

## Stewart Maxwell MSP



Thanks to everyone who has taken the time to vote in my latest online opinion poll about 'A people's power company'. The result makes for interesting reading, but there's still time for you to register your vote if you haven't already.

The winter is definitely over now and the only thing that has frozen is the council tax - and for the second year running. That's something that the Scottish Government are very proud of and are confident will go some way in helping families during the financial uncertainty.

April 1st also saw prescription charges in Scotland cut for the second time since 2007. I look forward to 2011 when we will mirror our friends in Wales and abolish them altogether.

Through in Parliament, I asked the First Minister if the cost of 'board and lodging' should be deducted from any compensation that a criminal receives while in prison. His response makes for some interesting reading.

If you wish to receive your newsletter via email rather than post, then get in touch and we'll add you to our electronic list.

Thanks for reading,

Stewart

## Should Prisoners Pay Compensation?

At First Minister's Questions on 19 March 2009, I asked Alex Salmond if he agreed with me that if compensation has been or will be paid to prisoners for poor living conditions, then the responsible authority should be able to deduct the cost of keeping them locked up.

The First Minister believed this to be an important point and shared my concerns about public money going to criminals.

I'd like to see this idea

### Council Tax Frozen Again

All West of Scotland Councils have confirmed that they will freeze council tax for the second year running.

The freeze will provide vital relief for households at a time when the effects of the economic downturn are being felt across the country.

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taken further though. Would it not be beneficial to see victims being able to receive compensation from criminals in the event that they are financially rewarded while in prison?

I received a number of letters from members of the public about the matter and there certainly appears to be an appetite for legislation that freezes these awards at the point of payment and allows victims to commence a civil action for damages with a very simplified procedure.



Picture: Stewart debating in the Chamber.

As with any important issue, I'd love to hear your opinions. So get in touch and let me know.

cial for families suffering as the recession sets in".

"Householders used to dread the day their Council Tax was set, but of course a freeze does not change the fundamental unfairness of Council Tax and I am committed to seeing it replaced with a fairer system".

"Council Tax will remain at 2007-08 levels, thus putting money back in people's pockets. Money that is cru-

## Scotland Benefits from Cut in Prescription Charges

I was very pleased to hear the recent announcement by the Health Secretary Nicola Sturgeon that from the 1st of April Scotland will once again benefit from cuts in prescription charges. It is great news that the Scottish Government has taken yet another positive step towards their commitment of abolishing paid-for prescriptions by 2011.

In 2007 a single item prescription was charged at £6.85, and this was cut to £5 last year. This cost has now been

further reduced by 20 per cent to £4. Costs are also down for those with long-term conditions who buy Prescription Payment Certificates (PPCs) to cover the price of unlimited medication, with charges being cut from £48 to £38 for 12 months, or £17 to £13 for four months.

Since the introduction of reduced charges in April 2008, the number of PPCs has increased by 110 per cent, enabling many more patients, particularly those with long-term conditions, to save money and spread the cost of their

medication.

I believe that unfair prescription charges have placed a real burden on those affected by illness; especially people suffering from long-term conditions such as asthma, multiple sclerosis and heart disease. It is unacceptable that people with chronic health problems may risk further ill-health rather than face the burden of expensive prescription charges. This will undoubtedly go some way to improving the lives of individuals and families who have been blighted by ill-health.

## Scotland Crowned Plate Champions at RWC 7s

Stewart was delighted by Scotland's recent victory over Australia in the Plate Competition at the 2009 Rugby World Cup 7s. The Scotland team defeated the Wallabies 21 to 17 in a thrilling final watched by 35,000 spectators in Dubai. Stewart was so pleased with the close-fought victory that he put down a motion in Parliament congratulating the team on this fine achievement.

Stewart said: "It was an absolute pleasure to see the boys do Scotland proud, winning the trophy is a great reward for the hard work of the players and management team. I look forward to the forthcoming Emirates Edinburgh 7s Festival at the end of May, and I urge people to get along to Murrayfield and support the team."



### Get in touch...

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### WHAT'S IN STEWART'S MAIL-BAG?

In this new newsletter section, the very best of Stewart's mail-bag will be published. If you have a great idea, a suggestion that could help people in your area or even a funny story; write in, and who knows, maybe you'll feature in Stewart's next newsletter.



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The Scottish  
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