

Stewart Maxwell MSP



I was very pleased to lend my support to the passage of an emergency bill which closes a loophole that had allowed thousands of prisoners to claim compensation over slopping out.

The Convention Rights Proceedings (Amendment) (Scotland) Bill was passed on June 18th, and will help to ensure that tens of millions of pounds of public money will be saved from the pockets of convicted criminals.

At First Minister's Questions (19th March 2009), I asked the First Minister if he agreed that in cases where compensation has been or will be paid out as a result of the Somerville judgement; the responsible authority should deduct 'board and lodging' expenses from that compensation payment.

I strongly believe that criminals who have been rightly imprisoned should not benefit financially from that imprisonment, and I welcome any action which helps to minimise compensation payouts in these circumstances.

Maxwell Expresses Concern About NHS Taxi Contract

Stewart Maxwell MSP has expressed his serious concern at reports that Greater Glasgow and Clyde Health Board are likely to take the contract they have for taxi services with *Glasgow Taxis Ltd* and award it instead to a private-hire firm which has alleged links to organised crime.

The contract for the provision of taxi services to patients, staff, and materials is worth around £2million, and *Network Private Hire* has been named as the preferred bidder, though *Glasgow Taxis Ltd* has challenged the decision.

Stewart has met with worried members of *Glasgow Taxis* who have raised concerns that *Network Private Hire's* fleet of taxis is grossly

insufficient, particularly for the transport of patients who need wheelchair accessible facility cabs.

Commenting on the issue Stewart said: "I have written to the Chief Executive of NHS GG&C Health Board and also met with the head of procurement on the matter.

"I have made it clear to them that I am deeply concerned that such a substantial public contract might be awarded to a taxi company with alleged links to organised crime."

Stewart went on to say: "It is also worrying to hear reports that the preferred bidder for an important NHS contract like this appears to have such a woefully inadequate



fleet of vehicles to meet the needs of patients who have mobility problems and require wheel-chair accessible cabs."

"I am worried that this could seriously impact the level of service offered by NHS GG&C and I completely support *Glasgow Taxis'* challenge of this decision."

Mearns Castle High School are Proud Debating Finalists

Eastwood's Mearns Castle High School debating team tested their verbal jousting skills against the very best on Thursday 11th June, when they competed in the final of the 'Donald Dewar Memorial Debating tournament' held in the Scottish Parliament's debating chamber.

All Scottish Secondary schools were invited to participate in the tournament,

with over 130 teams from across Scotland entering this year's competition. There were over 30 first round heats, 16 second round heats, and 4 regional finals.

Stewart Maxwell MSP joined the pupils on the floor of the chamber. Afterwards he said: "I know that everyone in East Renfrewshire will join me in congratulating our premier debating team. They have

done us proud by representing the area in the tournament; making it all the way to the final in spite of very tough opposition.

"Getting to the final in itself is an achievement and the pupils did very well to hold their nerve in such an intimidating environment. The Presiding Officer chaired the debates and I know first hand how stern an umpire he can be".

Maxwell Calls for the Introduction of Non-Invasive Post-Mortems

Stewart Maxwell, MSP for the West of Scotland and a member of the Scottish Parliament's Justice Committee, has called for the introduction of non-invasive post mortems.

The call comes after a recent session of the Justice Committee in which officials considered whether to allow non-surgical post-mortem examinations.

Stewart had previously written to Kenny MacAskill on the matter, highlighting that some people and religious groups have personal objections to what happens to their bodies after death.

The move would allow MRI scans to be used to investigate cause of death instead, with Stewart Maxwell calling for non-invasive post mortems to be allowed if the family of the deceased apply for one, though emphasising that the Procurator Fiscal should have the final say as to whether a non-invasive or a surgical post-mortem is carried out.

Commenting Stewart Maxwell said: "Losing a loved one is a very difficult time in anyone's life, but many people find the prospect of a surgical post mortem having to be carried out extremely distressing on top of the death itself.

"I believe that anything which can be done to reduce the stress for people should be considered, and that is why I am calling for the introduction of non-invasive post mortems in Scotland.

He added: "Some people and religious groups have strong views about what happens to their bodies after death and if we have the ability to accommodate these views through making non-invasive post mortems an option then I believe we should do so. This would be of particular assistance to Jewish and Muslim families, but should of course be open to anybody to apply for."

We are the Champions...

Congratulations to two of my members of staff, Sean Lafferty (pictured centre as "The Goalie") and Fraser Brown (pictured bottom left) who both recently played in the annual Scottish Parliament 5-a-side football tournament.

Their team, which also included some of their colleagues from the West of Scotland constituency office, won the event after a hotly contested final which went all the way to penalties.

I hope that this trophy is the first of many to grace the office. I'm sure the lads are already looking forward to defending their title at next year's event.



Get in touch...

Unit 27
Sir James Clark Building
Abbey Mill Business Centre
12 Seedhill Road
Paisley

Phone: 0141 887 2607
Fax: 0141 887 2626
Email:
Stewart.Maxwell.msp.scottish.parliament.uk

www.stewartmaxwell.com

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.



The costs of this publication have been met out of Parliamentary resources.



The Scottish
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