

## Stewart Maxwell MSP



*SNP Justice Committee member and former employee of Strathclyde Fire Brigade Stewart Maxwell has welcomed the recommendations made in a new report by the Chief Fire Officer on how to tackle fire deaths in Scotland.*

### Further Calls for Introduction of Fire-Safe Cigarettes

A recent report published by Strathclyde Fire Brigade's Chief Officer has further highlighted Scotland's disproportionately high number of fires, fire deaths and fire casualties as compared to other parts of the UK and Europe.

The report confirms that people living in Scotland are twice as likely to die in a fire than anywhere else in the UK. Thirty seven recommendations on how to address this were made, including the implementation of 'fire-safe' cigarettes - something I have been calling to be introduced for a number of years.

There is no doubt that Scotland has a rather unenviable reputation for fires and fire deaths. The report makes

sensible and realistic recommendations which, if implemented, could seriously reduce the number of fire accidents and deaths.

The report states that 36 lives could have been saved had Reduced Ignition Propensity cigarettes been mandatory since 2005.

The study also recommends that the Scottish Government works with partners in the creation of a European Standard for Reduced Ignition Propensity cigarettes. I of course support this call and will urge the Scottish Government to be at the forefront in the development of these cigarettes.

The report will be debated in parliament on 12 November 2009.

### Assurances Needed Over Future of Rugby Sevens

Following the news that Rugby Sevens has been accepted into the 2016 Olympic Games, rugby fan and former Sports Minister Stewart Maxwell has called for assurances that this would not mean the end to a Scottish Sevens team competing in the world's top tournament.

Scotland invented Rugby Sevens and the most famous Sevens game is still played at Melrose in the Scottish Borders every year.

The IRB has suggested that when Rugby Sevens is admitted to the Olympics the Seven's World Cup would be brought to an end, resulting in Scotland being barred from the world's premier Rugby Sevens tournament.

Commenting Stewart said: "Recognition for Rugby Sevens at the

Olympics is a great step but it must not lead to an end to the World Cup. If the Rugby Sevens World Cup is scrapped then Scotland - the country that invented the game and gave the game to the world - would find itself no longer able to enter into the sports showpiece event."

Stewart also said: "We have seen with football that the IOC will not allow Scotland to compete as a country in her own right - despite our position in Football as in Rugby as a separate and internationally recognised sporting nation."

"If the IRB scrap the World Cup there will be no opportunity left for Scotland's Sevens team to show their ability to the world in the sport's num-

ber one event."

"Scotland must be allowed to compete at Rugby Seven's top tournament as to block our participation would be a tragedy for Scottish Rugby and a bizarre fate to befall the country that invented the game. I have written to both the IOC and IRB to make them aware of my concerns."



## MAXWELL DONATES SMOKING BAN FILES TO ASH SCOTLAND

Over the years Stewart has amassed a collection of fascinating documents and correspondence following his involvement in bringing forward Scotland's ban on smoking in enclosed public places.

Unfortunately, the required storage space is no longer available, so instead of disposing of the files Stewart has negotiated an agreement with *ASH Scotland* to take possession of the materials.

*ASH Scotland* is a charity which campaigns for effective tobacco control in Scotland and a leading source of information on tobacco issues.

Sheila Duffy, Chief Executive of *ASH Scotland*, commented: "Stewart played a skilful and vital role in bringing in strong, effective smoke-free legislation and his legacy should remain a source of pride for him. In particular the amendment to bring non-tobacco lit smoked materials into primary legislation was I

believe a world first for which he deserves the leading credit. We are delighted to take possession of his archive materials relating to the smoking ban."

Commenting Stewart said: "It is a great pleasure to hand over the smoking records and documents which I have collected over the years to *ASH Scotland*. I hope that these files are a source of interest for people researching the leading legislation introduced in Scotland on smoking. I continue to support the good work done by *ASH Scotland*, and regard them as a valuable resource for all of Scotland's smoking and tobacco issues."

"It is a particular pleasure to do this following recent research published which suggests that heart attacks are cut by almost one third by smoking bans, going from a 17% drop in the first year to 36% after three years. I am delighted that the cumulative effects of the 2006 smoking



Picture: Stewart handing over files outside *ASH Scotland Office* in Edinburgh.

ban continue to reap such tremendous health benefits."

Stewart has lodged a motion in Parliament highlighting a recent study published which the *British Heart Foundation* suggests adds to the growing evidence that a ban on smoking in public places seems to have a positive impact on heart attack rates.

## STEWART ELECTED TO EUROPEAN COMMITTEE

I was delighted to gain unanimous support from the Scottish Parliament for my nomination to the *European Committee of the Regions (CoR)*, becoming one of only two Parliamentary representatives from Scotland.

The European CoR ensures that local government, assemblies and Parlia-

ments such as the Scottish & Welsh have a say in EU policy making. I hope that my appointment to the committee will help to ensure that Scotland's identity and priorities are respected in matters such as regional policy, education & transport.

The committee has members from across the 27 EU member states, with its primary goal being to improve EU legislation using the expertise of regional and local representatives. The CoR plays an important role as the European Commission must consult the committee whenever new proposals are made in EU policy

areas which affect local government.

I look forward to working alongside my fellow committee members to scrutinise what impact EU legislation might have at a local level, and I hope that this will enable Scotland to further develop its role within the EU.

Legislative changes made within the EU in areas such as the environment & energy can have a real impact at a local level, and the CoR has an important role to play in influencing EU policy. I am determined to ensure that Scotland's interests are represented on the committee.

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