

Parliamentary Patter is published by John Mason MSP to give members of the community a window into his parliamentary and constituency work. This newsletter is distributed monthly to those who have asked for an opportunity to read what their Member of the Scottish Parliament does and thinks.

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Action to tackle metal theft

Glasgow Shettleston's MSP, John Mason, has welcomed the Scottish Government's consultation on tackling metal theft. Mr Mason's praise for the consultation follows his calls in 2011 for new legislation to tackle metal theft. The SNP MSP called for action following a spate of vandalism in 2011 at local Churches in the East End.

John Mason welcomed the Scottish Government's proposed action, particularly emphasis on outlawing cash sales of lead and metal.

East End MSP, John Mason, said: "Metal theft is a big problem, so I am delighted to see the Government is heeding our calls for action and pressing forward with the consultation.

"I have been in tenement closes recently where even the brass edging on the stairs has been dug out to be sold. That might be at the less serious end of the scale but stealing the copper from railway signalling equipment is potentially catastrophic.

"Churches like St John's have seen, first hand, the damage – physical and financial – caused by metal theft, therefore any action is to be welcomed. The consultation is also an opportunity for everyone to contribute their thoughts and ideas, be it charities, organisations, Churches and small businesses. It's important we get the changes to legislation right to stamp out this kind of behaviour".

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Disappointment at Standards Commission ruling



SNP MSP, John Mason, has expressed his disappointment at the Standards Commission's recent decision not to pursue former Glasgow City Councillor, Catherine McMaster and current Councillors George Redmond and Jim Coleman for their part in financial misconduct.

The Shettleston MSP referred a complaint to the Standards Commission, following the trio's handling of the £500,000 pay-off for Ronnie Saez, former Chief Executive of Glasgow East Regeneration Agency – which the charity regulator, OSCR, slammed as "misconduct" and "wholly inappropriate".

Commenting on the Standard's Commission's decision not to pursue the issue further, John Mason MSP said:

"People have rightly been infuriated by the actions of these Labour Councillors and they will no doubt be further incensed by the Standards Commission's toothless action.

"The idea that these Councillors are going to get away with this scot-free is totally infuriating. These Councillors squandered hundreds of thousands of pounds of public money and this does not reflect well on the Labour Party, our City and our communities here in the East End.

"Back in 2007 I was given a nine month suspension from the Standards Commission for sitting in the Lord Provost's Chair in Glasgow. Years later we see three experienced Labour Councillors told they merely need training after being found guilty of financial misconduct. I mean, seriously, come on!

"The bottom line here is that these were three experienced Councillors, two of whom are still in Office, and they should have known better. They've failed the Labour Party, Glasgow, and above all, the tax payer – their constituents."



M74 extension cutting congestion

SNP MSP for Glasgow Shettleston, John Mason, has welcomed news that congestion on the M8 motorway has been dramatically reduced since the opening of the M74 extension in June 2011.

Figures released in response to parliamentary question from the Shettleston MSP have shown that the new motorway has improved the flow of traffic between Charing Cross and Baillieston by on average 18 – 20,000 vehicles per day. It has also reduced the number of vehicles crossing the Kingston Bridge by on average 11,000 vehicles per day - both of which are resulting in lower congestion and quicker journeys for drivers.

The M74 extension was completed eight months ahead of schedule and £20 million under budget.

Commenting on the statistics, John said: “These statistics show that the M74 extension has been a major success, not only in terms of it being delivered ahead of schedule and under budget but also in cutting journey times for drivers.

“There’s no doubt that it has taken a bit of time for folk to start using the M74 but these figures show that the extension has reduced the number of cars clogging up the M8. A number of M8 junctions are now easier to get onto for East End residents who, in the past, would have been queued up for ages because of the slow traffic flow.

“And it’s not just motorways that the Scottish Government is investing in. As someone who regularly uses the Airdrie-Bathgate rail link to get to Parliament, I can see that being well used as folk commute to West Lothian and Edinburgh.”

John Mason supports votes at 16 law

Glasgow Shettleston SNP MSP, John Mason, has given his support to the Scottish Referendum (Franchise) Bill published in the Scottish Parliament recently, which will give 16 and 17 year olds the right to vote in next year’s independence referendum.

Local MSP, John Mason, commented:

“The people who will be most affected by Scotland’s big decision next year are our young people. When I visit schools in the East End it’s very clear that young people are already thinking on the debate about Scotland’s future and what that means for them.

“Given that 16 year olds have the right to marry, join the army and can pay taxes it does seem fair that they are given the right to vote.

“While the UK Government is not willing to change the voting age in normal elections agreement has been reached for votes at 16 in 2014.

“I know that this move will energise the debate already taking place among Scotland’s young people about our future, and I am confident that this legislation will pass in Parliament.”

Shettleston’s MSP backs prostate cancer care check list



John Mason has pledged to support the swift implementation of a Prostate Cancer UK initiative in Glasgow to help Scottish men with prostate cancer receive the best possible care and support, regardless of where they live.

This comes as interim findings of a new survey suggest that support offered to men with prostate cancer in Scotland is falling short of satisfactory standards. The survey has been commissioned by Prostate Cancer UK to consult a sample of prostate cancer patients in Scotland about their experiences of care. The evidence so far highlights that despite recent improvements, there are gaps in the provision of information and support men with prostate cancer receive.

Initial findings from the survey show that:

- almost all men with prostate cancer questioned (91%) were not offered a written assessment and care plan,
- three quarters (74%) were not given information on available financial help,
- over half (55%) were not given written information on the type of cancer they had

and 4 out of 5 (59%) felt they did not have the potential side effects of treatment explained to them in an understandable way.

In a bid to help stamp out these inequalities, Prostate Cancer UK has produced a Quality Checklist to be used as a best practice guide for men and clinicians. The checklist sets out 15 national standards for care and support that Scottish men with prostate cancer should expect and demand, from the point of their diagnosis through to the end of their life.

Mr Mason commented:

Prostate cancer is the most common cancer in men, yet the quality of care men receive in Scotland varies. It is incredibly important that we do all we can to ensure all men with prostate cancer get the care and support they need. I am therefore delighted to endorse Prostate Cancer UK’s Quality Checklist, and call on NHS Greater Glasgow and Clyde to ensure it is adopted as soon as possible to help all men who are diagnosed with the disease.”

To view the Quality Checklist please visit www.prostatecanceruk.org/qualitycare