

Last Cross Party Group on Rail

The Cross Party Group on Rail held its final meeting before the election on 1st March.

John Mason MSP along with Neil Bibby MSP set-up and co-convened the organisation as a way for key stakeholders and interested groups to highlight the challenges and opportunities that Rail can provide.

The final meeting had a presentation on the impacts of the Queen Street tunnel closure and action being taken to help minimise disruption by the Head of Public Affairs for Scotrail.

Queen Street tunnel will close for essential upgrading for 20 weeks from Sunday 20 March. It will re-open on Monday 8 August.



Contact John Mason MSP directly...

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FGM Discussed in Parliament

John spoke on the debate on International Zero Tolerance of Female Genital Mutilation day in the Scottish Parliament on 10th February.

The Equal Opportunities Committee which John is a member of has done a lot of work on FGM in the past by taking the views of many different organisations and those who have experienced it first hand.

Speaking on the issue John said :

“One of the main things the committee noted was the difficulty finding facts relating to how prevalent FGM is in Scotland today.

“In light of that I hope that both the Parliament and the Government will continue to treat FGM with the seriousness it deserves.”

Scottish Apprenticeship Week

Scottish Apprenticeship Week took place between the 29th of February and the 4th of March this year.

The week aims to boost both the number of Modern Apprenticeships available and highlight apprenticeships to young people as a career path.

John Mason MSP visited some of his local businesses to see how they are helping further apprenticeships.

Commenting on the week John said:

“I particularly enjoyed my visit to GMG contractors who are offering many places for apprentices.”

John Sponsors Scottish Families Affected by Alcohol Event

The Scottish Families Affected by Alcohol and Drugs organisation provides help to those families who have experienced first hand the devastating effects that substance abuse not only has on the individual concerned but on all those around them.

Holding the event in Parliament allowed the message to be highlighted to MSPs.

 The Scottish Parliament Pàrlamaid na h-Alba	<h1>Parliamentary Patter</h1>	Community Council Report John Mason MSP
		March 2016

Scottish Parliament Receives New Powers

John Mason welcomed the news that the Scottish and UK Governments had reached an agreement on the new powers for the Scottish Parliament.

The talks had recently become bogged down due to disagreement over the Block Grant Adjustment which determines how much money the Scottish Government receives each year.

Commenting John Mason MSP said:

“I am delighted to see that an agreement has been reached that will allow more powers to come to the Scottish Parliament.

“Thankfully the Scottish Government have stuck to their guns in the negotiations and refused to accept the initial proposal that £7 billion would be cut from the Scottish Budget over ten years.

“Going forward it is essential that the two governments treat each other with respect and as equals. That is what ‘no detriment’ means. Any changes in future must be agreed by both governments... not imposed by the Treasury.”



Scottish Parliament Dissolution

After the 23rd of March the Scottish Parliament will be dissolved. From this point there will be no MSPs until after the election on 5th May.

Motions lodged by John at Parliament :

- ◆ **Motion S4M-15536: Homelessness** — Highlighting the reported increase in uptake of homelessness organisations over last winter and deploring the UK Governments ongoing dismantling of the Welfare State.
- ◆ **Motion S4M-15649: Junior Doctors Contracts** — Deploring the decision taken by Westminster to impose unfair contracts on junior doctors living in England, congratulating the BMA on its opposition and welcoming any junior doctors seeking a career in Scotland due to these changes.
- ◆ **Motion S4M-15669: Employment at Highest in Scotland** — Welcoming the figures from the Office of National Statistics which show that employment in Scotland has reached an all time high between October and December 2015.
- ◆ **Motion S4M-15689: Trident Decreasing Scotland's Security** — Noting the findings in the which show that the UK has had to rely on aircraft from Germany, France, Canada and the US to patrol its sea for Russian submarines. Notes that this is due to a conscious decision taken to prioritise spending on a fundamentally Trident Nuclear Submarines to the detriment of conventional systems like the scrapped Nimrod patrol aircraft.

The full text of all motions , questions and answers can be viewed at

<http://www.johnmason.org/category/motions/>