



DAVID FORD MLA

Working for South Antrim
—working for you

**IN THE ASSEMBLY...
IN COMMITTEE...
IN THE COMMUNITY...
ON THE INTERNET...**



ASSEMBLY·REPORT **autumn 2009**

Welcome to the latest edition of my Report to Constituents which aims to summarise for you the major work I have carried out on your behalf in the last few months.

Although the Assembly has not always functioned as well as we might hope, I believe that Northern Ireland is much better off because of the existence of the Assembly and the other institutions of the 1998 Agreement.

The existence of the Assembly allows me and other democratically elected representatives to hold ministers to account and to

take up issues of concern to you, the people of South Antrim.

I welcome the opportunity to meet with constituents – whether individually or as part of local groups – to hear of issues of concern and discuss how we may make life better.

If you wish to raise any issue, or if you wish to arrange a visit to Stormont, please contact me: details on the back page.

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "David Ford".

www.davidford.org

This publication is also available in digital pdf format on my website.



Working for you **IN THE ASSEMBLY...**

I am the only MLA who has represented South Antrim continuously since 1998. Over the years I have taken a particular interest on behalf of my party in the environment, agriculture and rural issues.

Since my re-election to the Assembly in 2007, I have:
asked **412** questions
tabled **95** motions
voted **173** times
spoken **974** times in **429** Assembly Debates

I have commented on a range of draft legislation passing through the Assembly at various stages, notably concerning local government, roads safety, and justice.

In the Assembly, I am a member of:
Committee for the Environment,
as well as All Party Assembly Groups on
Roads Safety,
Climate Change,
Rural Sustainability, and
International Development.

Working for you **VALUE FOR MONEY**

My constituency work is funded by the "Office Costs Allowance" (OCA) from the Assembly.

This Allowance covers the cost of running the full-time Advice Centre in Glengormley and the part-time clinics in Antrim, as well as employing two full-time and three part-time members of staff, who all help work for the good of the people of Antrim and Newtownabbey.

OCA also funds this report and it is delivered by Royal Mail throughout the constituency of South Antrim. The cost of printing and delivering the report is roughly 13 pence per household.

Full details of my salary and expenses are available on my website, as well as on the Assembly's website.

www.davidford.org
click "about David"
www.niassembly.gov.uk

Working for you **IN COMMITTEE...**



Parliament Buildings, Stormont—the home of the Northern Ireland Assembly.

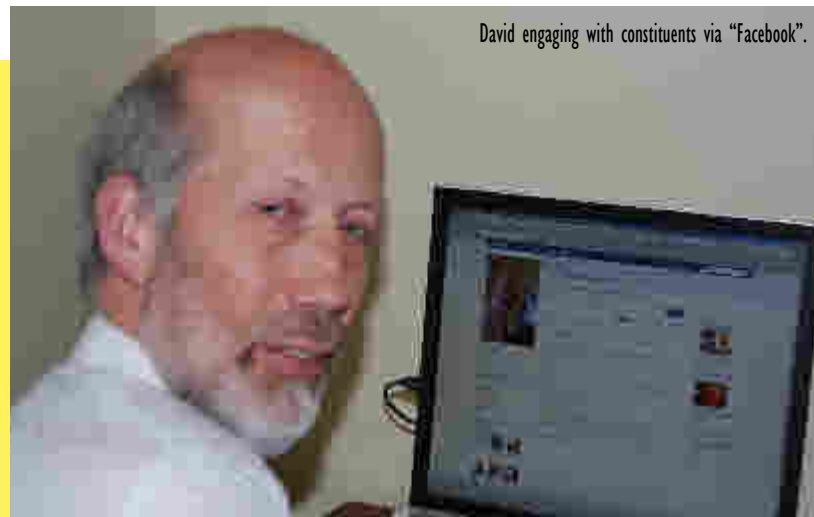
Committees play an important role in advising and assisting Ministers on matters within their responsibility. The Committees also undertake scrutiny, policy development, and consultation roles with respect to Northern Ireland departments and play a key role in the consideration and development of legislation.

THE COMMITTEE FOR THE ENVIRONMENT has been busy working on the Taxis Bill, and the Goods Vehicles (Licensing of Operators) Bill, the Local Government (Miscellaneous Provisions) Bill.

The Committee is finalising its report following its Inquiry into Climate Change.

Future work will include a Bill to deal with high hedges, reform of the Wildlife Order, and more detailed work on the reform of local government.

I am the only member who has served on the Environment Committee continuously since it was set up. I am always keen to hear from constituents on their concerns.



David engaging with constituents via "Facebook".

Working for you **ON THE INTERNET...**

You can keep up with all my latest news via my website and my Facebook page. On Facebook search for "David Ford MLA" and you will find me.

www.davidford.org
www.facebook.com

Working for you IN THE COMMUNITY...

- HOUSING**
- BENEFITS**
- PLANNING**
- COMMUNITY**
- POLICING**
- EDUCATION**
- HEALTHCARE**

Many of those who contact me have concerns about planning, healthcare, and education.

PLANNING

I have worked with those concerned about planning applications for large developments in both Antrim and Newtownabbey.

I am particularly concerned at the increasing number of established properties being demolished in preparation for



David pictured at Antrim County Hall following a meeting with the Chief Executive of the NEELB.



On the Belfast Road in Antrim, as in Glengormley, many family houses have been demolished to make way for new developments that have just not happened.

redevelopment but with no sign of that development going ahead.

I have met senior planning officers to discuss these issues, in particular the DoE's failure to produce a local statement for the Belfast Road area of Antrim. If you have any concerns about planning do contact me.

COMMUNITY CARE

My team and I have highlighted to the Northern Health Trust the lack of Community Care, particularly in the Ballyclare area. For years there has been under-funding of services for elderly people and people with disabilities. We will continue to press for appropriate funding packages being made available.

SCHOOL PLACES

I have met the Chief Executive of the North Eastern Education Board to discuss problems with the allocation of school places.

There appear to be particular problems with popular nursery schools: it is regrettable when children cannot obtain places in their neighbourhood nursery and this has implications for primary education.

IMMIGRATION

We have helped a number of individuals with visa applications and corresponded frequently with the UK Border Agency.

POLICING

My team and I have worked closely with the police service, local residents and businesses, and other relevant agencies to find short-term and long-term solutions to recent anti-social behaviour caused by youths in Antrim and Glengormley.

A SHARED FUTURE

I wrote to the Minister for Social Development to ensure the shared ethos of Springfarm Estate continues. The Minister has agreed to consider transferring the final 50 houses used by the Ministry of Defence to a Housing Association, rather than selling them to a private developer.

HOUSING EXECUTIVE

I continue to be concerned at the lack of social housing in general in our area, and am lobbying the Minister to get her to reexamine the issue.

My team has helped many constituents with concerns about maintenance and allocation.

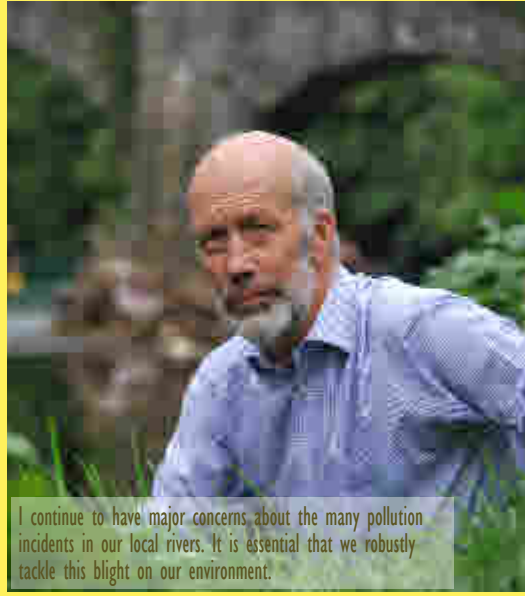
BENEFITS

We continue to assist local people in dealing with various public agencies with applications for benefits including DLA and industrial injuries benefits.

ROAD CONCERNS

We have contacted Roads Service about improvements and repairs to road surfaces throughout Antrim and Newtownabbey. The Assembly has recently debated the criteria for road gritting services during winter weather.

I remain concerned about road safety issues in many parts of South Antrim and am always willing to take up such matters.



I continue to have major concerns about the many pollution incidents in our local rivers. It is essential that we robustly tackle this blight on our environment.



Antrim Hospital leads the way in renewable energy.

Working for you

IN THE ENVIRONMENT

I am pleased that more and more people are looking for 'green' ways to generate electricity in South Antrim.

The new primary school in Templepatrick is a great example of using photovoltaic cells on the roof of the school to help produce more power. Antrim Hospital is also

leading the way with its wind turbine which generates a large proportion of the hospital's electricity.

I recently met a group considering developing geothermal energy from hot rocks 3,000 feet below Antrim town.

I welcome all these moves and will support other similar projects.

VISITING STORMONT

Parliament Buildings
—your building

During the year, I have welcomed many groups to Stormont.

Parliament Buildings is open to the general public. Visitors can turn up at any time during the working day or a tour can be arranged in advance.

On Mondays and Tuesdays, the public gallery of the Assembly chamber is open during business for anyone wishing to see it in action.

If you would like to arrange a visit for your group, please contact me.



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Working for you

ON LOCAL TRANSPORT

IMPROVED RAILWAY TIMETABLE

Following long years of discussion with Translink, I am pleased that there is a much improved timetable between Antrim and Belfast, following the upgrade on the line between Ballymena and Coleraine earlier in the year.

Many more people use the train with better rolling stock: I hope the improved timetable will encourage even more use.

LINK TO INTERNATIONAL AIRPORT

I continue to press the regional development minister and Translink about the reopening of the Knockmore line from Antrim to Lisburn, and its possibilities for development of a railway link to Crumlin, Glenavy, and Belfast International Airport.

iLINK TRAVELCARD

I welcome the recent introduction of the iLink Travelcard by Translink. This card allows for daily, weekly, or monthly unlimited travel, based upon travel to and from Belfast. Most of urban Newtownabbey is within Zone 1, and the most of the rest of the constituency is within Zone 2.

One significant benefit is that the travelcard will apply to Metro, Ulsterbus, and NI Railways.

This is a significant step forward. I hope that we will be able to review this system in the next few years to create more localised zones.

www.translink.co.uk
www.drndni.gov.uk

DAVID FORD MLA

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—working for you

Alliance Advice Centre

Unit 2, 21 Cammoney Road,
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Tel: 028 9084 0930
Fax: 028 9083 7774 southantrim@davidford.org

Cllr Lynn Frazer, Constituency Manager
Stephen Martin, Constituency Assistant

Stormont Office

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Fax: 028 9052 1313

Jonathan Simpson,
Assembly Assistant jonny@davidford.org

Michael Carchrie Campbell,
Communications Officer michael@davidford.org

Fiona Chan,
Environment Adviser fiona@davidford.org

Antrim Outreach Clinics on Friday mornings

Parkhall Community Centre 10.00 to 11.00
Greystone Community Centre 11.15 to 12.15
Jonathan Simpson jonny@davidford.org

www.davidford.org