

ASSEMBLY·REPORT

autumn 2010

**IN THE ASSEMBLY...
AS JUSTICE MINISTER..
IN THE COMMUNITY...
ON THE INTERNET...**

DAVID FORD MLA

Working for South Antrim
—working for you



Dear Neighbour,

Every year since I was elected to the Assembly, I have reported back to the people of South Antrim on my work as their representative. I believe that, as a public representative, I have a duty to keep in touch with the citizens of Antrim and Newtownabbey.

This report cannot replace face-to-face contact, but it enables me to let everyone who lives in the constituency know something about my work, and details of how you can contact me if you need my help, or if you want to tell me what you think about current issues of concern.

Since I became Minister of Justice in April, my workload has changed. I am no longer a member of the Environment Committee. I have also resigned my seat on Antrim Borough Council, where I have been

succeeded by Cllr Neil Kelly without the cost to the ratepayers of a by-election.

In these difficult times economically, I am fully aware of the pressures that many families are living under. My staff team of Cllr Lynn Frazer and Sam Nelson provides a full-time service to local people from the base in Glengormley and the outreach centres in Antrim. They are always ready to help with any matter, whether personal or affecting a local community. Full contact details for my team are included in this report.

I hope you enjoy reading this report and please do get in touch with issues that concern you.

Yours,

www.davidford.org

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

Working for you
**ON JUSTICE
ISSUES...**



As Minister of Justice, I am working to ensure that Northern Ireland has a justice system that provides justice for all; that meets local needs by providing local solutions; and that works in partnership with other Departments and agencies, as well as the wider community, to provide a safer, shared community for us all.

As a local representative, I know that many people in Newtownabbey and Antrim are concerned about vandalism and anti-social behaviour, as well as the threats coming from small groups trying to stop the progress we have made in recent years. I fully respect the operational independence of the Police Service, the Prosecution Service and the Courts. I cannot - and will not - interfere with the work of local police commanders, though I am able to meet them as an MLA.

I am always keen to hear of any particular concerns of local people about the justice system, the same as any other public service.

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

HEALTH SERVICES

I have worked alongside local councillors to ensure that the closure of the casualty department at Whiteabbey Hospital has not had a detrimental effect on Accident and Emergency Services across the Northern HSC Trust area. I will continue to work to protect jobs and ensure that A&E services at Antrim Hospital are able to cope with the increased demand from Whiteabbey and Magherafelt.

COMMUNITY CARE

I am very concerned about the changes to mental health services in the South Antrim area and have met with the Northern HSC Trust to call for the maintenance of top quality services. The *Bamford Report* recommended improvements to the services provided to people who have mental health problems or learning disabilities, and the Assembly is due to legislate on this next year.

Working for you
VALUE FOR MONEY

The 'office costs allowance' (OCA) that I receive from the Assembly funds my constituency work.

This covers the costs involved in running the full-time staffed advice centre in Glengormley, the part-time clinics in Antrim, which includes employing two full-time and one part-time members of staff who all work for the good of the people of South Antrim.

This report is also funded by OCA and is delivered by Royal Mail throughout the constituency of South Antrim. If you have a postcode beginning BT29, BT36, BT39, or BT41, and live in another constituency, please accept my apologies, and I hope you enjoy the read. 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
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...

EDUCATION

My team and I are working to protect pre-schools and their facilities, ensuring that local population demands can be adequately fulfilled.

There is a growing number of children who are not receiving appropriate places to suit the demands of their parents. We are currently compiling a report on how the varying demands are being met within South Antrim.

I am also concerned that the growing demand for integrated education needs to be better provided for.

ECONOMY & THE ENVIRONMENT

I have been instrumental in advocating a *Green New Deal for Northern Ireland* that will provide for a sustainable and prosperous future. A Green New Deal will increase jobs in sustainable and renewable energy and will provide a much needed boost for local enterprise.

As a member of the Environment Committee, I proposed a number of

amendments which I believe have strengthened the *Wildlife and Natural Environment Bill* to protect the environment and wildlife in our area. I continue to believe that the level of protection for the Irish Hare needs to be put at the highest level.

PUBLIC TRANSPORT

I continue to fight for an improved railway timetable. In particular, I have approached Translink to encourage a later weekend service between Belfast and Antrim, including Mossley West, and to improve the northbound service from Belfast to Ballymena in the early morning.

I am also determined that the essential track replacement beyond Ballymena should not affect services on the increasingly popular commuter route between Ballymena and Belfast. After successful lobbying, Translink will introduce new rolling stock over the next 18 months which will enable further timetable improvements.

**HOUSING
 BENEFITS
 PLANNING
 COMMUNITY
 POLICING
 EDUCATION
 HEALTHCARE**



HOUSING EXECUTIVE

I continue to highlight the lack of social housing in the area and the detrimental effect this has on the lives of local people. I have arranged to meet with the Housing Executive to raise the issue and have it re-examined.

BENEFITS

My team and I continue to assist local people in dealing with various public agencies and applications for benefits including housing benefits, pension credits, and DLA. If you need our help, please get in touch.

Visiting Stormont **PARLIAMENT BUILDINGS**

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

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

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



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Working for you **ADDRESSING CONSTITUENTS' CONCERNS**

SURVEYS

Alongside my constituency staff, I have continued to conduct surveys throughout South Antrim to reach out and address important issues. I remain dedicated to addressing individual concerns of local people.

OUTREACH CLINICS IN ANTRIM

Every Friday, we also hold two outreach clinics where people can arrange to meet with me to tell me their concerns. These clinics are held at Parkhall Community Centre between 10am and 11am, and Greystone Community Centre between 11.15am and 12.15pm.

I also arrange to meet local people and local groups across the constituency at suitable times and places.

Working for you **COMMUNITY SAFETY & POLICING**

As an MLA, I continue to meet regularly with the PSNI commanders in Antrim and Newtownabbey and to put the concerns of local people to them. It is important that we see partnership working to deal with problems like anti-social behaviour that blight the lives of

local people in different parts of our area.

I supported local people in opposing the plans for an off-licence in Mayfield, Newtownabbey and welcome the withdrawal of the proposal. I will continue to support local residents who do not want such premises in housing estates.

DAVID FORD MLA Working for South Antrim —working for you

You can contact me in the following ways

Alliance Advice Centre

Unit 2, 21 Cammonee Road,
Newtownabbey BT36 6HL

Tel: 028 9084 0930

Fax: 028 9083 7774

southantrim@davidford.org

Cllr Lynn Frazer, Constituency Manager

Sam Nelson, Constituency Assistant

or write to: **FREEPOST DAVID FORD MLA**

Stormont Office

Parliament Buildings, Belfast BT4 3XX

Tel: 028 9052 1314

Michael Carchie Campbell, (part-time)

Communications Officer michael@davidford.org

via Local Representatives

Antrim Town

Cllr Oran Keenan

Tel: 07808 257878 (mobile)

oran@davidford.org

Cllr Neil Kelly

Tel: 07587 657116 (mobile)

neil@davidford.org

Templepatrick - Crumlin

Cllr Alan Lawther, Deputy Mayor of Antrim

Tel: 07762 822600 (mobile)

alan@davidford.org

Glengormley - Mallusk

Cllr Tom Campbell

Tel: 028 9023 0808 (business)

tom@davidford.org

Cammonee - Mossley

Cllr Lynn Frazer (contact office above)

MINISTER OF JUSTICE

If you wish to contact me in my role as Justice Minister

Department of Justice

Castle Buildings, Ballymiscaw, Belfast, BT4 3SG

Tel: 028 9052 8121

private.office@dojni.gsi.gov.uk

www.davidford.org

www.dojni.gov.uk