

Siobhan McMahon MSP

Working hard for Central Scotland

Counting down to the local elections...

With the local council elections now only days away, I have been giving my full support to the labour candidates running for election in North Lanarkshire, South Lanarkshire, and Falkirk.

I am glad to say that Labour candidates and activists have shown great commitment to the cause, with regular door-knocking and leafleting sessions to help get Labour's message across. The SNP, on the other hand, has shown some signs of taking the electorate for granted, with recent newspaper articles quoting party strategists predicting landslide victories. Such talk is not only hugely premature, it betrays an arrogance that is becoming increasingly common within the SNP.

No one would deny that last year's Scottish Parliament elections went very badly for Labour; however, under the leadership of Johann Lamont we are travelling in the right direction.

And, as the election draws near, there are plenty of issues on which Labour is very firmly on the right side of the argument.

The Scottish Government's decision to cut the Bus Services Operators' Grant, for example, will only exacerbate the record fare increases and service cuts that occurred during the first three months of 2012. The Labour party understands just how important bus services are to local communities, with five bus journeys to every one train journey, and that is why we unequivocally opposed the cut to the grant. Campaigns to maintain and improve bus services are active throughout Central Scotland, and if Labour retains power in North and South Lanarkshire and Falkirk, we will act to offset the damage done by Scottish Government policies.

Elsewhere, youth unemployment remains a serious problem, with recent figures showing huge rises in the number of 16-24 year-olds claiming Job seekers allowance for more than a year. Prolonged unemployment at an early age can have a devastating effect on an individual's future prospects, and the Labour administrations in North and South Lanarkshire and Falkirk have invested significant funds to create jobs and opportunities for young people, efforts which are being hampered by a lack of leadership from the SNP Government.

On these and other issues, Labour councils in the Central region have been leading by example. I am confident that, after May 3, they will continue to do so.



Get in touch

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Surgeries

Siobhan's surgeries will take place at the following times and locations. No appointment necessary.

First Monday of every month:

- ⇒ @home centre, 2 Clark Street, Airdrie **4.00-5.00pm**
- ⇒ Shotts Healthy Living Centre, Kirk Road, Shotts, **5.30-6.30pm**

Second Monday of every month:

- ⇒ Larkhall Community Centre, 19 Montgomery Street, Larkhall, **4.00-5.00pm**
- ⇒ Hillhouse and Earnock Community Centre, 121 Hillhouse Road, **5.30-6.30pm**

Third Monday of every month:

- ⇒ Greenpark Community Centre, Greenpark Drive, Polmont, **4.00-5.00pm**
- ⇒ Grangemouth Community Education Centre, Abbots Road, Grangemouth, **5.30-6.30pm**

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Hosting the Holocaust Education Trust in the Garden Lobby



I had the great honour and privilege of hosting the Holocaust Educational Trust's first reception in the Scottish Parliament.

The Holocaust Educational Trust was founded in 1988, and played a central role in the establishing of Holocaust Memorial Day in 2001. In 1999, it set up Lessons from Auschwitz, a highly successful educational programme which has given thousands of students from across Scotland and the UK

Siobhan with (l-r) Simon Houston of Greenock High School, Michael Tuncliffe and Michael Dogan of Selkirk High School, Karen Pollock MBE, Chief Executive of the Holocaust Educational Trust, and Judy Russell, daughter of Holocaust survivor Ernest Levy

the chance to visit the former concentration camps at Auschwitz-Birkenau.

Two of the project's participants, Dominic Bradley and Katie McKenna, delivered Time for Reflection in the Scottish Parliament to mark this year's Holocaust Memorial Day, and their wise and thoughtful words were repeated at the reception. Another notable contributor was Judy Russell, who shared her memories of her father, Ernest Levy, a Holocaust survivor who settled in East Renfrewshire and later recounted his wartime experiences in his memoir, "The Single Light". Karen Pollock MBE, Chief Executive of the Holocaust Educational Trust, also spoke at the event.

I am glad to say the reception was a great success, and I look forward to supporting the Holocaust Educational Trust in the future as they endeavour to rid society of religious and racial discrimination and prejudice.

Local School raises over £1000 for teachers and students in Malawi

I was delighted to table a Parliamentary Motion congratulating 3rd year pupils at St Margaret's High School in Airdrie on their magnificent efforts in raising over £1000 for students and teachers in

the Malawian village of Mendulo. The money they raised will be used to fund a laptop and projector, which pupils will deliver personally when they visit Malawi this summer.

These will contribute to the

Girls Go for Health initiative, which supports young women by helping them further their education, as well as providing free health advice, and running a drama workshop to help

boost their self-esteem. The Motion has already been signed by a significant number of MSPs, and I am confident many more will come forward to offer their congratulations to St Margaret's pupils.