



Working hard
for Edinburgh
West

Margaret Smith MSP



Dear Constituent

I am proud to represent Edinburgh West in the Scottish Parliament and I hope that this report gives you an insight into my work both in Parliament and in the constituency.

It has been a very busy year in Parliament with the passage of the Forth Crossing Bill, legislation on Children's Hearings and numerous education debates dominating my work at Holyrood.

First and foremost, I am here to help you with any problems. I hold regular advice surgeries in the constituency or you can telephone, e-mail or write to me and I will get straight back to you.

I enjoy getting out and about in the constituency, meeting residents and discussing what's important to local communities. Over the course of the year I have raised issues with the Council about winter weather problems, care services, regeneration in Newbridge and Ratho Station and progress on the tram project.

If you know of an issue locally and think that I can be of assistance then please do not hesitate to get in touch.

Best wishes

Margaret Smith



My work in brief



Over the past year I have asked Parliamentary Questions on the Forth Crossing, youth violence, improving patient care in the NHS, falling teacher numbers and the trams.

I have tabled Parliamentary motions congratulating Craigroyston Community High School, celebrating the 50th anniversary of the Cramond Association and in support of the Wear it Pink 2010 breast cancer campaign.

I also gained support for my motion opposing the introduction of a £1 drop off charge at Edinburgh Airport and have lodged numerous motions and amendments on education topics in my role as my party's parliamentary spokesperson on education and young people.

The rest about West - your issues and concerns

Local facilities - campaigning to save Kirkliston Leisure Centre from closure. Continued discussions with Council, developers, residents and Sportscotland about the future of the Cramond Campus site.

Community safety - met with local police and residents in Blackhall to discuss concerns. Have run a bogus caller awareness campaign.

Housing - met Cala homes to raise concerns about the construction site and facilities in Kirkliston. Discussed the need for more affordable housing with Councillors and Council officials. Met Mactaggart and Mickel to discuss redevelopment of Somerfield site at East Craigs.

NHS - attended regular meetings with the Chief Executive to discuss concerns you've raised with me. Attended the turf cutting at the new Royal Victoria Hospital site. Met the staff at the Western General to discuss cancer services and cleanliness.

Use this slip to tell us about any problems you are experiencing in your area. Margaret will do her best to resolve any issues you may have.

Contact Margaret

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Visit Margaret's website at www.margaretsmithmsp.com

Surgery Times:

Margaret holds regular surgeries in the Constituency. These are held on Friday morning at Drum Brae Avenue. Appointments are necessary. She also holds surgeries on the last Friday of the month at Corstorphine Tesco between 10am and 12 noon. Surgeries will be held until the end of the Parliamentary term.



Your name: _____

Your address: _____

Your email: _____

Please return this slip to 3 Drum Brae Avenue Edinburgh, EH12 8TE

Margaret Smith MSP - Reporting back to you

The Forth Crossing

The Bill was passed by the Parliament in December. I voted against the Bill. Whilst I accept the need for a further crossing this scheme does not deliver for my constituents. We called for a tunnel and got a bridge; we called for a direct link to the M9 but have been denied that. We were promised a multi-modal model but this scheme does not deliver on that either.

Every single objection brought forward by an objector, including my own, was dismissed by the Assessor and the Committee. I believe my constituents and I are right to be disappointed and right to question the process.

In spite of the changes to the Bill, I still have very real concerns about the impact of the scheme on residents and the constituency. I will continue to work with the communities I represent throughout the remainder of this project. My constituents will continue to have my full and active support during the construction which is due to begin in 2011.



Drop-off charge

I ran a campaign against the introduction of the £1 drop-off charge at Edinburgh Airport. I lobbied hard to minimise the impact the charge would have on elderly and disabled passengers.

I met the senior management of BAA Edinburgh on several occasions to voice my objections to the charge and many of you joined my campaign against its introduction by signing my petition.



Helping others

I supported this year's Wear It Pink campaign by sponsoring the annual photo call in Parliament. The idea is to raise awareness and funds for the breast cancer campaign throughout Scotland.

I do my best to support a variety of charities and local organisations. I was pleased to Wear It Red for Haiti with other MSPs and I am due to take part for the third time in the Loony Dook in the Forth on New Year's Day, raising funds for the RNLI at South Queenferry.

My committee work

The Education, Culture and Lifelong Learning Committee has been busy with legislation on Children's Hearings and the Historic Environment. We are also working on an Autism Bill and are considering the future management of schools.

As my party's parliamentary spokesperson on Education, Lifelong Learning and Young People I have spoken in numerous education debates. From Scotland's literacy levels to student funding we have debated the best way to try to improve Scotland's education; holding the Government to account over class sizes, the reduction in teacher numbers, concerns about Curriculum for Excellence and the new national qualifications.

Schooling and further and higher education remain real concerns for many, whether they are parents with children at school, student or teachers. Over the year I have met numerous interest groups within the sector. I supported NUS Scotland's campaign to secure better childcare funding for student parents.

Much of my work as education spokesperson and a committee member is about meeting and listening to children and young people. I have welcomed many schools from the constituency to visit me in Parliament to interview me and ask me questions about my role.

Jobs and the economy

Big business

It has been another difficult year for local businesses and the effects of the recession are still being felt across Scotland. Edinburgh West is the home of many financial companies which means that their cutbacks have been felt particularly strongly in the constituency.

Over the past few months, I have met senior managers at RBS and Lloyds as well as the chief executive of Aegon UK to discuss their future plans and the impact that these business decisions are having on staff.

Local business

Small and medium size businesses are also really struggling. I carried out a business survey in Edinburgh West which was very well received by local business people.

Perhaps unsurprisingly, the lack of lending by banks and the rise in business rates came out as the issues of most concern. I presented a copy of the survey along with the results to Jim Mather MSP, Minister for Enterprise, Energy and Tourism.

I will continue to press the Government to support enterprise in Scotland and will carry on my fight to get them to introduce a transitional business rates relief scheme like the one in England. This would support business and jobs in an effective and sustainable way.

