

South Belfast Constituency Newsletter

Jimmy Spratt MLA



Issue 01 | Also available for download: www.jimmyspratt.org

Dear Constituent,

This May will mark the second anniversary of the restoration of devolved government in Northern Ireland. I want to thank you, the people of South Belfast, for electing me to represent you at Stormont during that time, and for trusting me to be an advocate for your interests.

I recognise that devolution must deliver if it is to be beneficial to the community in Northern Ireland. As your MLA, I welcome the many initiatives brought forward by the Executive, under the leadership of Peter Robinson as First Minister, that have

helped improve the lives of many of my constituents. I hope this leaflet is useful in outlining just some of the positive measures taken by the Executive, and in so doing highlight that devolved government is in your best interests.

Finally, and most importantly, this leaflet provides you with the details of how you can contact me as your local MLA. If I can ever be of assistance to you, your family or a friend, please do not hesitate to get in touch with my constituency office.

Yours sincerely,

Jimmy

How to contact your local MLA

Drop in or write to Jimmy at:

South Belfast DUP Advice Centre
15 Cregagh Road,
Belfast BT6 8PX

T: 028 9045 5936

E: jimmyspratt@dup.org.uk
www.jimmyspratt.org

Devolution delivering!

Your Assembly is making a difference:



- Regional Rates Freeze
- Industrial De-rating
- Water charging deferred
- Record Investment in health + free prescriptions
- Increased funding for the Loyal Orders and Ulster Scots
- Victims Commission and doubling of victims sector budget
- Rates Capping – helping the elderly
- Free Public Transport for Over 60s
- No Irish Language Act
- 5000 New Social Housing Units
- Preservation of Academic Selection
- Older Persons Advocate
- Increased East-West Focus
- Funding for Flood Victims
- Reform of compensation arrangements for Orange Halls and Orange Hall de-rating
- Additional Infrastructure Investment
- Devolution of Policing and Justice – Unionist confidence needed
- Additional £900million from HM Treasury for investment in vital services
- The Pensions (No 2) Bill – helping people with better pension provision
- £150 fuel payment for those on income support or pension credit



TOURS OF STORMONT

Tours of Stormont provide an excellent insight into both the history of the building and the current workings of government.

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If you are involved in a church, school, youth or community group and would like a tour of Parliament Buildings, please contact my office on Telephone: **028 90455936**

DRD Minister's u-turn on parking fees welcomed



South Belfast DUP MLA Jimmy Spratt has welcomed the announcement made by Roads Minister Conor Murphy that residents in Barrack Street, Donegall Pass, Sandy Row, The Markets (west of Cromac Street) and Brown's Square will be able to avail of a free residents parking scheme.

"This will be tremendous news to residents in the areas concerned. Despite the initial bluster and threat by the Sinn Fein Minister to leave these areas in parking chaos if they refused to pay £40 for a parking permit, it is clear that the Minister has climbed down in the face of political and overwhelming community pressure.

I welcome this u-turn wholeheartedly. The community made clear that they were unwilling to pay and I congratulate residents on a well organised and very persuasive campaign. The areas concerned have suffered for many years as a result of commuter parking, leaving areas crippled with regards to access for emergency services and many people unable to park in front of their own home. To have to pay for such freedom on their doorstep was never an option and I made this view known to the Minister. I look forward to the implementation of these schemes as soon as possible and witnessing the benefits within the community concerned."

Huge rise in parking tickets issued in Belfast smacks of 'over zealous' approach: Spratt

South Belfast DUP MLA Jimmy Spratt has hit out at the Department for Regional Development after they revealed the number of parking tickets issued in Belfast. Speaking after receiving the figures in a response to an Assembly Question tabled to the Minister for Regional Development, Conor Murphy, Mr Spratt said:

Such a massive rise in the number of parking tickets issued in Belfast would indicate that we do have a continuing problem with illegal parking in the city, but it would also hint that the approach taken by Roads Service is over zealous and

draconian. I receive many complaints from constituents about the approach taken by traffic wardens, who refuse to take into account any mitigating circumstances and purely approach parking as a 'black and white' issue.

The issue here is that a 'common sense' approach is taken by traffic wardens rather than the over zealous approach currently taken by those patrolling our streets. We all want to see safe, legal parking, but at times a word in the ear can be as effective as a penalty charge notice.



Concern over rise in sex assaults in South Belfast

Following a series of rapes in the South Belfast area, DUP MLA Jimmy Spratt has met with the PSNI about policing in the constituency. Commenting, Mr. Spratt said:

I am very worried at what appears to be an increase in sex assaults in the South Belfast area. The safety of the community is of paramount importance. I have had meetings with senior

PSNI officers for the area, regarding the number of sex offenders living in the South Belfast constituency, and the increasing concern among the community surrounding this issue. Recent attacks will only serve to heighten anxiety among the community.

I will be asking the police to outline what extra measures they are taking to tackle the increase in sexual assaults in the city. Furthermore, I am committed to getting answers as to why so many sex offenders are being placed in South Belfast and what steps the PSNI are taking to protect the community.

Hospital staff must be safe at work: Spratt

South Belfast DUP MLA Jimmy Spratt has called on Health Minister Michael McGimpsey to address the ongoing problem of assaults on hospital staff.

Mr Spratt made the comments after receiving an answer to a written question in the Assembly. Commenting, Mr Spratt said:

'Figures from the Minister show an ongoing problem with attacks on Hospital staff within the Belfast area. While many of us despair why any individual would assault someone trying to help, we have a duty to protect those in the healthcare profession.

I would call on the Minister to assess existing security provisions in place and examine any possible measures to improve safety within hospitals. Hospital staff are invaluable to the welfare of the public and should at all times feel safe at work, free from the fear of physical or verbal assault.'



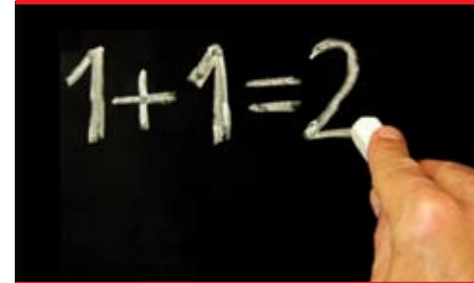
PUTTING SOUTH BELFAST ISSUES TOP OF THE AGENDA

- Debate secured on regeneration of Sandy Row
- Debate secured on Housing in the Village area
- Primrose Hill traffic lights – DRD pressured – lights installed!
- Spending on local schools – new builds taking place!
- Flooding compensation and prevention – Executive action taken!
- Residents parking schemes – no charge secured!

Jimmy Spratt has been consistent in raising local issues with your local Ministers – through Assembly debates and Ministerial Questions

- HMO's in South Belfast – DOE urged to act!
 - Future of vital Health services Ministerial commitments in response!
 - Future of Belfast Festival - DCAL action taken!
 - Preservation of Malone Conservation area – DOE asked to act!
- MANY MORE LOCAL ISSUES HAVE BEEN RAISED IN THE LAST TWO YEARS. IF YOU HAVE AN ISSUE YOU THINK NEEDS ADDRESSED, CONTACT ME AT MY OFFICE.

Public endorse principle of academic selection: SPRATT



Speaking after a public meeting on the future of post-primary transfer in South Belfast, local DUP MLA Jimmy Spratt has expressed his delight that those gathered gave unanimous backing to the principle of academic selection. Speaking after the meeting in Belfast, Mr Spratt said:

'We had an excellent meeting in South Belfast which gave my constituents the opportunity to hear about the Democratic Unionist Party's vision for the future of our education system, as well as provide a forum for the people of South Belfast to air their own views on this crucial subject. One complaint I hear repeatedly when I am out and about in the constituency is that there is no information available and that nobody is listening to parents. That is why the DUP are holding public meetings- we are a listening party.

I hope that the Minister will listen to the unanimous wishes of those gathered who wholly endorsed maintaining the principle of academic selection. Rather than continue with her doctrinaire approach, the Minister should show some flexibility and actually listen to the wishes of parents and teachers alike.'



Spratt helps secure £307,000 for youth centre

Jimmy Spratt, along with Cllr. Diane Dodds, meeting community representatives and BELB staff at Nubia Youth Centre in the Village area. Mr. Spratt successfully lobbied BELB for funding for the centre and helped secure £307,000 for much needed improvement work.

Figures prove Belfast City Hospital A & E Unit a vital service to community

South Belfast DUP MLA Jimmy Spratt has questioned the Minister for Health, Social Services and Public Safety, Michael McGimpsey, regarding the use of the Accident and Emergency Unit at Belfast City Hospital. Mr Spratt sought answers on the use of the A & E unit at the site following a consultation paper released by the Belfast Trust cast doubt over the future of the facility. Commenting after receiving answers from the Minister, Mr Spratt said:

'After reading the consultation report and the subsequent coverage in the local press, I thought it appropriate to ascertain from the Minister how many people use the Accident & Emergency Unit at Belfast City Hospital.

Having received the figures, it is clear that the unit does an invaluable job because of the sheer volume of people requiring assistance. In each of the last three years almost 50,000 have attended the A & E Unit at Belfast City Hospital. This is a huge number of people in need of assistance in an accessible location. Furthermore, figures released show that in 2007 17416 attendees had to wait in excess of three hours to receive treatment.

This further highlights the strain that the unit is under and the need for such a service to be developed rather than reduced.

I welcome the fact that in response to my questions the Minister has concluded that the A & E Unit at Belfast City Hospital plays a vital role providing emergency care and that it will continue to do so for many years to come. Such an admission is welcome. It is important that the Minister now shows his commitment to the service provided at the City Hospital site in working to reduce waiting times at Accident and Emergency and I will continue to press that this be the case.'



Messages from my constituents



SPRATT RAISES SOUTH BELFAST TRAFFIC CONGESTION PROBLEM WITH MINISTER

South Belfast DUP MLA Jimmy Spratt has raised the increasing problem of traffic congestion in South Belfast with the Minister for Regional Development, Conor Murphy.

'The problem of traffic congestion in the South Belfast area seems to be getting worse, and constituents from right across the area have raised their own individual examples of how it is affecting their daily lives. As such I raised it with the Minister to see what steps he was planning to take to address the situation.

The Minister has outlined various measures he intends to take. Additional bus lanes for

the Lisburn Road, Malone Road and Saintfield Road corridors are planned, with further bus lane provision on the Ormeau Road. It is hoped that this would encourage greater use of public transport.

With work completed on the M1/Westlink, with the construction of underpasses and additional lanes, the Department is hoping to alleviate traffic movement in and out of the city from the South.

While all these measures outlined by the Minister are to be welcomed, I would urge the Minister to also consider measures to alleviate problems on Boucher Road and Donegall Road. The problems that exist across South Belfast cannot be allowed to continue at the current level or indeed worsen. As such, I will be continuing to put pressure on the Minister on this matter for the benefit of my constituents.'

'I tried for years to get a new home with the Housing Executive, but got nowhere. Now, thanks to your help, my family and I are settled into our new house. The kids just love it!'

Mandy, Finaghy

'We really appreciate the assisted bin lift your office arranged for us. When you are elderly it's good to know there is someone willing to help arrange these things.'

Mr. & Mrs. R, Cregagh

'Just a wee 'thank you' for helping my sister with her DLA. I'm useless with forms and didn't know what to do – but your office made the whole thing so easy.'

Davy, Annadale

'I've been keeping track of what our MLAs are doing up in the Assembly and notice you secured debates on Housing in the Village AND Regeneration of Sandy Row...it's good to see the DUP continue to work hard for working class loyalist communities. Keep up the good work Jimmy!'

Chris, Donegall Road

'I got news this morning that the planning application for next door had been withdrawn! It's such a relief and it's all thanks to your hard work. Thank you very much Mr. Spratt - I couldn't have expected a better outcome in my wildest dreams.'

Ali, Newtownbreda



South Belfast MLA participates in World's Biggest Coffee Morning

South Belfast DUP MLA Jimmy Spratt has hosted a very successful Macmillan Cancer Support coffee morning in his local constituency office. Speaking after the event, Jimmy Spratt said:

'I'm sure we all know of someone, a friend or loved one, who has been affected by cancer. Statistics show that 1 in 3 of us will be affected by cancer at some stage in our lives. Such a statistic is worrying, but it also highlights the need for us all to do what we can to help cancer charities carry out the excellent work that they do. I wish to thank the good people of South Belfast who attended our coffee morning and express my appreciation for their generosity in aid of Macmillan Cancer Support. 9

ARE YOU REGISTERED TO VOTE? 1

A European Election will be held in June - make sure the Unionist voice is heard!

To register to vote contact the Electoral Office on 0800 4320 712 or contact your DUP Advice Centre on 02890455936

Every vote counts!