



Parliamentary news

Sandra Osborne MP

Working hard for you in Ayr, Carrick & Cumnock

Spring 2009

Meeting the Prime Minister

Earlier this year I raised with the Prime Minister at Prime Minister's Questions the announcements of redundancies in Ayr and Girvan. As a result I met with the Prime Minister, Gordon Brown, to discuss in more detail how the economic downturn was impacting on the local economy. We discussed the job losses and what the Government could do to help. My role as local MP is to meet with management and unions locally to see what can be done to limit the loss of jobs and to make sure workers get all the help they need to see them and their families through difficult times and back into work.



Homecoming Scotland 2009



Sandra and her fellow Burns Trustees are happy to see their work taken forward by the National Trust for Scotland

Homecoming 2009 marks the 250th anniversary of the birth of Robert Burns. Sandra recently ended 11 year's service as a Burns Trustee when she and her fellow trustees handed over to the National Trust for Scotland. This marks the start of a major redevelopment of the Burns National Heritage Park including the building of a new museum to house the most important Burns collection in the world.

Sandra said "A funding package is now in place from both the UK Government, through the National Heritage Lottery, and from the Scottish Government. This is a very exciting opportunity to secure Burns memory for future generations and I am proud to have played a part in making it happen along with my fellow Trustees."

Strictly Campaigning

Sandra welcomed the Government decision to cancel the tendering process for the Post Office Card Account and award the contract to the Post Office. This means that the Post Office will continue distributing benefits to over 4 million customers. Sandra said, "I have been campaigning for this outcome for several years now. I pay tribute to the way the Federation of Sub-postmasters have led on this issue and to the huge public support the campaign has attracted."

Sandra's efforts to support local post offices due to close under the Network Change Programme involved her holding 10 public meetings attended by over 600 people. Sandra said, "I am delighted we managed to save Forehill Post Office and that a new post office service has been opened in the Straiton Community Shop. However, I was bitterly disappointed that the valiant efforts to keep other post offices open weren't successful."

Other campaigns Sandra has supported include



Sandra with other MPs and supporters of the Temporary and Agency Workers Bill

- Fighting for an end to overcharging through pre-payment meters
- Supporting the rights of temporary and agency workers for fair and equal treatment (see picture)
- Protecting service industry workers so that tips can't be counted as part of the minimum wage but must be over and above
- Getting age discrimination included in the Government's Equality Bill

The Global Village



Sandra in a North Korean factory chatting to employees

Sandra is a member of the House of Commons Foreign Affairs Select Committee. Here Sandra explains what the committee does and some of the work she has been involved in.

"We are a committee of 14 Members of Parliament drawn from the three largest political parties. The House of Commons has entrusted us with the task of monitoring the policy, administration and expenditure of the Foreign and Commonwealth Office (FCO) and its associated bodies, including the British Council and the BBC World Service.

Our subjects of inquiry focus on the major issues of the day. We take written and oral evidence from all the key people before publishing reports to which the Government must issue a response.

The work we have undertaken over the past year has included a continuing brief on Iraq and Afghanistan; developments in the European Union; and an investigation into issues of Global Security including weapons non-proliferation.

We have recently given detailed consideration to the situation in both Iran and North Korea. We held discussions with the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) which is the body responsible for monitoring nuclear facilities.

The Year in Focus

The Coastal Towns

Along with other MP colleagues who represent coastal towns I have been calling on Offcom to set at nil the Royal National Lifeboat Institute's fees for using VHF frequencies. They are a vital charity supported and financed by volunteers. Still on the theme of water, I have been supporting the campaign to restore a swimming pool in Girvan following the closure of the pool by the Council.

Rural Areas

I am fully behind the efforts of the Barrhill Development Association to transform their community. The proposals brought forward are imaginative and exciting. The plans will make the most of the area's local environment to attract tourists as well as improving opportunities for local residents. Talking to local residents I was struck by their very positive 'can do' attitude.



Barrhill Open Day

Cathy Jamieson and I have been continuing to work together to try to find a solution to the poor mobile phone signal reception in the Barr area.



Welcoming Prince Charles to the Ailsa Distillery in Girvan

Business Summit

Last December, I called a Business Summit with the help of the local Chamber of Commerce which was attended by Secretary of State for Scotland, Jim Murphy. Discussion covered banking regulation, support for small businesses, support for research, changing energy situation, business tax, consumer confidence and employment and welfare policy.

This was a valuable opportunity to ensure that the Secretary of State was fully aware of the issues being faced by local businesses in the current economic climate. It was a helpful, informative, well attended meeting and I am liaising with the Chamber of Commerce on some of the follow up issues.



Secretary of State, Jim Murphy, Sandra Osborne, fellow Ayrshire MP Brian Donohoe and Chamber of Commerce representatives at the Business Summit

The Homecoming Parade in Ayr

I was proud to attend the Homecoming Parade in Ayr for the four hundred Officers and Soldiers from the Royal Highland Fusiliers the Second Battalion the Royal Regiment of Scotland after six months active service in Afghanistan. I was also immensely proud of the reception given to the soldiers by the large crowd who had assembled from all over Ayrshire and beyond.

The Regeneration of New Cumnock and Cumnock Town Centres

Cathy Jamieson and I have continued to press for the regeneration of the town centres in New Cumnock and Cumnock to go ahead as planned. This is vital for the local economy as is the potential of Dumfries House now open to the public.

The Corner Shop Resource Centre in North Ayr

Independent Advice Services are a life-line for all our communities as more and more people are faced with money problems; problems with benefits or accessing services. I have supported the North Ayr Resource Centre in their fight to retain their funding so they can continue providing their vital service to local people.



Sandra with the staff and local people "Acknowledgements to Ayr Advertiser Series"

A Window on Westminster



In the last year Sandra has called for extra support for those made redundant in former Coalfield Communities like our own. She has asked the Prime Minister about knife crime and the young lives lost locally as a result. She has spoken up for our local seaside towns and the difficulties they face. She has taken part in major debates on Child Poverty in Scotland, the important Embryology Bill and Welfare Reform. She raised job losses in Ayr and Girvan at Prime Minister's Questions and secured a meeting with the Prime Minister to discuss what could be done.

Sandra is always ready to speak up in Parliament on issues of importance to the local community or the country as a whole.

She can make a speech in a debate; ask a question of a Government Minister; try to secure an adjournment debate on a particular topic where the Minister has to reply; or put down an Early Day Motion to highlight an issue and attract the names of other MPs in support.

On Foreign Affairs, Sandra has opposed Israel's blockade of Gaza; she has highlighted the persecution and murder of trade unionists in Colombia; and spoken out on human rights abuses in Iran.

Most people think of Parliament as it is at Prime Minister's Questions – packed, noisy and adversarial. The reality is that most of the time the detailed work goes on away from the public gaze in a less well attended House or in the many committee rooms.



Scotland Manager and Cumnock son, George Burley with Sandra in the House of Commons



Signing the Holocaust Memorial book 2009



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