



Serving the Ballynaveigh, Rosetta, St John's & Ravenhill communities

DUP must not be allowed to hold up progress



When Sinn Féin announced that it would enter the Assembly when it was reconvened in May past we made a number of points clear. We made it clear that this Assembly was not the Assembly which was envisioned under the Good Friday Agreement. We made it clear that we would not allow ourselves to become bogged down in a talking shop which had no power to change anything. We made it extremely clear that our focus in entering this Assembly was to elect an Executive and get the Assembly which was envisioned under the Good Friday Agreement up and running.

Our reasoning for this was simple. Day and daily people were telling us that they wanted politicians who were directly accountable to them to be making the important decisions on issues such as rates, the water tax, planning and education. They did not want politicians from Britain, politicians who do not receive a single vote here, to be making these decisions for them.

With this in mind Sinn Féin President Gerry Adams MP took the unprecedented step of nominating the DUP's Ian Paisley to the position of First Minister in a genuine effort to get the Executive and Assembly up and running.

The DUP, however, rejected this initiative and have, instead, continued with their policy of

publicly criticising the British Direct Rule Ministers for their decisions while at the same time refusing to put them out of office by agreeing to share power with the rest of us on the basis of equality and respect.

Next up was the 'Preparation for Government Committee' (PFGC). This was a committee proposed by Peter Hain to prepare for the restoration of the Good Friday Agreement's political institutions. Once again the DUP's intransigence was clear. Speaking after the first meeting of the PFGC Martin McGuinness said, "The DUP are not serious about re-establishing the institutions....While there was agreement among all of the other political parties at the committee, the DUP's only contribution was to frustrate the first item of

business, namely the arrangements for chairing the meetings".

While Sinn Féin, held firm to our commitment not to be drawn into meaningless debates, it is unfortunate that the other political parties did not hold firm on this issue. Not for the first time in their history, the SDLP allowed themselves to be sucked into a meaningless talking shop designed to placate the DUP. Such actions only served as a fig leaf for DUP attempts to create a shadow Assembly and have, undoubtedly, allowed the DUP off the hook.

The most recent evidence of DUP intransigence was Peter Robinson's very public dismissal of November 24th as a real deadline for getting the

institutions up and running.

Sinn Féin has consistently been of the view that the two governments must not allow the process to drift. An Assembly without power is meaningless and we put forward the view that they must not wait until the November deadline to act decisively. We argued that the DUP's unwillingness to work to get the institutions up and running must mean the governments calling time on the Assembly. It must be made clear to the DUP that the alternative to power sharing will be less palatable than the status quo to them.

In the absence of progress Sinn Féin supports the view that the salaries and allowances of Assembly members should be stopped. DUP failure to share power must mean the two governments pressing ahead with all of the other aspects of the Good Friday Agreement, and this means increasing substantially the All-Ireland elements of that Agreement.

Comhgairdeas - An Droichead

Tréasláinn muid don Droichead príomhdhuais Ghlór na nGael a bhaint ar ócáid cheiliúrtha bhliantúil. Don chéad uair tharla go raibh an ceiliúradh seo i bhFoircneamh Pairliamainte

Stormont. Bronnagh an curadhmhír ar An Droichead as a shaothar ar son na Gaeilge agus an Chultúir.

Ar ghlacadh leis an duais dó, dúirt Stúirthóir ar An

Droichead, Pilib ó Ruanáí faoina dtodhchaí, "mothaíonn muid go bhfuil tionscnamh den scoth againn ach ní ligfidh muid ár maidí le sruth. Tá pleannanna againn ár dcuid oibre a fhorbairt

sa dóigh go mbíonn eagrais uile-chuimsitheach gairmiúil againn".

Guíonn muid gath rath, bláth agus beannacht ar An Droichead don tionscnamh seo. Adh Mór.

Sinn Féin: Ensuring we work for YOU!

As each election draws closer every political party appears on your doorsteps to ask for your vote. More often than not you will not see them until the next election.

Sinn Féin is an activist based Party which is intent on ensuring that we give you the best representation possible. That is why we have come up with the idea of an ongoing 'political canvass'.

This will be launched in the greater Ballynafeigh, Rossetta and St John's area's and will entail our activists calling to your door to ask what are the issues you would like us to be dealing with in your area, and what we can be doing to best represent you.

South and East Belfast Sinn Féin intends that this will be an ongoing process, beginning in the coming weeks and continuing on a street by street basis throughout the year.

South and East Belfast Sinn Féin intends to ensure that you don't on just see us at your door at election time!

Florenceville & Whitehall traffic calming

Sinn Féin has lent its voice to calls by residents in the Florenceville Drive and Whitehall Parade areas for traffic calming measures to be installed in the area.

Cllr. Alex Maskey MLA said, "Our office has been contacted by a number of residents concerned that the volume of traffic in this area is increasing. Indeed, it is only recently that a young child was knocked down here.

"I have contacted the Roads Service about the lack of traffic calming measures in these streets and have pointed out the fact that most other streets in the area already have traffic calming measures in place.

"It is essential that children can be safe when playing outside their own homes. Increasingly, cars are using these streets as a short cut. It is therefore, of the utmost importance that we have traffic calming measures put in place in this area as soon as possible".

Residents Pay the Price for Airport Greed

• South Belfast says 'No' to increased airport noise

Sinn Féin fully supports the views of residents in South Belfast that quality of life should be more important than profit.

That is why we believe that the expansion of the George Best Belfast City Airport should not be allowed to go ahead at the expense of the quality of life of the people of South Belfast.

"Increasingly we are seeing large, low-flying jets in the South Belfast area. This is creating increased noise levels throughout the area", said, South Belfast

MLA Alex Maskey.

He continued, "There is a real fear that the expansion of the airport will see more and larger planes flying over the area, as well as a possible increase in night traffic. It is clear that the existing planning agreement is not being enforced, if the airport is expanded this can only get worse, not to mention the potential impact that this will have on both the environment and the health of people living locally".



• Cllr. Alex Maskey MLA

MOVES TO CAP NUMBERS OF HMO's WELCOMED

South Belfast Sinn Féin MLA Alex Maskey, speaking after a recent meeting with British Direct Rule Minister David Cairns and after attending the launch of the Planning Service's Subject plan on Houses in Multiple Occupation (HMO's), has welcomed the report as the first step in dealing with the HMO issue.

The South Belfast MLA said, "The HMO issue is a major issue in South Belfast. Yesterday's meeting with British Direct Rule Minister David Cairns was extremely useful. It was a welcome opportunity to put raise first hand this issue.

"We expressed our view that there must be a single point of management to deal with the

HMO issue and other difficulties which are associated with them, and that more must be done to ensure that HMO's and landlords are registered and adequately regulated.

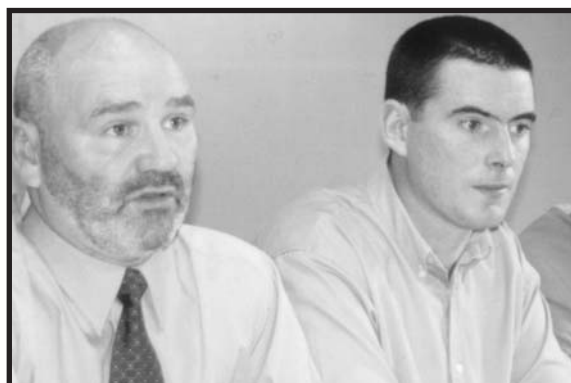
Speaking about the launch of the Planning Services HMO Subject Plan Cllr. Maskey MLA said, "I would broadly welcome the publication of this report, particularly plans to cap the number of HMO's in specified areas, as the first step in developing a comprehensive plan to deal with the issue of HMO's. This is something we have long campaigned on and Sinn Féin will be making a more detailed submission in time on this document.

"I am mindful that for some areas

this may have come too late. However, I believe that there is potential in this document, if it is implemented as part of a coherent strategy, to reverse some of the detrimental effects that the over-proliferation of HMO's have had on many communities.

"Moves to work towards the building of proper student accommodation are also to be welcomed and will, hopefully, take much of the pressure off of local residential communities.

"I believe that many residents in South Belfast breathe a huge sigh of relief that at last this issue is being taken seriously. It is now up to all of us to ensure that there can be no backtracking on the proposals laid out in this document".



• Cllr. Alex Maskey MLA & Balmoral Representative Stiofan Long

Ormeau Park not a suitable venue for Football stadium

South & East Belfast Sinn Féin are opposing calls by both the Alliance Party and the DUP to site a football stadium in Ormeau Park.

We are opposing this call on the grounds that the infrastructure in the area is already struggling to cope with large volumes of traffic and this is creating parking problems in the Laganbank area. This would exacerbate the potential problems already being associated with the proposed expansion of Ravenhill Rugby Ground as well as remove vital public, green space in the area.

IRFU must take residents concerns on Board

• Ulster Branch must follow Dublin example

Anyone who lives in the vicinity of Ravenhill Rugby grounds, or travels by it on match nights, will know only too well that the area is struggling to cope with the current levels of noise and traffic.

Imagine, then, the potential problems if the proposed £5m refurbishment goes ahead. Imagine the situation with three new stands, two new bars, corporate facilities including restaurants, and even a proposal to rent the stadium out for events to raise money.

This is the situation faced by residents in the area.

“Already access to this area is extremely difficult on match nights. Undoubtedly, these proposed refurbishments will make matters worse. I would be particularly worried that access to the area for the emergency services could be restricted, such an occurrence could have fatal consequences”, said South Belfast MLA Alex Maskey.

Raising other concerns he continued, “My constituency office regularly receives calls from residents in the surrounding area complaining about the noise coming from some of those attending matches, particularly

when they are leaving late at night. If the Grounds are opened up to corporate events and new bars are built, this will only serve to exacerbate this problem”.

Sinn Féin recognises the success of Ulster Rugby in recent years, and the increased popularity that this has brought with it. However, we believe that the Ulster branch of the IRFU must follow the example of their counterparts in Dublin. When Lansdowne Road was being redeveloped in Dublin, the Dublin



• Rugby fans at Ravenhill

Branch of the IRFU took on board many of the concerns of local residents.

We believe too many developers, in all fields, are not consulting with local residents or taking their views on board. The Ulster Branch of the IRFU has an opportunity to set an example here and work with local residents. We would encourage them to do so.

Sinn Féin hold community briefing on the RPA

South and East Belfast Sinn Féin have held a number of meetings to brief community and residents groups in the constituency, and to discuss the effects that the Review of Public Administration (RPA), will have upon their communities and the work that they are involved in.

Speaking about the rationale behind holding the briefings Alex Maskey MLA said “Everybody accepts that the Review of Public Administration, whatever the finalised details are, will have a major effect on community groups, residents groups, and, indeed, residents themselves. Probably the most important issue in this respect is the subject of ‘community planning’. There is, however, a real lack of knowledge about the specifics of this. We have been contacted by a number of groups about this. We, therefore, decided to embark on a series of information evenings, or discussions which would allow us to explain the potential effects of the RPA, our position on the RPA, and to address any concerns which people may have about the RPA.

“ ‘Community Planning’, in essence, will be the designing of a

grand plan, a community plan, for the city of Belfast. This will encompass almost everything that you can imagine from transport to housing, from the environment to community development. One of the real benefits will be that there will be an onus on statutory bodies and departments to work with the council. This means that departments will be obligated to work with the council. This is the empowering of local government, the empowering of the local people elected by the people to work on their behalf.

“ For us, however, this does not go far enough. We believe, and are continuing to argue for, a statutory duty to be placed on councils to work with local communities and residents. Such a move would put the citizen at the heart of local government and make sure that ‘Community Planning’ truly represents the needs of the community”.

“ Sinn Féin will be trying to facilitate as many groups as possible in the South and East Belfast area. If we have missed your group please feel free to contact South Belfast Sinn Féin @ (028) 90243194”.

Housing Crisis

• First-time buyers being forced out of housing market

The latest University of Ulster quarterly index produced in conjunction with the Housing Executive and the Bank of Ireland has shown that house prices were increasing by £600 per week.

This report comes within months of the publication of statistics which show that the number of first-time buyers in South Belfast is in decline.

These statistics highlight the urgent need for an examination of the impact that, not only developers and landlords through the buy-to-let market, are having on house prices in South Belfast; but also how the lack of a coherent planning policy in Belfast is destroying many communities in South Belfast.

As developers and landlords snap up houses, knowing that they will get the go-ahead from Planners to knock many of these properties down and build apartments in their place or to convert these houses into flats for rent, the house prices are soaring.

While this may appeal to those trying to sell their home, the reality for our communities is not as positive.

Not only are apartments which do not fit in with the character of the area being built, but many are rented on short term leases. The knock on effect of this is that many of those who move in on short term leases have no real interest in the community in which they are moving into.

Speculators and developers are forcing up house prices. This means that it is harder for first-time buyers and young families to get a toe hold on the property ladder. This is having a detrimental impact on our community.

Sinn Féin have called for a review of the housing market, including the buy-to-let market, as well as a complete overhaul for the planning madness which passes for policy in Belfast. It is our intention to keep a focus on these issues and raise them at every opportunity.

Belfast City Council must do more to support the GAA

Alex Maskey has said that recent figures released by Belfast City Council show the extent to which the council must go to support the GAA in Belfast.

Cllr. Maskey said,
“ Figures show that the council provides almost 100 soccer pitches at various sites throughout city. This is in sharp contrast to the six GAA pitches provided by the council.

“ Gaelic games is the biggest sport in the city, both in terms of participants and spectators. Unfortunately, this is does not seem to be reflected in council policy.

“ It is the intention of our Party to raise this issue with council officials. At present there is no home pitch for the GAA in South Belfast. This is an issue which we hope will be resolved in the near future”.

Demilitarise Ballynafeigh PSNI Barracks

Sinn Féin in Ballynafeigh is calling for the demilitarisation of Ballynafeigh PSNI barracks.

Eight years after the signing of the Good Friday Agreement we still have a heavily fortified PSNI barracks in the area.

We have been contacted by many residents in the immediate vicinity of the barracks wondering what is the need for all of the spy cameras pointed towards their homes. This unsightly feature is a blot on the area and we believe it should be demilitarised immediately.

Ag rá na Fírinne do Réabhlóid Veiniséala

Tá sé anois ocht mbliana ó a tháinig lucht réabhlóide i gcumhacht i Veiniséala agus Hugo Chavez mar cheannaire acu. Ní amháin gur cur i gcoinne do lucht maoinne agus d'aicme ahaibir na tíre sin, ach cur i gcoinne é freisin don chóras nua-liobarálach domhanda atá curtha i bhfeidhim, a bheag nó a mhór, ar mhuintir na Cruinne ag na Stáit Aontaithe. Masla dar leis na Meiriceánaigh go bhfuil a leithéid i gcumhacht áit ar bith, ach go háirithe i dtír a sholáthraíonn 25% de riachtanais ola na Meiriceánach.

Tá fadhb mhór ag na Meiriceánaigh áfach sa chaoi go maíonn said go dtagann fíordhlisteanas ag aon rialtas ón daonlathas agus is léir go bhfuil an dlisteanas sin faighte ag Chavez agus ag na réabhlóidithe ó mhuintir na tíre sin. Ach tá roinnt samplaí cheana féin nuair a rinne na Meiriceánaigh sabaitéireacht ar thoil an phobail, mar a rinne said sa Síle i 1973 nó i nGuatamala i 1954, nuair a

thacaigh agus a chabhraigh siad leis na seanluchtanna cumhachta ón meánaicme agus ón uasaicme teacht i gcumhacht go fealltach. D'éirigh leo na babhtáí sin, ach nuair a rinne na Meiriceánaigh agus an seanlucht cumhachta ceannas a ghabháil go fealltach i mí Aibreáin 2002, theip go tubaisteach leo. Ní raibh aon amhras ina dhiaidh sin go raibh naimhidí cumhachtacha ag daonlathuithe agus réabhlóidithe na tíre sin.

Le linn na bliana beaga anuas, tar éis teipeadh cheannas a ghabháil ansin i 2002. Tá pobail i Meiriceá Theas tar éis casadh go mór le rialtais an eite ehlé a thogadh – Lula Silva sa Bhrasaíl, Evo Morales sa Bholaiv agus tíortha eile na mór-ranna sin. Tá fadhb mhór ag lucht cumhachta na Meiriceánach sa chaoi go bhfuil dúshlán mór á fhógairt i gcoinne a gcumhachta. Tá línte Catha ollmhóra tarraingte ar an láthair idé-eolaíochta i Veiniséala agus i gcuid eile de Mheiriceá Theas idir impiriúluithe Meiriceánacha



• Hugo Chavez

lena gcomhleacuithe sna seanluchtanna cumhachta agus daonlathuithe/réabhlóidithe/muintir an phobail.

Tá a lán i ngeall anseo agus mura bhfuil na himpiriúluithe in ann athrú rialtais a dhéanamh trí lámh fealltach, tá seans an-mhór ann go gcasfaidh siad ar an lámh láidir mar atá déanta cheana acu. Mura féidir leo an líne catha a chasadh ar ais, tá íomhairtí móra mílteachta dá gcumhachta agus dá smacht i Leath Thiar na Cruinne. Déanfaidh Chavez i bhfad níos mó tinnis do na himpiriúluithe amach anseo.

Labour Party Position Raises Questions For SDLP

Sinn Féin has long campaigned on the issue of representation for northern nationalists in Leinster House. After much pressure the Irish government finally gave a commitment to move forward on the issue.

February, however, saw Bertie Ahern attempt to shy away from this commitment citing opposition in Leinster House led by Labour leader Pat Rabbitte amongst others.

Since Pat Rabbitte has become leader of the Labour party in the South and Mark Durkan took over the reins of the SDLP in the North both have made much of their sister party relationship. The Labour party played key roles in recent SDLP election campaigns. One would assume then that the SDLP have a degree of influence over Labour policy on Six County issues.

However, Pat Rabbitte has been

leading opposition to Northern representation. At the same time the SDLP have publicly claimed to support Northern Representation.

So, either the SDLP's public position on Northern Representation is a lie for public consumption or they enjoy no influence over the Irish Labour party. Either way this issue raises serious questions for the SDLP.

Join Sinn Féin * * * * *

HELP SINN FÉIN TO BUILD AN IRELAND OF EQUALS * * *

If you would like to join Sinn Féin fill in the form and send it to:
South and East Belfast Sinn Féin, Unit 3, 174-178 Ormeau Road, Belfast BT7 2ED.

Name:.....
Address:.....
.....
.....
Tel/E-mail:.....
Age:.....

Sinn Féin: Working for YOU!

Sinn Féin is an activist based Party intent on giving you the best representation possible. If you need advice or have a problem, no matter how big or small, feel free to contact us at :

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