

Sinn Féin: making your voice heard!



• Making your voice heard: South Belfast MLA Alex Maskey and East Belfast's Niall Ó Donnghaile

Earlier this year Sinn Féin activists canvasses homes throughout the Ravenhill electoral ward in order to get your opinions about the issues that matter most to you and to ask you what issues you would like your political representatives to be working on.

"I would like to take this opportunity, on behalf of Sinn Féin, to thank all those who took the time to speak to our activists. We in Sinn Féin greatly appreciate your views", said East Belfast representative Niall Ó Donnghaile. He continued, "We have always prided ourselves on the work that we have tried to do for local communities and in representing the most marginalised in our society.

"This canvass is an

extension of that work. It is about going directly to the people and asking them what is important to them; what are the issues that they want their politicians to be working on. It is about ensuring that the people of South Belfast know that they have a voice in all of the political institutions here."

Among the most consistently raised issues in this area were issues around traffic-management, including traffic-calming and parking; anti-social behaviour and the need for more neighbourhood policing patrols on the street; alley-gating; the proposed expansion of the City Airport; proposals for a stadium

at Ormeau Park; academic selection; and dog fouling. This list is by no means exhaustive and in many instances individual issues were raised on the doorstep.

While some issues have been acted upon quickly, many require a longer and more strategic approach. Sinn Féin will, however, keep you informed as our work on these issues progresses.

Niall Ó Donnghaile added, "For many people political parties only turn up at

their door at election time to ask them for their vote. Sinn Féin is about ensuring that people have the best representation possible. Our canvass is part of this process and it will ensure that, unlike many other parties, Sinn Féin do not just appear on your doorstep at election time!"

If there are any issues that are important to you and you would like to make us aware of them, you can do so by phoning our constituency office on (028) 90243194, or by emailing us at: sandebelfast@sinn-fein.ie

Excessive Bank charges must go!



East Belfast's Niall Ó Donnghaile has said Banks and Building societies here need to scrap excessive charges for their services. Niall made the call after the Consumer Council, last month, revealed some of the bank charges for duplicate statements.

"Excessive charges are hitting struggling small businesses just as badly as they impact badly

on people on low incomes. With the move to benefits and pensions being paid through banks it is vital that bank charges are properly regulated and that banks are forced to stop charging people for basic services.

"People in the north of Ireland already pay substantially more for our energy needs, insurance costs and general day-to-

day necessities. It is unacceptable that customers are in some cases have to pay up to £10 per page for duplicate statements.

"I would also like to commend the General Consumer Council for the work they have done on behalf of consumers in highlighting these unacceptable charges."

Dog Fouling

Dog Warden patrols in the Ravenhill area are to be increased after representations by East Belfast Sinn Féin representative Niall Ó Donnghaile to Belfast City Council. Mr Ó Donnghaile contacted the Council after a number of residents in the area raised the issue of dog fouling with Sinn Féin activists carrying out a political canvass earlier this year.

Niall Ó Donnghaile said, "Obviously dog fouling is a problem throughout the city and not just in this area; after this issue was raised by residents in the area with Sinn Féin activists I contacted the City Council's Environmental Health Department. I have been assured that that the Council is taking appropriate steps to monitor and remove any dog waste within the area. I have also requested that signage be erected in the area to highlight that the failure of dog owners to clean up after their dogs is not acceptable.

"I would ask on dog owners to have consideration for other residents when walking their pets, most of them already do, but we can all help in making the area a cleaner and safer place."



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Confirmation of Ravenhill traffic- calming assessment welcomed

East Belfast Sinn Féin representative Niall Ó Donnghaile has welcomed confirmation from the Roads Service that they are to carry out a traffic survey to assess whether traffic-calming measures should be installed in the Ravenhill Park area.

This confirmation comes after Sinn Féin Niall Ó Donnghaile contacted the Roads Service and formally requested that they carry out an assessment with a view to installing traffic-calming measures.

East Belfast representative Niall Ó Donnghaile explained, "Sinn Féin recently carried out a door to door survey in the Ravenhill area

to assess residents' views on how we could better represent their views and concerns on the issues that they felt were important within their local community.

"Residents in the Ravenhill area identified the need for traffic-calming measures as one of their main priorities.

"Following this request for an assessment to take place in the area.

"I would welcome the confirmation from the Roads Service that they intend to carry



• East Belfast representative: Niall Ó Donnghaile
we contacted Roads Service and made the request for an assessment to take out a traffic survey, which should be completed by January 2010, to assess whether traffic-calming measures should be installed in the Ravenhill Park area."

Public inquiry needed on Belfast City Airport extension proposals

East Belfast Sinn Féin representative Niall Ó Donnghaile has again reiterated Sinn Féin's support for residents in the area who are calling for a full public inquiry into the proposed runway extension at Belfast City Airport.

Earlier this year, South Belfast MLA Alex Maskey outlined our position on the issue during a debate in the Assembly earlier this year during which the Assembly supported calls for a full public inquiry.

"There are serious environmental, economic and social concerns around any planned extension to Belfast City Airport", explained Niall Ó Donnghaile. "These concerns have been highlighted by local residents over a long period of time and also highlighted on the floor of the Assembly during



• Inquiry call support: Belfast City Airport today's debate.

"I recognise the importance of having a functioning city airport and commend them for the service they provide, this should not however, be at the expense of public health and safety", he continued.

Both Niall and Alex Maskey I have in the past met with Belfast City Airport Watch Group to discuss this issue. Niall added, "We share many of their concerns and I firmly believe any planned extension must be subject to a rigorous public inquiry process".

Sinn Féin make alley-gating scheme request

South Belfast MLA Alex Maskey has written to Belfast City Council's Community Safety manager calling for an alley-gating scheme to be commissioned, where requested by residents, in the Ulidia area and Park Road areas, stretching from Fitzwilliam Avenue to Park Road. The request was made after the issue was raised with East Belfast Sinn Féin's Niall Ó Donnghaile during a canvass of the area, and it was also the focus of a recent meeting between Alex Maskey and the Ulidia Residents Group.

"The issue of alley-gating was raised with both myself, and other Party activists when we canvassed the area earlier this year. For many residents this was an important issue for them, and it is an issue which we have taken seriously and acted upon", explained Niall Ó Donnghaile.

South Belfast MLA Alex Maskey added, "I have met with residents from the area a covered by the Ulidia residents group a number of times. They have raised similar

issues to some of the residents in the Lower end of Ballynafeigh in relation to alley-gating.

"According to both residents and the PSNI there has been an increase in domestic burglaries in this area. There is a view that this may be as a result of the displacement of those committing such crimes due to the success of the alley-gating scheme in the Lower Ormeau area. Therefore it is a reasonable request for this scheme to be extended to these streets above the Ormeau bridge.

"I believe that such a scheme would also help reduce levels of anti-social behaviour which has also been a consistent issue raised with me in this area."

He went on to say, "I have written to the City Council's Community Safety manager to formally request that moves to begin to initiating the implementation of an alley-gating scheme in this area, obviously after consultation with, and with the support of, local residents."



• Going to the people: Alex Maskey MLA and Niall Ó Donnghaile

• Many residents concerns at prospect of large stadium in Ormeau Park

Supporting residents on Ormeau stadium proposals

East Belfast Sinn Féin's Niall Ó Donnghaile has said that Sinn Féin will continue to do all it can to support local residents in the Ballynafeigh and Ravenhill areas in their campaign to oppose the building of a stadium in the Park.

"Proposals to site the new stadium in Ormeau Park have resurfaced once again. Those who are supporting the calls to site the stadium in Ormeau Park are going against the wishes of almost all of the residents living in the area that

I have spoken to", explained Sinn Féin's Niall Ó Donnghaile.

Sinn Féin believes that residents living in South Belfast, particularly the areas close to the Ormeau Park, are quite rightly concerned at the prospect of having a large stadium built in Ormeau Park. There are particular concerns around the loss of green space as well as the knock on effects that such as stadium would have, such as increased parking and traffic problems, and noise pollution. Added to

this is the fact that there is not the infrastructure within the area to cope with such a project.

Niall Ó Donnghaile continued, "Sinn Féin is on record as stating our support for local residents in opposing such a development and this support will continue.

"I would reiterate the call made by my colleague Alex Maskey MLA for all the other political parties on Belfast City Council to likewise come out in support of the local residents in this area."



• Stadium opposition: Niall Ó Donnghaile

Athbheochan i gCnoc na Bhfiach

Is léir anois go bhfuil ár gcultúr `s ár gcluichí Gaelacha ag dul ó neart go neart i gceantar `Cnoc na bhFiach`, ceantar nach raibh clú agus caill air ó thaobh na Gaeilge de riamh, go bhfios dom ar scor ar bith!

An fáth a bhfuil mé in ann seo a rá ná nuair a rinne ár bpáirtí canbhás polaitiúil sa cheantar seo ceithre nó cúig mhí ó shin, ba shuntasach linn an oiread geansaithe Gaelacha a bhí le feiceáil ann agus an oiread ainmneacha Gaelacha chomh maith – rud a chuir gliondar ar mo chroí.

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Bíonn Sinn Féin ag obair go docht daingean ar son na Gaeilge. Le déanaí bhuaill muid le Coimisiún na dTeorainneacha ag iarraidh orthu ainmneacha na ndáilcheantar a aithint go

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Mar sin de, leanaimis uilig ar aghaidh le cur chun cinn ár dteangan is ár gcultúir.

Sinn Féin: Working for YOU!

Sinn Fein 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 :

Unit 3,
174 Ormeau Rd,
BT 7 2ED.

Tel: (028) 90243194

Opening hours: Monday - Friday 10am - 2pm
e-mail: sandebelfast@sinn-fein.ie

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If you live in Ireland and are over the age of 16 you are eligible to join. If you are between 16 and 25 you can also join Ógra Shinn Féin.

Contact our office at (028) 90243194 or fill out the online application form at:
www.sinnfein.ie/join/join_form

Academic selection meeting a publicity stunt

The meeting of several political parties which took place on the 14th October in relation to academic selection has been described as a publicity stunt by East Belfast Sinn Féin representative Niall Ó Donnghaile.

Niall described it as an attempt by the parties involved to lever some amount of credibility on their failed positions in terms of academic selection saying, "This meeting was inspired by the recent focus by the Belfast Telegraph, who are clearly an organ of the pro-selection lobby, as an attempt to grab another headline".

"The 11plus lobby need to understand their days of having an unhealthy influence in the corridors of power is over, the 11plus is gone and their era is over.

"The ridiculousness of the situation is clear. The meeting was held at 12 o'clock. At 2 o'clock on the same day, the parties represented at the meeting

sat on the education committee, the very same committee that over the past two years has had ample opportunity to find consensus and discuss the critical issues affecting education and our children.

"On top of that the same parties are represented on the Executive where education proposals were blocked from discussion by the DUP. What is ironic is that proposal to phase in the abolition of academic selection was on the table when the Minister, Caitríona Ruane, brought forward compromise proposals for discussion to the Executive.

"The DUP and UUP rejected the proposal and the SDLP accused the Minister of a climb down because she sought compromise.

"They have blocked change and have failed to provide leadership on our children's educational needs and this is an attempt to look squeaky clean on this vital issue."