

Sinn Féin go directly to the people of Rosetta



In February Sinn Féin canvassed over 400 homes in the Rosetta area to get your opinions on what issues matter most to you and what issues you would like your political representatives to be working on.

Sinn Féin would like to take this opportunity to thank all those who took the time to speak to members of our team. We in Sinn Féin greatly appreciate your views.

"Sinn Féin has always prided itself on the work that we have tried to do for local communities and in representing the most marginalised in our society", said South Belfast MLA Alex Maskey.

He continued, "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 the Rosetta area were, uneven road surfacing/potholes, dog fouling, anti-community/nuisance behaviour, requests for alley-gating schemes, planning issues, parking problems, and traffic congestion. This list, however, is

far from exhaustive and in many cases individual issues were raised at the doorsteps.

While some issues can be dealt with immediately, many will require a longer and more strategic approach. We will, however, keep you informed as our work on the issues that you raised with us progresses.

Alex Maskey MLA 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. This canvass is part of this process and it will ensure that, unlike many other parties, Sinn Féin do not just appear on their doorstep at election time!"

If you were not in when one of our team called to your door then you can still make us aware of the issues that are important to you by phoning our constituency office on (028) 902431894, or by emailing us at: sandebelfast@sinn-fein.ie

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Local youth needs must be assessed



• Alex Maskey accompanies MEP Bairbre deBrún in South Belfast.

An issue which was consistently raised on the doorsteps during our recent canvass of the area is the lack of local youth facilities.

Sinn Féin acknowledges the great work that is being done by a number of local groups such as Rosario Youth Club and the

GAA in working with young people in the local area.

This work is to be commended and is of great benefit to the community and the young people who live here.

It is our intention to, as soon as possible, meet with the groups who are

working with young people in this area. We would hope to survey the needs of the youth sector in the area in particular, and young people in general. After all, by investing in our young people society is investing in all of our futures.

Community Update

Following our recent survey in the Rosetta area we have taken the following action on issues identified by you the residents:

Knockbreda Park:

Residents raised the issue of anti-social behaviour with us and identified an alleygating scheme as a potential solution. We have contacted Belfast Community Safety Partnership to explore this idea and will update residents as soon as possible.

Dog Fouling:

Many residents identified this as a major concern for them. We have pressed Belfast City Council who have agreed to pay particular attention to the area over coming weeks and months to help deal with this problem.

Youth Facilities:

Again many residents identified the lack of youth facilities as a problem as this may be leading to anti social behaviour in the area. We will be in contact with youth providers in the area to assess what Sinn Féin can do to improve the facilities and services for young people in the area.



Text to join

Joining Sinn Féin is now as simple as sending a text message. Just text the word 'JOIN' followed by your name and address to:

60060

Be part of Building an Ireland of Equals

Sinn Féin work to ensure lowest rates possible on Belfast City Council

• Sinn Féin aware of increasing financial pressures

Speaking after Belfast City Council set its rate for the year at 6.97%, South Belfast MLA Alex Maskey said that Sinn Féin was determined to get the lowest rate possible while maintaining a good standard of public service.

"Sinn Féin were determined to keep any rates increase to a minimum", Alex Maskey said. "However, a number of months ago it was recommended that rates be increased by substantially more than the 2.88% increase that was struck last month".

"When a substantial

increase was recommended councillors directed that each Department head on each council Department go back and trawl through their Departments to identify areas where savings could be made. This was an example of councillors taking a hands-on approach to scrutiny of how public funds were being used.

"In a cost saving move funding has also been withdrawn from a number of key events such as the Proms in the Park. These were tough decisions to make, but foremost in our mind was

ensuring that any rates increase was kept to a minimum", explained Alex Maskey.

"We in Sinn Féin were extremely conscious of the increased financial pressures being faced by families and businesses at this time. With this in mind we were determined to keep any rates increase to a minimum while also ensuring that we maintain a good standard of public services. The figure of 6.97% was the lowest that we could get and all political parties on the council were unanimous on this", he concluded.

Maskey raises delays in Lagan College refurbishment with Education Minister

South Belfast Sinn Féin MLA Alex Maskey has raised the issue of the delay in the planned refurbishment of Lagan College with the Education Minister Caitríona Ruane MLA and has called for the Minister to reiterate her Department's commitment to the project and to outline a definite timescale for completion of the planned refurbishment.

"The issue of the delay in the planned refurbishment of Lagan College has been brought to my attention by a number of my constituents in the South Belfast area and parents of pupils at Lagan College", said Alex Maskey.

He continued, "This project was initially given support in 2002 by the then Education Minister Martin McGuinness MP.

However, the current delay has undoubtedly caused some disappointment and frustration among staff, governors, pupils and parents. I share this frustration.

"While many parents would understand some of the complications which have arisen, the seemingly endless delay and bureaucracy leaves them questioning the commitment to the school from the Department of Education.

"It is my firm belief that the Education Minister Caitríona Ruane passionately believes in providing the best standard of education for all



• Education Minister: Caitríona Ruane

children. However, I believe it is necessary for her to provide some clarity on the reasons for the delay".

Creeping blight of HMO's needs urgent attention

Following a number of meetings and correspondence with various Ministers including Social Development Minister Margaret Ritchie, and Environment Minister Sammy Wilson, Alex Maskey has raised his concerns over what we believe is the growing problem of registered and non-registered HMOs in the Rosetta and Ballynafeigh areas.

"Our constituency office is continually contacted by residents concerned about various planning applications for the conversions of what were family homes into Houses of Multiple Occupancy in their street.

"We would share their concerns that what we have witnessed has already taken place in areas like the Holyland is creeping into other residential areas. In a relatively short period of time the Holyland has been transformed from a mainly residential community to an almost part time community with most of the properties having been converted into HMOs or apartment type buildings. It is all too obvious that this has had a detrimental effect on the character and social fabric of this area.

"Sinn Féin is determined that we will not idly watch this happen in other parts of South Belfast.

"With the reinstatement of the Assembly in 2007 I first contacted Margaret Ritchie in November of that year for an update on the HMO

registration process, for which the Housing Executive has responsibility. I was informed that this would not be concluded until 2013. Having had further contact with the Minister I am confident that even this far off deadline is unlikely to be met. All of this means that while the Department of the Environment may announce caps on the number of HMOs in any one street, unless we actually know how many HMOs there may already be the caps are meaningless.

"While we may call into question the definition of a HMO, and I have raised this directly with Sammy Wilson, unless we have a true picture of the number of HMOs we are at a severe disadvantage in dealing with the issue.

"I will continue to pursue this issue with the DSD Minister as her benign attitude to this issue is a threat to long term communities like Rosetta."



• South Belfast MLA: Alex Maskey

**GAA
celebrate
125 years
of
excellence**



This year sees An Cumann Lúthchleas Gael celebrate 125 years of excellence. All sports are good, but I'm sure everyone would agree that even after 125 years the GAA is still one of the most important and dynamic institutions on this island.

The founders of Cumann Lúthchleas Gael could not have envisaged how it

would develop. But I'm sure they would be proud of everything that has been achieved.

We all, also, should take pride in, and salute, the achievements of the GAA. In this particular area clubs such as Breda have shown a great commitment to the community and youth of this area. "I have visited Cherryvale on a number

of occasions and could not help but be struck by the large number of children which this club caters for", said local MLA Alex Maskey.

"This great work has ensured that Breda has become one of the fastest growing clubs in the country. This work must be commended and we wish them every success in the future", he added.

City Airport extension debate

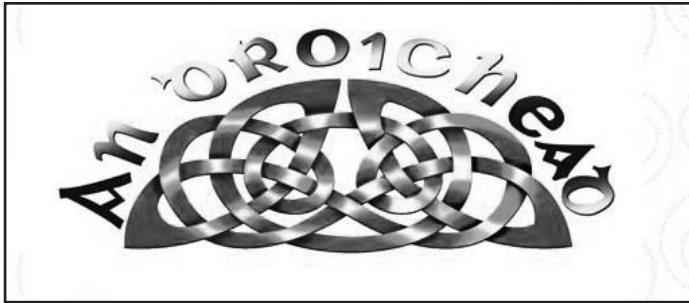
Speaking after the Assembly debate calling for a public inquiry into the proposed runway extension at Belfast City Airport South Belfast MLA Alex Maskey said,

"There are serious environmental, economic and social concerns around any planned extension to Belfast City Airport.

"As someone who uses Belfast City Airport 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.

"I have met with Belfast City Airport Watch Group. I share many of their concerns and I believe any planned extension must be subject to a rigorous public inquiry process".

Pleananna móra don Ghaeilge i ndeisceart Bhéal Feirste



I 1992, bhunaigh pobal na Gaeilge in oirthear agus deisceart Bhéal Feirste a n-eagraíocht féin chun athbheochan na Gaeilge a bhrú chun cinn sa taobh seo tíre. Tháinig said le chéile mar 'An Droichead', óir is ó sheanchantair stairiúla cois Lagáin a tháinig siad – an Trá Ghearr, an Margadh, agus an Ormeau Íochtarach – áiteanna ina raibh dhá naíscoil bunaithe acu cheana féin sna hochtóidí.

Thóg siad Lárionad sa bhliain 2000 a raibh costas leath-mhilliún punt air. Is é Lárionad An Droichid an t-aon lárionad Gaeilge i ndeisceart agus oirthear Bhéal Feirste, agus bíonn sé in úsáid ó dhubh go dubh seacht lá den tseachtain i rith na bliana.

There are now 150 children attending Scoil an Droichid. As well as a pre-school, primary school and afterschool service, An

Droichead organize a wide range of language and cultural activities, classes, social events, dramas and displays.

They opened a youth club in 2005, and then went on to win the Glór na nGael Trophy for the best Irish language project in the country, which was presented to them at an event in Stormont's Great Hall in 2006.

Tá pleananna á bhforbairt ag An Droichead i rith ama chun an Ghaeilge a chur chun cinn.

D'éirigh leo deontas de £200,000 a fháil ó fhoras na Gaeilge anuraidh agus beidh siad ag toiseacht gan mhoill ar thionscadal turasóireachta cultúrtha mar chuid den chlár Eorpach INTERREG IV, rud a

mbeidh maoiniú suas le £600k ag dul leis.

Sa mhullach air sin uilig, tá pleananna acu chun oll-ionad úr a thógáil do phobal na Gaeilge i nDeisceat Bhéal Feirste.

This 'bridge' now reaches from it's Belfast base over in to County Down, both eastwards and to the south, taking in many families from greater South Belfast and beyond.

If you want to find out more about An Droichead and the opportunities available here, including pre-school and primary education in one of Belfast's best schools, phone 90288818 or visit their website: www.androichead.com

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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174 Ormeau Rd,
BT 7 2ED.

Tel: (028) 90243194

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

Join Sinn Féin

Sinn Féin is the fastest growing political party in Ireland. We are activist based and have cumann (branches) throughout Ireland, working locally and nationally to bring about an Ireland of Equals.

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

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St John's Avenue Road surface repairs



• DRD Minister Conor Murphy MP is joined by Alex Maskey in South Belfast.

South Belfast Sinn Féin MLA Alex Maskey has welcomed the commitment given by the Roads Service to repair the road surface at St John's Avenue.

The commitment was given by the Roads Service after Alex Maskey asked that they address the issue which had been raised with Sinn Féin members during a door to door survey of the area by Sinn Féin.

"Over the past number of months Sinn Féin have been carrying out a survey in South and East Belfast in order to ask constituents what issues they feel are important to them and what issues they would like politicians

to be addressing on their behalf", explained Alex Maskey..

He continued, "One of the most consistent issues raised by residents in St Johns Avenue was that of the state of the road surface.

"Following this I contacted the Roads Service and asked that they address this issue".

He concluded, "I, as no doubt local residents will also, welcome the speedy response from the Roads Service in dealing with this issue and I would hope that the work that they are to carry out will go some way towards resolving this issue".