



John Barrett

MP for Edinburgh West

REPORT 2005



I hope you find this special report interesting and the handy guide I have enclosed useful.
John Barrett



www.johnbarrettmp.com



John Barrett MP

Dear Friend,

Over the last four years, my number one priority as your MP has been to represent local concerns and help local people with their individual problems.

With so much going on in both Westminster and West Edinburgh, I felt it important to give you a further update on my work on your behalf. That is why I have produced this special report.

I was delighted to receive such positive feedback in response to my 2004 annual report. However, one of the issues that stood out from people's comments was the difficulty

in finding who to contact when a certain problem arises.

Many people said they would find it useful to have a list of handy numbers on one sheet that they could keep for reference. That way, they would know who to contact when a problem occurs. That is why I have designed this special report, not just to update you on my work but to also provide that handy list. I hope you find it both interesting and helpful.

Of course, I am always happy to help with any issues related to Westminster. If I can ever be of service to you, please do not hesitate to get in touch.

With best wishes

John Barrett
John Barrett MP



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Please feel free to cut out this handy guide and keep it in a safe place where you can use it for reference.

John Barrett
MP for Edinburgh West
USEFUL CONTACT NUMBERS

Member of Parliament
John Barrett MP
(taxation, pensions, benefits, foreign affairs, child support, immigration etc.)
1A Drum Brae Avenue
EDINBURGH EH12 8TE
Tel: 339 0339 Fax: 476 7101
Email: johnbarrettmp@parliament.uk

Member of the Scottish Parliament
Margaret Smith MSP
(health, education, crime, housing, etc.)
3 Drum Brae Avenue
EDINBURGH EH12 8TE
Tel: 317 7292 Fax: 317 7306
Email: margaret.smith.msp@scottish.parliament.uk

THE COUNCIL
City of Edinburgh Council
Tel: 200 2000
www.edinburgh.gov.uk

CLEANSING Tel: 529 3030
(recycling, special uplifts, wheellie bins)

CLARENCE (Mon-Fri 8am-8pm)
Freephone 0800 23 23 23
(roads, blocked drains, street lights)

HOUSING DEPT (General).
Tel: 200 2000
PLANNING DEPT. Tel: 529 3594

Your local councillor -

Queensferry - George Grubb
(529 4972)

Dalmeny & Kirkliston - John Longstaff
(529 4974)

Cramond - Kate Mackenzie
(529 4970)

Davidson's Mains - Jim Lowrie
(529 4976)

Muirhouse & Drylaw - Lesley Hinds
(529 4000)
Craigleith - Ian Whyte (529 4090)
East Craigs - Robert Aldridge
(529 4992)

N. Corstorphine - Paul Edie
(529 3172)
S. Corstorphine - Phil Wheeler
(529 3181)
Gyle - Jenny Dawe (529 4987)

POLICE
For Emergencies, dial 999

Corstorphine Police Station:
334 4900
Drylaw Police Station: 343 3171
Queensferry Police Station:
331 1798

WATER AND GAS
Council Emergency Number (24 hour): 200 2000
Scottish Water: 0845 601 8855
Gas Leaks: 0800 111 999

For urgent treatment:
Royal Infirmary (Little France) -
536 1000
Royal Hospital for Sick Children (for children under 13) - 536 0000
St. John's Hospital (Howden)
- 01506 419 666
Western General Hospital
(Craigleith) - 537 1330

TRANSPORT
Travel Line Scotland: 08706 08 26 08
(for bus, coach & train information)
Lothian Buses: 554 4494
Airport Noise: 0870 040 0007

HEALTH
For health emergencies, dial 999

PENSIONS AND BENEFITS
Pensions Service (Scotland Office)
- 0845 6060265
Job Centre (Torphichen Street) -
456 5200
Child Support Agency -
08457 133 133

For general queries, health information and advice, phone
NHS 24: 08454 24 24 24

FURTHER HELP AND ADVICE
Citizens Advice Bureau
Pilton office: 332 9434
Gorgie/Dalry office: 474 8080

Working in Parliament

This parliamentary term has proven to be an especially busy one. One of my most important jobs is raising local issues and concerns with Government Ministers. If there is a particular issue of concern to you, please let me know.



Council Tax

Millions of pounds of council tax benefit go unclaimed every year, leaving too many people paying council tax when they should not. In the long term, I want to see council tax scrapped and replaced with a fairer system, which is

based on the ability to pay. In the meantime though, it is vital that more people, especially pensioners are told of the extra help available. That is why I am co-sponsoring a parliamentary Bill, which would require local councils to write to pensioners about claiming council tax benefit.

Protecting the Environment

The UK has pledged to cut carbon dioxide emissions dramatically by 2010. However, Friends of the Earth say the Government is way off meeting these targets.

I believe the Government must do more to protect the environment and tackle climate change. This is one of the most important issues

facing this country and the world and one I will continue to campaign on, both in and out of Parliament.



The Tsunami Disaster

I am sure you were as shocked as I was by the horrifying effects of the earthquake and tsunami



in Asia. As a member of the House of Commons International Development Committee, I have witnessed the poverty faced by many of the affected countries, even before the wave hit. I questioned Government Ministers on the UK's response to the disaster as soon as the House of Commons returned from the Christmas recess. Specifically, I have challenged the Chancellor to channel all the tax he gets from people's donations back into the UK's aid contribution.

What local people have said about John Barrett

"Thank you so much for your help. I received my payment from the Government in full and was absolutely delighted that you resolved it so quickly."

Mrs K, Clermiston

"Thank you so much for your kindness and swift action. I can only speak most highly of you to all I know."

Mrs M, Kirkliston

"Thank goodness we have an MP who recognises that constituent problems need to be addressed as well as big issues!"

Mrs Saunders, Silverknowes

"It is entirely your efforts that has broken through the bureaucracy I could not dent."

Mrs L. Davidson's Mains



Fair Deal for Pensioners

Answers to my parliamentary questions have shown that hundreds of thousands of pensioners in Scotland are living below the poverty line. This prompted me to seek and secure a special parliamentary debate, specifically on the issue of pensioner poverty in West Edinburgh. I challenged the Pensions Minister on many of the issues, such as the poor state pension, their complicated and degrading mass means testing, local post office closures and the anger many older people have felt from the scrapping of pension books.

I am very grateful to the thousands of local people, who have now added their names in support

of my campaign for a substantial increase in the state pension. I will not let up on this Government until our pensioners get a fair deal.



Police, not Plastic

I have strongly opposed the Government's plans to introduce compulsory identity cards. This scheme is likely to become another expensive Government IT failure because it relies on untested new technology. It is also unlikely to achieve its stated objectives of tackling illegal immigration, terrorism and fraud. Worst of all, the cost is likely to be in excess of

£3bn and there has been no proper analysis of its cost-effectiveness.

Many people are unaware of these compulsory ID cards, with each person having to pay as much as £85. I believe the savings from scrapping this ID card scheme should better spent on more police on the streets and better intelligence services. This would be a far more effective way of tackling crime.

Save the Scottish Regiments

I was proud to be one of the thousands who marched in protest against the Government plans to amalgamate the Scottish regiments. I have also raised people's anger on this issue directly with the Defence Secretary in Parliament. There may very well be a case for reform in the army. However, to consider any reduction at a time when our armed forces are so needed and overstretched is nothing short of madness.



Tackling local problems, helping local groups

Over the last few months, I have:

- ✓ campaigned vigorously against the closure of Strachan Road, Clermiston, Comely Bank, East Craigs and South Gyle post offices;
- ✓ inspected the Forth Rail Bridge to ensure this internationally recognized Scottish monument is properly maintained;
- ✓ attended remembrance ceremonies at Davidson's Mains and Corstorphine.
- ✓ met with the management of Job Centre Plus about proposed changes to local Job Centre and social security offices. I will not accept any changes that will result in a poorer service;
- ✓ pressed the Chancellor to drop his plans to change the rules on gift aid that could cost Edinburgh Zoo up to £500,000 a year;
- ✓ helped local scouts and charities by providing my constituency office as a drop off point for Scout Post;
- ✓ led the parliamentary campaign to keep the Royal Highland Centre at Ingliston;
- ✓ worked with local groups, like the Corstorphine Fair, on the rocketing costs of public liability insurance;
- ✓ supported local charities, such as the popular Loony Dook at South Queensferry on New Year's Day.