

Jan 2012
Issue 6



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TUV leader Jim Allister MLA has expressed the view that a plan is afoot to downgrade the Causeway Hospital and rob it of its acute status, something which he said would be disastrous for the North Coast and much of North Antrim.

In a statement Mr. Allister said:

"The Compton Report, which Minister Poots endorses, anticipates reducing the number of acute hospitals to as low as 5. With one, probably two, inevitably in Belfast, another in Londonderry and one in the west, how is the rest of the Province going to be catered for, especially the north of the Province?"

"When I asked the minister about the closure of A&E services at Coleraine he tried to cop out of saying it was a matter for the Board to decide, but the reality is that

January marked the 20th commemoration of the Teebane massacre in which 8 Protestant workmen were murdered by the IRA. Jim Allister had sought to raise the issue as a 'matter for the day' in the Assembly chamber but the Speaker refused his request.

Commenting Jim Allister said,

"Teebane was among the most dastardly of many IRA attacks on innocent civilians. No one has ever been made

he is driving a programme of closure which will force the Board's hand. When I asked him if he anticipated an acute hospital in Coleraine in 5 years time, he failed to answer.

"I detect a plan to shut down acute services in Coleraine. In part it will be done by a programme of run-down and failing to appoint staff to key posts, all designed to induce non-viability. Two years ago I warned the Department was planning to close the A & E department. It was denied then, but under this Review the roadmap to robbing North Antrim and East Londonderry of vital services is much clearer.

"I was disappointed that the East Londonderry MP, Gregory Campbell, though present in the Assembly when the Compton review was debated, did not speak up in defence of acute services in Coleraine."

Mr. Allister has also met with the Chief Executive of the Northern Trust regarding the future of the Causeway hospital.

Mr. Allister explained:

"At a meeting I called for the Trust to fight tenaciously to retain full acute services at Coleraine, I expressed the fear that services were being run down as a prelude to downgrading. In particular, I challenged why so many unfilled consultant posts existed at the Causeway, with huge reliance on locums, all of which is suggestive of undermining long term commitment to retention of it as a major acute hospital.

"I left the Chief Executive in no doubt that such would be unacceptable and that this large swathe of the north of the Province must not be denuded of acute services.

"I will be observing with interest just how proactive the Northern Trust is in retaining this vital service. The DUP Minister may wish to rob Ballymoney, Coleraine and the north coast of its present level of hospital service, but the local people, I believe, are equally determined that he will not succeed."

Remembering the Teebane Massacre

accountable for this episode of mass murder. Families still grieve. It would, I thought, have been fitting for the Stormont Assembly to mark the occasion and empathise with the huge loss of the families.

"Having failed to secure consideration under SO 24, I then tabled the motion so that at least it stands on the record, even if the DUP/Sinn Fein Business Committee never permit it to be debated. I would encourage other

democrats to add their names to the motion.

"The motion reads: This Assembly, noting the 20th commemoration of the IRA massacre at Teebane, conveys support to the grieving families; expresses deep disappointment and dissatisfaction that no convictions have resulted from this atrocity and calls on the public, including any member of this House, with relevant information to provide it to the police."

"It's good in any context to have somebody who goes against the grain. If you disagree or even if you are the object of his attack it forces you to examine what you are saying".

Jude Collins
(Guardian)

"He is constantly Interrogating and demanding and he annoys everyone but you need annoyance, you need him on their case.... In the absence of an opposition you need Jim to be asking these awkward questions".

Fionola Meredith
(Speaking on Radio Ulster)

"His contribution is invaluable at Stormont".

Hugh Jordan

Allister Demands Delivery at Castle Tower School

Following a visit to Castle Tower School in Ballymena, local MLA Jim Allister has called for delivery of the long outstanding promise of provision of a new build which would combine the present three scattered sites onto the one site at Trostan Avenue.

Speaking after the visit, Jim Allister said:

"You could not visit this school and not be impressed by the immense dedication of the staff, who do marvellous work with such a range of special needs young people, and the urgent need for adequate and modern facilities. Having the

268 pupils and staff scattered over 3 sites, Loughan, Beechgrove and Dunfane, is wholly impracticable, with the situation compounded by the deficiencies of these aged sites, especially Loughan where even on site profoundly disabled children have to be moved outside through the elements to get from one part of the building to another.

"The present facilities are patently not fit for purpose, as amply demonstrated in the Inspector's report. These are young people who are getting the absolute best of care and attention from their teachers and support staff, but the facil-

ities in which they have to operate are so deficient that their replacement should be a priority for the Department of Education. I will be pressing the department accordingly.

"Frankly, when I think of the squander of resources which I witness at Stormont - like an 18% increase this year alone by OFMDFM on its own administration and £100m being wasted over this budgetary period on useless north/south bodies, and unspent millions by Invest NI - it makes me angry that real and deserving need such as exists at Castle Tower is not being met."

TUV: Time to Fix Finvoy Park

Cllr William Blair has urged Ballymoney Borough Council to prioritise the neglected Finvoy Play Park and to address safety and accessibility concerns.

The children's Park at Finvoy has fallen into a state of disrepair and when Cllr Blair visited the site he discovered that it was inaccessible via the through-road which was flooded.

Cllr Blair stated:

"I was recently contacted by residents from Finvoy

explaining that their local play park presented a risk to any child that played in it. Residents complained that the equipment in the play park was rusted and that the ground is surfaced with coarse stones could cause an injury if a child was to fall.

On a visit to the site last Friday I discovered that the access road to the park was flooded. Not only would the flooding present a risk to any child attempting to access the park but it also impacting on an adjacent property.

The through-road and the play park are severely neglected and the Council must act urgently to ensure that the park is refurbished and the through-road appropriately serviced."

Cllr Blair has also revealed that TUV Leader Jim Allister MLA has already written to the Council regarding the Finvoy Park and has explained that he hopes to avail of an opportunity to discuss the matter at a meeting of the Council.

TUV raise concern about Coastguard closure

Moyle Councillor Sharon McKillop (TUV) has sought reassurances that the safety of people relying on the Ballycastle Coastguard Rescue Team will not be compromised by the imminent closure of a coastguard station at Clyde.

Commenting Cllr McKillop stated;

"The closure of the Clyde station was announced in December and since then I have investigated any implications the closure may have upon operations in

Ballycastle after discovering that the Clyde station is used when the Belfast Coastguard station needs to communicate with resources in the Ballycastle area.

Owing to the geography the Ballycastle station sometimes communicates via the Clyde.

The Coastguard Agency have now assured me that future architecture will mean that all the remote radio sites such as Ballycastle will be connected into two main data centres. Coastguard

operators, regardless of where they are based, will connect to these data centres and be able to use whichever radio resources they require at that time.

The Coastguard at Ballycastle and throughout Northern Ireland performs a vital role and I therefore trust that the new infrastructure will be in place before the closure of the Clyde station to maintain a quality service in Ballycastle and Northern Ireland."

Allister Challenges InvestNI on £39 Million Underspend and £200 a Plate Function

Jim Allister MLA has discovered through questions to Arlene Foster, Minister for Enterprise that InvestNI recently spent taxpayers money on a champagne dinner costing £200 per person.

Commenting on the lavish expenses MLA Jim Allister stated:

“A few weeks ago I commented on the fact that InvestNI spent over £4,000 on a single event for 14 representatives. The five course meal preceded by a champagne reception and

followed by a Van Morrison concert which cost £200 a head stuck me a grossly excessive.

“Of course there is a place for hospitality but it is vital – in a time of economic downturn – that taxpayers see their money is not being squandered.

“This lavish use of public funds is unacceptable and in an age of austerity restraint must be reflected across publically funded bodies – including InvestNI.”

Mr Allister’s question and the answer received were as follows:

To ask the Minister of Enterprise, Trade and Investment what has been the total spend on hospitality by InvestNI in each of the last five years.

Invest NI supports and hosts a number of marketing and promotional events each year that form a very important element of Invest NI’s agreed sales strategy. The provision of hospitality at such events forms part of this and provides an essential means of interacting with key global decision makers in order to attract new investment.



In January Jim Allister clashed with DEL Minister over plans to Merge Stranmillis with St. Mary’s

Hain Reveals Tactics Used to Tame the DUP Lion

Former Secretary of State Peter Hain has revealed the tactics deployed by the Labour Party to secure the St. Andrews agreement.

Commenting on the tactics which included offering Peter Robinson and Jeffery Donaldson Chelsea Football tickets Jim Allister stated:

“Press reports of the contents of Peter Hain’s memoirs provide a telling insight into just how the Blair Government went about taming the DUP

lion.

“Mr Hain makes it obvious that he identified a series of weak links in the party. According to Hain the ego of Ian Paisley senior was fed by way of flattery while Ian Paisley Jnr’s hunger for power was also indulged. Additionally, a key part of Hain’s plan to persuade the DUP to accept mandatory coalition with the IRA’s political wing was a threat to stop paying MLAs unless they agreed to operate

the Belfast Agreement – something which Hain claims Peter Robinson told him was causing consternation within the DUP Assembly group and the party’s officials and support staff.

“Any impartial observer will hardly regard what the former Secretary of State has to say as a glowing list of compelling reasons for public representatives to cut a deal for the good of the electorate! St Andrews had a great deal to



In January Peter Hain revealed how he tamed the DUP Lion

Allister Raises Boston College Tapes at Stormont

Jim Allister MLA has urged the Justice Minister to support the PSNI in their pursuit for the ‘Boston Tapes’.

In a Statement Jim Allister explained:

“The on-going saga surrounding tapes of interviews conducted with terrorists has rightly outraged many innocent victims. Imagine if these had been interviews conducted with Nazis who talked candidly about their role in the mass murder of Jews, saying things which incriminated both themselves and others.

“No one would seriously argue that the interviews should remain locked away because of assurances given to the criminals.

“I believe that it is incumbent upon the Justice Minister to do all he can to assist and support the police in their efforts to recover these tapes. Yet he has yet to so much as declare his support for the release of the entire archive to the PSNI.

“I have tabled a motion which would enable the Assembly to demonstrate its support for

the release of the archive to the PSNI so that it can be used in the tackling of unsolved terrorist crimes.

“We hear much talk about Sinn Fein/IRA’s supposed Damascus Road conversion to support for justice and the rule of law. Will the Business Committee allow this motion to reach the floor of the House so that all of Northern Ireland can see if they support the PSNI when it comes to solving some of the countless cases where their colleagues until now literally got away with murder?”



In January Jim Allister urged Justice Minister to support release of Boston tapes to the PSNI

Nua-DUP and the GAA



Jim Allister MLA has claimed that Nationalists, never mind Unionists, could be forgiven for wondering what the DUP's real position is on the politically driven GAA.

Commenting on Peter Robinson's visit to a GAA match Jim Allister explained:

"A few weeks ago Ian McCrea MLA rejoiced in defeat for Tyrone, Gregory Campbell regularly, and properly, objects to multiple GAA grounds being named in honour of IRA terrorists, but

Nelson McCausland lavished £60m on the GAA as Sports Minister last year and now Peter Robinson happily sits under the tricolour to watch two teams play whose county officials boycotted the Queen's visit to Croke Park!

"Moreover the GAA from Counties Tyrone and Londonderry, and Armagh where the match was played, are among the most ardent in glorying dead terrorists – the hurling club in Dungiven is named after hunger striker Kevin Lynch; another hunger striker, Martin Hurson, is celebrated every year in Tyrone through a memorial cup named in his honour;

likewise in Armagh the Michael McVerry cup honours a terrorist shot while bombing Keady Police Station; the Gerard and Martin Harte Memorial cup celebrates in Tyrone IRA brothers shot by the SAS; the Loughgall bombers are celebrated with the Paddy Kelly cup played for in Dungannon; the GAA Park in Dromintee, south Armagh is named after IRA members Jim Lochrie and Sean Campbell who were killed when a land mine exploded prematurely; IRA members, Bateson, Sheridan, and Lee, who blew themselves up as they primed a bomb, intended for the centre of Magherafelt in the early 70s, have a yearly GAA event

called after them in south Londonderry, where terrorist Francis Hughes has a trophy named after him.

"Once these things mattered – indeed at one time Nelson McCausland made an empty threat to withdraw GAA funding because of these calculated insults to innocent victims – but now his leader can sit oblivious to all this to cheer on teams from counties which epitomise the ease with which the GAA celebrates IRA terror.

"Where will the leader of Nua DUP go next? Is a Gay Pride parade on the agenda?"

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Allister Thanks Respondents to Special Adviser Consultation

The TUV have been overwhelmed by the public support offered to Jim Allister's private members bill on SPADs

In a statement TUV leader and North Antrim MLA Jim Allister expressed his gratitude:

"Last October, accompanied by Ann Travers, I launched the consultation process as the first stage of a Bill to ban people convicted of serious offences from holding the position of Special Adviser. At the time I said: "I would appeal to people across Northern Ireland to respond to the consultation on the Bill. Every response which is received in support of these proposals – be it from an organisation or individual –

will show support for the Travers family who have suffered so much as a result of Sinn Fein/IRA's heartless appointment."

"I am delighted to say that the response has been overwhelming. In total, 818 responses were received. Of those, over 98% supported the vast majority of my proposals.

"To receive 818 responses to a consultation on a proposed private members bill really is remarkable. HM Government's national consultation on the devolution of corporation tax to Stormont attracted "over 700" responses according to the Treasury's website while OFMDFM's high profile

consultation on the Cohesion, Sharing and Integration Strategy resulted in just 285 replies.

"Response were received from organisations, including some political parties but the vast majority came from ordinary members of the public who were disgusted by the appointment of convicted murderer Mary McArdle to such a post.

"The next stage in the process is to consult further with the Assembly's Bill Office on some finer details before seeking the authority of the Speaker's Office for the Bill to be formally drafted.

"I am very grateful to the

public who have so magnificently played their part, now, shortly it will be over to the MLAs. It is incumbent upon all democrats to see to it that these proposals make it on to the statute book so that a great wrong can be righted."

