



Allister tells Brussels to stay clear of terrorist shrine

Prompted by reports that the DUP and Sinn Fein will do a deal to preserve the “conflict resolution centre” (official speak for terrorist shrine) at the Maze, while not proceeding with the Stadium, and that such might be funded from Europe, Traditional Unionist MEP Jim Allister raised the issue at the start of the first sitting of the new term of the European Parliament in Brussels.

Referring to the fact that the project had been cited approvingly in the EU Task Force Report and deliberately using the language of Nigel Dodds MP from a statement in June 2007, Mr Allister said, “However it is dressed up, whatever spin is deployed, the preservation of a section of the H-Blocks - including the hospital wing - would become a shrine to the terrorists who committed suicide in the Maze in the 1980s. That would be obnoxious to the vast majority of people and is something unionist people cannot accept.”

In the course of his remarks the TUV Leader said:-

“The EU, often with good intentions, shows interest in Northern Ireland. However, today I warn it against funding a project of immense divisive potential. I refer to the foolish embracing in the EU Task Force Report, at the behest of the DUP/Sinn Fein leaders of the Northern Ireland Executive, of possible support for a so called “conflict resolution centre” at the site of the former prison at the Maze.

However it is dressed up, whatever spin is deployed, the preservation of a section of the H-Blocks - including the hospital wing - would become a shrine to the terrorists who committed suicide in the Maze in the 1980s. That would be obnoxious to the vast majority of people and is something unionist people cannot accept.

Thus I caution the Commission against itself meddling with such an explosive issue and being used by those anxious to hide behind the EU in

delivering something which shall severely set back relations in Northern Ireland.”

Having perceived the possible content of the DUP/Sinn Fein deal on the Maze, back on 6 August Jim Allister wrote to First Minister Robinson in the following terms:-



“In regard to the future of the Maze site, can you assure me that the so-called “centre for conflict transformation” will not proceed. I trust we are agreed that no project capable of glorifying terrorism warrants support and that the inextricable link between this proposal and the retention of the foolishly listed buildings at the Maze would attach to any such centre this ignominious role.

Perhaps, therefore, you could advise me on what steps have been taken to reverse previous departmental support for this objectionable centre and can you assure me that with or without the Maze stadium proceeding, this centre will not be built.”

There has been a deafening silence from the First Minister. The key question is “How did a DUP First Minister permit such a proposition to go to Brussels and be part of what is in the Task Force Report?”

With or without the stadium it is utterly unacceptable that a “conflict transformation centre”, based on the H-Blocks, proceeds. It inevitably, as the DUP formerly recognised, would become a republican shrine for the hunger strikers and their other terrorist butchers. If housing is added to such a site then it will be so branded by the shrine as to become a cold house for unionist house buyers. Slowly, but surely, the Maze area itself would be transformed into a republican hub.

So, Army Council and Stormont Executive in same position- Allister

Statement by TUV Leader Jim Allister

"The IMC Report, despite all its Jesuitical verbiage, is unable to say the IRA Army Council is gone - in spite of the fact that the DUP told us it would have to go before they entered government with their political wing.

If the IRA's terrorist intent is at an end, then why does the Army Council still exist? What is its purpose? The NI Executive is no longer "operational or functional", yet one would hardly deny that it exists! The Executive remains in place, but is not involved in political activity! Now, we are asked to believe the Army Council remains in place but is involved in political activity! What a wonderland we live in.

With neither an Army Council nor the Executive to attend, one wonders what exactly IRA leaders are doing these days. McGuinness must have a lot of time for fishing!

As the IMC appears to be able to pronounce on these matters with such certainty perhaps they could enlighten us as to when and where the Army Council last met and who was there? The IRA is an illegal terrorist organisation stained with the blood of thousands of innocent men, women and children. The duty of government and its agencies is to pursue them for the vile crimes they committed, rather than downplaying the telling fact that their wicked Army Council still exists.

The IMC's pitiful whitewashing comments, following the brutal murder of Paul Quinn, demonstrated to all who were interested that it had become yet another pawn of the political process. Today's effort confirms its compliant role. Only when the gangsters of militant republicanism have been hunted down and brought to justice will the people of Northern Ireland know that a truly just peace has been obtained."

EU impotent in face of Russian aggression - Allister

Speaking in a late night debate in the European Parliament on the situation in Georgia, Traditional Unionist MEP Jim Allister, described the EU's response as weak and ineffective. Noting the absence of any sanctions coming out of the EU Council of Minister's meeting, Mr Allister said:-

"Its hard to avoid the conclusion that Europe is impotent in face of Russian aggression.

Whereas condemnation has greeted Russia's annexation of parts of the sovereign state of Georgia, even the tone from within the EU has varied. The message of ambivalence will not be lost on Moscow. It's hardly quaking in its boots

over the divided mutterings of Europe.

Without a robust response Russian aggression, I fear, will not end with Georgia. Is Ukraine next? What will it take for those in the EU who willingly have made themselves dependent on Russian energy, to permit any effective response?

The past few weeks have been an object lesson on the unworkability of a common foreign policy for the EU. It merely delivers the paralysis of conflicting vested interests, which has done nothing to make security for Georgia or anywhere in the Caucasus any closer."

DUP spinning in contradictory circles

For months the DUP scriptwriters in DUP HQ have been spinning that without devolution we would have an Irish Language Act imposed by Westminster. This scare tactic has been used time and time again to attack and villify those of us who dare to question the morality and politics of being in government with IRA/Sinn Fein. Moreover, it was one of the favourite figleaves to cover the volte face of March 2007.

"Yet, amazingly", said Mr Allister "in the Guardian

I read Jeffrey Donaldson MP MLA is telling us, ***"Even if devolution collapsed in the morning and we were back living under direct rule from London, the DUP is convinced there would be no Irish Language Act through Westminster."***

"Patently, the DUP does not even believe its own propaganda about the ILA! With every day that passes Belfast Agreement devolution and its prime proponent is seen as an Emperor with no clothes."

Allister tells DUP to face reality - mandatory coalition is unworkable

“It is time for the DUP to face reality. Belfast Agreement devolution has failed; mandatory coalition is unworkable. The DUP has a clear choice - face reality and end the dysfunctional charade at Stormont or go on feeding the insatiable demands of IRA/Sinn Fein.

No matter how it is dressed up, conceding policing and justice now will be seen for what it is, abject surrender to the republican agenda for

the sake of clinging to office.

Recent events should demonstrate to even the slowest learner the utter folly of ever believing Sinn Fein had any interest in delivering good government to Northern Ireland, a state it does not believe in, nor can it bear to even speak its name. No self-respecting Unionist should hang around this absurd system of government waiting to be blackmailed by political thugs in suits.”

Allister speaks out on 10th anniversary of Omagh massacre

Statement by TUV Leader Jim Allister MEP:-

“As all of Northern Ireland, but particularly Omagh, remembers the dastardly republican massacre 10 years ago in Omagh, our thoughts, naturally, are with those so dreadfully bereaved.

At this difficult time I am sure the victims could well have done without the controversy visited upon them by the insensitivity of the local Council. I greatly regret that the Sinn Fein dominated Omagh Council has put political expediency before the unvarnished truth by sanitising its memorial to let militant republicanism off the hook for this wanton mass murder. I, therefore, fully understand the resentment of many of the relatives.

Equally, it is appalling that for all its occasional pious words



Sinn Fein failed to wholeheartedly urge and direct full co-operation with the police so that justice might have been obtained through criminal convictions. Sinn Fein’s equivocation and failure to do all it could, particularly back at the critical moment in 1998 and since, has been a huge contributor to the lack of justice for the Omagh victims. In 1998 they refused to urge people to help the RUC. The product on the ground of areas they control demonstrates they are still holding back.

Just as in the Robert McCartney case, their fingerprints are all over the non-cooperation which has protected the killers. Their actions and inactions are a timely reminder of their unfitness not just for policing and justice control, but for any government office.”

MEP defends integrity of British justice against EU inroads

In a debate in the European Parliament on a variety of justice issues, including mutual recognition by the UK of convictions made elsewhere in the EU in the accused’s absence, Ulster MEP and QC, Jim Allister, spoke out strongly against compromising both the integrity and independence of the British justice system.

In the course of his remarks Mr Allister said:-

No sensible person wants to make life easy for criminals, but we do have to guard against justice in Europe being reduced to the lowest common denominator. And with such a wide range of judicial procedures, safeguards and processes across the EU, talk of obtaining judicial equivalence often involves exactly that.

In the United Kingdom, our common-law-based

legal system is quite different in practice, precedent and processes to the system in our continental neighbours. So when I see reports that are predicated on the fusion of practice for fusion’s sake, I must be concerned.

I take the report on mutual recognition of judgments in absentia. I frankly say that there is not equivalence between the painstaking judicial precautions taken before someone is convicted in absentia in the United Kingdom and what seems to me the far more casual approach in, for example, Greece or Bulgaria. Therefore, I do not agree that my British constituent convicted there in his absence should have that conviction automatically recognised in the UK. If that makes me a bad European, then so be it.”

Allister reveals role in RDS row

The major row, which erupted between Peter Robinson and Sinn Fein over Minister Murphy's republicanisation of a planning document, was provoked by a revelation made by Jim Allister.

Statement by Jim Allister MEP:

"I welcome the fact that action which I took concerning the politicising of the RDS Review by IRA/Sinn Fein Minister Murphy has resulted in action by the First Minister. I trust he will see it through.

I wrote to the Permanent Secretary of DRD on 1 August in these terms:-

Re: Shaping our Future - RDS Review and Adjustments

I write to convey my disapproval of aspects of the above documents.

In particular I object to the import into these documents of republican speak for our country, Northern Ireland. The constant references to somewhere called "the North" is a calculated slight upon both the name and constitutional entity and integrity of Northern Ireland. It is wholly inappropriate that planning documents have become vehicles for promoting this republican agenda. Hence, it is offensive and wrong to so politicise a planning document that it has chapters headed "The Spatial Development Strategy for the North" and "the Rural Area of the North of Ireland". Likewise the text is riddled with such inaccurate and political



language. In similar vein the second city of Northern Ireland, Londonderry is constantly referred to as "Derry", which is not its name.

I really think it is quite shameful that Minister Murphy has imposed his grubby republican speak on planning documents."

I also raised issues about the disproportionate emphasis on spatial planning development links with the Republic of Ireland and the paucity of focus on vital east/west links.

At the same time I wrote to every Unionist member of the Executive asking how and why they permitted such to happen. Now, it seems Murphy hoodwinked his colleagues and surreptitiously inserted his republican propaganda. This demonstrates the bad faith with which republicans misuse their government office.

What is required now is:

- immediate withdrawal and reissuing of the document in a non-political form;
- full explanation of how this political slight of hand was performed and the role therein of Civil Servants, who surely should have advised Murphy against this malevolent political action;
- firm disciplinary action against Murphy for apparent breach of the Ministerial Code;
- and a learning by Unionists of this further lesson in the unworkability of mandatory coalition and the untrustworthiness of Sinn Fein.

Problems of NI workers abroad highlighted in debate

Traditional Unionist MEP Jim Allister, speaking in a debate in Strasbourg, raised both difficulties being experienced by Northern Ireland residents working abroad within the EU and the exploitation of the UK's welfare system by "benefit tourists".

Due to conflicting regulations and misunderstanding of them as between member states, workers often experience difficulty in accessing benefits which ought to be available to them. As workers have become more mobile the problem has intensified.

In the course of his remarks Mr Allister said:-

"Mobility of labour is supposed to be a key feature

of the EU and of the Lisbon strategy, yet as an MEP I regularly get complaints about lack of health care cover and inadequate social cover and, most frustrating of all, conflicting advice given by different state agencies. It is not uncommon for an employee from one member state to be working in another where they are employed by a company from a third, causing real issue about where and how they are covered."

Mr Allister, then went on to attack the scourge of "benefit tourists" and exploitation of the UK's generous welfare benefit regime, "Let me made it plain, my concern here is for gainfully employed individuals, not benefit tourists. There are loopholes in that regard which require to be well and truly blocked."

Allister speaks in Strasbourg on fishing package

Speaking in the European Parliament on the Commission's emergency aid package for fishing, Jim Allister said while there were useful measures within it, his abiding concern related to the all-important issue of delivery and whether the UK would avail of the package. Mr Allister said:-

"How, Commissioner, do we assure across the EU that these measures do not induce some distortion in competition? Not arising out of anything the Commission may do, but arising from the fact that it is a reality that some Member States are much more enthusiastic about public expenditure and reaching out to help sectors than other Member States, and where there is reticence in some and enthusiasm in others, will there not be an uneven application and drawdown of these measures, with a potential impact on competition?"

My second issue is also somewhat parochial and focuses particularly on the fleet adaptation scheme. Within that, you anticipate



special support measures, on condition that the scheme brings about a permanent reduction of 30% in a fleet's capacity.

Take the United Kingdom, Commissioner. There we have three of the constituent countries: Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland, where fishing is a devolved issue, with devolved governments making the decisions. It is entirely conceivable that any one of them could come up with a fleet adjustment scheme for their own region whereby fleet capacity would be reduced by 30%. But taken across the whole United Kingdom, because others drag their feet, that may not produce 30% reduction overall.

Is that fair? In short, can the Commission look at any steps to deal with that potential inequity in countries where there are regional governments which might be pulling their weight and national governments which are not?"

MEP concerned about risk to cement industry

As the economic downturn continues Jim Allister has held a series of meetings with key economic sectors over recent weeks. Identifying the concrete and cement industry as key to economic growth and activity, Mr Allister has been in discussion with EU Commission officials over Brussels' plans to restructure its carbon tariff pricing policy, which the MEP believes has the disastrous potential to drive cement production out of the EU.

Mr Allister explained:-

"The Commission proposes to revise its CO2 Emissions Trading Scheme (ETS). Industries currently covered by the ETS receive for free most of the ETS allowances they need. For 2013-2020 the Commission proposes that a reduced share of these allowances be distributed free. This will have an economic impact on industries covered by the ETS. Therefore the Commission has proposed two measures to facilitate this transition and to address the risk that production moves abroad, to no environmental benefit, and leading to loss of jobs (so called carbon leakage).

The first measure is that all industrial sectors would get up to 80% of their share of 2005/2007 emissions free in 2013, declining to 0% only in 2020. Secondly, the proposal foresees a possibility

for sectors deemed to be exposed to a significant risk of carbon leakage to get up to 100% of their 2005/2007 share as free allowances, at least until 2020.

The cement industry is particularly vulnerable to carbon leakage, with large scale production facilities already in operation in the Far East and Africa. Thus it is imperative that our EU cement industry gets maximum protection.

The Commission has proposed that it will be decided at the latest by June 2010 which sectors are deemed to be exposed to a significant risk of carbon leakage. To date the Commission has acknowledged in communications with me that the cement and concrete are indeed energy intensive industries, but they need to go further and indicate now that come 2013 our EU cement industry will be protected and not driven out by self-inflicted and foolish reductions in ETS allowances.

The significance of this issue goes far beyond the cement industry itself, not only is there the risk of it being driven abroad but the consequence for the construction industry would be higher costs which would impact adversely in the economy and accentuate the slow-down."

Allister challenges First Minister over Kelly

Following revelations in the Robert McCartney murder trial, TUV Leader, Jim Allister MEP has called on the First Minister to initiate steps to remove Gerry Kelly as a Minister in OFMDFM.

During evidence before Mr Justice Gillan it was alleged by a Crown witness that he had 4 to 6 meetings with the IRA and that these were facilitated by Gerry Kelly. The Judge, in consequence, spoke of the possibility that his evidence may have been influenced “or indeed even directed by the IRA”.



These findings caused Mr Allister to suggest to Peter Robinson that Kelly should be removed from office. In the course of his letter the MEP wrote:-

As I expect you will be aware, one of the reasons Gillan J acquitted those charged in the Robert McCartney murder trial was the fact that the IRA had held meetings with two of the three chief Crown witnesses.

He spoke of the witness Gowdy having had “lengthy meetings with the IRA before gaining their “approval” to speak to the police. I must be wary therefore lest he is merely repeating a version of events which he has been instructed to relate or has been influenced by that unlawful group.” He went on to say of this witness, “I am absolutely satisfied he is not telling the truth about the extent of his knowledge of the events both in the bar at Magennis’s and more importantly in Market Street that night.” The Judge proceeded to amplify several instances where Gowdy was not telling all he knew, saying, “I harbour a grave suspicion that he hid behind the mask of memory loss in order to be selective about those that he chose to name.”

Having referred to Gowdy meeting the IRA between 4 and 6 times, Gillen J felt compelled to conclude “there exists the possibility that his evidence, including identification of the people he has named, may have been influenced or

indeed even directed by the IRA. At the very least there must be a real possibility that his evidence has been through a sieve orchestrated by this unlawful organisation.” He also expressed concerns about the effect of meetings between the IRA and the witness Devine.

It is clear, therefore, that the IRA’s malevolent meddling in this case polluted and perverted justice. The immediate relevance for you, First Minister, is that in evidence it emerged that one of the Ministers in OFMDFM, Kelly, played a role, at least in securing, these meetings between the unlawful IRA and these Crown witnesses.

I will assume you would be disapproving of such behaviour, the question, though, is what you intend to do about it? Do you propose to carry on as if such had never happened or will you take steps, either under Section 30 of the Northern Ireland Act 1998, or otherwise, to have Kelly removed? Surely, you cannot turn a blind eye to this matter?

Commenting further Mr Allister said, “The McCartney trial not only underscores why Sinn Fein must never be let anywhere near policing and justice, but the possible perverting of the course of justice by the IRA raises fundamental questions about the fitness for office of the one said under oath to have facilitated such meetings between a Crown witness and the illegal IRA. You can’t be associated with such murky activities one day and fit for government office the next. Herein is the lunacy of IRA/Sinn Fein in government.

Section 30 of the 1998 Act provides a mechanism for the removal of Ministers. The challenge now for the First Minister is will he act or turn a blind eye.”

In a pathetic response, which McGuinness, of course, had to also sign, Peter Robinson indicated that he planned no action! Mr Allister has also referred the matter to the PSNI and awaits their response to his call to investigate perversion of the course of justice.

Belfast Agreement devolution floundering - Allister

Speaking to the Central Council of Traditional Unionist Voice, TUV Leader, Jim Allister MEP said Belfast Agreement devolution was unravelling and floundering day by day. "Why", he asked, "because it is built on the sand of republican veto".

In the course of his remarks Mr Allister said:-

"With the dysfunctionality of OFMDFM having spread to the whole Executive, which has not been able to meet since mid June, government is grinding to a halt. Planning and education are two of the most obvious casualties, with the parties deadlocked over PPS 14 and the future shape of education. If this was happening under Direct Rule, and no prospect of decisions for weeks, there would be an outcry.

The Executive hasn't made a single decision in weeks because Sinn Fein is refusing to let it meet until it gets concessions on its key demands. And get those concessions it will, because this absurd system is built on mutual vetoes and cannot work without such concessions. Hence, the DUP, in time, will fudge and budge, because it dare not admit it got it fundamentally wrong in ever letting unreconstructed terrorists anywhere near executive office, never mind giving them the trump card of veto. Remember, for IRA/Sinn



Fein, this is just another phase of its unyielding struggle, in which it plays the long game and banks the concessions which "the peace process" inevitably produces if it is to last.

Sinn Fein aren't in Stormont to bring good government to Northern Ireland - a state they don't even believe in - they are there to extract maximum advance for their continuing long-term strategy. Ending British policing and British justice on any part of the island of Ireland is a critical part of that strategy. Hence their focus on obtaining the devolution of policing and justice. Hence, too, the folly of any unionist contemplating assisting them, particularly when under this warped arrangement it necessitates giving McGuinness, of all convicted terrorists, key powers over the judiciary.



So, whether viewed from the strategic perspective or the more mundane of delivering for citizens, this government is a lamentable failure and so far removed from the hyped promise of devolution as to be the very antithesis of good government."

Multiple opportunities to meet with First Minister refuted as DUP spin - Allister

Responding to a claim in the News Letter by an unnamed DUP spokesman that, "The MEPs of Northern Ireland, including Jim Allister, had several opportunities to meet Ian Paisley while he was First Minister". Jim Allister said:-

"I'd be interested to know when these imaginary opportunities were. The facts are very simple. I wrote on 6th August 2007 asking for a meeting with the First Minister to discuss EU issues. My request was ignored. Then, in anticipation of an

intended reply in the Assembly about OFMDFM meetings, I was written to on 29 January 2008 saying that office would be in touch with mine to work out the details of a meeting.

Again, nothing happened. So, it is a face-saving concoction to suggest I was afforded opportunities to meet the First Minister Paisley. I challenge the DUP to specify each and every such alleged opportunity. All this correspondence is available from my office."



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There, you can also sign up to receive each new edition, either by post or by e-mail.

Obscenity of equating victims with perpetrators to continue - MEP

In an initial response to the supposed consultation on victims' issues launched by joint Junior Ministers, Donaldson and Kelly, TUV Leader Jim Allister MEP has expressed his disappointment that again the wrong which equates perpetrator with genuine victim has not been rectified by necessary legislative amendment.

In a statement Mr Allister said:-

"I suppose it should be no surprise that when a convicted terrorist, Bomber Kelly, jointly launches a so called consultation on Victims' issues, that it effectively avoids the key and foundational issue of definition of victim. Yes, there is a token reference to the Victims and Survivors Forum - which will be set up at some unspecified date and which will include terrorist representatives - looking at some point (Commission and OFMDFM permitting) at "the



issues surrounding the definition of 'victim', but it is crystal clear that the Commission, Forum and Victims' Service will proceed to work on the present obscene definition which equates victim with perpetrator, which puts an innocent victim like Michelle Williamson on exactly the same footing as the Minister's namesake who made her a victim.

Failure to deal with this obscenity makes any programme for victims deficient.

This document is called a "consultation", but in truth all the key issues it sets out are non-negotiable - a Commission of unacceptable composition, a Forum where perpetrators will sit with genuine victims and no meaningful prospect of amending the definition of "victim" in an acceptable fashion because of the Sinn Fein veto."

Allister answers Lord Morrow

What unfortunate choice of assailant the DUP Press Office made in choosing to issue a statement of attack on Jim Allister in Lord Morrow's name on the subject of the IRA. Lord Morrow should be the last man to raise his head on this subject. It was he who correctly told the Assembly "everyone knows the IRA murdered Paul Quinn" and then went on to keep tellingly silent, in deeds and words, once the IMC whitewashed what he knew to be the truth. So Lord Morrow's credibility on the subject of the IRA's actions and existence is rather shot to pieces.

He might also like to remember that he is the

Chairman of a Party which talked about the necessity for the Army Council to disband before the DUP even considered any power-sharing with Sinn Fein, yet meekly accepted IRA/Sinn Fein in government without a squeak about the Army Council, making the DUP's current stance on the Army Council meaningless posturing.

My own position is consistently clear. IRA/Sinn Fein is utterly unfit for any government post, be it education or policing and justice. Lord Morrow used to believe the same, sadly now, he is one of those propping up McGuinness and company in the government of a state they do not even believe in.

What has O'Loan been teaching her son?

"It was with more than a little bemusement that I read Mrs O'Loan's remarks in the press. She - in the tradition of the independent witness of the IRA's alleged decommissioning Alex Reid - claims that Protestants were "taught as children that they should not trust Catholics".

"How does Mrs O'Loan know this? Well she "checked with other senior people in society". Perhaps she would condescend to answer a simple question.

"In 2006 an incident occurred in Ballymena just

before an Orange parade. At the time security sources were quoted in the press as saying that two members of the Tactical Support Group accompanied by a community police officer were subjected to a torrent of verbal and sectarian abuse in the William Street area, before the parade took place, and they spoke to Mrs O'Loan's son about his conduct.

"So, Mrs O'Loan, if, as you suggest, a person's upbringing is the root cause of sectarianism what have you been teaching your son?"

Allister opposes animal cloning

Traditional Unionist MEP Jim Allister has spoken out in the European Parliament against animal cloning.

Speaking in a debate on an Oral Question to the Commission on the subject the Ulster Euro MP said:-

"It is right and natural to want to improve stock quality by breeding our best animals. Artificial insemination and embryo transfer provide for that. Cloning is quite different - a quantum leap - as the report from the Food Standards Agency in the UK said - beyond "giving mother nature a helping hand."

Quite apart from other ethical issues and the danger of copycat science in the human field, animal welfare is a real concern here. The

premature ageing and health deficiencies seen in the high profile cloning cases which have made the headlines - like with "Dolly the Sheep" - remind us of the welfare issues.

More money devoted to tackling animal disease would serve us better than experimenting with nature.

From the consumer perspective there is the food quality issue as cloned herds would all share the same vulnerability to the same strains of disease, whereas genetic diversity is one of our best protections against rampant disease outbreaks.

So, no matter what way I look at this subject I find nothing to convince me that animal cloning is right, necessary or in the public interest."

Responsibility for victims should be removed from OFMDFM

Paisley never met with a victims' group in official capacity

Statement by TUV MEP Jim Allister

"For all his fine words about victims being "some of the most vulnerable people in our Province" and being "determined that they should not be left behind", I am not surprised to have received confirmation from OFMDFM that the former joint First Minister, Dr Paisley, never met with a victims' group during all his time in office in his official capacity.

The reason, of course, is that because the First Minister is politically joined at the hip with McGuinness and unable to do anything officially without him, he couldn't, as First Minister, meet IRA victims without the assent, or even the presence, of the man who boasted of his IRA leadership position in Londonderry.

How could OFMDFM embark on the appointment of a Victims' Commission without even bothering to officially meet with the sector? The spectacular failure of the Commission to win the

approval of victims' groups - most dramatically demonstrated by the fact that the Department is currently fighting Michelle Williamson in the courts - illustrates that a government office jointly headed by a self-confessed IRA man is grossly unfitted to represent victims' needs.

I am calling for victims portfolio to be removed from OFMDFM and given to DFP, which already handles PEACE funding, under which some victims' groups receive aspects of funding. At least there the Minister could officially meet the sector, without IRA/Sinn Fein involvement.



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Farming News

Two thirds still to finish FNMS work - MEP

With just 37.7% of farmers, who were issued with FNMS grant approvals, having finished the work and with the expiry of the EU's extension just 3 months away, Traditional Unionist MEP has been pressing DARD on how it plans to attain completion by the end of year deadline.

In figures produced by DARD to Mr Allister this week it was revealed that 4141 FNMS grant approvals issued, and of these 1562 (37.7%) have completed their work and submitted claims for payment. Of these 1271 have been paid to the total value of £39.025m. This leaves 2579 farmers with approval but who have not yet completed the work.

Commenting Mr Allister said, "With almost two thirds of affected farmers still to finish the work, I am concerned if the 31 December deadline will be met. I know many farmers had been counting on making progress over the summer, but the weather has been so bad that many contractors have fallen badly behind.

This is not the fault of the farmers and, therefore, I believe DARD should be beginning to prepare the ground with the Commission for the eventuality of all the work not being finished. Delay caused by the exceptional weather is a legitimate and rational basis upon which to explain any slippage."

Allister makes AFBI visit

Traditional Unionist MEP Jim Allister has met with senior management and staff of the Agri Food Biosciences Institute (AFBI), to learn more of the Institute's varied research programme.

"General discussions were had on AFBI's work in promoting sustainable livestock systems. Much of the Institute's work centres on research which can make livestock systems more

efficient, and therefore increasing profitability of farm enterprises."



"The benefits of evidence-based research in addressing the needs of the agri-food sector are clear to be seen. It is a travesty that a DARD Minister's incompetence in the current Crossnacreevy debacle is putting some of this work in jeopardy."

Allister meets Auditor General on DARD Turbine Scheme

Jim Allister has met with John Dowdall, Northern Ireland Comptroller and Auditor General, after a request was made by Mr Allister for DARD's role in the Wind Energy for Rural Business (WERB) Scheme to be investigated. The WERB scheme was fraught with difficulties from the outset, with 11 of the grant-aided turbines developing severe technical difficulties, including a number of turbines where blades dislodged.

The MEP said,

"My primary motivation in asking the NI Audit Office to investigate DARD's role in this scheme, is to secure redress for those farmers who have invested large sums of money in turbines at Government's encouragement, and who remain out of pocket as a result."

Mr Allister added,

"The Auditor General was less than content with DARD's attempts to furnish me, an elected representative, with misleading information about this scheme. DARD wrote to me, stating that both installers and turbine equipment were on Government's 'Clear Skies' list of approved installers/equipment. I have since learned that the Powerbreeze turbine variety did not appear on this list until some time after these turbines were purchased under the WERB scheme, and that the supplier never featured on this list."

"The Northern Ireland Audit Office will be carrying out its own Report on DARD's handling of this scheme, with the power to refer DARD to the Public Accounts Committee if serious breaches of public accounting rules are found. I will, of course be keeping a close watch on developments as they unfold."

It's time for DARD to turn platitudes into action - Allister

Following the substantial summer flood damage Traditional Unionist MEP Jim Allister criticized the inaction of the NI Executive in helping the agricultural sector.

In a statement Jim Allister said:-

"Weeks on from the severe impact of flooding on our agricultural sector, we have seen no help from DARD or the Executive for farmers who have lost stock and crops. The potato sector has been hit particularly hard, with many farmers having lost a substantial portion of their crop.

The Executive boasts of delivering local solutions for local problems and of a caring attitude, Well, platitudes aside, what have they done? We've seen Minister Gildernew offer sympathy and other Ministers promising action, but still nothing has been offered to farmers with devastating livelihood losses.

Since the overall scale of damage in the UK is probably below the €3Billion threshold necessary to trigger help direct from the EU Solidarity Fund, the ball is firmly back in the Executive's court,

with DARD, which poses as "the rural Champion", required to deliver for farmers.

Aid can be given, either by availing of the de minimus options, or, more likely through aid which can meet state aid rules. In terms of state aid rules, there is, I believe, a strong argument that such help as is needed would not qualify as state aid because it would have no effect on trade between member states. If there is no such effect, then the state aid rules need not apply. If permission is required, then pursuant to the relevant Community Guidelines (2006/C319/01) there is considerable scope to help in circumstances where the loss is significant. Either way, it is now up to DARD to expeditiously come up with an aid package, which must not get bogged down like the last time weather aid was promised.

Under EU rules I believe the way ahead is via aid under the "de minimus" rules for those with modest losses and by an application under the State Aid Regulations where the threshold of loss of 30% of normal production is surpassed."



Jim Allister and Tristen Kelso met with representatives from NIGTA, along with the Agricultural Industries Confederation (AIC), the leading UK trade association in the agrisupply industry. The discussion included high feed prices and non-approval of GM compound varieties.

Linkage between severity of flooding and foolishness of EU regulations - Allister

Jim Allister has questioned how far inadequately cleaned waterways and EU restrictions contributed to the severity of the recent flooding.

In a statement Mr Allister said:-

"In the aftermath of the summer flooding I have asked DARD and the River Agency for their assessment of the contribution of inadequately cleaned waterways to the scale of the flooding.

Historically, the relevant statutory agency throughout the countryside had a pro-active programme of regularly cleaning out watercourses. This, I perceive, gave the countryside the optimum opportunity to successfully cope with heavy rainfall.

Now, it seems, eco-driven concerns are inhibiting effective cleaning of watercourses. In consequence, it seems to me, the efficiency of

many watercourses to cope with heavy rainfall has been reduced and additional flooding is resulting. It really is a sorry situation if protecting the eco-system of the water rat is prioritised above ensuring our countryside has the most efficient drainage system attainable! It certainly wouldn't be the first time that foolish EU regulation has turned common sense on its head and left ordinary citizens to bear the consequences.

I have also pressed the Department on the need for expeditious remedial works on some of our rivers to deal with the legacies of the flooding, including situations where bank protections have been disturbed and erosion is resulting. If sufficient funds are not in hand to meet necessary remedial works, then DARD must press DFP for additional resources, either as part of the quarterly monitoring or otherwise."

Use of IRA Semtex Raises Serious Questions - Allister

"Confirmation that semtex was used in the abortive but potentially murderous attack in Lisnaskea raises fundamental questions about both the completeness of alleged IRA decommissioning and the collaborative nexus



between the Provos and dissident republicans.

"The people of Northern Ireland were assured the IRA had destroyed its semtex, yet here it turns up ready to murder policemen in Lisnaskea. How can this be? Perhaps Father Reid, Rev Good, Martin McGuinness or the IMC would like to explain. I have never been convinced that what passes as dissident republicanism operates in a vacuum. We have been reminded how IRA/Sinn Fein protected the Real IRA operatives by refusing to advise the public to help the police after the Omagh atrocity."

IRA's perverse campaign to sanitise its past

Commenting on reports that hundreds of convicted IRA terrorists are planning a concerted drive to overturn their convictions and claim compensation, Jim Allister QC MEP said:-

"Every terrorist conviction in Northern Ireland was the product of a due process with built in double judicial protection. Not only did a senior Judge preside over every trial but every convicted terrorist - unlike "ordinary" criminals - had an automatic right of appeal to 3 Judges in the Court of Appeal, and beyond, if appropriate. So every finding of guilt was well sifted judicially.

No one should deny that occasional miscarriages of justice occurred, but the suggestion that hundreds of IRA terrorists, duly convicted, were in fact innocent, is preposterous.

Let's remember the IRA murdered over 2000

innocent people. Would they now have us believe that persons other than those convicted committed those and other heinous crimes. I know the IRA/Sinn Fein is on a mission to sanitise its past, and that for some such could be politically convenient, but their ranks are not the habitation of the innocent. The innocent populate the graves of Ulster, put there primarily by IRA/Sinn Fein and thus it would be stomach-turning to see this campaign at re-writing history gaining any credence in the courts.

Think, too, of the malevolent assistance such a process could be given if Sinn Fein got anywhere near policing and justice powers. McGuinness able to exercise influence over who is appointed and removed from the Judiciary is the greatest single reason why policing and justice must not be devolved, because those powers would go to OFMDFM."

Roof falls in on European Parliament

The Strasbourg Parliament is out of use following the collapse of large chunks of the ceiling, causing the sittings to be transferred to Brussels. Thereby taxpayers are being saved the monthly cost of transporting MEPs, staff and all documentation needlessly to Strasbourg. The portion of the ceiling which collapsed was above the area where Mr Allister sits.

Commenting Mr Allister said, "It hasn't been a good few months for the EU. First Irish voters derailed their constitutional project and now the roof has fallen in. It is ironic that the European Parliament, which loves to regulate on everything for everyone else, couldn't even

meet basic health and safety standards in its own building, which is less than 10 years old."

