

Newsletter

1 Year On...

I have been your local representative for more than a year now and whilst having worked with some of you on local issues I am still keen to hear from you more.

#### *Albion Gardens Fire*

However, on the evening of Saturday 5 April 2008 I was surprised when Lothian and Borders Police phoned me at home to inform me that there was a serious fire at Albion Gardens which had resulted in more than 100 residents being evacuated. Obviously, my first reaction was to drive over to the site of the fire to see if I could do anything to help my constituents. I'm glad I did as I was able to speak to some of the local residents and help the Council's Housing Officer coordinate temporary housing for people. An unfinished block of flats had been set on fire and whilst this was fairly close to an inhabited block, more worrying was the crane up above the fire which was buckling through the heat and could collapse. The vast majority of residents were able to return to their homes by 11 April at which time the developers, Bellway Homes, took over responsibility for advising the remaining residents when it would be safe to return home. This was due to access issues for 4 of the flats and I hope that they are back home by now.

#### *The Monday Club*

The Monday Leith Outdoor Spaces Project Drop-In Club at Pilmeny Youth Centre is a highly successful local club which was set up by local police officers working with youths in the area who present the most challenging behaviour. Some of the officers involved have worked with young people in Leith for many years but even they have been surprised how these particular young people who have the most contact with the police but are the least likely to be involved with local clubs and activities have engaged with Pilmeny Youth Centre. Our local community beat officer assures us that this is a relatively safe area but with quite high levels of vandalism which is a difficult crime to solve. The Monday Club has been so successful at reducing youth crime that it is now to be rolled out in the Fort and Restalrig next. Kenny MacAskill, Cabinet Secretary for Justice, has asked if he can come to visit the Monday Club in July this year as it may be used as a model of best practice in other communities in Scotland.

#### *Bonnington Primary School*

Bonnington Primary School is one of the three schools which is facing possible closure under the Lib Dem/SNP current plans. On Tuesday 24 June parents held a strike at the gates and this was very well attended. I am waiting to hear what comes out of the consultation which should happen over the Summer, the final decision about the school will be made at the November Council meeting.

#### *Test Purchasing*

On Friday 13 June, test purchasing was carried out at 9 off licenses in the Leith Walk area to test if owners, managers or their staff were checking if people were 18 before selling them alcohol. This is a very carefully run rather new initiative being carried out by the police and all 9 premises passed the test!