



John Barrett

MP for Edinburgh West

REPORT 2008



I hope this report will give you a flavour of my work on your behalf.
John Barrett

www.johnbarrettmp.com



John Barrett MP

Dear Resident,

It is a great privilege to serve as the Member of Parliament for Edinburgh West and I hope this Annual Report gives you a flavour of what I have been working on in the last twelve months, both in the constituency and at Westminster.

As someone whose home and family have been in the constituency for many years, I have been proud to be part of and to serve the local community, first as a community councillor, then as an elected City Councillor and now as the Member of Parliament. Throughout this time it has been a pleasure to meet up with many groups, organisations and individuals

who have also worked to improve our community and I would like to pass on my thanks to the many hundreds of dedicated individuals I have worked with throughout the past year.

Having recently been promoted to the role of Disabilities Spokesman for the Liberal Democrats, I am campaigning strongly on disability issues while continuing my work on International Aid and Development.

I am always happy to deal with any issue related to Westminster and if I can be of service to you, please do not hesitate to get in touch.

With best wishes,

John Barrett

John Barrett MP

John Barrett MP – Factfile

- Re-elected as Member of Parliament in 2005
- Majority 13,600
- Elected Member of Parliament for Edinburgh West, 2001
- Edinburgh City Councillor 1995 -2001
- Community councillor for 10 years
- Married to Carol with one grown up daughter
- Liberal Democrat Disabilities Spokesman
- Honorary Vice President of Scottish SPCA
- Lives locally in Edinburgh West.

Full profile:

www.johnbarrettmp.com/profile



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Keeping in Touch

Website

I have recently re-designed my website, using expert advice, to make it more accessible to all constituents. Please visit the site at

www.johnbarrettmp.com



Important Advice Surgery Update

As well as holding weekly advice surgeries in my constituency office, I also arrange home visits and hold 'roving surgeries' throughout the constituency at a number of locations on the first and third Saturdays of the month. Because of the increasing number of constituents I am now meeting, and to avoid a long wait, all surgeries are now by appointment. For those with mobility problems

home visits can be arranged by calling 0131 339 0339.

Contact Details

Write: John Barrett MP
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Tel: 0131 339 0339

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Helping Constituents – Working For You

My main priority is always helping constituents whenever possible.

I am always available for any constituent who wishes to get in touch. Matters I can assist with are those reserved to Westminster which include:

- The Economy and Taxation
- Benefits, Pensions and Social Security
- European and Foreign Affairs
- Defence
- Immigration and Asylum
- Energy Policy
- Air and Rail Safety
- Employment Legislation
- Constitutional Matters



I will continue to work hard in the House of Commons to fight for local interests and make sure the concerns of Edinburgh West are heard loud and clear. If there is any issue you believe I should be working on, please contact me with details.

www.johnbarrettmp.com/advice

Working in Parliament

With many economic issues regularly on the parliamentary agenda as well as Bills on Climate Change and Pensions working their way through the system, this parliamentary term has proven to be another busy one.

At Westminster, one of my most important jobs is raising local issues and concerns with Government Ministers. Please let me know if there is a particular issue of concern to you. Over the last 12 months I have regularly spoken in Parliament on such issues as **Child Poverty, the Environment, UK Overseas Aid, and Tax Credits and Benefits.**

Full transcripts of these and other speeches are on my website.



During the past year I have been lucky enough to welcome hundreds of constituents to parliament. If you are planning a visit to London, please contact my office and make a visit to the House of Commons part of your itinerary.

www.johnbarrettmp.com/speeches

Humanitarian Crises

The earthquake in China, Cyclone in Burma and the ongoing conflicts in Darfur and the Congo all show why effective humanitarian aid is so important.

I have frequently argued for more resources and assistance for those affected by humanitarian disasters and for our own government to take a tougher line with regimes who ignore the rights of their own people.



I recently met with the Dalai Lama when he visited Westminster.

www.johnbarrettmp.com/international

Supporting our Forces at Home and Abroad

I recently secured a debate on the Military Covenant (the agreement between country and soldier) to press the Government to meet obligations to our troops and their families during and after their service.

Over the last year I have also led a campaign to increase take-up of the veterans badge. This badge is now available to all service men and women who have served in the armed forces **at any time.**

Merchant Navy seafarers and fishermen who served in vessels supporting UK military operations prior to 1970 are eligible for a UK Merchant Seafarers veterans badge.

And after a long campaign, the

Government has also agreed to formally recognise the 'Land Girls', surviving members of the Women's Land Army (WLA) and Women's Timber Corps (WTC), and the 'Bevin Boys', who worked as miners during the period 1943-1948.

Application forms for all these special badges are available from my office. Please get in touch if you think you, or a relative, might be eligible.



www.johnbarrettmp.com/veterans

The Environment

Throughout this parliamentary session I have made the environment a key focus of my work both in the constituency and at Westminster.

In the last year I have campaigned for a strengthened Climate Change Bill with tougher emissions targets, and have argued against a new generation of nuclear power stations that

would divert funding away from renewable alternatives.

I have also continued to push for an environmentally friendly high-speed rail link between Scotland and London and am campaigning to cut down on the amount of excess packaging on many supermarket products.

www.johnbarrettmp.com/environment

Action on Data Loss

Throughout this year there have been regular reports of the mishandling and losing sensitive personal data. Many constituents have contacted me after receiving letters from Government departments informing them that their personal details have been lost. I have campaigned in Parliament for a radical overhaul of our data laws and opposed the controversial, costly and compulsory ID card plans,



which would see huge volumes of personal information held by the Government on yet another database.

www.johnbarrettmp.com/idcards

Recent events and visits include:

Modern Studies Conference at the Royal High School, Murrayfield Parish Church JUST US Group, Cramond Primary School, St Anne's and St Ninian's fundraising events, Friends of Corstorphine Hospital Strawberry Fair, Kirkliston Myasthenia Gravis Association fundraising Garden Party, Dalmeny Primary

School, Cargilfield School, Royal Infirmary, Corstorphine Fair, Queensferry High School, SSPCA, Christian Aid, West End Community Council Trams Update, East Craigs Street Football Pitch Launch, Edinburgh Zoo, Gylemuir Primary School Ruby Anniversary, Red Cross Scottish Headquarters – and many more!

Save Our Post Offices!

I have campaigned to safeguard Post Offices across the West side of the city for many years. With the Government currently proposing to axe one in five Post Offices across the country, only two branches in Edinburgh West, which are currently open, are on the closure list.

I have no doubt that this good result

is down to the spirited and dedicated campaign fought by local people and community groups across the constituency in recent years.

I am currently working with groups, individuals and organisations in those two areas to produce a case for the retention of the local branches and have already received much support by letter and at the public meetings I arranged.

I have also raised the importance of local Post Office at Prime Ministers questions, and in many House of Commons debates. Ministers often say that the Post Office network is financially unsustainable – I have always replied that the community role that our Post Offices fulfil cannot simply be measured in pounds and pence.



By continuing the campaign we can send a strong message that Edinburgh West will not tolerate unjustified Post Offices closures.

www.johnbarrettmp.com/postoffices

At Westminster John has:

- ✓ Voted against the current Post Office closure programme;
- ✓ Raised Edinburgh Post Office closures at Prime Minister's Questions;
- ✓ Spoken out for more investment in the network during debates;
- ✓ Challenged Ministers over the removal of Government services from the Post Office;
- ✓ Campaigned to save the Post Office Card Account;
- ✓ Secured meetings with senior Civil Servants to discuss the future of the Post Office network;
- ✓ Delivered "Save our Post Offices" petition to Downing Street.