

# Tyne Bridge Constituency Labour Party Parliamentary Report

David Clelland MP

[www.david-clelland.org](http://www.david-clelland.org)

2 July 2004



## Scotswood Community Gardens

I was pleased to be able to welcome the Minister for Children and Young People, Margaret Hodge, to the Community Gardens where she met some of those involved in the planning and up-keep of this wonderful resource. The Minister then went on to address a meeting at the St Chad's Community Project, Bensham, where she outlined the Government's latest thinking on children's services with particular reference to the White Paper 'Every Child Matters'.

*A little of what you fancy...*



## Amicus Regional Political Conference



I addressed Amicus' spring regional Conference. I used the opportunity to draw attention to the achievements of the Labour Government and the importance of unity given the then pending local elections and the forthcoming regional government referendum, as well as the possible general election in 2005.

Following a Health Select Committee report on the subject there was a constant barrage of information on what we should, or should not, eat, drink, do, etc. It is all a matter of commonsense and moderation really as I pointed out when I opened the newly refurbished 'McDonalds' on Grainger Street.

## BBC Politics Show



I took part in the local BBC Politics show programme on the subject of postal voting, which Tories and Lib Dems opposed and tried to frustrate by forcing through the fiasco of the witness signature that cost many thousands of electors their votes in both local and European elections.

## Foyer Reception

I attended House of Commons reception for 'Foyers', like the one on Westgate Road, Newcastle. They cater for vulnerable young people, who lack family support, and are a halfway-house between (sometimes) care homes, or family breakdown and offer help with independent living. Dedicated professionals give advice and help on further education, finding work, and coping with simple daily tasks.



## Comment

Congratulations to all of our **successful candidates in the local elections**. Boundary changes and the national swing narrowly robbed us of the new **Dunston Hill and Whickham East ward**. I want to put on record the tremendous hard work put in by our three candidates - Pauline Dillon, Margaret Duddin and Frank Earl.

In all other Tyne Bridge wards, Labour retained its council seats but nationally, and particularly in **Newcastle**, it was not a good election for Labour and the responsibility of being in government took its toll.

The complication of the Lib Dem/Tory imposed 'witness signature' almost certainly lost us a seat in the Euro elections where the Lib Dem candidate scraped home by 5,000 with over votes discounted by the Returning Officer. I want to pay tribute to Barbara O'Toole for the hard work she put in as MEP and look forward to her return to office in due course.

I also want to place on record my thanks to those former Tyne Bridge councillors who did not succeed in being elected. Margaret Duddin, Joanie Easton, Eric McKinlay, Jimmy Snowdon and Peter Thompson. Thanks also to Albert Brooks and Ian Mason who did not stand this time.

Congratulations to John O'Shea and Nick Forbes on being elected Leader and Deputy of the Newcastle Labour Group.

We now have to begin to work toward the day when we will win in Dunston Hill and Whickham East and return the City of Newcastle to Labour control.

The Government has moved on to set out the battleground for the **General Election** by promising voters that a third-term Labour Government will deliver a new generation of schools and hospitals in which our traditional commitment to fairness and equality of opportunity will be matched by 21st century standards of excellence.

By contrast, the Tories allege they will introduce widespread reforms which would completely end waiting lists within five years, and dramatically increase NHS capacity.

But what the Tories are really offering is the old, old story. Privilege for those who can pay and second class services for the rest. The 'freedom' they have on offer is *a choice between freedom to choose and freedom to charge*.



## Parliament

**Iraq** has continued to feature in Parliamentary business, with a statement about the treatment of Iraqi prisoners and, lately, of the handover of power to Iraqi government. Other Statements included one on the **G8 summit**.

Legislation included the Second Readings of the **Energy Bill**, the **Age-Related Payments Bill**, the **Domestic Violence, Crime and Victim Bill**, we also had the remaining stages of the **Housing Bill** and the **Pensions Bill**. Bills returned from the Lords included the **Child Trust Funds Bill**, the **Planning and Compulsory Purchase Bill**.

I spoke at PM questions and during a debate in the Standing Committee for Regional Affairs on regional policy. I also attended a meeting of the three

northern regions with the Deputy Prime Minister to discuss the forthcoming referenda.



## Constituency

I met with officials of unions involved in the Federation/Newcastle Breweries takeover, and with senior managers of the two breweries.

I have also had meetings with local youth workers, concerned about the way their work is financed. As a consequence, I then arranged a joint meeting with officers of GONE.

I attended the annual meeting of the Dunston Drop-In Centre, a great resource for young people in the area, and met with organisers and voluntary workers.

I also attended a meeting of the Yes for the North East campaign at Durham County Cricket ground and joined fellow MPs in a meeting with the Leader and officials of Gateshead Council. I enjoyed a visit to the almost completed Sage in Gateshead, a truly magnificent building that will be a tremendous resource for the whole region and one of few of such excellence anywhere in the world.

I attended Gateshead's civic reception for the new Mayor and also Newcastle's reception for the outgoing Lord Mayor, our very good friend Cllr Margaret Carter.

(pictured left with the two outgoing Mayors)

