

SNP Fly the Flag for Broughty Ferry Beach

The SNP are joining forces in the European and Scottish Parliaments and in Dundee City Council to call for the Scottish Executive to recognise Broughty Ferry Beach as a designated bathing beach. Ian Hudghton MEP, Shona Robison MSP and Broughty Ferry Councillor Ken Guild will plant a symbolic European flag on the beach on Friday morning while urging the Scottish Executive to have the beach designated under the European Directive. The SNP says the Scottish Executive has dragged its heels over designating the beach and, as a consequence, the area is missing out on visitors and tourists.

Explaining the background to the Directive, MEP Ian Hudghton said,

“Europeans are very concerned about water quality and give top priority to good bathing water when judging their immediate living environment. Moreover, for the Tourist Industry, clean and safe water is an important argument to attract visitors to their area.

“The countries of the EU have seen the potential of designating sea and fresh water bathing beaches, with many thousands of sites designated since the 1976 Directive came into force. And it’s not just the sun-kissed shores of Greece, Spain and Italy. Denmark has over 1,000. Even land-locked Austria has 267 fresh water designations! Why are there are only 60 in the whole of Scotland? The Scottish Executive’s reluctance speaks volumes.

“Under the Directive, beaches are awarded either a yellow or a blue flag with blue in the top flight and yellow indicating some improvement needed. But the importance of the flags is the public investment they bring. Initial yellow flag status for this beach, which is what we’re pushing for, would almost certainly result in the awarding of a blue flag within the next couple of years.

“With over 2 million hits on the Commission’s Bathing Waters Website in 2001, beach designation is as much about tourism as it is about the environment – both of which I believe are important to local people. I am pleased to be able to lend my support to this campaign.”

Shona Robison MSP, who has tabled a motion in the Scottish Parliament for the beach to be designated, commented,

“It’s not too late for Broughty Ferry. As Ian has said, clean water is important in attracting potential tourists from mainland Europe and Yellow Flag designation would be the first crucial step. We simply can’t afford to ignore the potential economic gains to the Dundee area.

“The Scottish Executive have dragged their heels over this area for far too long. With only two Scottish beaches waiting for yellow flag designation - Broughty Ferry and Largs, I remain hopeful that our pressure will pay dividends in the very near future.”

Broughty Ferry Councillor, Ken Guild echoed Ms Robison’s comments saying,

“Local people are keen to get involved in Broughty Ferry beach issues and in actively promoting a beach management plan. Regular clean ups, which I’ve taken part in, have been a great success and I’m delighted that the Royal Tay Yacht Club organised a similar clean up at their part of the beach.

“Dundee City Council are keen to back our action and Shona and Ian’s efforts at Parliamentary level will help to spur things on. SEPA said Broughty’s water quality passed with flying colours this year but in order to get a Blue Flag work needs to be done. Winning Yellow Flag designation would be a great stride forward.”

ENDS