

18 February 2003

EUROPEAN THEME AT CARNOUSITE AGM

Carnoustie Branch of the SNP has, as guest speaker at tonight's AGM Ian Hudghton MEP. Ian, who was formerly Leader of Angus Council, will bring members up to date on what he's been doing in the European Parliament. He will also stress the importance of forging strong links between members of local authorities, the Scottish Parliament and MEPs.

Looking towards the Scottish Parliament and Council elections in May, Mr Hudghton will say:

"Eighty per cent of issues for which the Scottish Parliament is responsible start out in the European Parliament. Once the EU votes in legislation, it is for the Edinburgh Parliament to transpose it into domestic law, and it is very often delegated to our local authorities to implement. One rather notable example was legislation affecting the disposal of fridges. Although we can all agree that this it is imperative we protect the environment, the government must ensure that local authorities are well forewarned and properly financed to implement any new measures stemming from Europe.

"That's just one example; there are plenty more. I can't stress how vitally important it is for our politicians in Edinburgh to be on the inside track when discussions in Brussels and Strasbourg are underway. Even at these early stages changes to EU laws can be made to render them more applicable and relevant to Scotland.

"I often criticise the EU's approach as being "one-size-fits-all" which seldom leaves anyone entirely happy. However, if we can ensure that the channels of communication both upstream and down are kept open, then we can at least be assured of influencing decisions at each and every stage."

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