

# Your

# letters

Your voice in  
your paper

SEND your letters to: Your Letters, Dumbarton and Vale of Leven Reporter, First Floor, Carus House, 201 Dumbarton Road, Clydebank, G81 4XJ or email them to [editorial@dumbartonreporter.co.uk](mailto:editorial@dumbartonreporter.co.uk).

**PLEASE note that only letter writers who supply full contact details will have their contributions selected for the letters page. If you wish to remain anonymous please mark name and address to be withheld clearly at top of the page and your details will not be published. Letters printed do not represent the views of the Dumbarton Reporter (submission deadline noon Thursday).**

## Home to roost?

I WAS interested to read your article "Calls to control rogue camping" in the Reporter (31/5/11).

It seems the chickens have finally come home to roost with the necessity to introduce a camping ban on parts of Loch Lomond to try to combat the persistently increasing anti-social behaviour that is ruining the loch-side for the many decent visitors who enjoyed this special place in the past.

These people together with residents are the victims.

The blame for this mess lies squarely with the combination of Freedom of Access legislation that allows wild camping, and the National Park Authority's management policy where "success" is seen as encouraging ever increasing visitor numbers.

What else did they expect?

Like many other over-marketed tourist destinations, Loch Lomond is spiralling downwards towards a ghetto-like environment that most decent people will seek to avoid and there is no point in the Friends of Loch Lomond bleating about the escalating problem.

Over the years they have become bedfellows with the National Park Authority and as such relinquished any right they ever had to call themselves conservationists. They are now part of the problem; not

of the solution. With "friends" like the Friends of Loch Lomond and the National Park Authority, Loch Lomond doesn't need any enemies.  
**Angus Macmillan, Balloch**

## Renewables to blame?

IN light of the recent announcement by Scottish (actually Spanish) Power to raise our electricity bills I would like to point something out.

Our bills are going up as a direct result of a renewable energy policy that pays developers, land owners and city investors handsomely for a pitiful amounts of energy sometimes produced from wind turbines.

We are all subsidising an industry that is not going to fulfil our energy needs and is ruining our beautiful country.

Alex Salmond seems argued to keep Britain's nuclear weapons in the hills of the west coast of Scotland but seems totally against developing nuclear power.

I hope he changes his mind before the lights go out.

**Sally Page  
Gartocharn**

## National Carers Week

THIS week is National Carers Week, and I would like to ask your readers to spare a thought for the six million carers in the UK.

One in eight of the population cares for a disabled or older spouse or family member and this number is rising rapidly.

Carers provide round the clock care for their loved ones and often go unrecognised, unsupported and invisible to society.

Without regular respite from their daily struggle, many carers face a bleak future of physical and social isolation, depression, ill health and despair.

I work for a charity called Vitalise.

We provide desperately-needed respite breaks for people with disabilities and their carers at our accessible UK centres.

The people who visit us often tell us just how important a break is in their lives — people like this woman who cares for her father, who has dementia.

She told us: "The biggest challenge in caring for my Dad is simply that it's 24/7. I feel isolated from a 'normal' life, as all my time and energy goes into caring for him.

"Carers never get enough support. I cared for Dad for a year with no support at all. Regular breaks are really important.

"Just being able to relax, knowing Dad is safe and happy, makes such a difference.

"I really feel I wouldn't cope at all now without our breaks. At Vitalise I get to be his daughter again, instead of his carer — it's a wonderful feeling."

During Carers Week 2011, I would like to ask your readers to remember that carers need breaks just as much as those they care for, and to support our vital work in the region.

We don't get a penny from central government, but rely on the compassion and generosity of our supporters to keep on providing our vital services, so please help us.

To make a donation or for more information about our breaks, call 0845 345 1972 or visit [www.vitalise.org.uk](http://www.vitalise.org.uk).

**Colin Brook, Vitalise**

## 'We all want peace'

THE name of West Dunbartonshire has featured widely in media concerned with the Middle East this past week.

Here in Israel, it is has taken a notable hit following news of a ban on Israeli goods, and especially Israeli books — for Israeli Jews, there scarcely exists a scarier echo of the Third Reich.

I am Jewish, was born in the UK and now live in Israel.

I live in an Israeli city near the West Bank, and am often in Jerusalem — accordingly I have regular

contact with Palestinians, and like a majority of Jews in Israel, daily contact with Israeli Arabs, Christian, Muslim and Druze alike.

What for you may be a political campaign, a hobby, a cause to support — for me is daily life.

And let me tell you a bit about it.

When I drop off my kids at kindergarten in the morning, there is an armed guard at the door.

When I enter any shop, hospital, cinema, museum or office, there too is an armed guard who checks my bag, and either passes a wand over me, or requests I walk through a metal detector.

In my home, I am required by law to have a safe room, with reinforced concrete and an airtight window and door.

I have gas masks under my bed — for me, my wife and my infant children.

I pay a high level of tax to afford a security service capable of defending me and my family from daily attempts on our lives, whether in the form of bombs, shootings, stabbings, deliberate hit and runs, or rockets from neighbouring territories and states.

These attacks pre-date 1967, they occurred before Israel's independence in 1948.

Indeed they began as early as the 1920s, and were carried out by those incited into 'jihad' by the Islamic Mufti of Jerusalem and his supporters — a man who, while your parents and grandparents were fighting the Nazis, was making alliances with Hitler.

Yet, when my wife was diagnosed with cancer, she was treated by Jewish and Arab doctors and nurses, and alongside Jewish and Arab patients.

Her surgeon was a Palestinian from Hebron, her nurse was a Druze from Haifa and her day care doctor was a Jew from Jerusalem.

This is not reported in the media, because it is not unique. This is normal life, and is happening right now.

Speaking of the media, Israel's press is the most open in the Middle East.

If you doubt me, ask any British journalist in Israel; they have just been across the region covering the Arab Spring — see if they really feel that sound humanitarian reason would propose a boycott of Israeli publications over those from other states. There is freedom of speech in Israel like nowhere else in the region.

I am not suggesting Palestinian life is all fine and dandy.

But myths such as a humanitarian crisis when economic figures are booming, and claims of occupation when Palestinians are suppressed by their own leaders, mean the Palestinian rhetoric as it is heard around the world is far from reflective of reality.

Moreover, Palestinian television and press continue to preach, to children and adults alike, the culture of jihad, the honour of martyrdom and sickeningly deny Jews the right to exist.

Farfur the 'Mickey Mouse' character who sung of suicide bombings to five year olds is just one example. Finally, I ask you to consider the root of this motion to boycott Israeli goods, and books of all things.

The Left in the UK is enduring difficult times.

In recent years we have seen its key figures invite Islamist preachers and supporters of homophobia, suicide bombings and domestic abuse.

We have seen leaders of Israel's political opposition unable to speak in the UK. We have seen university unions deny the very definition of anti-Semitism, and leading members of the Houses of Parliament voice support for suicide bombings.

Remember 7/7, remember the attack on Glasgow's airport. Imagine having this threat every day, not for a decade, but for a century.

I am not asking you to agree with Israel's policy toward the Palestinians.

I am simply asking you understand why and how these policies have come to be.

I am asking you to listen to mainstream voices in Israel, not simply the hard Left or Right.

We all want peace. But I want a peace that assures my children a future.

We may disagree on how we achieve this, but banning my leaders, boycotting my goods, blocking my books, silencing my voice — does only harm to all of us.

**Jason Pearlman  
Modi'in, Israel**

## The nationalist voice

**Ronnie  
McColl,  
council  
leader**



## Spending review

**THE Westminster spending review, revealed last week, has shown us that the next four years are going to be the most difficult in West Dunbartonshire Council's history.**

**The slash and burn strategy of the Con-Dem Government will have serious ramifications for our staff and the most vulnerable in our communities, unless West Dunbartonshire Council lives up to its responsibility as the area's biggest employer, and the main funder and delivery agent of crucial services to our communities.**

**That is why, on the back of a Westminster mini-budget in June, which affected this year's council budget by around £1.8m, and the reality that last week's spending review was not going to be good news, the SNP administration had to make in year adjustments.**

**This enables some budgetary savings to be made in the current year and also ensures that full year savings and income will be achieved next year.**

**Labour councillors say we were wrong to plan ahead and that we should have waited until January.**

**Like their colleagues at a national level, they are in denial about the position they have put us in.**

**Be assured, this SNP administration will do whatever is needed to protect jobs and frontline services.**

**One decision taken last year, which I would like to revisit, is the minimum living wage. This was suggested by Labour and rejected by council due to costs and difficulties around wage structures.**

**We must find a way round these problems.**

**In these times of austerity, it is vital we protect our lowest paid staff.**

**The SNP administration have asked officers to prepare a report for the November council meeting, when I trust the entire council can agree to not only implement a minimum living wage in West Dunbartonshire, but also call on all councils across Scotland to do likewise.**

**This SNP administration will never be afraid to revisit decisions if it can be demonstrated they were made in error.**

**As a minority administration, we will never forget to listen to others whose support we seek.**

## Fuel price increases

DUMBARTON and Vale Jackie Baillie has called for urgent action from the Scottish Government on fuel poverty as Scottish Power it is to raise the cost of gas by 19 per cent and the cost of electricity by 10 per cent.

Scottish Power says the increase, which will affect 2.4 million households in the UK, will come into effect from 1 August.

Affected customers will see an average daily rise to a dual fuel energy bill of 48p per day.

Jackie said: "Consumer groups and elderly care charities have warned rises like these will leave thousands of vulnerable people struggling to pay their fuel bills — especially after the summer."

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