
Wow, is this a knockout blow to Andy Kerr?

Posted by Clare - 2008/08/01 00:04

From today's Herald.

Labour leadership hopeful Andy Kerr has been dealt a devastating blow to his campaign by a party stalwart's accusation of "cant and humbug" over the former health minister's role in threatened hospital cuts.

Mr Kerr, who launches his leadership campaign in Glasgow today, has been savaged by a senior figure in North Lanarkshire whose father was the MP who campaigned for the founding of Monklands Hospital.

Jim Dempsey, son of the late James Dempsey, has circulated an open letter to MPs, MSPs and other senior Labour figures in the area, criticising Mr Kerr's role in the threatened closure of Monklands emergency department.

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Mr Dempsey writes: "Are you the person who was prepared to oversee the closure of essential A&E services in Monklands and elsewhere? The person who would close an eye to centuries of Labour struggle to improve the quality of life for all?

"Instead you would have non-accountable quangos - not locally elected representatives - to decide which services would be available to the aged and infirm, the young and the old, to those in most need in North Lanarkshire."

In a comment which will stun many Labour activists, Mr Dempsey says that he remains true to real Labour traditions, but "I will put on record my gratitude to Alex Salmond and his party for rescuing the local health services in this area from bean-counters and disinterested politicians such as you".

Praising those who fought to save Monklands A&E, Mr Dempsey says to Mr Kerr: "You do not have the mettle to stand up for us, just as Glasgow East has decided that Westminster has not realised their hopes and aspirations.

"There is an obligation on party members that we do not elect a leader in Holyrood who makes acceptable soundbites but whose record in office reflects lack of commitment to Labour ideals.

"Those of us who still carry the torch for Labour want to see the election of a candidate committed to tackling inequality - not just sounding off about it."

Mr Kerr said last night: "I saw the passion for the health service all around Scotland but my decisions were for the good of the NHS in Scotland as a whole. Hard decisions had to be made and I believe these decisions were the right ones for the long term."

He said the decisions were taken with experts, adding that the SNP reversal of the decision to close the Monklands emergency unit "has brought the proposals for primary care in Lanarkshire into a state of disarray".

Elaine Smith, the MSP for Coatbridge and Chryston, said of Mr Dempsey's letter: "My constituents, and I would include Jim, felt extremely strongly about Monklands Hospital and that Andy Kerr as health minister was responsible for the threat to it. Feelings here are still running high on this issue."

Re:Wow, is this a knockout blow to Andy Kerr?

Posted by Levenax - 2008/08/01 07:22

The Scottish Branch of the Labour Party is riven by factionalism as is shown by this latest example of fratricide by a member of the Lanarkshire Mafia. Mr Kerr will probably have to remain as one of the People's Party manure operatives.

Re:Wow, is this a knockout blow to Andy Kerr?

Posted by Geeooo - 2008/08/01 08:01

Labour need to find themselves some rising stars if they want to win back Scotland and hold onto the UK, as no-one has that dynamic drive to inspire people. That, and everyone in the party currently has been tarred with the 'Tony/Gordon/Wendy/Glasgow East' stick - it's time to move them all over and start afresh.

Re:Wow, is this a knockout blow to Andy Kerr?

Posted by Brenna1508 - 2008/08/01 10:34

Geeeeoo suggested: Labour need to find themselves some rising stars if they want to win back Scotland and hold onto the UK, as no-one has that dynamic drive to inspire people. That, and everyone in the party currently has been tarred with the 'Tony/Gordon/Wendy/Glasgow East' stick - it's time to move them all over and start afresh.

I think it will take a bit more than some rising stars Geeeeoo as most people are sick and tired of so called "stars". They are usually self serving idiots put in place by the powers that be in NuLabour. The Labour Party no longer exists in the UK as they now represent a form of Thatcherism and have done for the last 10 years at least. The only way to get them to move over is to throw them out.

They talk about "listening" but have no concept of what it means. They haven't listened to the people who elected them to power and they are still not listening.

Re:Wow, is this a knockout blow to Andy Kerr?

Posted by Brenna1508 - 2008/08/01 10:42

That's an interesting article Clare particularly as it contains a gentle reminder regarding the minimum expected from an elected representative.

"There is an obligation on party members that we do not elect a leader in Holyrood who makes acceptable soundbites but whose record in office reflects lack of commitment to Labour ideals."

Further comment would be superfluous!

Re:Wow, is this a knockout blow to Andy Kerr?

Posted by Clare - 2008/08/01 12:28

Levenax wrote:

The Scottish Branch of the Labour Party is riven by factionalism as is shown by this latest example of fratricide by a member of the Lanarkshire Mafia. Mr Kerr will probably have to remain as one of the People's Party manure operatives.

I can't see this as fratricide Lev, nothing like it. What I actually see here is someone with guts coming out and telling Kerr what he came to stand for. Monklands nearly lost its A&E, so did North Ayrshire, because of his refusal to listen to people and to medical staff in those areas and even to Emergency Services in those areas. Monklands is right on top of the motorway network. North Ayrshire is on top of the A77 and that other A road that links Ayrshire with Dumfries where a lot of RTAs occur. He ignored ALL of that. He also told us what a great deal PFI and PPP were and hid the true costs behind all these new hospitals. I think Jim Dempsey is right to issue this reminder to everyone about Kerr.

Don't forget either that Kerr is part of the Lanarkshire set-up too. He is the MSP for East Kilbride. He is part of the "Mafia" you refer to.

Add to that the fact that of anyone standing he had the most to gain from Wendy's fall for hadn't he set himself up way back to step into McConnell's shoes once they'd got rid of him only to be thwarted by Brown's decision to impose Alexander on them as Leader? Hasn't he kept pretty quiet since the knives came out for Wendy? When it comes to dirty tricks no one plays dirtier than Kerr can.
