



Rhoda Grant

Scottish Labour MSP for the Highlands and Islands

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Wick High School

I visited Wick High School recently and was really concerned about the state of the building.

My impression and that of my colleagues, Peter Peacock and David Stewart was that a rebuild was a necessity.

Apart from the general fabric of the building there was very little in the way of common areas, the canteen for instance was standing room only.

The day we visited was a lovely sunny day and food was also being sold from serving hatches outside, something that couldn't happen on a wet day.

Had the day been wet, it was difficult to see where all the young people could have gone to have their lunch.

I was also really impressed by the behaviour of the young people involved, had this been a less well behaved school the whole thing would have been a nightmare.

The old part of the building is beautiful and seems to have stood the test of the time more than the newer extensions.

However, even this part of the building is in need of up grading with a heating system that is antiquated and the high ceilings add to the cost of heating the building.

A new build would be easier to maintain and heat, leaving money in the school budget for teaching materials and education rather than patching and fuel.

It is also sad to see that swimming pool in the school closed, and while there is another pool in Wick this is not so convenient for swimming lessons as having one on site.

It was also an excellent community asset and its closure has been regrettable for the whole community.

The sports hall is also used more widely but again is far from satisfactory.

At a time when we need to encourage people, both young and old to take more exercise this does not help make sport more attractive.

It is unfair to ask young people to try to reach their potential in surroundings such as this and we owe it to them and the staff to provide them with better accommodation.

At the last election we pledged to rebuild or refurbish any school that needed this work.

However, since the SNP government was elected no new school has been commissioned.

It was our ambition to make Scotland No. 1 in the world for education, an investment in all our futures.

Sadly this government does not even seem interested.

If you think we should be investing in Wick High School, visit our website on www.handimsps.org.uk where there is a letter you can send to the Minister for Schools and Skills asking the Government to step in.

There is also a link to the Parent Council campaign e-petition where nearly 800 people have already signed.

It is also important to speak to your Councillors and make them aware of your concerns.

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Rhoda Grant's website : www.rhodagrants.org.uk

Highlands and Islands Labour : www.handilabour.org.uk