

Lothian Greens Launch Election Campaign 2011

☒ Greens in Lothian have launched their local campaign for the Scottish elections with retiring MSP Robin Harper passing the baton to former athlete and Green councillor, Alison Johnstone.

Alison – a former East of Scotland title-holder at 800m and 1500m – is in the running to take Robin's place in the Scottish Parliament as a regional MSP for Lothian.

The Greens are proud of the fact that Lothian was the first place in the UK to elect a Green Parliamentarian, with Robin's election in 1999. It is also the part of the UK that has had Green parliamentarians the longest. The party is determined to keep it that way, by seeking the public's backing through "second" or "regional" votes in May.

Alison Johnstone said:

"I am pleased that the campaign is now in full flow, with Robin setting me off on the last few laps. I recognise the sheer hard work that Robin has put in over the last 12 years and I am determined to earn the same backing from voters in the next few weeks. Lothian is the Green heart of Scotland, if not the UK: let's keep it that way on 5 May!"

Robin Harper said:

"I've worked with Alison for more than a decade, and I can think of no-one better to be an MSP for Lothian. She has four years as a councillor under her belt and in that time has won plaudits from campaigners and community groups on issues as diverse as sports facilities, school closures, use of public land and even plastic bags. With at least 6% of second votes needed to elect Alison, she'll be a superb Green MSP."

Among the issues which Greens are highlighting locally are: the opportunities for investment in public services by repairing the Forth Road Bridge rather than building a new one; opposition to large-scale biomass in Leith; and making a commitment to Edinburgh's students by rejecting tuition fees. The party's plan for a comprehensive home insulation scheme would also slash fuel bills and create hundreds of jobs in the city.

[Our interview with Alison](#) was published at the weekend.