

#SP16 Nick Cook Conservative candidate for Edinburgh Eastern



In 2012 Nick Cook was the youngest person to be elected as councillor in Edinburgh. He is currently Conservative councillor representing the Liberton/Gilmerton Ward of the city.

Now, in 2016, he has been selected to stand as a candidate in May's Scottish Parliamentary election for Edinburgh Eastern, and he told The Edinburgh Reporter exactly why he thinks he is the best man for the job. Until recently Kenny Macaskill was SNP MSP for the area, but he has retired after being an MSP since The Scottish Parliament reconvened.

"I'm standing for the Scottish Parliament at this election because I want to offer a low tax alternative to Labour and the SNP. The Scottish Parliament will soon get huge new powers over income tax. I want to ensure that people in Edinburgh Eastern have an alternative to the higher tax proposals of both Labour and the SNP.

We've been quite clear although we will bring forward more policies in our manifesto but the principle is clear: people in Scotland should not be subject to higher taxes than people in the rest of the UK. Going into this election only the Scottish Conservatives will make that promise.

"The principle proposal which we have seen are both higher income tax from Labour and also the Liberal Democrats with their penny increase on income tax. That would hit the lowest workers in Scotland, people who are right above the basic tax

threshold as well as those on higher bands. I think that is wrong. I think that the policy laid out by the Chancellor of the Exchequer George Osborne for lowering personal taxation for people across the UK is the correct one and that is the trajectory that I think Scotland should stay on.

“We don’t want to impose an extra tax burden on anyone, but what we have seen from the television debates is Nicola Sturgeon flip-flopping on the idea of a 50 pence top rate of tax. Ruth Davidson has said that the last thing we want in Scotland is a sign up at the border saying that Scotland is closed for business. We want to encourage business and investment into this country. We also want to make sure that people aren’t paying more of their money to government, but that they have more to spend on themselves.

“In May 2015 the SNP had a very good General Election across Scotland. It would be silly to deny that but what we have seen both then and during the Scottish Independence Referendum is a sizeable majority of people in Edinburgh Eastern and right across Edinburgh who wanted to back the United Kingdom.

“At this election what we see is both Labour and the Liberal Democrats going soft on the union, allowing their MSPs to have a free vote on independence if they want. The Scottish Conservatives are the only party who stand 100% behind the United Kingdom and that is what I offer at this election.

“I already have the pleasure of representing a large part of Edinburgh Eastern at local council level and there are a lot of issues both citywide and locally. People don’t have the waste collections that they deserve, there are huge problems with potholes and local infrastructure and the council administration pursue the wrong priorities.

“There is also a huge proposed development right across the south east of the city which is cause for real concern. I have worked with residents for the last two years to assist with

their concerns and make their voices heard in the City Chambers. If I am elected to parliament I would have more power and a louder voice to be able to assist them with their concerns about the huge swathe of development proposed across south east Edinburgh.