

#SP16 Gordon MacDonald SNP candidate for Edinburgh Pentlands

✘ Gordon MacDonald took this seat from the incumbent MSP the late David McLetchie by 1758 votes in 2011. Now he hopes to build on his reputation as a hard working local politician to reclaim the seat and go on to serve Edinburgh Pentlands for the next parliamentary term.

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Born in Glasgow, MacDonald previously worked as a management accountant with the council-owned Lothian Buses, so it is fair to say that he had an understanding of many local issues before becoming an MSP.

The Edinburgh Reporter met him on a cold day in Wester Hailes where he posed in front of the underpass opened to the public late last year, which he helped campaign for.

[The Edinburgh Reporter #SP16 Gordon Macdonald Edinburgh Pentlands](#) from [Phyllis Stephen](#) on [Vimeo](#).

“I’ve worked hard to make sure that the constituents are aware that I have been campaigning hard for them. When I was elected in 2011, I quickly decided that like the doctor, the dentist, the lawyer and the banker I was there to provide a service to my constituents. We quickly established the Longstone office in the heart of the constituency which acted as an advice centre, and over the years we have helped thousands of people.

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The SNP group of MSPs elected in 2011 at Holyrood the day after the election

" The three issues that affect many people in this area are housing, traffic congestion and air quality. In terms of housing we have got to get the balance right. We desperately need houses that are affordable in this area and with that in mind we have over the last five years built affordable housing in Broomhouse, in Ratho and in Fairmilehead. We are currently building affordable housing at Curriehill and at Harvester's Way in Wester Hailes. North Sighthill will come on stream later this year. We have to have that balance right with private developers who wants build on all the available green space and that has an impact on traffic congestion especially along the Lanark Road and the Calder Road which at peak times is the biggest car park in the west of the city.

"We have to get the balance right. I think that in the west of the city we have huge problems with air quality and as a result three of the four arterial routes currently fail the air quality standards. We are also in a difficult position in that in West Lothian there is a lot of housebuilding along the eastern boundary all of which is commutable into Edinburgh.

"We know there is going to be increased traffic coming into Edinburgh and so it seems crazy that we are looking at allowing development on the likes of the Garden District or in Wallace Land. We have to remember that this is good arable land that we could be building on.

During his time at Holyrood and mainly because of his background in the bus industry, MacDonald was appointed to the Infrastructure and Capital Investment Committee. There he was able to persuade The Scottish Government to put up a community bus replacement fund to the tune of about £1 million. He was also latterly on the Education and Culture committee looking at the Higher Education Bill. He managed to secure an amendment to ensure that student sabbatical officers were not

excluded from standing for the university court. As originally drafted the legislation would have prevented that.

He also sat on the Economy, Energy and Tourism committee and in that role they looked at 'fair work' and he hopes this will allow the government to support councils to pay the living wage for careworkers.

The MSP was also involved in the reinstatement of the underpass next to the Wester Hailes Healthy Living Centre. He said: "When we sat down to discuss the development of the centre a few years ago the council wanted to leave the underpass much as it was, but putting in a dog leg ramp. Along with Wester Hailes Community Council I said this was not acceptable because we have a history of problems with underpasses in the area. I just did not see the sense in replicating the mistakes of the past. After a lot of discussions and pressure from the Community Council, we managed to persuade the council, the health board and the owners of the Westside Plaza to agree to build this more acceptable underpass.

"I may be an SNP candidate, but I am definitely not complacent. I have worked hard with the community over the last five years. As much as the parliamentary timetable allows I go to as many community council meetings as possible, gala days, public meetings and I meet NHS Lothian and the council on a regular basis. I try to promote what is needed in this area.

"For example we are in the process of upgrading WHEC, Oxbgangs Primary School was upgraded by adding on extra classrooms and we have a new 3G pitch at Broomhouse Primary School thanks to Cashback for Communities money. In terms of the community during the summer I try to get involved with litter picking with the friends of Peatland Hills Country Park, I painted the Broomhouse Market, I helped build a dry stand dyke with Youth Vision and with the members of Currie Community Council I

filled potholes on Donkey Lane. I feel that it is all about becoming part of the community both as a politician on all the issues which are important, but also taking part.

" Although our manifesto is yet to be launched but the main drivers of the Scottish Government has been to make life better for the people of Scotland. The living wage for caseworkers is one example of that. The fact that we spend 7% more on health than they do south of the border is another.

" We reorganised colleges to give them the same status and standing as universities, and that has been quite successful. We have invested in Modern Apprentices raising these from 16,000 in 2011 to 25,000 now with a goal of 30,000 by 2020. Hence the reason in the Edinburgh area about 95% of children leaving school have positive destinations which is the highest it has ever been.

"I will be happy if my constituents recognise the amount of work that I have put in to the area to make this a better place."