

Council elections 2017 – Liberton/Gilmerton

This ward lies on the south eastern corner of the city, has an Army Reserve Centre in it, the historic Liberton Tower and skirts along the City By Pass on its southern edge.

The current councillors who were elected for the Liberton and Gilmerton Ward in 2012 were

Norma Austin Hart – Scottish Labour Party

Bill Cook – Scottish Labour Party

Tom Buchanan – Scottish National Party (SNP)

Nick Cook – Scottish Conservative and Unionist

Norma Austin Hart has been Vice-Convener of Culture and Sport during this administration, but is retiring from local government now.

Labour's Bill Cook has been Vice-Convener of Finance and Resources and he is also standing down at this election.

Sadly Tom Buchanan who was Economy Convener for some time [died in April 2013](#). Following the [by-election in 2013](#) Keith Robson (Labour) was elected to the council but is now standing down.

Like his predecessor Keith was motivated by promoting employment opportunities for young people and worked with Council officers to have Employment Fairs run in the ward in each of the last two years.

The highlight of Keith's short time as a Councillor has been as the city's first Play Champion where he has met many fantastic groups across the city working with young people promoting play, particularly in disadvantaged areas. Keith also served for the past fourteen months as a member of the Edinburgh World Heritage Board which he has described as a

great experience learning even more about our fabulous city.

Nick Cook is not resigning but he is moving to a new ward. He is standing as the Conservative candidate in the newly named Morningside Ward.



Loading...



Taking too long?

↻ Reload document

| ↗ [Open in new tab](#)

[Download \[162.00 B\]](#)

The 2017 candidates for the four member ward are as follows:

***CAMERON**, Lezley Marion (Scottish Labour Party)*

***HOWIE**, Derek (Scottish National Party (SNP))*

***KNOX**, John Christopher (Scottish Liberal Democrats)*

***MACINNES**, Lesley (Scottish National Party (SNP))*

***NICHOL**, John (Scottish Green Party)*

***POGSON**, Tim (Scottish Labour Party)*

***SMITH**, Stephanie (Scottish Conservative and Unionist)*

Lezley Cameron Scottish Labour Party



Lezley Cameron was a councillor once before, so we asked her why she wants to do it all over again. She explained that she feels that the people in this ward in particular need a Labour councillor (or two!) to stand up for them.

Lezley told us : "I think the people of the Liberton/Gilmerton need Labour councillors more than ever given the cuts that there have been over the last 10 years from the SNP led Scottish Government to our councils.

When I was a Councillor previously we were able to invest lots in our schools, and we built Gracemount Leisure Centre for example. It's a very different story now.

People are very worried about what's happening in our schools about education, and they are also very worried about the fact that we've got an elderly population and that our services for health and social care in particular are really, really stretched.

My background is in HR originally and in economic development when I was a councillor before I represented Alnwickhill which

is part of this ward so I know the area quite well.

I was also the Convener of economic development, so my priorities at that time were to make sure people had access to education, training and employment opportunities.

I've also lived overseas – I lived in Australia. So I have seen how things are organised in other parts of the world, and I am bringing back that kind of experience.

I've got a very rounded experience in local government. I first worked as an officer in the council, I have been a trade union representative and I've also been an elected member so that's a very rounded perspective. I've also run my own business and I worked very closely with the business community in my previous role.


I was responsible for European and international Affairs and last year during the EU referendum I led the main campaign for the area. That's an issue that people are really bringing up on the doorsteps there are lots of EU National is living in this area and they are concerned about what Brexit means for them.

Derek Howie SNP



Derek told us : “Having been an Edinburgh council social worker for 31 years I am well placed to address the issues and champion the causes of individuals, families and communities in Liberton/Gilmerton for the next five years. I am ready to take on this responsibility and, indeed, looking forward to it.”

John Knox Scottish Liberal Democrats

 John Knox is the Liberal Democrat candidate. Those of you who read our weekly Letter from Scotland column will be familiar with him.

He lives in the ward and has stood three times previously. He said : “I think the election is going to be about Brexit and

about the Union really, but I would like to see it about local issues. The Liberal Democrats are strong on Brexit. We are against Britain leaving the Common Market and we are for the union but also we have a lot of local policies that we want to put across.

“The big one is decentralisation. We want power to come back from Holyrood back to the councils. Local councils would be much stronger, and then we want the councils in turn to devolve some of their powers to local communities as well. That is one of our big, big projects.

Knox believes that power has become too centralised. He explained : “We have seen the police and fire brigades being centralised. The schools are threatened with being centralised, that would be dreadful. The Health Service is centralised already, so we have had enough of that and we want to get back to local decision making if we can.

“The local issues here are that public services are going down the drain. We think that the answer to that is to raise taxes unfortunately. You have to pay for what you get. So we are talking about a 3p increase in the council tax. We are talking if we can about getting an increase in income tax as well to pay for better local services. That is what people are complaining about. They are complaining about potholes in the road, they are complaining about the health service not being up to scratch, they are complaining about the schools not having enough teachers and so on.

“All of that comes back to finance in the end.”

On the subject of schools and whether councils should have more say in the way they are run, Knox believes they need more. “My own pet project in this campaign is to recommend that Friday afternoons in every secondary school should be used for physical activity of some sort. I think Friday afternoons are largely wasted at the moment. And teachers

should be paid extra, or sport instructors paid extra to come in and run physical activities from 2 till 4 every Friday afternoon for every secondary school pupil. It would fight obesity and would put people in a much better mood at the end of the week going off into their weekend.

As a fourth time lucky candidate, John is well-qualified to talk about this part of Edinburgh which he hopes to represent. "I have lived in this city for more than 30 years. I brought up my family here, and I have lived in this particular ward for 13 years. I have stood here three times before so I think I am committed to this area. But not just to this area. I am not a great believer in these very local campaigns. I think that people are elected like me for the whole city and should take into account the good of the whole city, not just people here in Liberton."

[The Edinburgh Reporter – John Knox Liberal Democrat candidate for Liberton/Gilmerton](#) from [Phyllis Stephen](#) on [Vimeo](#).



Lesley MacInnes SNP

Living in Gilmerton, Lesley is ready to bring energy and some fresh ideas to the Liberton/Gilmerton ward. She explained that as a former manager of an international organisation she will apply her skills and experiences to her community's challenges and to bring maximum benefits to this part of the city.

John Nichol Green Party



John Nichol has lived in Edinburgh for almost thirty years, studying at South Queensferry High School, Napier Polytechnic and Telford College. He has worked for an intercity train

company in Edinburgh Waverley for the last twenty years as a guard and trainer.

He joined the Scottish Green Party in 2009 and has held various voluntary roles within the organisation. He is a Community Councillor on Gilmerton Inch Community Council, and sits on the management committee of Inch House Community Centre.

Tim Pogson Scottish Labour Party



Tim told us about himself: “Originally from Yorkshire, I have lived in Edinburgh since 1995. I have spent virtually my entire career working in the field of social housing.

“I currently work for a charitable organisation that supports council housing services and housing associations throughout Scotland. My specialist area is homelessness policy and practice.

“I live in the Southside and am currently chair of Southside Community Council. My early family experiences were blighted by disability. I have always wanted to make a positive contribution to my community and hopefully help others in need. I believe that I have the experience and knowledge necessary to make an excellent contribution to managing public services on behalf of the people of Liberton/Gilmerton ward.

“The Liberton/Gilmerton area is a fantastic place for families to raise their children, minutes from the city centre, filled with its own beautiful green spaces and with the greenbelt right on its doorstep, but it is a community with challenges, and it is these challenges that I would seek to address as a ward councillor.

1. Anti social behaviour continues to be a major headache in pockets of the ward, and with increasingly severe

cuts to community policing resources, challenging these problems isn't going to become any easier.

2. Edinburgh is a city in dire need of more housing. We acknowledge that a booming, growing, economically successful city is going to need more houses, but we also need to provide everything that goes along with new communities, more schools, GP surgeries and other community resources. Housing alone does not make a community.
3. Finally, we are all aware of the spending cuts that threaten our precious public services, education, health, social care, cleansing. I will fight to ensure that Liberton/Gilmerton receives the services it needs and that it deserves."

Tim spoke to us outside Inch House in the ward. He explained why he thought he would be a good councillor. "A few reasons. When I was growing up, I grew up in a housing association flat, our home, my childhood home, because my father had a disability and wasn't able to earn to his full potential. So I think there was some good life experience there. My whole career has been spent in housing, in terms of affordable housing, so I've got a lot of experience there in terms of helping with council services and having an understanding of the benefits of housing. And then finally where I stay in the Southside I'm heavily involved with community organisations there, with the community council. And we've worked closely with the councillors looking at issues around bins, planning and what have you.

"I think my priority would probably be around housing pressures within Liberton/Gilmerton. Everybody's aware that Edinburgh is a growing city. We need more housing, more schools. We need investment in new schools where new families are moving into the area, GPs' surgeries, public transport.

"We need to make sure that council services are well run and well delivered."

[Tim Pogson](#) from [Phyllis Stephen](#) on [Vimeo](#).

Stephanie Smith Conservative Party

Stephanie Smith is an experienced political campaigner having fought for Almond Valley in the 2016 Holyrood election.

☒ She has been selected by local Conservatives as the Scottish Conservative candidate for the Liberton/Gilmerton ward in the upcoming council election on 4th May.

After her selection Stephanie said, “Having been born and raised in Liberton, I am delighted to be standing in this election for my home area.

“I know the area well and having been politically active in Edinburgh for a number of years, I have a good understanding of the concerns local residents have.”

“I am the only candidate who will be able to hold the SNP to account and stand firm against their calls for a second independence referendum, focusing instead on the issues that are important to the residents of the ward, such as our schools, local businesses, transport, and refuse collection to name a few.”