

Spotlight on Councillor Cammy Day



Councillor Cammy Day, Deputy Leader of the City of Edinburgh Council

Cammy Day is councillor for Forth Ward in the north of the city and leader of the Edinburgh Labour Group. He was born and raised in what he describes as “Scotland’s fine capital city” and is a proud Edinburgh citizen.

He was a front bench councillor in the last administration which was run by Labour and now he has a prominent role in the present set-up.

We spoke with him about his political career and that wee bit of his life that he gets away from politics.

He said : “I was really proud to be elected in the by-election in Forth Ward in 2008. This was a change in my career and has allowed me the opportunity to lead on housing, community safety, Education and now as Depute Leader of the City of Edinburgh Council along with SNP Council Leader Adam McVey.



Councillors McVey and Day signed the new coalition agreement in June 2017, a month after the Council elections.

“I spend my spare time cycling, running, going to the gym (way less than I should), meeting my friends and having my family come and dine with me each week!

“I don’t think I’ve yet mastered a work life balance. The role I have is an exciting and challenging one and can be demanding. But I make sure I have a day a week away from work!”

So what does he like best about the place he has lived all his life?

Councillor Day continued : “Edinburgh is one of the best cities in the world, with an old town, many hills surrounding us and a sea side to enjoy. It’s a hugely popular, vibrant city with something to offer everyone There are great bars, restaurants, theatres, sports, the best schools and universities, and something for all ages.”



Councillor Day as Education Convener attended the opening of Portobello High School with Hector Macaulay, Managing Director of Balfour Beatty and The Rt Hon Lord Provost of the City of Edinburgh Donald Wilson

So where does he like to spend time in the city? Councillor Day continued : "I really like Princes Street Gardens. In summer it's a Shangri-La away from the hustle and bustle of the city. It is a great place to relax and have some 'chill time'. My other favourite is Cramond and the River Almond to walk, run or cycle. It's a beautiful part of the city and very relaxing."

As a councillor, Cammy Day has been quite successful, rising through the ranks to become the group leader and Deputy Council Leader in this administration.

In his own career he was until recently studying community education and social policy at the University of Edinburgh. All that had to stop however when he became too busy as leader of the Labour Group.

He said : "I really enjoyed the social policy side of it. I didn't finish the degree but if I ever find a gap I will go back! I worked in the north and north west of the city doing

community development work, youth work, working with young people. I worked with tenants groups trying to get them more involved in what happens in their community. My job was really to upskill local people and help them understand policy documents from the government or the council.

“So effectively I started on the other side of the fence by helping people to challenge what goes on. I really miss that because I feel there is a lot we can do for young people with interventions early on in life to improve things. I am no longer directly providing that help and I do miss it. I try to keep my eye on this area from here at the council as I know it can transform lives.”

We suggested to Councillor Day that his portfolios of housing and then education fitted his skills and expertise perfectly. He admitted that and said : “These are probably the only two portfolios that I like or would want. This is exactly the kind of work that I used to do before in local areas.”

He is quite modest about his achievements. He told us : “I’m not sure I’ve yet got to the pinnacle of my career – though I’m hugely proud of the roles I have serving the city right now and I lead a great team of Edinburgh Labour Councillors. I’m also proud of the work I have done supporting young people across North Edinburgh in my previous work.

“I don’t have a mentor as such, but I have a few good people around me who keep me grounded with good advice and support, including my family, friends and my good friend and agent, Sandy Cameron.

“In the next year I have some goals to achieve – both in work, delivering the best we can for Edinburgh Labour and personally taking up a marathon and trying to be a bit fitter!”

And on the other side of the fence, what career advice would he give to others? “Well the advice I would give is to stick

at something if you believe in it, but to be respectful and strong enough to admit that you are wrong sometimes!””

What does a typical day hold for him? “No day is the same - but on a Monday I have an early start at The City Chambers with a council leadership meeting. I then catch up with Labour Group members, usually I have a meeting with the Police Commander, the Labour Group Executive, and at the moment I meet to discuss possible Transient Visitor Levy work. Then I am off down to my Ward for a 6pm surgery, usually manage to visit my mother then go home! And yes for most of this agenda I run a bit late!”



Councillor Day was presented to Prince Harry and Ms Meghan Markle when they made their first official visit to Edinburgh in February.

ROYAL VISIT

“I think it was good to see some of the new young royals here. I think they bring something different to the Royal Family. Prince Harry is quite informal and made a beeline to talk to lots of children which is brilliant. I was there representing the leadership of the council.

“On that day you could see from the Castle Esplanade right across to Fife with sun and blue skies and in the other direction there was snow on the hills. I asked if he would come back in the summer to join us at the time of the Edinburgh Festival and I think he will.

“The more the prince shows people that he just wants to be received quite normally then I think that helps us enjoy the work the Royals do. He does a lot of work with amputees and ex-servicemen and Ms Markle appears to want to become involved with social causes and promoting women. So what we have now is

two royals championing causes that I really believe in. And if we can use that to promote these causes here in Edinburgh then we should do that.

“I asked if Prince Harry and his fiancée would be staying in Edinburgh for St Valentine’s but he said no they were returning to London later that evening.”

NEXT TWELVE MONTHS

“In the next twelve months I want the council administration to deliver the best we can for the city, continue to campaign for a tourist tax for the capital city, do a marathon, work harder with my Edinburgh Labour Team and I would like to say be on time for meetings – but that’s unlikely!

“I will be looking forward to summer and a little break this year....”

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