

Craigentinny/Duddingston by-election – Elaine Ford – Liberal Democrat candidate

Elaine Ford is a brand new candidate with only a little experience in politics and she offered us her very first interview earlier in the year.

A council by-election has been called on 12 November 2020 in Craigentinny/Duddingston Ward as a result of Cllr Ian Campbell's resignation due to ill health. It was originally to be held in May 2020 but has been delayed due to the pandemic.



Elaine Ford, Scottish Liberal Democrats. Photo: Martin P. McAdam www.martinmcadam.com

We already conducted an interview with Elaine earlier this year, but sadly, we couldn't use it because the by election was then cancelled.

What's the big issue in the constituency which you have noted?

"Well, the top issue that's coming back is the withdrawal of the 69 bus service. That is the thing that has really been top of the list of concerns that people have. It runs right round Willowbrae down to Duddingston Village across to Northfield goes way up Parsons Green. And it was a little bus service that the elderly people in the ward, and those less able

really depended on to get down the hill, to their lunch club, and across perhaps to the shops at Northfield.

“And the council withdrew the service claiming that it wasn’t well patronised. So they cut the service at the end of just as we locked down. The local community had tried to persuade the council to stop the cuts, but they felt they weren’t listened to. And I felt so sorry for them. And this is the one thing that has come up again and again, they felt they weren’t listened to and they weren’t consulted.

“So I’ve started a petition for the return of the 69 bus and I am getting signatures every day. So I shall do my bit, I shall try and help the people.

“Lockdown has exacerbated loneliness. A lot of the elderly folk couldn’t get out to go to their lunch club, even the kirk minister had spoken to me earlier in the year that he was very worried about the mental health of people too – you know, the social contact. So that’s one issue that I am trying to turn about for the local people.”

How is it campaigning in a pandemic?

“Well, we’re still delivering leaflets. We ceased door knocking at the beginning of lockdown just for social distancing and protecting you know, the shielding community. So we had to stop delivering as well at one point but once restrictions started to be lifted, we were allowed to go out and deliver leaflets again. So that resumed in the summer. We did do one, one little door knock a few weeks ago and got a great reception from people. But then restrictions came back on again. So we’ve now stopped the door knocking but I’m trying to keep a social media profile up and of course, we’re getting a lot of feedback from our leaflets that are going out at the moment All my activists are going out with masks and

we've got a strict code of what we do if we do meet somebody we'll take a step back, but we've not received any criticism. People are happy to see us

"The state of the roads is the next big thing – the potholes the pavements, speeding traffic in Marionville, that's another thing that hasn't gone away. And before lockdown, I did manage to get some police checks increased there. And again, then lockdown happened, and everything went quiet again.

"But yes, it is a very diverse area. And I think regardless of people's political allegiances, everybody has to have their bins emptied, everybody has to walk the same streets drive on the road, ride their cycles. So we all deserve good council services. I want to cut across right across allegiances and political views , I would be somebody who would stand up for everybody, regardless of you know, where they stand on other issues. But because we all live in Edinburgh, we all love Edinburgh. And we want the best deal for the area. And I feel I would be a councillor that would fight for everybody and be local and vocal.

"I am in touch most daily with the Liberal Democrat group. And they're very supportive. I know that once, if I'm elected, you know, I will probably get committees to sit on as well as doing my ward work I've got an interest in culture and children and things. But that would have to be agreed by whoever makes those decisions. I understand that the more you put in, the more you get out. And I would be somebody who would devote, you know, a lot of my spare time and one day a week to it when I go down to four days a week anyway, next year at work.

"At work I'm a Pastoral Manager for St. George's. And I've been there 18 years now and supporting the pastoral team with issues, so I'm familiar with young people and their concerns and worries. It's a lovely job to have that in between an admin person and a teacher, it's lovely, I get to, you know,

encourage young people so that's wonderful. Myself, I've lived in Edinburgh for 33 years. And as my hobbies I am a baking mad person. I play the oboe for the Really Terrible Orchestra, which isn't meeting at the moment. And I like photography.

"I'm not a very good oboeist but the night we sadly left Europe, I opened my window here, stuck my oboe out and played Ode to Joy across the rooftops."

Why the Liberal Democrats?

"I think we are a party who will always try and listen to people. I know Ed Davey our new leader is very keen on, you know, trying to listen to people hear their views, understand the things that rather than just sort of saying, this is what we're about, you know, vote for me, it's actually about them. And that's what public service is about. I've always felt that about the Lib Dems, they offer good liberal solutions to problems and common sense things for everybody. I joined the party in 2015, but I've been a keen liberal for many, many years."

There are seven candidates standing in the election. They are (in alphabetical order):

Elaine Ford, Scottish Liberal Democrats

Margaret Arma Graham, Scottish Labour Party

Tam Laird, Scottish Libertarian Party

Andrew McDonald, Independent

Ben Parker, Scottish Green Party

Eleanor Price, Scottish Conservative and Unionist

Ethan Young, Scottish National Party (SNP)

This is a four councillor ward and the other three councillors who already represent the ward are Cllrs Joan Griffiths MBE,

John McLellan and Alex Staniforth.