

Greens call for deselection of Lothian list Conservative candidate

The Scottish Greens have called for the deselection of Cllr Sue Webber who is they say a “Covid sceptic Tory candidate”.

The party says that Cllr Webber – who is second on the Lothian Conservative party list ahead of sitting MSPs such as Jeremy Balfour and Gordon Lindhurst – is willing to risk public health.

David Bol writing in The Herald has reported having sight of messages posted on a WhatsApp group for Conservative councillors by Cllr Webber.

She is said to accuse the media of “creating panic and fear” over Covid-19 and call for a 20 per cent cut in public sector pay. She also apparently calls the travel ban “crazy”.



Cllr Susan Webber Pentland Hills Ward PHOTO ©2020 The Edinburgh Reporter

Scottish Greens health spokesperson and Lothians MSP Alison Johnstone said: “It is deeply alarming that the Scottish Conservatives could select someone who willing to risk public health, denies the science and holds the public sector workers who have seen us through this crisis in such contempt.

“As the Scottish Greens health spokesperson I have spent the last year urging caution as we face this deadly pandemic. The

travel bans have been a necessary part of that.

“And if councillor Webber feel the pitiful pay freeze in the Westminster budget was too much, she will be outraged at the pay increase the Scottish Greens secured this week. These workers have been our front line against this virus, and deserve to be valued, not punished by cruel Conservatives.

“Either the Conservatives agree that lives should be risked and that NHS staff should get a pay cut, or candidates spreading this dangerous rhetoric should be deselected.”

The SNP has said the “Tory mask has slipped” ahead of the Holyrood election in May, claiming that Cllr Webber attacked the pay of the NHS staff and vital frontline workers keeping Scotland safe during the pandemic.

Cllr Webber apparently praised the decision to freeze public sector pay, saying it was “about time” and that she “was thinking about a vote-winning policy called salary sacrifice where they only get 80 per cent and have to struggle like the others on furlough.”

SNP candidate for Edinburgh Central Angus Robertson said: “To see a Tory candidate suggest docking the pay of all those who have been on the frontline keeping public services going during this pandemic is a disgrace.

“Frontline workers have been working day-in day-out to keep Scotland safe from COVID-19, and Ms Webber’s attempt to downplay the fight against this virus does a total disservice to them.

“It is no surprise a person with these toxic views is standing for the party of Boris Johnson and Douglas Ross, it speaks volumes about the Tories.

“The Tory mask has well and truly slipped and the party has a duty to address these comments. It’s hard to see how Ms Webber

can now remain as a candidate.

“This is the most important election in Scotland’s history, and it comes down to a stark choice – who should decide the country’s future. Should it be the people of Scotland or Boris Johnson?”

A Scottish Conservative party spokesman said: “Candidates, councillors and other members often share views with each other on group chats on a private and informal basis and they are reminded about the importance of being considerate and measured while doing so.”

The Edinburgh Reporter has asked Cllr Webber for comment.