

Council Elections 2022 – Amy McNeese-Mechan Leith Walk Ward

Amy McNeese-Mechan was elected as one of two SNP councillors for Leith Walk Ward in 2017.

She told us a bit of her background and why she is standing again as councillor. Ms McNeese-Mechan said: “I was born in the U.S. and worked for the Japanese Foreign Ministry in Chicago and then the Ministry of Education in Osaka, Japan, both as a school teacher and later a college instructor and programme administrator. I came to Scotland in 1996 and completed a. MSc with Distinction at the University of Edinburgh, and then a Ph.D. in Anthropology from the School of Social & Political Sciences.

“I was Vice Convener of the Trade Union Side for Scottish Natural Heritage, and later elected International Relations Officer for Unison City of Edinburgh Branch.

“I have been Vice Convener of Culture & Communities since 2018, with oversight of the city’s museums, galleries, parks, libraries and theatres as well as chairing the Edinburgh Community Safety Partnership and representing the city on the COSLA Wellbeing Board. I’m currently co-chair of the SLiC Public Libraries Implementation Strategy Group.

“The main issues I will campaign on are sustainability, inclusion and wellbeing. We need to tackle the climate challenge, focus on a healthy environment for all our citizens, as well as delivering a healthy economy with

rewarding jobs that pay a proper living wage. We need to build on our reputation as a welcoming, diverse and inclusive place to live, where everyone has a chance to participate and feel part of their community. And we need to recognise that access to cultural and leisure opportunities – to parks, libraries, to local festivals and the creative arts – are important to everyone's wellbeing.

“I think as a party our greatest legacy will be our investment in building high quality social housing, new schools, and public transport and active travel infrastructure. These are future-focussed initiatives that help us build a successful, fairer, greener Edinburgh. As for my own contributions, I'm proudest of my role in helping create dedicated funding for community arts programmes, local festivals, and grants to support the thriving creative sector, especially our minority ethnic artists.”

Finally we asked “What is the thing that few people would know about you?”

Amy answered: “That I was bilingual as a child, and first attended a Spanish-speaking school – where I was teased because of my Cuban accent!”



Cllr Amy McNeese-Mechan PHOTO ©2022 The Edinburgh Reporter

2017 results for Ward 12 – Leith Walk

Candidates elected:

- Marion Donaldson – Scottish Labour Party – elected at stage seven
- Amy McNeese-Mechan – Scottish National Party (SNP) – elected at stage nine
- Susan Rae – Scottish Green Party – elected at stage four
- Lewis Ritchie – Scottish National Party (SNP) – elected at stage nine

Electorate: 24,160

Votes cast: 10,816

Turnout: 44.8%

Since the 2017 election, Lewis Ritchie, lost the SNP whip as he was arrested and charged with sexual offences in 2020, and Labour's Marion Donaldson resigned.