

# **Council elections 2022 – Ben Parker – Morningside Ward**

**Name** Ben Parker

**Political Party** Scottish Greens

**Ward** Morningside

## **What is your story?**

I have lived in Edinburgh since 2015 when I moved from North Yorkshire to study at university. Like many, I fell in love with the city and my main ambition when graduating was to find a job that could keep me here! I was lucky enough to work as the Shop Manager at the One World Fairtrade Shop on Princes Street, and I now work as a senior manager for a Scotland-wide disability housing charity. I have previously stood for election with the Greens, including in the Craigentinny / Duddingston council by-election in 2020, where we significantly increased our vote share. I have always been a 'Green' and I believe we are the only party who present a coherent narrative around the climate crisis, and who are honest about the scale and urgency of the change we need to see to tackle this.

## **What are the main issues you will campaign on – both as a party and personally?**

Unsurprisingly, Greens will be campaigning with a manifesto to address the climate and nature emergencies – and we are not shy about the scale of our ambitions in this way. The next council term will take us to the brink of 2030, a pivotal moment in the global climate movement. In Edinburgh, to play our part and reduce emissions to the level required by this

date, we need to see a drastic change in the urgency of measures the council is taking on climate policy – from changing our habits around transport, to supercharging action on the way we heat our homes and keep them warm. Crucially though, we are clear that the steps we must take to build a climate-friendly city are also steps which will tackle poverty, make our city more accessible and create public spaces which are good for our mental health and wellbeing. For all of these reasons, increasingly, meaningful action on climate change is the number one priority for voters at the ballot box. I will be proud to champion that cause as the Green candidate in Morningside.

## **What do you consider to be your or your party's achievements or legacy during the last council session?**

Given my professional background, I am especially impressed with our achievements around housing over the past council term. All of these achievements have gone some way to undermine the broken attitudes towards housing we sometimes see in the city – those which view our homes as commodities and profit-making ventures, not places where we live and build communities. Green wins have included:

- Pushing for action on unregulated holiday lets and ensuring the whole city is designated a short-term let control area
- Winning the suspension of eviction action against council tenants for rent arrears during the pandemic
- Pushing planning committee to agree that a section on accessible housing and disability be added to design guidance for developers, as well as the introduction of more stringent measures around low-carbon building
- Obtaining agreement on a strategy to ensure that suitable accommodation is provided to homeless people in

need of temporary accommodation, instead of expensive and unsuitable B&Bs

Outside of these specific policy wins though, I think that the legacy of Green councillors has been their positive and constructive approach to working with others in the City Chambers. Our councillors have been a constructive opposition to the SNP-Labour administration, pushing them to be bolder on many issues, but working together with them where we agree. The urgency of the many problems the city faces requires a grown-up approach to “doing politics”, and I believe this is the approach Green councillors have taken over the past term.

## **What is the thing that few people would know about you?**

This is the hardest question to answer! Lots of people are surprised to hear that I am a football fan. I support Doncaster Rovers who are currently sitting at the foot of the (English) League One table. I like to think that my lifelong support has blessed me with a great capacity for heartbreak, something which is often exercised at 4.45pm on a Saturday.

