

# **Council Elections 2022 – Colin Fox – Liberton/Gilmerton ward**

Name – Colin Fox

Political Party – Scottish Socialist Party (SSP)

Ward – Liberton/Gilmerton

## **What's your story?**

While I was a member of The Scottish Parliament, representing The Lothians from 2003-2007, I followed developments on Edinburgh City Council closely and still do. Throughout those four years I held weekly surgeries for my constituents.

I am standing in this election because Edinburgh badly needs a socialist councilor. The city's political leadership has forgotten its working class majority; the men and women who empty our bins, who drive our buses and trains, who care for our sick and elderly, serve our food and drink, teach our youngsters, deliver our mail and provide the essential services that improve the quality of life we should all be able to enjoy.

This is a wealthy city where too many people are left behind; told they cannot have a wage on which to live a full life, cannot live in a decent home nor access quality public services for themselves and their families.

Edinburgh was recently voted the fourth best place in the UK to live, but only if you are, say Baillie Gifford on Leith Street – the second biggest shareholder in Tesla cars after billionaire Elon Musk himself – or an asset manager like abrdn on George Street, but not if you are amongst those who worry

about how to pay soaring energy bills, or how you are going to raise a young family or afford quality care for your elderly parent.

This is an ill-divided city where, remember, one quarter of children attend private schools [costing £30,000 per year] yet many more go hungry, go without footwear suitable for wintry conditions and miss out on the outings others take for granted. That's not right and the City Council has done far too little to counteract such inequalities in our society.

I know Liberton/Gilmerton. I've lived here for 30 years. I know what changes its citizens want to see.

## **What are the main issues you are campaigning on?**

Every candidate in this election can tell you that the cost of living crisis is the main issue being raised on the doorsteps. And no wonder. Runaway price inflation is at levels not seen in 40 years. Energy bills have doubled. National Insurance Contributions are up. Even the price of a stamp is now almost £1! Yet wages, pensions and benefits have barely risen at all. The government has withdrawn the support people on Universal Credit relied on throughout the pandemic. Many are struggling to make ends meet in insecure and poorly paid jobs. Some, like the 800 men and women callously dismissed by P&O, have lost their jobs altogether.



Colin Fox SSP candidate for Liberton/Gilmerton in 2022

The desire for change however is also unmistakable.

The Scottish Socialist Party's message is unique. We are not like the parties who run the Council on behalf of corporate interests like P&O, Baillie Gifford and RBS. We offer an entirely different promise, one that will redistribute some of Edinburgh's enormous wealth from those who have so much to those with much too little.

-We intend to scrap the unfair council tax for example because it is not based on your ability to pay and sees the wealthy pay 'coppers' relatively speaking while working class families are charged a 'small fortune'.

-We intend to improve public services for the less well off by increasing taxes on the better off. That will include a national care service that is universally free, publicly owned and above all fit for the 21<sup>st</sup> century – something that cannot

be said about the present system where private care homes, owned by say HC-One [Britain's biggest provider] are run for profit from a tax haven in the Cayman Islands.

-We will introduce a £12/hour minimum wage across the city [starting with all Council employees] with 16 hours work a minimum.

-We will introduce free public transport across the city as the centrepiece of our plan to reduce emissions and inequalities together.

-We will join with others to deliver improved public services not inferior, cuts ridden ones subsequently sold off to private companies.

## **What are SSP's achievements and legacy?**

The Scottish Socialist Party has been campaigning on behalf of working class people for 25 years. Founded in the aftermath of the anti-poll tax struggle we secured the abolition of Poindings and Warrant Sales in Scotland in 1999 – the debt recovery method unique to Scotland designed to humiliate the poor. It was also the SSP that introduced the Bill to the abolish NHS Prescription Charges in Scotland. Those examples reveal what is unique about us.

We support independence too. I represented the SSP on the Board of 'YES Scotland' ahead of the 2014 Referendum advocating an independent socialist Scotland, a modern democratic republic, which again uniquely identifies us within the independence movement.

As a party we have been on every picket line, protest and progressive struggle of the last 25 years because standing in solidarity with those pursuing enlightened reforms is in our DNA.

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

Between elections I can be found on the SSP campaign stall at the East End of Princes Street every Wednesday to Saturday 12-2pm. I like meeting people there who are as interested in politics as I am.

I enjoy discussing political ideas and opinions in an intelligent and respectful manner whether people agree with mine or not. I was once described by a Member of the House of Lords [Baroness Goldie of Bishopton] as 'the most charming Trotskyist in Parliament.'

Praise indeed!