

Council elections 2022 – Edinburgh Conservatives publish manifesto to “Clean Up the City”

Edinburgh Conservatives have published their 2022 manifesto in which they promise to clean up the city, both literally and metaphorically.

If they are elected in sufficient numbers to create an administration then the Conservatives will immediately undertake a spring clean of the city, saying it is dirtier than any other in Scotland. Currently there are 17 Conservative councillors – Cllr Ashley Graczyk was elected as a Conservative but resigned the whip and now sits as an Independent.

Criticising the current SNP/Labour administration the Conservative Group leader, Iain Whyte says that they do not listen to the public and that the council neglects basic service delivery. He says in the foreword to the manifesto: “So we need your help to do more and boot them out of power”.

Mr Whyte said: “We are putting forward a really positive campaign. We want to clean up the city. That means literally cleaning up the city with a spring cleaning then enforcement of our cleansing, litter, fly tipping and all of these things to make sure that it stays clean. But it means cleaning up the culture of the council as well on issues that we’ve seen

raised through whistleblowing inquiries and others. The failure to take action on lots of recommendations against the council – from auditors to independent inquiries – we want to change that culture and bring new leadership both politically and in management to the council to make sure that we deliver for the people of Edinburgh.”

Conservative Group leader [@CllrWhyte](#) explains the basics of the 21-page Edinburgh Conservatives manifesto for the 2022 council elections in which the foreword by him promises to “boot” the current administration out of power and clean up the city pic.twitter.com/ENtcyBYsRu

– Edinburgh Reporter (@EdinReporter) [April 9, 2022](#)

The manifesto (which is published below) sets out what the Conservatives would do if they are elected to run the council. They have 20 candidates in the 17 wards with two in Pentland Hills and two in Colinton/Fairmilehead. Two of the current councillors are moving to new Wards – including Whyte himself who is moving from Inverleith to stand in Craigentenny/Duddingston as it is “closer to home” for him. He explained the “vacancy” had come about when [John McLellan](#) decided to step down after one term.



17 of the 20 Conservative candidates for the 2022 election with a few MSPs for support Photo ©2022 The Edinburgh Reporter



New Conservative candidates for 2022 – Neil Cuthbert, Emma Gilchrist, Hugh Findlay, Stuart Herring, James Hill.

Christopher Cowdy, Marie Clari Munro, Teresa Perchard and Tim Jones PHOTO ©2022 The Edinburgh Reporter

Read about some of the 143 candidates standing for election in May 2022 in our special category [here](#).

The Edinburgh Conservative promises about the environment include:

1. A spring clean of the city with add ons like a graffiti taskforce and an enforcement team to deal with fly-tipping, litter around bins and dog fouling
2. The end of the £25 a year brown bin charge for garden waste and a review of the bin hubs project for communal bins, including putting communal bins underground wherever possible
3. Improve maintenance of litter bins and reinstate a programme to clear street drains

In the area of transport there is much criticism of the Spaces for People project introduced by the Conservative UK Government during the pandemic with a ring-fenced budget, and which Transport Secretary Grant Shapps encouraged councils to make permanent where possible. There is also a guarantee that there would be “no major changes without public support”.

The Conservatives would:

- Remove all Spaces for People measures from “unsuitable areas” where they were opposed by the public in the previous consultation
- Remove any approval for the Workplace Parking Levy in Edinburgh (this is a charge to employers first – who may if they choose pass it on to employees – where there are more than ten parking spaces at a workplace. In Nottingham the charge is around £423 per annum and has raised around £60 million for the transport budget)
- Ensure quality infrastructure for walking and cycling

projects with no discrimination against people with disabilities – but they plan to scrap the allocation of 10% of the transport budget “for cycle lanes”. Instead they will allocate resources to projects which will “benefit all road and pavement users” and would avoid conflicts such as floating bus stops.

- Oppose more Controlled Parking Zones
- Protect Lothian Buses which the Conservatives say is being threatened by proposed route changes, and “plundered” by the current administration. They would retain the bus company in public ownership and “champion its needs”.
- Review the plans for George Street to ensure that New Town residents and businesses have “unharmd” access
- Reintroduce a city cycle hire scheme saying that the SNP/Labour administration ignored a new deal offered by SERCO which was “affordable”.
- Review the low emission zone – and restrict this to Princes Street only

In the area of education the Conservatives say this is a national mess and would benefit by introducing the kind of academy schools which they say are successful in England. These would use the model of the City of Edinburgh Music School at Broughton High but would offer centres of excellence in STEM subjects, languages and the arts.

The Conservatives would also:

- Foster links with Edinburgh College to give pupils a more traditional pathway to a career after school including more apprenticeships
- Seek private sector sponsors for a Personal Pupil Opportunity Fund to allow the most gifted to access additional learning
- Establish a Capital Sports Fund to provide opportunities for vulnerable adults and communities through physical

activity

In the areas which have resulted in whistleblowers uncovering “a series of very public scandals” the Conservatives admit these go back decades indicating a “rotten culture” in the council, but suggest the way to address these is by being more open and transparent and a “root and branch change”.

The Conservatives would:

- Change the culture with new leadership at political and organisational levels
- React to the recommendations of the 2021 Tanner Report immediately, saying there has been too much delay.
- Introduce new staff policies on whistleblowing within three months of a new council being elected

In the area of council spending the Conservatives would “clear out inefficiency”, aiming to reform and “build an efficient and effective organisation which delivers better services”. They criticise the Scottish Government which they say underfunds The City of Edinburgh Council, and they criticise the current administration which has compounded the problem with “financial mismanagement”.

The Conservatives would:

- Demand that The Scottish Government ensures that council tax can be frozen in future years budgets – and would cap any increases in council tax required to a maximum of 2.5%.
- Review management structure at the council and get rid of “expensive senior managers”.
- Conduct an efficiency review of all key services like bins and street cleansing
- Reform council services to make it easier for a member of the public to track a complaint
- Increase the amount allocated to Edinburgh Integration

Joint Board – the body responsible for delivering social care

- Introduce an Audit Committee to “weed out” inefficiency
- Deliver public consultation for all new projects – putting the views of individuals and Community Councils at the heart of decision making

The Conservatives criticise the current administration for their flagship policies such as the Poverty Commission and the plans to make Edinburgh net zero by 2030, saying these are “grandiose, impractical, uncoded and undeliverable.

Instead the Conservatives would:

- Increase the funding for a Housing First policy ensuring that everyone gets a home rather than temporary accommodation
- Introduce a Right to Dignity programme focusing on preventing poverty and homelessness by supporting access to work and training
- Deliver high quality quick build accommodation
- Challenge Police Scotland to provide more policing in Edinburgh concentrating on anti-social behaviour and using partnership working to provide community led solutions

In the field of housing the Conservatives dispute the new City Plan 2030 which aims to only build on brownfield sites, disallowing expansion into the Green Belt, claiming it is “dishonest”.

The Conservatives would:

- Look at innovative funding models for providing affordable homes
- Demand that The Scottish Government properly funds new affordable homes in the capital
- Review the status of student housing – developers of

student housing are not subject to the same requirements and do not for example have to provide any affordable homes provision in return for their planning permission.

On tourism and culture the Conservatives have plans to reinstate Marketing Edinburgh the city's destination marketing agency which was "wound up" by the SNP/Labour coalition, costing around £2 million to do so (although the company remains in existence but its assets such as the edinburgh.org url are now used by the [Forever Edinburgh](#) campaign).

The Conservatives would:

- "Reduce bureaucracy" for city centre businesses to tackle the economic decline there
- Review planning rules to use empty buildings in the city centre for housing
- "Manage the impacts of our Festivals on the City". This would mean better management to prevent overcrowding and dispersal of events across Edinburgh
- Do more to encourage Business Improvement Districts in Edinburgh
- Introduce non voting representation by several bodies such as FSB Scotland, Visit Scotland and CBI Scotland on a new Economy, Employment and Enterprise Committee



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Council elections take place across Scotland on 5 May 2022.

Register to vote by 18 April. More information about how to do that [here on the council website](#).

Out of the 17 current councillors, eight are stepping down – Callum Laidlaw (Portobello/Craigmillar), Sue Webber (Pentland Hills), Nick Cook (Morningside), Stephanie Smith (Liberton/Gilmerton), Andrew Johnston (Fountainbridge/Craiglockhart), John McLellan (Craigentinny/Duddingston), Scott Douglas (Corstorphine/Murrayfield) and Graham Hutchison in Almond Ward.

There are eleven new Conservative candidates: Neil Cuthbert, Emma Gilchrist, Hugh Findlay, Stuart Herring, James Hill, Christopher Cowdy, Marie Clari Munro, Teresa Perchard, Bonus Fombo, Mark Hooley and Tim Jones.

We have photos of some of them here:



Tim Jones Portobello/Craigmillar



Teresa Perchard Leith



Christopher Cowdy Fountainbridge/Craiglockhart



James Hill Almond



Neil Cuthbert Colinton/Fairmilehead



Mair Clair Munro Morningside



Hugh Findlay Corstorphine/Murrayfield



Stuart Herring Inverleith



Emma Gilchrist Pentland Hills



17 of the 20 Conservative candidates for the 2022 election with a few MSPs for support Photo ©2022 The Edinburgh Reporter



Graeme Bruce candidate for Pentland Hills



Phil Doggart Conservative candidate for Liberton/Gilmerton
PHOTO ©2022 The Edinburgh Reporter



Jim Campbell Conservative candidate for Forth Ward
PHOTO ©2022 The Edinburgh Reporter



Iain Whyte candidate for Craigentenny/Duddingston