

Council elections 2022 – Fred Hessler – Almond Ward

Name- Frederick Hessler

Political Party – Scottish Labour

Ward – Almond

I have been a mental health and learning disability nurse for almost 30 years. I retired through ill health – lower back damage – tragically a widespread issue – as many thousands of nurses in the seventies and eighties were taught and trained to use all manner of manual lifting techniques that left them broken and damaged.

I went through a baptism of fire in trade union and political activism, as a student nurse.

I think we slightly upset our tutors and the health board by demanding adequate staffing checks in the case of the elderly wards as the nurses and nursing assistants were literally on their knees. We proposed the unions implement a very simple work to rule and a ban on overtime. It was hardly a revolutionary strike at the heart of the system. You would have thought we were proposing the immediate overthrow of capitalism. The health board suits asked us how far did we intend to go with this action. We said: “How far do we need to go? Panorama? Sunday Times Insight Investigation? World in Action? They went white and then red. They then found £3 million down the back of the couch to employ 30 extra staff across the care of the elderly sector. We were 23 years old and by the time we qualified as nurses we were considered pariahs, with bad reputations as troublemakers. No one would employ us. I was unemployed for six months after I got my RMN qualification so I helped with George Wilson to set up the first Lothian Unemployed Workers Centre, joined the Labour

Party and the rest as they say is history.

I retrained as a Financial Adviser with the Coop, but I was possibly the worst adviser they ever had. As the continual emphasis was on sales, volume and value. and instead I rarely achieved my sales targets, instead I was no salesman, instead advising, people, about their rights, and welfare benefits.

My main priorities are to, not just halt the cuts, but reverse them.

If elected I will undertake a detailed analysis of Ten years of a needs based budget 2010-2020, and show the accurate face of the cuts.

My top three are :

- Child poverty- in 2022, this should be something we teach children in history lessons, not have teachers dealing with the effects if it day by day.
- Integrated and active transport – why can't we use the best examples from Europe and other cities – why are we still caught up in trying to provide a 21st century transport system using 19th century approaches and systems?
- Childcare. It's ridiculous and clearly still a feminist issue when women are still bring held back from taking a full part in the workforce because of inadequate, difficult to access costly childcare. We need a wave of fresh thinking and make approaches to unlocking the talents of the female workforce whilst providing safe, healthy, tailored childcare models at a cost that makes it viable for providers and mothers. I would welcome an opportunity to run a pilot scheme.

Against a backdrop of Economic vandalism, chaotic governments and dangerous precedents in international affairs, we need to get our own house in order, but nothing is more important than protecting our planet, as we blithely carry on destroying our

life support system in this speck of dust in the vastness of the universe.



Fred Hessler, Labour candidate. Photo: © 2022, Martin P. McAdam www.martinmcadam.com