

Council Elections 2022 – Jule Bandel – Inverleith Ward

Name and age: Jule Bandel

Ward: Inverleith

Party: Scottish Green Party

What is your story?

Like many of the young people you've seen protesting for their future over the past couple of years, I've been involved with climate activism since high school. It was really only a matter of time until some of us decided that the best way to deliver the change we need was to run for political office ourselves! Originally from Germany, I moved to Edinburgh in 2016 and grew so fond of it, I decided to stay after completing my Geography degree. This love for our city, paired with my frustration about young people's issues not being taken seriously enough by our current council, motivated me to stand as a councillor.

Nowadays, I work for a Scottish housing charity, seeing up close how broken our housing market is. I'm also studying part-time for a Masters in Public Policy, focusing on public engagement in planning, and organise with others to make the world a little better in my spare time, including as an active member of the tenant's union Living Rent.

What are the main issues you will campaign on?

Obviously we've got the climate crisis looming over us, and while that might seem like a global problem, local action can make a real difference. As Greens, we believe that social and environmental justice go hand in hand, so our main priority will be to reduce Edinburgh's climate emissions whilst

improving the quality of life for everyone.

As rents and energy prices rise, making sure homes are warm, energy-efficient and affordable has become more important than ever. High rents are a key issue for many Edinburgh residents, and my generation in particular. If elected, I'd look forward to continuing the work of existing Green councillors on the regulation of short term lets which take away much needed residential properties for actual residents in Inverleith, as well as implementing rent controls.

I'm also very passionate about transport and want to make it easier for people to get around Edinburgh safely and sustainably. As someone who walks, cycles or takes the bus everywhere, I'm familiar with the issues people face when trying to switch to greener modes of transport. Whether it's widening pavements on busy, vibrant streets like Raeburn Place to make our public space accessible to everyone, providing safe cycling storage, improving bus services, or reducing speeding, there's lots of work I'm keen to get stuck in.

I think there's been a collective realisation of how important parks and greenspaces are for our physical and mental health in recent years, especially when you don't have access to a private garden. I want to explore how communities can make the best use of the greenspaces we have, for example by creating more community growing spaces. We also need to improve park amenities – I'm a member of Friends of Inverleith Park who have a great proposal for a café with toilet facilities.

One last issue that's quite personal for me is changing the way the council engages with the public. As someone who belongs to a number of demographics that seldomly get a voice in local politics, I want to make sure the council makes an effort to involve young people, New Scots, and other residents who don't have the time or energy to respond to lengthy consultations in decision-making, for example through local citizen assemblies or participatory budgeting schemes.



Julie Bandel

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

I'm really proud of our grown-up approach to politics which I know many people appreciate. For the last five years, Greens have been a constructive opposition to the SNP-Labour administration, frequently pushing them to be more ambitious. Our priority is always what's best for people and planet – if working with others is the way to make that happen, we will do that rather than opposing them for opposition's sake.

One of the best examples of this approach is the two-year council rent freeze we delivered during the pandemic by working with other opposition parties. Green councillors also

- Led Edinburgh Council in declaring a Climate Emergency and setting a target of reaching net zero climate-changing emissions by 2030 with interim targets and an action plan,
- Pushed the council to designate the whole city a short-term let control area,

- Secured support for a number of policies that make walking, wheeling and cycling safer, and
- Consistently stood up for local communities against big developers, the most high-profile case probably being the successful Save Leith Walk campaign.

What is a thing that few people would know about you? I love foraging. If you spot a strange woman with a bowl and a scale plucking dandelion blossoms in our parks, chances are that's me gathering ingredients for my (very tasty) dandelion honey.