

# **Council Elections 2022 – Leah Gunn Barrett – Morningside Ward**

- Name – Leah Gunn Barrett
- Political Party – Alba
- Ward -Morningside

## **What is your story?**

A dual US/UK citizen, I've lived in Edinburgh since 2017. In the US, I was the Executive Director of CeaseFire Maryland and New Yorkers Against Gun Violence, both gun violence prevention organisations and was a dean at Columbia University's School of International and Public Affairs. In London, where I lived for 14 years, I held management positions for The Economist and Tetra Pak UK. I have a degree in Economics from Carleton College and masters degrees in international affairs from Columbia University and education from Johns Hopkins University. I was politically active in the US and here in Scotland I was briefly an SNP member before joining Alba, where I serve on the executive committee. I love Edinburgh and Scotland and passionately support the restoration of Scotland's independence. Scotland has all it needs to be a highly successful small European nation except the full powers of independence. Its enormous potential can be unleashed only when it breaks away from a Union that has served it so badly.

## **What are the main issues you will**

## **campaign on – both as a party and personally?**

Alba exists to achieve an independent Scotland as soon as possible, a goal that informs all that we do. Poverty is of particular concern under a UK Government that controls 85% of all social welfare spending and has cut it ruthlessly harming the most vulnerable. Alba has a five point plan to blunt the worst effects of these cuts. I would like to see Scottish education move closer to the Finnish model where education isn't a political football, schools are rooted in the local community, standardised testing is rare, non-STEM subjects are encouraged and teachers have the autonomy to make decisions in the best interests of their students.

I believe Scots care deeply about the rights of women and girls, in particular that they have access to safe spaces, currently under threat by Holyrood changes to GRA.

I'd like to see a cleaner, safer and more sustainable city where local councillors listen to their constituents' concerns and not ram through unpopular policies. Edinburgh should consider participatory budgeting, where local residents can come together to decide on certain spending priorities and projects that benefit their area.

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

Alba is a new party and as such doesn't have a long track record. However, all our councillors are focused on achieving independence for Scotland and doing their best to address the concerns of their constituents.

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

My career trajectory took a sharp turn when my older brother was murdered 25 years ago in the US. I wanted to do something about the uniquely American problem of gun violence by changing the culture through laws and education. Ultimately, I decided this was a problem that was not going away anytime soon and it informed my decision to move to Scotland.



Leah Gunn Barrett candidate in Morningside Ward