

# Council elections 2022 – Mairianna Clyde – Morningside Ward

- Name. Mairianna Clyde
- Party. SNP
- Ward Morningside

## What is your story?

I'm an academic based in Edinburgh – I work from home. I've been in this role for nearly 20 years and have a PhD in Scottish History. I've also lived in the ward many years and been active on the community council for about the same length of time, where I've mainly covered planning. I was the initiator many years ago of the joint community council group involving Merchiston and Morningside community councils and the Grange Association looking at the future of the Astley Ainslie hospital and its site and holding discussions with NHS Lothian who were reported to be selling it.

My interest was not only in the beauty of this site, its long history (I'm a historian) and its splendid south facing setting, but also its convalescent facilities. I had a close friend with a head injury, and I was aware that Headway and the SMART centre were based there, and other therapeutic convalescent services. Because of my friend, I was aware that increasingly people survive traumatic life changing injuries – but then what? What do they do with the rest of their lives when they are so permanently damaged they can no longer live independent or fulfilling lives? Are their lives to have any meaning? Any quality? Who is to care for them, give their lives meaning, and who is to care for the carers? As basically, once discharged, it all falls back on families, and

families struggle. So it wasn't just the land, or its history of being a public gift to the people of Edinburgh, but the therapeutic services and especially the Occupational Therapy units that used to be there.

I was fascinated by St Roque, (or Rocco) the patron saint of the afflicted, to whom a chapel was built at the site, the former burgh muir, by James IV and it became a place where plague victims were quarantined and cared for in their last days, prayers and rites said for them. It was fascinating that as we still have our 'afflicted' today, that these Occupational Therapy units and the whole field of therapeutic medicine should coincidentally spring up at the AAH site 500 years later... (it became a global first) ... only to be closed down, in the 21st century by people with no knowledge of their history or its social significance. The need has not gone away.

So my initial motivation was quite bold and idealistic, to save the site as a place of healing for the community and especially for those who suffer the permanent after effects of life-changing traumatic injury. But the joint CC group I helped form had more limited (more realistic!) aims of just being kept informed of any plans for sell off and having some input into the planning process to preserve as far as possible, local amenity. We found engaging with NHS Lothian difficult, as the organisation is not used to community engagement, but the series of meetings we held with them did at least keep the wider issue alive.

Then a new group emerged which became aware of the potential sell-off which was interested in community ownership and I have joined AACT (AA Community Trust). I was also active in the Fountainbridge Canalside initiative looking at the future of the former brewery site and was instrumental in saving a grade C listed building, the former offices of the North British Rubber Company, a major employer, employed 5000 at one point, and which also made a significant practical

contribution to WWI in providing rubber tyres for ambulances and waterproof footwear for soldiers in the trenches (leather decays; foot rot was a cause of death).

I suggested that we target saving this building and that it would make a great arts centre for artists and crafts people such as the Printmakers Workshop, which I knew was looking for a bigger site, and it came to pass – by the efforts of many, many others, I hasten to add! Not me, directly. But I had the initial idea. I was just so delighted when this happened.

## **What are your priorities?**

- Secure affordable housing with access to green space.
- Short term lets control – we need these to return to being homes.
- Rent pressure zones are also urgently needed.
- The fuel and energy crisis – energy is not a devolved matter. Though energy rich, and a major oil producer, the Scottish government is powerless to lower rising fuel costs which will have a dramatic effect on the entire economy. When fuel costs rise, so does everything else. Still, there is mitigation that can be done locally, in the form of better insulating homes to reduce fuel bills and reliance on oil by use of heat pumps, solar, wind power, EVs. I would like to get as much help as possible to retrofit homes to reduce fuel costs for the poorest. Covid recovery in education.
- Children's education has faced disruption. We need to think of ways to catch up.

My party's priorities: Covid and Brexit recovery. City deal. Expansion of robotics and medical science jobs (21,000). Expansion of living wage in council contracts. My party's achievements: built 1100 energy efficient affordable homes a year, doubled the number of new council homes built, secured short term lets legislation from the Scottish Government.

Built EIGHT new schools employing 400 staff. New Meadowbank and world-class Dunard Concert Hall built. Refurbished Kings Theatre. All P6 and above given iPads. Nursery provision doubled to 1140 hours.

## **What people might not know about you?**

I'm half Norwegian (father). Dad used to say we were descended from Eric the Red. (But they all say that!).



Mairianna Clyde