

Council elections 2022 – Bonnie Prince Bob calls for equality tax to tackle poverty

An independent candidate in the council election has called for an Equality Tax on the capital's accommodation and festivals to help tackle poverty.

Edinburgh-based activist, artist and film-maker, Bonnie Prince Bob, said the city centre, the ward he's standing in, has become a "hostile place for those on lower incomes" as a result of the "wholesale commodification" of the area.

It's not the first election bid for the pro-independence firebrand – just last year he challenged the SNP's Angus Robertson in Edinburgh Central and received 0.9 per cent of the vote.



Bonnie Prince Bob an Independent candidate in Edinburgh Central with Lady A and Lady B and Mr M ©2021 The Edinburgh Reporter

But this time he has his sights set on more local prospects, with his hat in the ring for a seat in the City Chambers.

He said his campaign, which has encompassed videos posted on social media, door-knocking in the ward and an appearance at a City Centre hustings where he declared Edinburgh to be “a farce”, allows the opportunity to “raise consciousness over some of the issues that I believe should be of concern”.

Taking aim at the SNP/Labour administration of the last five years, he added: “I resent the way Edinburgh is currently being administered.

“Simply put, Edinburgh is not being managed in the interests of the people, Edinburgh it is now being run entirely in the interests of private capital.

“The wholesale commodification of the city centre has made it a hostile place for those on lower incomes. Look at the

hypocrisy of the ruling party: the SNP make a huge song and dance about opposing Etonians at Westminster, yet they enthusiastically solicit our public space and gardens to the Etonian profiteers from Underbelly, who subsequently fill their coffers and send all the loot back to London.

“The proliferation of student flats without social housing provision is criminal and the overdevelopment of the Old Town amounts to civic vandalism. There’s huge opposition to the recent announcement of a north-south tramline, they have mismanaged all the major roads and infrastructure projects and the fact that there is no grand institute of the arts in Edinburgh after 70 years of the Festival, is a national scandal.”



Bonnie Prince Bob

The candidate, born and bred in the capital, said the city's residents will "lament what we have lost" without "radical change" in the council.

He added: "We need an Equality Tax – the SNP's £2 a night tourist tax is an insult. I am advocating a 10 per cent Equality Tax on all accommodation and festival tickets.

“This would be paid in the council’s Common Good Fund and a committee would be elected to oversee the distribution of these funds to invest in our poorest communities.”

However, the main issue, according to Bonnie Prince Bob, is the “dominance of party politics” in local democracy.

“We need independent voices in the council who understand local issues and are prepared to speak up for local people,” he said in a plea to City Centre voters.

All City Centre candidates:

Bonnie Prince Bob, Independent

Pete Carson, Independent

Andy Foxall, Scottish Liberal Democrats

Margaret Arma Graham, Labour and Co-operative Party

Kevin Illingworth, Independent

Finlay McFarlane, Scottish National Party (SNP)

Claire Miller, Scottish Green Party

Jo Mowat, Scottish Conservative and Unionist

Marianne Mwiki, Scottish National Party (SNP)

Maria Pakpahan-Campbell, Independent

Paul R. Penman, Independent

Norrie Rowan, Independent