

Profile – Cllr Stuart Dobbin Forth Ward

The Edinburgh Reporter has invited all councillors newly elected in 2022 to tell us about themselves.

This profile is of Cllr Stuart Dobbin who is the SNP representative for Forth Ward in the north of the city.

Cllr Dobbin explained he works part-time for Circularity First – a UK company specialising in helping companies address the carbon footprint of their IT estates and build sustainability.

He said: “Prior to coming back to the UK on 1st January 2019, I worked in Asia for 26 years, living and working in Macau, The Philippines, Indonesia and Hong Kong. This was a wonderful experience and gave me many insights into how other societies address and manage the challenges that they face. I hope to be able to bring a different perspective into looking at the many challenges we face in North Edinburgh.

“Before getting elected in May, Sunday mornings would usually kick off with a two hour tennis session with the teams at David Lloyd in Newhaven, followed by relaxing with my wife Rosanna. Since the election, Sundays increasingly mean working on constituents’ issues or other Ward matters.”

We asked if there was anything cultural which Cllr Dobbin

would like to take with him if he was to be marooned on a desert island.

He replied: "I don't really have a favourite musical genre, I guess anything that draws on blues and rock roots. One of my favourite authors is Thomas Kenneally, an Australian whose collected works cover a wide range of subjects, all with deep sensitivity and insight. My absolute favourite movie is The Seven Samurai by Akira Kurosawa."

What do you like about the place you represent and what would you like to fix?

"Forth Ward has such an important history and role in the development of Edinburgh. From the Great Michael, the largest ship in the known world at its launch, as the flagship of King James IV in 1511 (and remembered with the Great Michael Rise street name in Newhaven) to Newhaven itself. This is a longstanding fishing community along the waterfront which was so important in industrial Edinburgh to Granton where the Maldevic Car Factory still stands – the first car factory in the UK and the builder of the first ever electric car in 1898.



Madelvic Hiouse PHOTO ©2021 The Edinburgh Reporter

“There is a magnificent plan to invest around £1.3 billion in the Granton Waterfront Development. But alongside that investment, it is imperative that investment also flows into West Pilton, Granton, Royston, Wardieburn to ensure that these longstanding communities also benefit.

“I am on the Housing, Homelessness and Fair Work Committee. The challenges are significant in Edinburgh, and the main issues I see are to do with mixed tenure. So many former council flats were sold off and are now in the hands of private landlords, so that it is very difficult to manage the old council blocks to ensure a good quality of home and environment for residents in these areas.

“The increase in people living in poverty and more mental health issues after so many years of austerity have resulted in broken communities. I am keen to see how we can build up our communities again, engender local resident activism and encourage local communities to agitate for change. I see myself as an advocate to support local communities.

“Accordingly, I am engaged in encouraging participation in our community councils and where I can, supporting local residents to form residents associations.

“In my opinion, too many residents in our left behind communities feel disenfranchised and have no control over their living environment. I want to help people challenge that.”

He explained that it was tough coming back to Edinburgh to live after so many years overseas, seeing the “rampant homelessness, the widespread use of foodbanks and the lack of security in zero hours contracts in what purports to be the fifth largest economy in the world is to me an absolute outrage and a fundamental failure of the political system. This is why I entered politics. I also believe that England is politically as well as culturally on a very different track from Scotland – hence my joining the SNP”.

Cllr Dobbin continued: “Initially my thought was to work at branch level towards independence but when the opportunity arose to get involved as a councillor to impact positively on peoples lives now, I jumped at it.

“My best trait is that I have dogged determination. I take being told that something cannot be done merely as a challenge to be proved wrong.

“After my years in Asia, the main thing that I miss is the fantastic food that I was privileged to experience. So to relax, one of my hobbies is to try to replicate as authentically as possible many of my favourite dishes from India, Indonesia, Thailand and of many of the regional Chinese cuisines.

“In fact, one of my favourite little restaurants in Edinburgh is the Macau Kitchen (on St Leonard’s St) which offers tantalising taste memories of four wonderful years in Macau.”

Contact Cllr Dobbin [here](#).

The other three councillors for Forth ward are Council Leader, Cammy Day and Cllr Sanne Sijkstra-Downie and Cllr Kayleigh O'Neill.



Cllr Stuart Dobbin SNP image taken in Forthquarter Park.
(Photo: Thomas Brown)