

Meet your councillor – Cllr Jane Meagher

Cllr Jane Meagher was elected as one of the ward councillors in Portobello/Craigmillar last May. She is a member of the Labour administration and is the Housing Convener.

As a former council employee Cllr Meagher was a community worker for most of her working life, in different parts of Edinburgh from Wester Hailes to Leith.

She said: “I met a lot of inspiring, hard working people who wanted to make their communities better places to live, from taking action against dampness in their homes to offering support to aimless young people or improving life chances through adult education. It was a privilege to work alongside them and to help to make a real difference to people’s lives.”

At weekends she likes to go swimming in the morning, followed by a coffee and chat with friends then catching up with emails in the afternoon. She has grandchildren and family who live abroad and there is a scheduled WhatsApp call each Sunday afternoon to keep up to date with their news.

During her downtime she explains that she has been an opera lover since she was a teenager. She said: “My nine brothers and sisters and school friends thought I was a bit odd.

“If I ever had to go to a desert island I’d take a wind-up radio loaded with my favourite podcasts because I know I would

miss hearing the sound of the human voice.”

Cllr Meagher is well acquainted with the area she represents. She said: “I’ve lived in Portobello for 36 years and I can’t think of a better place to live, with a beach, swim centre, community centres, numerous clubs, restaurants, shops, schools, and so much more, all in walking distance. Craigmillar has always had a vibrant community life and parts of it have changed beyond recognition, with so much new housing, community resources and now a splendid new High School.

“Throughout the pandemic, young people have paid the price of protecting more vulnerable people and if there is one thing I could do for this area of the city, I would like to help to redress that balance.”

Now that she is an elected member she is Convener of Housing, Homelessness and Fair work. She explained this is a difficult area: “We are faced with a massive challenge. Edinburgh is a hugely popular and growing city, with the equivalent of 100 new people moving in to the city every week. The problem is that we simply don’t have enough affordable homes for everyone, in spite of our many efforts. We are building and acquiring as many homes as the council’s finances permit and the recent legislation to limit short term lets should encourage landlords to rent their properties to people who need homes, not holidays.

“Homelessness is a growing problem in the city, likely to be made worse by the cost of living crisis. Ultimately, I would like to end the pain and trauma of homelessness and provide a greater number of affordable homes. To do this, we need the support of the Scottish Government to unlock the borrowing potential to fully achieve our aims.”

Her reasons for getting involved in politics are pretty clear. She said: “Put simply, it was to to use my time and experience

to improve the lives of people in my ward and across Edinburgh.”

But she also admits to tending to leave things to the last minute. She said: “I really have to discipline myself to make sure I’m properly prepared – that way I can be more confident and, if I’m making a speech, I can ad lib more easily and effectively.”

She is also however well used to performing in public as she sings in two choirs. She said: “Singing has helped me through some very difficult parts of my life. I’ve seen what a difference being in a choir can make – the friendship, the music, the thrill of singing in harmony and the fun – all our worries disappear while we’re singing.

“I also volunteer with a children’s choir and I love to see the excitement on the faces of the children and see their confidence grow as they rehearse then perform in the Usher Hall.”



Jane Meagher, Labour. Photo: © 2022, Martin P. McAdam
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