

# **Corstorphine/Murrayfield by election – Pete Gregson Independent**

**Pete Gregson is a name well known in Roseburn. He is still listed as a member of Murrayfield Community Council at present, although he would no doubt have to step down if he is elected to The City of Edinburgh Council.**

He has been very vocal down the years in his support of the Roseburn traders who demanded compensation for loss of trade due to roadworks to create the City Centre West to East Link (CCWEL), a piece of infrastructure Mr Gregson also campaigned against and also encouraged others to do. He was present at the mass cycle which travelled from the West End to Roseburn one morning in August 2016, standing at the side of the road wearing a cycle helmet and [voicing his objection](#) to CCWEL in Roseburn. He has produced many leaflets and banners to evidence this opposition. He conducted door to door campaigning against the scheme which has been delayed by years by a relatively small number of objectors.

The objectors to CCWEL succeeded in ensuring that the proposed draft road order became the subject of a Scottish Government Inquiry between 2018 and 2020 when no work could proceed. Inquiry sessions were held at the City Chambers when verbal evidence was heard. After two years the order was given the

nod by the Government Reporter with some modifications which the council had itself suggested.

Mr Gregson appeared at a Transport and Environment Committee meeting at the City Chambers along with two of the Roseburn traders, one wearing a gas mask and the other holding a poster saying Save Baby Finn – a reference to Ruth Davidson's son. At the same Baroness Davidson was MSP and had her constituency office in Roseburn. A press release which Mr Gregson had produced suggested that the council would raise pollution levels at Roseburn Terrace, and if the MSP thought to take her son to work with her he could be affected by the dirty air. Transport Convener, Cllr Lesley Macinnes, asked him to leave the meeting.

It was the matter of compensation which the council would not agree to in December 2022, that [former councillor Frank Ross resigned over](#), causing this by election. If you are interested in reading a full history of the development of CCWEL then SPOKES have the comprehensive story [here](#).

Now Mr Gregson is a member of the Friends of Roseburn Park where the former toilet block is being converted to a café which will be a huge benefit for the park. He was also behind the mural which is applied to the building opposite.

This is the manifesto from his website:

**VOTE PETE GREGSON—YOUR INDEPENDENT CANDIDATE FOR:**

- More social activities for young and old
- Supporting asset transfer to give Corstorphine Community Centre a permanent home
- Proper CCWEL pollution monitoring and cycle counts
- No CCWEL through Corstorphine; use removable bollards, with investment directed to fixing cycling blackspots
- Adding Council roadworks to online maps
- Better roads and pavements, fewer potholes, through regional delivery of transport
- Smaller class sizes, better pupil support through regional delivery of education
- Setting up a student lodging scheme
- Allotments at Pansy Walk and mural at Balgreen Tunnel

A photograph of Pete Gregson, an older man with grey hair, wearing a brown leather jacket over a dark sweater and a collared shirt. He is smiling and looking towards the camera while holding a paintbrush and painting a wall. The wall is light-colored and has some faint markings. The text 'Let's paint a better future' is overlaid on the right side of the image in a large, bold, black font with a white outline.

**Let's  
paint  
a better  
future**

And this is what he would like to tell people living in the ward:

“When you vote in a Council election, you’d think you’d be voting for someone who will represent your interests... yes? Well, you’d be wrong – because that person will side with their party once they’re in power. Because if it comes to the crunch- and they go against the line by supporting their locals at a key vote, they’ll be expelled from their party for “breaking the whip”. The SNP are particularly keen to expel those who don’t toe the line- just count the number of ex-SNP independents at the end of an administration’s term. Some of these will stand again, but they never succeed, because their old Party gets the votes – putting in a replacement who will be more obedient. This happens because voters usually vote along Party lines.

“But why, if it’s not in their interests? For a case in point, consider the fate of the two motions for CCWEL compensation to Roseburn traders.

“The minutes of the full Council meeting of 15th December were published a few days ago, which tells us who voted for what. [Read it on pages 63 to 69 here.](#)

“In spite of various Labour Councillors promising to support the shops, they did what they were told that day by their Party bosses and refused to vote for compensation. The Greens also opposed giving the shops a penny. There were two motions in favour of compensation; one from the Libdems/Tories and one from the SNP.

“Anyone reading the minutes will see that the 19 SNP Councillors supported the move one minute, then sat on their hands the next, after their motion fell. They just couldn't bring themselves to support the LibDem/Tory bid for the same thing. The reason can only be because they put Party before people.

“Our venerable SNP Cllr Frank Ross, who had submitted the SNP motion to support the traders, was whipped into line and prevented from voting with his heart, having to keep silent on a matter that seriously affected his ward and the people who had voted for him. Maybe he had calculated that even if he had voted with the LibDems, rather than abstaining, they would still have been two votes short for getting compensation agreed. He did the decent thing; when the traders were left with nothing, he resigned in disgust after the meeting.

“The act of mass abstention was classic petty posturing party politics from the SNP group – which suggests they are losing touch with what really matters. Every single one was frightened to break the whip. But equally, one wonders why the LibDem/ Tory group didn't speak to the SNP beforehand and agree a joint approach. What is going on in our Council chambers when politicians are unable to come together on matters of common interest?

“We also have members of the ruling Labour group on the record before last May's elections saying that they fully supported compensation for the Roseburn traders. People voted for at least one of them on the strength of that promise. But they reneged at the crucial hour.

“What we saw in December from Labour, LibDems, Tories and SNP politicians- all of whom have influential councillors who indicated the traders should be helped- was a result where the traders got nothing because most of them (apart from the Greens) were whipped into voting along party lines.

“We basically have a system where party is put before the interests of constituents. Yet councillors stand for election on the basis that they will represent the interests of their constituents. This is not democracy.

“The fact is, that local government is wholly unsuited to party politics. Again and again we see politicians voting *en bloc*, for the sake of opposing one another, when they should be co-operating for what’s best for their constituents. We should have a Council where politicians are freed from doctrine- what happens at a local level ought to be based around like-minded souls coming together on matters of mutual concern.

“At the moment, when officers want a particular decision to be made, they’ll work with the party leaders to pitch their plans in the group rooms in the week before the Council meeting. After discussion, the Councillors will be forced to agree a party line. So when deputations from the community arrive at the Chambers to put their case on the day, in 9 times out of 10 they’ll be wasting their breath, because a decision will have been taken by the whips even before the meeting has started.

“We need more independent candidates. The citizens of Edinburgh should choose their local representatives not on the basis of who they will vote for at Westminster or Holyrood, because local issues seldom require a party dogma-driven solution. We citizens often vote along party lines because we don’t have the time to study the track record of our independent candidates. But when we don’t, it’s our loss.

“I have decided to stand in the byelection on 9<sup>th</sup> March as an independent candidate. It’s impossible to get the Council to agree to compensating the traders now, but I will be fighting to get the cyclists counted who actually use the new track- and to get pollution levels on the south side monitored.

“This, along with many other new ideas, are all in my ‘manifesto’ at [www.kidsnotsuits.com](http://www.kidsnotsuits.com)“



Pete Gregson of Friends of Roseburn Park, John Shand (seated) who was a cycle messenger in the Second World War accompanied by his friend from Darroch School in Gilmore Place, Margaret Smith whose father was Warden and the then Rt Hon Lord Provost Frank Ross.