

Corstorphine/Murrayfield by election – Scottish Libertarian Party – Gary Smith

Gary Smith who is the Scottish Libertarian candidate says that what we really want is a “return to basics, to what the council should be doing, which is being like a big janitor”.

He continued: “You certainly don’t want your janitor to start preaching to you about little projects that they have going on.”

Asked what the council is preaching about Mr Smith replied: “I just think that there is a whole bunch of activists who have ended up on the council. All parties seem to agree on the same thing nowadays. For example they all agree on Ukraine. You have to be in favour of Ukraine – why? Is that the council’s job?”



Gary Smith, Scottish Libertarian Party candidate. Photo: © 2023, Martin P. McAdam www.martinmcadam.com

Reminded that Kyiv is our twin city, Mr Smith countered that we are also twinned with Xi'an in China but we are not communists.

He said: "We are opposed to things like wars which used to be a noble thing. I find it odd that the Labour Party are so gung ho about having a war with Russia. I remember the Labour Party when they were against Vietnam – and we weren't even in Vietnam. But we are supplying billions of pounds to Ukraine to fight Russia. That is insane. What we should be doing is having a peace conference.

"They are using the vehicle of the council to promote agendas like that – and also the matter of gender politics. So if someone is an LGBT activist then why does it have to be part of the education system? I don't think that should be something you should teach children – it is none of their business. A lot of parents don't realise the extent of that part of education these days. It was unthinkable 15 years ago.

But they are getting away with it. And if you say anything against it then that is hate speech – it's a clever trick that. So if you object to something that is happening then it is hate speech. And a lot of people are afraid to speak out now. You should be free to speak out about anything."

The Scottish Libertarian Party holds the view that everyone should have freedom of speech. Mr Smith continued: "That is the premise of everything, because if you are not allowed to express your opinion then what kind of society is that?"

He admitted that members of the Scottish Libertarian Party may hold differing views, but you "have to set the foundation of society on something better than we have at the moment. The freedom to express an opinion is pretty fundamental – we are meant to be living in a democracy".

Asked what he would you do for his constituents he accepted his would be one small voice in a big council, but "it is a first step if we get in to actually have some say and the message gets out".

He is firmly against road works and in particular the 20 minute neighbourhood concept which the council has already adopted. When the 20 minute neighbourhood policy was promoted to the council it was described as: "A 20-minute neighbourhood is about living well locally, giving residents the ability to meet most of their daily needs from within their own community by building on models of shared service delivery with public, private and voluntary sector partners. This could be by walking, cycling, taking public transport or using wheelchairs and other 'wheels' like scooters or prams." (Transport & Environment Committee June 2021)

Mr Smith said: "One thing that is driving the council at the moment is this 20 minute city thing. I think it is diabolical. It is none of the business of the council to tell me where and when I can drive my car."

We countered that nobody was telling him when he could or could not drive his car, but that those who can are encouraged to use active travel.

But Mr Smith was adamant. He said: "It is not their business to socially engineer people's lives to that extent."

Climate change

People are also entitled to have their own opinions about climate change. Mr Smith put forward his. He said: "I happen to not be of the carbon dioxide is bad camp. I would breathe it out like everyone else and the trees would provide me with oxygen. It is not exactly global warming right now – I am freezing standing here."

He preferred the view that climate is just an analysis of weather over a longer period of time. He continued: "One thing that is sure is that we were told 25 years ago about global warming, melting ice caps and poor polar bears – it has not really happened. The reverse is happening and we do not have global warming."

According to Mr Smith the evidence is everywhere – "the polar ice caps are still there. Greenland has got bigger."

Asked to explain flooding, for example that in Cumbria, Mr Smith said the water board ought to have been taken to court as they were just not managing the water supply. According to him, they could have offloaded drains from the reservoirs and ensured there was no flooding, but it was cheaper not to do that. He added: "So when flooding occurs, it is interesting that the churches are usually perched on mounds and free of floods. They got what flooding was years ago. It is about mismanagement and poor infrastructure not increased rainfall."

According to the Scottish Libertarian candidate the media have whipped up people into a frenzy over the climate crisis or the

climate emergency which are “all the same thing”. He added: “They have also whipped up primary school kids to go out into the streets shouting about something like that. I’m thinking of Greta Thunberg. It is so fake.

“If anyone really believes that I am sorry but they need to look into it. And particularly the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC) is not scientific. One of the worst things anyone can say is that the science is settled. I have a science degree and the whole point of science is that it is not settled. The last thing you have is a consensus. Nobody voted 400 years ago to say was the world round – you would have been up in front of the state, because they thought the world was flat.”



Gary Smith, Scottish Libertarian Party candidate. Photo: © 2023, Martin P. McAdam www.martinmcadam.com

Roseburn traders

The former councillor Frank Ross resigned over the council's decision not to compensate the traders in Roseburn for loss of business during the City Centre West to East Link (CCWEL) works. Mr Smith was unsure of the precise details, but he said that he would have compensated the traders, and would never have built the project in the first place calming: "It was a ridiculous waste of time.

“That is one of the things I am annoyed about – the amount of ridiculous stupid roadworks which go on all the time. Everyone in a car now is treated as if they are a criminal. You’re bad, you’re in a car. They should be encouraging people to go about and do their business. Edinburgh used to be a boomtown. You could just go about and just buy something in a shop.

“They have introduced an absurd set of traffic obstacles. You can’t park and they are doing stupid things like making George Street a pedestrian precinct. Edinburgh has a massive road in the middle of town. Princes Street was a six lane highway and it worked for a reason. It was good. If there was a bit of a traffic jam at teatime so what? We were all busy.”

Asked if we should just allow congestion to take over the city’s streets, Mr Smith conceded that we should take steps to reduce congestion, but suggested it was just about finding a different route rather than adopting any alternative method of travel.

He offered the example of his parents who are in their eighties and who “need a car to get about”. He asserted that they would be unable to do their shopping by public transport.

The council’s plans in Mr Smith’s view amount to “social engineering to get people to do what they want like rats in a lab experiment. I am not a rat and the people of Corstorphine/Murrayfield are not rats. They are free to make their own decisions not the council’s.”

Asked what he would like to do if elected as a councillor Mr Smith had few concrete policies of his own, but said: “I would like to stop all these nut job crazy activists from getting their day in the sun because we don’t need this.

“We want all these local shops to get as much positive assistance as possible from the council not to be treated as an annoyance that has to be got rid of.

“You want people to be able to stop at a shop, go in buy something, not get treated as if you’ve smoked a joint or something. The way they are treating people is not right. It is not a healthy society when the council is something that is an oppressive baddie telling you that you can’t do something. It is none of their business. I want to get the council off their back and the council on their side.”

Mr Smith is a qualified bookkeeper who completes tax returns for a living. He lives just on the border of the ward but grew up within the area and can remember going to the Astoria Cinema, the ironmongers and the Duchess sweetie shop.

He concluded: “It is my home, and I regard this as a personal thing for the people here.”

The Corstorphine/Murrayfield by election is on 9 March 2023.

The candidates are:

Fiona Bennett	Scottish Liberal Democrats
Richard Fettes	Scottish Family Party: Pro-Family, Pro-Marriage,, Pro-Life
Hugh Findlay	Scottish Conservative and Unionist
Pete Gregson	Independent
Elaine Miller	Independent
Richard Parker	Scottish Labour Party
Donald Rutherford	Scottish National Party
Gary Smith	Scottish Libertarian Party
Chris Young	Scottish Green Party

Polling stations will be open from 7am to 10pm on 9 March and will be situated at:

- Murrayfield Parish Church Centre
- Saughton Crescent Scout Hall
- BT Murrayfield

- Corstorphine St Ninian's Church Hall
- St. Anne's Parish Church Hall
- 10th Craigmmond Scout Hall
- Corstorphine Library
- Carrick Knowe Parish Church Hall
- Tesco Extra

The by-election follows the resignation of Councillor and former Lord Provost Frank Ross in December.

Find out more about the [Corstorphine/Murrayfield by-election](#).