

Edinburgh voters give verdict on general election a week after it was announced

Voters in Edinburgh have given their verdict on the general election a week after it was announced – and have called for fewer cuts to public services and funding for local projects to address anti-social behaviour and “make life better”.

With five weeks until the polls open on July 4, Scottish Labour leader Anas Sarwar visited Craigmillar on the campaign trail for the Edinburgh East constituency, a key target seat in Scotland for the party leading in the polls.

The Local Democracy Reporting Service asked locals how they were feeling about the election and what issues they wanted to see high up on candidates’ list of priorities.

Jennifer Elliot is a coordinator for the High Street’s Greenhouse Pantry, a social enterprise which helps people access groceries at a lower cost, which was visited by Mr Sarwar on Thursday (May 30).

She said she hoped whoever became the local MP would “make sure they represented the area, got funding for projects that are local, and funding for schools and healthcare”.

She said: "I'd also argue for third sector projects.

"Austerity has bitten for the last 10, 15 years and the impacts of that are being felt all the time.

"I'd want to see anti-social behaviour addressed with investment in youth projects. I hate to be nostalgic for the 80's but it seemed even then there were much more of these projects available to make life better – it really does seem everything is cut to the bone at the moment.

"How can there be so much money in the world yet things feel so cut to the bone?"

Ms Elliot said she was interested in politics and "relished the chance" to cast her vote next month, but was yet to make up her mind.

On her visit from Mr Sarwar, she said: "We had a conversation – I don't know if I'll make my decision based on that, he asked pertinent and relevant questions to the project that were valid.



“We didn’t get into discussing politics; Greenhouse Pantry would welcome any politician, councillor that wants to come and visit.”

Outside the shop, social worker Sandy said he was feeling “completely apathetic” ahead of the election. “I’d struggle to vote for any of them apart from, I’d probably stick with the SNP to be honest,” he told the LDRS.

“I’m kind of a floater, but I don’t think I could vote for Keir Starmer at all. I think he’s a total snake, the stuff he’s doing with [Jeremy] Corbyn. I don’t trust them, their stance on Israel is very poor.”

Sandy said it was “an appalling time for politics,” adding: “I used to be very into politics but then became completely apathetic.

“I think [John] Swinney has steadied the ship a bit, for all his faults Humza Yousaf was caught between a rock and a hard place. He had to satisfy the Green element but he had also had

to satisfy the right-leaning members of the SNP.”

Suad, a doctor who lives in Craigmillar, said she was an undecided voter and hoped to see more of an “actual platform” on how parties would address problems facing communities rather than attacking each other.

“One party ruined everything, the other party is running on the first party being s**t,” she said.

“I hope to be voting but to be honest none of them are saying the things we want them to say for us to vote.

“If we’re talking about the Tories, they’ve ruined everything to be honest and I think their popularity is not that great.

“If we’re talking about the Labour party, all they’re talking about is the Tories are not great – but I have not seen an actual platform. They’re not saying ‘this is what we’re going to do, this is what we’re going to fix’.

“Rather than running on ‘they’re bad’ they should be running on ‘we’re good – this is what we’re going to do for you’.

“We hear promises, we don’t see anything. But if [Labour] say the right things, are we going to trust them enough to vote for them next time?

“I work in a hospital and what we’re seeing is cuts to everything, so all the social services being cut, all the packages of care – everything we need to run a proper hospital. If I hear a promise about doing something about that, to fix our NHS, I would like that.”

By Donald Turvill Local Democracy Reporter