

Colinton/Fairmilehead by election – David Henry independent candidate

**David Henry is an independent
candidate in the by-election to be
held in November in
Colinton/Fairmilehead.**

He explained that he does know the area quite well, having lived in Hailes Gardens as a teenager while going to school in Corstorphine.

He said: "All parts of the city have got some of the same issues. The roads are in a terrible state. People have problems with bucket collections. That's normal day to day, local council stuff. And I would mention the new bus tracking system that they've installed. It's breaking down all over the city – they've got signs over them saying "out of service"."

We pointed out to Mr Henry that the council has just announced that all existing trackers are now working and they're about to extend it to other new locations. Undeterred he continued: "My question is, (and I've already sent it to the council) – how much electricity are these things burning? Because these are colour and there are fans on them, and they're making a lot of noise.

"The old ones had none of these issues, so I want to know how much money they spent on it."

He said that as a councillor he will be questioning everything spent, because he thinks the council wastes a lot of money."

He raised housing as an example. He said: "In my ward, which is right on the edge of this one here, there are lots of empty houses. There's thousands of empty houses that the council own, while they put people that are homeless in temporary accommodation, wasting huge amounts of money. They can't afford to upgrade these premises.

"So they've got all these empty properties where they're not getting any council tax from, they're not getting any rent from, and at the same time, they're paying for 5,500 people in Edinburgh to stay in temporary accommodation. If they go into a B & B, it's £1,000 a month. I worked out how much that was – it's millions and millions of pounds they're wasting on keeping people in temporary accommodation while at the same time they claim they don't have the money to upgrade these properties.

"And then there's student accommodation, the number of installs of student accommodation, rather than actual social housing or affordable housing, is all over the city. And while I think Edinburgh University is a fantastic institution – it's taking over the whole city."

Regarding poverty he said that it is a "disgrace in this day and age that we're not looking after the people that are most vulnerable. I think because I've been in politics for a while. I was always supportive of free school meals for all school children, and not means testing it for two reasons. One, it means kids are going to get at least one decent meal. Two, they don't get picked on, and they don't stand out as they're getting free school meals while others aren't, because everybody gets it. So I think for those two reasons, we should ensure that all school children across Edinburgh, but across all Scotland, get free school meals."

He also set out an argument that one of the reasons Edinburgh Council is underfunded is because we have "lots of private schools".

He said: Apparently this is part of the calculation in the Barnett formula, that if you've got private schools, you're deemed to be a more wealthy area, therefore you need less funding. So that is one of the things apparently has quite an impact on how much money is given to Edinburgh versus other cities of similar sizes."

He also insisted that the council has wasted money on the tram. He said : "I was in a party conference meeting once when they discussed what they were going to do with the tram in Edinburgh. They were thinking of extending it, and I said well it only goes from the airport to the city centre. Did you know it doesn't even go to the airport until seven minutes past six in the morning, so you can't use it for the first 20 flights of the day. Then it shuts down about 1130 or 12 o'clock at night, so you can't use it for any of the late flights. So it's a complete white elephant. I question the logic – the financial case – for building that extension.

"This seems to be the problem with our local council, is once they decide they're going to do something, no matter what the evidence is that they should stop, they just keep going. So the same issues come up over and over again.

"I've watched what they've done in Roseburn. They spent a huge amount of money on this wonderful new road layout, except it's damaged the local businesses, because traffic can't really stop. New local businesses have opened, yes, but the old ones went out of business.

"So my issue on transport is there's been no actual joined up thinking. How can we do the whole of Edinburgh? How can we make it work as a system? Instead, what we've had is little vanity projects which have not really been joined up.

"Then they decide they're now going to add to it but what they never did is fix all the roads first.

"So I've seen potholes, I've watched cyclists going over them.

The roads need fixed. It affects everybody. It's damaging people's vehicles. It's injuring people. I've met some cyclists when I was in the general election campaign that was out in South Queensferry, and a woman had come off her bike, fractured her skull and ended up in hospital. She doesn't know what happened. She can't remember what happened."

Asked to sum up why he is the best candidate, David said: "Well, I've got a connection to this ward for a start, and I think the big thing that makes me stand out from all the political parties is that I don't have a manifesto that I'm tied to. I'm only interested in the community and the people that vote for me."

[A list of all the candidates in the election is here.](#)



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