



# **EAST LOTHIAN CONSERVATIVE & UNIONIST PARTY**

Local Government Manifesto  
2017







# INTRODUCTION

Since May 2012, the East Lothian Conservative & Unionists have been part of the Administration of East Lothian Council.

During that time we have worked tirelessly to implement the policy platform on which we were elected and to provide the best possible representation for the communities which we have been fortunate enough to serve.

It has been an enormous privilege to work on behalf of the people of East Lothian over these past five years and we are hopeful that, with an increased number of Councillors after 4th May, we will continue to do so in the years ahead.

*Michael Veitch*

Conservative Group Leader &  
Depute Leader of East Lothian Council 2012-2017



## A MESSAGE FROM RUTH DAVIDSON

This year's local government election in East Lothian is vitally important. **Voters have a clear choice** – electing strong local voices who will focus all their energies on improving local services or voting to go back to the divisions of the past.

Despite promising it would be a **“once in a generation”** decision, it didn't take long for the SNP to start demanding a second referendum on independence.

So the Council elections in May will be an important opportunity for you to tell the SNP – **we voted No to independence, respect that result** and stop trying to put us through it all again.

The simple fact is that **every SNP Councillor elected here on 4th May will use their position to agitate for another referendum**, while every Scottish Conservative elected will oppose one.

We need to make our voice heard loud and clear. **We said No to independence** and we do not want another independence referendum. Let's focus on improving our local services instead.

That's what your Scottish Conservative & Unionist councillors will do every day.



# CANDIDATES

The East Lothian Conservatives & Unionists are fielding a very strong team of local candidates across the county. Please do not hesitate to contact your local candidate using the details below if there are any issues which you would like to discuss with them.

## **LACHLAN BRUCE**

Preston, Seton, Gosford

Lachlan4PSG@gmail.com  
07944 625411



## **JEREMEY FINDLAY**

North Berwick Coastal

votefindlay@gmail.com  
07771 981265



# CANDIDATES

## **JANE HENDERSON**

North Berwick Coastal

Janehenderson2017@gmail.com  
07788 577610



## **SUSAN KEMPSON**

Dunbar & East Linton

sakempson243@gmail.com  
01620 248060



## **GORDON MACKETT**

Tranent, Wallyford & Macmerry

gmackett@mail.com  
01620 248060



**BRIAN SMALL**

Haddington & Lammermuir

Brian4HL@outlook.com  
07843 530158



**KATIE MACKIE**

Musselburgh

Katie4Musselburgh@gmail.com  
07747 564649





# OUR RECORD

In 2012, the East Lothian Conservatives produced a local manifesto detailing our policy priorities for our county. On joining the new Council administration, our manifesto was adopted as Council policy and then incorporated into the new Council Plan for 2012-2017.

Despite the hugely challenging national economic climate of the past five years, and the extremely tight squeeze on local authority budgets as a result of Scottish Government policy, we have none the less managed to deliver on many of our key priority areas.

## **These include:**

**Presiding over a prudent and stable financial strategy.** We balanced the books and ensured that the Council has lived within its means. This has been the only credible way of ensuring that the investment required to maintain our valuable public services has been protected. We implemented a series of balanced budgets, focusing on maximising efficiencies and ensuring, as promised, that every penny taken from East Lothian taxpayers has been wisely spent.

**Defending the Council Tax freeze for as long as possible.** We saw this as a crucial tool in reducing household expenditure across the County. The very modest increase, agreed by all political parties in February 2017, will assist in the provision of services going forward.

**An over-riding priority for the Conservative group has been local transport.** Conservative Councillors have worked hard to protect the local roads budget.





We have also:

- Reconfigured the Council-supported bus network, which is now vastly improved since 2012.
- Maintained excellent relations with all local bus companies in the county through the establishment of the new East Lothian Bus Forum.
- Worked with RELBUS to create a new East Lothian Bus Charter.
- Implemented better public information at bus stops.
- Established a new community transport initiative to connect Humbie with Haddington.
- Established the Scottish A1 Action Group to campaign for the dualling of the road between Dunbar and Berwick. This group has led the way in securing a number of improvements along the route.
- Taken very significant strides towards securing the re-opening of East Linton station. A funding mechanism has now been secured between East Lothian Council, Scottish Borders Council and the Scottish Government.
- Implemented new 20mph speed limits areas in North Berwick, Cockenzie and Tranent.
- Campaigned for better car parking at county railway stations, which has included the creation of a brand new car park on Countess Road, Dunbar.

We fulfilled our commitment to defend our crucial local services, including actively campaigning against the disgraceful closure of Haddington Sheriff Court, opposing any downgrading of local hospitals, and robustly insisting upon the retention of all East Lothian's rural schools.



This was in addition to supporting [substantial new investment in the school estate](#). We have been consistent in opposing the Scottish Government's centralisation agenda. e.g. the Courts and the Fire and Police services.

- Housing and planning has proved to be one of the most challenging issues of the past five years with the Scottish Government reporters over-turning local decision making and the Scottish Government's insistence that some 10,000 homes be constructed in East Lothian over the years ahead. We have worked extremely hard to identify appropriate sites with the necessary infrastructure, while [trying our best to ensure that the views of our constituents are listened to](#).
- A key priority for the Conservative Group in the Administration has been a robust commitment to [ensuring the tighter regulation of wind turbines](#) in the county. We successfully secured new conditions on larger turbines in the upland areas of the county and have steadfastly opposed the inappropriate siting of turbines in sensitive rural areas.
- We have consistently sought to [prioritise the economic development of East Lothian's town centres](#), and have worked closely with local businesses to help achieve this.

- Local policing was, as promised, a key priority for the Conservatives who have pioneered efforts to establish a dedicated Police and Fire Scrutiny Committee. Moreover, we actively pushed for and have now received the decriminalisation of parking enforcement. This allows the Council to employ traffic wardens following Police Scotland's disgraceful decision to withdraw our traffic warden service.
- We are especially proud of our record on sport and leisure. Conservatives supported the refurbishment of Meadowmill Sports Centre along with the laying down of new 3G pitches and refurbishment of numerous 2G pitches throughout the county. We have seen £2million of external funds invested to enhance East Lothian's Active Infrastructure to support a healthier East Lothian. There has been support to provide sporting pathways within the county through its sports development and Active Schools structure.
- Finally, we have worked very hard to support and embrace the active civic life of communities across the county, by working alongside community councils, school parent councils and a range of other community groups to secure shared objectives.



# HOUSING & PLANNING

## Scottish Conservatives will:

- Ensure that **adequate levels of affordable housing and rental market** continue to be provided county-wide.
- Take **a zero-tolerance approach to anti-social behaviour** in Council properties.
- Continue to **oppose the excessively high levels of housing being forced upon the county** by the SNP Government at Holyrood and to ensure that all developments are supported by an appropriate level of services and infrastructure.
- Campaign for **much needed improvements to the nationally funded trunk road, rail, water and sewerage infrastructure** in East Lothian, so as to ensure that the county can adequately cope with the levels of new housing upon which the Scottish Government are insisting.



# FINANCE

## Scottish Conservatives will:

- Ensure the Council continues to **take a strategic view of its overall financial planning process.**
- Maintain the current **rigorous approach to tightly controlling expenditure**, ensuring that the Council continues to live within its means by operating as efficiently as possible. This will also **ensure that investment is protected and is focused on key priority areas** such as schools, roads and protecting frontline services wherever possible.
- **Keep Council Tax as low as is reasonably possible** within the current economic climate.



# ENVIRONMENT

## Scottish Conservatives will:

- **Ensure that planning decisions are sympathetic to the natural and built environment of East Lothian.** Our unique and beautiful landscape and settlements must be protected and enhanced.
- **Provide maximum support to farmers and other rural enterprises,** as the key custodians of our natural environment and crucial job creators.
- **Conduct a thorough review of the effectiveness of coastal car park charging.** Furthermore, we would support the immediate withdrawal of charging at the very small car parks at Whitesands/Barns Ness and Tynninghame.
- **Vigorously oppose any reduction in the regulations governing the siting of wind turbines** in the county.
- **Continue to insist upon the best possible waste disposal and recycling facilities.**
- **Look for ways to encourage and support initiatives to increase cycling and walking activity** by both East Lothian residents and visitors.





# TRANSPORT

## Scottish Conservatives will:

- Ensure that the **maintenance of the local road network remains a top priority** in all spending decisions.
- Continue to take **a proactive approach to maintaining and enhancing the local bus network** including supporting the introduction of bus services to Garvald, Morham and Oldhamstocks along with proper express services between Edinburgh and Port Seton/Prestonpans/Longniddry.
- Continue to lead the **campaign for the re-opening of East Linton station**, and the expansion of the station car parks at Drem, Longniddry and Dunbar.
- Continue to **support efforts to have increased passenger capacity on rail services** within East Lothian.
- Continue to actively lead and **support the work of the Scottish A1 Action Group** with a view to securing junction improvements and dualling. The badly needed upgrade at the Broxburn junction east of Dunbar remains a top priority.



A stack of gold coins is positioned in the upper right corner of the page. The coins are stacked vertically, with the word 'TUTAMEN' visible on several of them. Below the coins, a document with various numbers is partially visible, including '150,241,291', '404,906,646', '172,4', and '354.59'. A dark blue curved line separates the image area from the text area below.

# ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

## Scottish Conservatives will:

- **Provide maximum support to local businesses**, especially SMEs, in terms of an efficient planning system, better infrastructure and, where legislation allows, competitive rates.
- **Support initiatives relating to growing tourism** in East Lothian and in particular to obtain benefit from its proximity to Edinburgh.
- Actively **support the future of Torness Power Station**, as the county's largest commercial employer. It is essential that the anti-nuclear SNP do not thwart the eventual replacement of this vital facility on planning grounds.
- Work with the community to **ensure that their voice is heard in the planning for what will replace Cockenzie Power Station**.



# TOWN CENTRES

## Scottish Conservatives will:

- Look for opportunities to **expand car parking in town centres**, and ensure the **speedy implementation of decriminalised parking enforcement**.
- Rigorously **oppose any efforts to introduce on- or off-street parking charges** in our towns.
- Back initiatives that **support High Street retail businesses** throughout the county.



# EDUCATION, HEALTHCARE & SOCIAL CARE

## Scottish Conservatives will:

- Maintain our **firm opposition to any downgrading of facilities at the Edington and Belhaven Hospitals**, while insisting upon the maximum level of services possible at the new Haddington facility.
- Ensure that **head-teachers be given more control over schools**.
- **Ensure that none of our small rural schools are threatened with closure**. At a time when so many new houses are being built, it is essential that the school estate is expanded and not reduced.
- Continue to positively **support the growing need for both adult and children social care** along with the provision of suitable childcare facilities for the increasing population within the county.



# COMMUNITIES & LOCAL DEMOCRACY

## Scottish Conservatives will:

- Continue to **provide the maximum possible support to community councils**, area partnerships and other community bodies.
- Continue to **invest in first rate sport and leisure facilities**, and maintain green spaces in our towns.
- Continue to **support initiatives addressing anti-social behaviour**.
- **Conduct a review of community planning partnership arrangements**. While the local area partnerships now appear to be working relatively well, we are less convinced about the effectiveness of the four county-wide partnerships.
- **Resist central government attempts, directly and overtly, to move responsibilities away for local Council control and accountability.**



**EAST LOTHIAN CONSERVATIVE  
& UNIONIST ASSOCIATION**

4 Church Street  
Haddington  
EH41 3EX

T: 01620 248 060

E: [elcua@talktalk.net](mailto:elcua@talktalk.net)