



FIFE CONSERVATIVE AND UNIONIST GROUP – 2022 COUNCIL ELECTION MANIFESTO

THE FUTURE for FIFE

The Fife Conservative and Unionist Group has been the Fife Council official opposition since 2017 and held the ruling SNP/Labour coalition to account. As we emerge from the Covid pandemic, we can do so much more for Fife if you will support our candidates in the May 2022 Local Authority elections. If you do, this is what you can expect. We will:

- **Independence and Governance**

- Do everything in our power to oppose any further referendum on Scottish independence and keep Scotland part of the success story that is the United Kingdom. Only the Conservative and **Unionist** Party can be trusted to protect the Union. And only the UK can defend our freedom.
- Work with the UK Westminster government to maximise additional funding, such as the Levelling Up fund, direct to Fife Council, bypassing the Scottish Government.
- Ensure that powerful scrutiny committees maintain oversight of Fife Council decisions to ensure due process and maximise taxpayers' value for money.
- Devolve more funding and decision-making powers to Area Committees to expand and facilitate local decisions for local communities within Fife.

- **Economy and Jobs**

- Support a mixed economy of Council (in-house) and commercial service solutions to maximise value for money. We will not be driven by political dogma. We will assess and award contracts according to best value in both financial and environmental terms.
- **We will free up resources to re-invest in degraded Council services that have deteriorated over decades of mis-rule by Labour and the SNP.**
- Offer free parking for one hour stays to encourage local shopping.
- Reject any workplace car parking charges
- Support a full fibre broadband service to every door by 2025.
- Encourage high skill, higher paid jobs creation across Fife through the provision of financial and infrastructure incentives to innovative small businesses.
- Ensure that Fife gets its promised share of the Edinburgh and SE Scotland and Tay Cities Region deals.
- Create a Council owned business to give disabled people work experience and skills to help with longer term employment.
- Encourage more local town markets providing locally sourced produce and craft

- **Health and Social Care**

- Pressure the Scottish Government to properly fund Fife's Health and Social Care system.
- Seek improved access to GP's and a better booking system for Surgeries using internet as well as telephone
- Increase the hourly rate for Care at Home workers to £12 per hour and stop the "rationing" of home care packages in Fife due to lack of carers.
- Pay for this, partly, by reducing bed blocking in acute care hospitals , and through the expansion and increased efficiency of in house, private and 3d sector care providers, allowing everyone who can, to be cared for in their own homes or homely setting.
- Oppose the SNP's plan to nationalise the care system and ensure that local democratic accountability for this critical service is maintained.
- Protect and ensure investment in Community Hospitals to guarantee an effective Out of Hours service to local residents.
 - All communities should be within 40 minutes travel to Out of Hours care 24/7/365.
- Encourage and incentivise the private sector to build more care homes, to the appropriate standard, where they are most needed such as in Dunfermline and Glenrothes.

- **Environment**

- Support and prioritise environmentally sound practices across all Fife Council services and policy. The Climate emergency has to be addressed at local, as well as national, levels and we will ensure that Fife Council plays its part.
- Create and expand Active Travel routes to link homes, work and shopping across Fife.
- Ensure that every community has free and easy access to recycle centres.
 - Fund and build a new Recycle Centre for Cupar and reverse the cut from 7 to 2 days opening imposed by the SNP/Labour coalition.
 - Ensure that large bins at Recycling Points are emptied when full
 - Remove restrictions on trailers from domestic users.
- Increase the number of Community Wardens to bear down on fly tipping, dog fouling and other anti-social behaviour
- Introduce smaller waste bins for houses and flats which do not require normal large bins – to cut down on street bin clutter.

Education and Children's Services

- The Conservative group successfully led the way to scrap SNSA for Primary One pupils in Fife, campaigned over the past five years to end the inequity in Primary One deferrals and most recently, successfully demanded a halt to the Scottish Government's inappropriate "sex survey" for schools.
- We will build on these successes to ensure that all young people in Fife, irrespective of their background, are able to realise their full potential. We will
-
- Guarantee at least one STEM qualified teacher in every primary school
- Ensure that all children leave Primary education able to read and write
- Improve education for young people with additional support needs by increasing the number of pupil support assistants in schools, investing resource into diagnosis and education pathways. Improve services and support for those on the Autistic Spectrum.
- Create One Stop Shops for those on the Autistic Spectrum and their carers in key locations around Fife.
- Strengthen child mental health services as we emerge from the Covid pandemic.
- Refuse to allow the Scottish Government's child survey to be used in Fife. Questions relating to sexual experience are not acceptable and ill conceived.
- Maintain the current leadership structure in our schools. Primary schools need their own Head Teachers.
- Build a tutoring service in Fife to support young people who have lost so much time in education over the past two years
- Ensure that from P5-S6 all pupils have access to digital technology to develop virtual learning in the event of any future school closures and also to allow improved connectivity across schools, thus allowing for wider subject choice options
- Expand capital investment into new schools, including in Glenrothes and Kirkcaldy

• Roads and Transport

- Bring road surfaces in Fife up to acceptable standards by 2024 by additional funding and better use of commercial contractors
- Deliver a Fife wide charging infrastructure for electric vehicles by 2026
- Reduce speed limits in appropriate built up areas to make the roads safer and cut emissions.
- Innovate to provide better public transport for urban and rural communities
- Develop more Park and Ride facilities
- Encourage the provision of additional Parent & Child parking spaces

- **Communities and Leisure**

- Expand the opening hours of Leisure Centres and swimming pools across Fife
 - Ensure that every Primary school child has the chance to learn to swim
 - Increase wellbeing by making all sports facilities easily accessible for longer.
 - Ensure that opening hours respond to community need, not staff availability
- Investigate the potential for commercial sponsorship of leisure facilities
- In recognition of its major population expansion, examine the viability of building a new, state of the art, Leisure Centre for Dunfermline and West Fife.
- Ensure that all communities have modern, well equipped play park facilities within 20 minutes walking distance.
- Ensure that modern, secure public toilet facilities are widely available

- **Housing and Planning**

- Ensure that strategic developments such as Cupar North and Dunfermline are built to high environmental standards, with extensive Active Travel connectivity and with the interests of the existing communities as paramount
- Buy additional houses to supplement Council stock
- Implement Passivhaus standards for all new houses by 2025.
- Seek to redress the balance of decision making so that Local Authority planning decisions are less easily rejected by the Scottish Government Reporter
- Improve the turnaround for council housing to improve availability
- Ensure that wheelchair access is designed into sufficient council housing