



Restoring Pride in Stirling

Manifesto of the Scottish Conservative & Unionist Party
Stirling Council Election 2022



Introduction

Stirling is a place that I love. It is a community that I am part of and home to me and my family. For many people it is a place that they are proud to say that they come from or a place that they have chosen to call home.

But in so many ways, the sense of pride has eroded over time. We see a city centre that is in decline, we see services that have been cut too much and we see social problems that just never seem to get any better.

Bringing pride back to Stirling is our driving mission and one which the Scottish Conservative & Unionist Party is united behind.

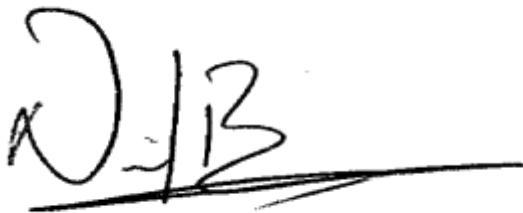
We want to see a Council that serves the people of Stirling and a Council that is focused on the issues that matter to the community. We need less of a focus on the Council as an organization, with endless discussions about policy and procedures, and more focus on the things that we want for our communities.

A big focus in our campaigning over the last year or so has been on the cuts that the SNP/Labour administration have made to waste collection. This is a significant issue that many thousands of people have contacted us about. We will reverse this decision and we will reverse the Garden Waste Charges which amount to nothing more than an extra tax.

But this is part of a wider trend. One where the council takes the easy decision to cut a service rather than to deal with the underlying issues of expense and recycling levels. Instead of addressing the operational management of the system, the SNP/Labour administration simply bought into the idea of cutting services. This cannot continue. We need leadership in Stirling that gets a grip on the Council and puts the people of Stirling first.

If we have the kind of leadership we need; capable, open, focused on the community and genuinely interested in finding solutions, then we can restore our pride in Stirling.

In this manifesto you will find some specific ideas about how we will achieve this. Our approach is to restore positive leadership and to work with everyone, whatever their political point of view, wherever they live, whatever their outlook. Working together we can Restore Pride in Stirling.



Neil Benny
Leader of the Scottish Conservatives on Stirling Council



Pride in our Local Environment & Infrastructure



The Local Environment is a major part of what makes us proud of our community. Protecting and enhancing our parks and open spaces, encouraging community use of land and enhancing our infrastructure are all important.

Roads & Pavements

Complaints about the state of Stirling's roads are one of the most common that we receive. Potholes hurt all road users, they damage cars and vans, they endanger cyclists and motorcyclists and when pavements are not maintained, they drag down the look of a place and make it less desirable for walkers and wheelchair users.

We should not underestimate the adverse impacts on wellbeing of our shoddy roads and pavements. Messy, dug up streets, white lines that have faded and dirty signs all contribute to a feeling of decay. This has a significant impact and should be a higher priority than it is.

We need to change gear on our road investment programme.

Scottish Conservatives will raise Council Tax by 1% each year, earmarked to borrow money to invest in our road network. This will add a potential £24,000,000 to the road investment programme over the next four years.



Scottish Conservatives will develop a long-term plan for investing in our roads, looking at all the criteria for road investment, ensuring proper road repairs rather than patching. This will also include a better inspection routine and a process of accountability for road repairs.

Scottish Conservatives will implement a policy of Safer Routes for All. This will mean that all road investment will be geared towards ensuring that roads are safe for cyclists, walkers, riders and drivers.

Scottish Conservatives will develop an overall cycling masterplan to deal with the fragmented cycling infrastructure that is a result of many years of piecemeal investment.

Parks & Open Spaces

Parks covers everything from the major regionally important parks like the Kings Park or Plein Country Park to small neighbourhood parks or village swing parks. They are all valued and loved by

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the people who use them. The Council also owns and looks after a huge amount of open space that is used for a variety of informal sporting and leisure activities.

People are proud of their local parks. Scottish Conservatives have always put parks high on our priority lists. When we have been involved in budget-setting, we have always sought to secure investment for our parks in Stirling. There is still a long way to go.



Scottish Conservatives want to stand alongside communities who want to look after their parks and open spaces. We want to make the default answer of the Council, ‘yes’ when people come up with new ideas, particularly on projects that increase biodiversity. This is especially true for community gardens, men’s sheds and similar projects where they are agreed by the wider community.

Scottish Conservatives will bring back the Ranger service. This service should look after our land, work with communities to run education programmes in our open spaces and most importantly, recruit volunteers. We want a volunteer army of people who will help to maintain and look after the public spaces in our communities. Local volunteers, supported by Council officers, are the best people to look after and love local land.

Digital Infrastructure

The Council has a key role to play in ensuring that the digital infrastructure of Stirling is fit for the modern age. We need to ensure that Stirling is connected in every way possible.

Most people access services online, and many now also work from home. Access to seamless and reliable broadband is essential.

Scottish Conservatives will seek a full review of mobile telephony in Stirling and engage with the private sector to ensure that we have full and up to date coverage.

Scottish Conservatives will work with City Fibre to find ways of extending the superfast fibre network to Dunblane and to the eastern villages of Throsk, Fallin, Cowie and Plean.

Scottish Conservatives will continue the work to ensure fast digital connections for rural Stirling.

Scottish Conservatives will look at all policies to ensure that people can work from home and make their homes fit for the job.



Proud of Our Services

One of the most important functions that a Council has is to provide services for its people. Whether this is picking up waste, educating children or providing libraries, it is imperative that these services are built around the people who use them. We need leadership that puts people at the heart of service delivery and will defend the services that they value.

Waste

A feature of this campaign is our pledge to reverse the changes to waste collection that were brought in by the SNP/Labour administration at Viewforth. There is no doubt that something has to change, but it is how we deliver that change, and what we change to, that the debate should be about.

Scottish Conservatives will revert to 2 weekly collections for residual (grey bin) waste and for the blue bin recycling.



Scottish Conservatives will remove the £35 tax for garden waste.

These pledges are a priority and we will seek to make these changes as quickly as possible.

The future of waste collection must, however, be considered. Stirling has, by a long way, the most expensive waste collection system in Scotland. More expensive than Highland Council with all its complexity and islands.

The Scottish Conservative vision for this is to work with the people of Stirling to

develop new methods and systems for waste collection.

Scottish Conservatives will establish a Waste Advisory Group to bring experts from the community in Stirling and beyond in to advise the Council on the future of our waste collection system.

Scottish Conservatives will commission a full independent review of the Council's waste collection system and publish that review to establish why Stirling has the most expensive waste collection in Scotland.

Scottish Conservatives will undertake a major public engagement session to establish what our future waste collection should look like, with all the facts and options on the table. This should take account of current policies and targets on the circular economy.

The outcome we expect from this to be a new waste collection policy and system to be implemented by year 3 of a Conservative administration. This should have targets for recycling and reducing the amount of waste sent to landfill alongside meeting the needs and expectations of the people of Stirling.

Schools & Education

Councils in Scotland run schools, but the amount of latitude they have to influence change within the education system is considerably constrained by the level of central government interference.

That being said, there are significant local problems that must be addressed. We need to renew our focus on narrowing the performance gap. Too many students in Stirling are left behind purely because of their socio-economic background.

We must also protect parental choice in the system. Flexibility should be a key measure and the ability of the system to flex around individual pupils and families should be protected.

Scottish Conservatives will set a target for the reduction of the performance gap between schools and relentlessly pursue the improvement of schools that are underperforming.

Scottish Conservatives will look at targeted individual pupil support through the use of one-to-one tutors. This should not simply be a subsidy, but an intervention in the life chances of individual students who can achieve far more than they are currently achieving.

Scottish Conservatives will resist any caps on parental placing requests and protect the rights of parents to choose a different school for their children if they wish to.

Scottish Conservatives will remove voting rights from religious representatives in the education authority. While we value their views, it is not right that they should be able to disrupt the democratic decision-making of the authority.

Scottish Conservatives will support early intervention models to help children who are at risk of educational failure, harm or slipping into the criminal justice system. We want to work with third sector partners to achieve this.



Nursery & Early Years

Stirling has a historically good nursery provision which has fallen behind other areas in some of the provisions that are made. A good example of this is the provision of nursery education for 3 year olds. In Glasgow the provision kicks in within a few days of the child's birthday, but in Stirling the provision is not triggered until the following academic term. This feels wrong.

Similarly, Stirling Council has a per-capita poor provision of private nurseries, with the education authority often seeming to stifle competition and convenience, rather than encourage it.

Scottish Conservatives will ensure that legally-entitled nursery provision becomes active when the child reaches the correct age.

Scottish Conservatives will work with private and charitable sector nurseries to build a new partnership based on trust and mutual respect and we will have a target for attracting a diverse range of nurseries into the Stirling area to help meet parental demand and enhance choice.

Libraries & Culture

Libraries have seen a great deal of investment over the past few years and we have already seen much of the shift that we would hope to see in the way that services are delivered. We want to see library services preserved and enhanced to create multifunctional spaces that meet the needs of what people use these services for today. Similarly, we want to see the continued development of digital services, like the Pressreader application which are used by many people.

We see this reform of libraries as a catalyst for a cultural revolution in Stirling which can be enabled by building on the successes of the existing partnerships. Stirling must become a hive of cultural activity. We also see major capital investment as a way to fundamentally change the way that we interact with our culture and our history.

Scottish Conservatives will commission a feasibility study to undertake a major refurbishment of the Central Library to turn it into a cultural and historic hub, bringing the front-facing elements of the archive into the building so that people can access our rich and vibrant history.

Scottish Conservatives will enhance the cultural partnership and stand alongside the variety of venues and artistic output in Stirling to ensure that people have great opportunities to interact with their culture and history.



Proud of Stirling's People

Regeneration of our communities is something that has often been trailed and talked about, but there seldom seems to be activity beyond the demolition of a few buildings or the repaving of a road. The truth is that regeneration has to be much broader than just

the built environment and we need to think about a new relationship with all the agencies and partners that the Council deals with to help people.

Anti-Social Behaviour

One of the most common complaints dealt with by Councillors are issues of anti-social behaviour. This is a catch-all term that can refer to people keeping an untidy garden right through to drug dealing or violent behaviour.

The Council should always be on the side of the victim, but that can be unclear in terms of who that is. The main complaint that people make about our anti-social behaviour processes, is that they do not know what is happening.

Scottish Conservatives will seek to make it easier to report anti-social behaviour and make it possible for people to see where their complaint is in the process when they make it.

Scottish Conservatives will seek to evict people from Council properties when they are engaged in anti-social behaviour and will have no tolerance for people violating the terms of their agreement.

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Scottish Conservatives will seek to support private sector landlords to do the same thing, offering advice and assistance to allow them to evict tenants who are causing misery to their neighbours

Scottish Conservatives will seek to work more closely with Police Scotland to identify individuals and families who are perpetrating anti-social behaviour in all its forms and seek ways to address that behaviour and to make Stirling a place that not only feels safer, but actually is safer.

The Council has far more power to help victims than it currently uses. We would like to see a full examination of council policy in this area. An independent review of our anti-social behaviour policy would be an early priority of a Conservative administration.

Social Care

Helping vulnerable people is one of the key duties of the Council. Providing social care packages to the elderly and to those who have specific needs is essential. That has to be done in an individually tailored way with the full involvement of the service users and their families.

It is worth saying that the Council policy in this regard exists in concert with the Integration Joint Board and as a result much of what is being proposed would require a great deal of partnership working with NHS Forth Valley.

Building partnerships across Stirling and through the third sector is key. Most importantly, working with the whole family is the best way to ensure that Social Care is provided in a fair open and transparent way.

Scottish Conservatives will look at ways of making sure that Social Care is an attractive and inviting profession for people to come into and will support people to train into the sector.

Scottish Conservatives will seek to bring in an absolute right to information for families on changes to care packages that affect relatives they look after.

Scottish Conservatives will seek to maximise the level of flexibility on care packages to ensure they fit round families to allow them to help and be involved in care.



Working with the Third Sector

The third and voluntary sector in Stirling is a vibrant and engaged part of the Stirling community. The Council should stand alongside the third sector and ensure that they are supported in the work they do throughout Stirling.

The Council can and must work to ensure that their budgets are secure and to help them attract new volunteers.

Scottish Conservatives will build a new deal with the third sector in Stirling to provide them with long term financial security, so they know the grants and contracts they will have with Stirling Council more than a year in advance

Stirling Conservative Manifesto

Scottish Conservatives will set up a supported recruitment campaign to bring new volunteers into the charitable sector in Stirling, to fully utilize the array of talents and experience we have in the Stirling area.

Addressing the Cost of Living Crisis

Incomes are stretched and the Council has a responsibility to ensure that it does not add to the burden of the cost of living and do what it can to give help to those who need it.



Energy bills, increased taxation, fuel costs and price inflation are all contributing to the squeeze on household budgets.

The Council should have a far better understanding of the effects that Council Tax bills and council charges have on individuals and we should publish an assessment of the level of poverty that is created by the Council Tax when it is not alleviated by the various benefits that are available to help payment.

Scottish Conservatives will seek to pursue a balanced tax policy. Taxes may have to rise to support investment and the most vulnerable in our society, but an assessment of the ability of our citizens to pay should be a major consideration in any tax policy.

Scottish Conservatives will work with partners in the third sector to ensure that as a community we are doing all we can to support people's income.

Skills Training & Jobs

To alleviate poverty and secure wellbeing, a high-quality job is essential. People need to be supported to get a job and the Council has a role to ensure they have the skills they need for those jobs.

Ensuring that there are options available for young people leaving Stirling schools should be a high priority for the Council, but the other important factor is to ensure that opportunities exist for people to retrain during their working lives.

Working together with the Schools in Stirling, Stirling University and Forth Valley College is



imperative. It is also important to look at the third sector and private providers in the area and work closely with the Job Centre.

Scottish Conservatives will work with partners to ensure that people have full-life access to career and skills training advice.

Scottish Conservatives will reintroduce the Stirling Employment Incentive which was money that was made available to employers who take on a Stirling school leaver for a good job with training potential.

Scottish Conservatives will put in place a target to double the percentage of Council posts that are created as traineeships, apprenticeships or other development jobs to ensure we

have the right skills in place for the organization and as an example to other employers in Stirling.

Housing

Stirling has nearly 40,000 households, some 5,600 of these are Council houses. The diversity of housing in Stirling is significant with the pressures that come from having a large and growing University, a National Park and proximity to major centres of employment. Stirling has also seen a huge growth in the price of houses.

The Council does not have a great deal of intelligence or policy focus on the private sector. This must change. It is not acceptable that the Council maintains no data on the costs of private rental or the prices that houses are being sold for.

The Council needs to ensure adequate supply of housing, while protecting valuable green spaces. This is a hard balancing act, but it is essential that we get this right.

Our objective is that people should be able to live in Stirling in good homes and local people should not be crowded out due to increasing prices. Too many children of Stirling families have to move to Falkirk, Clackmannanshire and Lanarkshire to be able to afford their first home.

We also need to look at the relationship between new housebuilding and regeneration. Too often, the Council has nebulous and non-specific asks of developers who are building in our area. We need policies that will allow communities to achieve practical and specific objectives, like new supermarkets, better roads or public transport rather than vague plans to slightly improve an employability scheme that has no real benefit to the community.



Scottish Conservatives will seek to work with developers to build a new deal for Stirling's communities. Villages, towns, settlements and neighbourhoods should be able to articulate aspirations that are open with developers, and developers should understand what these objectives are and be challenges to meet them.

Scottish Conservatives will seek to ensure that anyone who buys a new house receives a statement on what money went to the council from their purchase of the house and what it was used for (Section 75 monies)

Scottish Conservatives will seek to ensure that the right kind of houses are built that represent the best for achieving net zero goals (and are cheaper to run)

Scottish Conservatives will examine planning, regulatory and financial policies to ensure that prices for houses, whether it be rental or for purchase, allow local people the opportunity and choice that we would want for them in the housing market.

Scottish Conservatives will examine the possibility of raising a community bond for new council housing to raise money from the people of Stirling to invest in our community.

Proud of Our Future

Stirling's economy is vital to our future. Attracting investment, ensuring our city centre and tourist areas are attractive and making sure there are local jobs available are all important. Our economy has been let down by a negative attitude towards investment by the political leadership of Stirling Council. Our number one priority will be to have a positive approach to investment in Stirling.

Stirling City Centre

People from Stirling and the immediate area around it feel that the city has lost its sparkle; that something is missing and that the amazing city centre we used to have is not what it was. This trend must be reversed. People do not use city centres in the way they used to and Stirling does not have the scale to compete with big cities.



Scottish Conservatives will introduce a small grant scheme for business and property owners to allow painting, deep cleaning and refurbishment to take place to improve the streetscape in the City Centre and in town and village centres around Stirling district.

Scottish Conservatives will change planning policies to encourage and develop more opportunities for people to live in quality, affordable housing, close to public transport links, in the City Centre.

Scottish Conservatives will look at ways to improve the accessibility of Stirling City Centre both in terms of better and more frequent public transport connections and the availability and pricing of parking, particularly for rural residents.

Scottish Conservatives will use Council powers to incentivise businesses to locate in the City Centre through better business rates.

Big Change needed

Much of the Stirling City Centre needs a more radical approach. There is a need to look at the built environment over the long term and this will require a vehicle.

The empty space outside the Train Station is a good example of this. It has been sitting as a development site for years without much action. Similarly, the council shops at the base of the new flats there have been left empty since they were built 5 years ago.

The Council should set up, in partnership with local businesses, a City Centre Company with funding and staff to enable practical and targeted interventions in the City Centre. It should be able to make deals between private owners and the Council as well as take on the running of Council assets in the City Centre. It will be a property development company that will look for opportunities to create new spaces for living in Stirling City Centre and a better, higher quality, more beautiful built environment.

Scottish Conservatives will set up a City Centre Company, with support from private finance to make deals in Stirling City Centre and rebuild our city to make it fit for the future.

Jobs & Attracting Investment

Stirling's economy has a number of minor structural weaknesses. These are due to our over-reliance on jobs in the public sector and in the visitor economy. Having too much reliance on any one sector puts the district at risk if those sectors enter difficult times.

Our manufacturing, food production, forestry, pharmaceutical, digital and financial services sectors are very important and we need to build on these successful, well paid and profitable sectors. We need to maximise employment opportunities and encourage growth. The Council does not in itself create jobs, but through investment it can create the conditions for job creation.

Scottish Conservatives will rewrite the Council's current economic strategy to ensure that diversification of the economy and positivity towards investment is at the centre of what we do.

Scottish Conservatives will reform the economic development department to align it to this new strategy and ensure that the skills and support exist in Stirling, whether that be at the Council or in an economic development delivery vehicle.

Scottish Conservatives will align planning policies towards the attraction of investment, work to speed up planning decisions and ensure that economic development considerations are at the heart of our planning policies, procedures and practices.

Scottish Conservatives will seek to create a Stirling Investment Advisory Group to harness the expertise that exists in Stirling to advise Stirling Council on its economic development and investment policies.

Transport & Getting Around

Stirling is a walkable city, but the district is the size of Luxembourg so transport is an essential component of our lives here. The Council has put significant amounts of money into cycling through the city region deal, but there is a sense that there is a lack of coordination.

There is a need for a radical approach to transport, especially with new powers for local authorities likely to be coming on bus travel. We need to use these powers to make sure that the transport system we have is efficient and useful.

Scottish Conservatives will work with other council areas (especially Falkirk and Clackmannanshire) to establish a new Forth Valley transport partnership. This will coordinate bus travel throughout the region and ensure that the area is well connected. At first, we will seek to work in partnership with the bus companies, but if necessary, direct intervention will be made.



Scottish Conservatives will work with the local cycling community to establish a Stirling Cycling masterplan to ensure that we have a coordinated approach to cycling and that there are safe and accessible off-road routes for bicycles to the main destinations throughout



Stirling.

Scottish Conservatives will look for opportunities to fund the Kings Highway cycling project that will connect Stirling to Loch Lomond via the villages in West Stirlingshire. This will be a major tourist draw and we will look to Levelling Up and City Region Deal funds to expedite delivery of this fantastic scheme.

Scottish Conservatives will commission studies to look at the feasibility of reopening the old railway routes that ran west and north of Stirling. While these are likely to be far longer-term in their delivery, examining the economic feasibility of connecting places like Callander, Doune, Killlearn and Balfron to the railway network is a worthwhile exercise.

We should also lobby and seek to secure the reopening of the train stations in Bannockburn and in Causewayhead.

Proud of Our Contribution to the Climate Emergency

The Climate Emergency and the targets for net zero require radical action. While there is a real need to ensure that the Council limits the amount of carbon it emits, this only accounts for 3% of the emissions in the Stirling area. It is crucial that the Council supports residents in their efforts to reduce the carbon emissions of their properties, their travel and their food.

Bringing the Community with us

There is a great deal of expertise in Stirling on this subject and there are many passionate and engaged people. Throughout the last few years, we have fought to introduce a Climate Advisory Group to harness that expertise. This would be a great way of accessing this expertise.

Scottish Conservatives will establish a Climate Advisory Group of experts to advise the Council and monitor policies for their impact. This should be independently chaired.

Scottish Conservatives will put out a call for any organisations directly involved in this area to register to help the council support community action.



Practical Action

The Council needs to stand alongside the community as we move towards net zero.

We need to ensure our regulatory policies are in place and correct as well as aiding and assisting homeowners with advice and support. We need to incentivise and reward businesses that get this right and help and support, especially smaller businesses, who may struggle to make the transition.

Scottish Conservatives will fund and work with the third sector to provide an advice service for homeowners and businesses to help them transition to net zero.

Scottish Conservatives will look at expanding the Council's operation on installing solar panels, insulation and the other improvements that have been made to Council housing stock to private housing at favourable rates.

Scottish Conservatives will undertake a full review of planning regulations, rules and operations to ensure that we have the skills, expertise and tools in place to help Stirling transition to net zero.

Scottish Conservatives will change planning regulations to allow those living in conservation areas to undertake works to their homes to make them more efficient. This will include solar panel installation, double glazed windows and insulation. While preserving our built heritage is important, the current regulations do not take heed of our net zero aims.

Harnessing Our Potential

The City Region Deal is looking at a regional energy masterplan that will bring forward suggestions as to how we can generate new sources of power in the Forth Valley area. The Council also needs to look at how this can be done on its own estate.

We need to support energy projects that are in-keeping with Stirling and allow generation of energy at the community level. Working with energy companies, the Council can be positive about such developments.



Scottish Conservatives will undertake a review of the potential of renewable energy generation on Council property.

Proud of Our Council

Stirling Council needs to operate more fairly and more openly. The divisive politics of rancour and grudge are entirely unnecessary at the local level and we believe firmly that politicians of all parties and none should work together for the good of Stirling. Councillors are all elected to do a job and serve our constituents and we need to ensure that each of us has the ability to do so.

Furthermore, the relationship between Councillors and officers is one that should be based on professionalism and trust.

Our guiding principles for the Council are to respect openness and democracy, to consult and engage with our fellow citizens, and to be robust in our scrutiny and management of finances.

Finances

The Council tax should not subsidise inefficiency and waste. Council tax may need to go up in the future, but that should only be on the understanding that the money the council uses is being used wisely. The fact that the Council has run up a very high reserve shows that it has taken too much money from people which should have been utilised in the interests of communities.

There is a real need for the finances of the Council to be more open than they currently are. Too often it is difficult to get an answer on how much specific services cost or how much money the council is spending in an area. This must change.

Scottish Conservatives will take a robust approach to waste and inefficiency and ensure that all non-statutory services are measured against what they achieve and not misspent on pet projects.

Council tax rises will only be pursued if the Council publishes a statement of assurance to the people of Stirling that their money is being put to good use.

We will undertake a full review of all non-statutory spending and publish the results to show what the council must spend by law and what is extra.



Openness & Democracy

The Council needs to be more accessible than it has been over the last two years of the Covid-19 pandemic.

There is also a need to utilise the expertise of the community and involve people far more in the running of the council. Councillors often seek only one source of advice: the officers who are directly involved in the running of services. It is imperative that this is changed.

Scottish Conservatives will work with officers to get the Council back into the office. Citizens should be at the heart of how the Council does its business and the Council should ensure it is ready to meet their needs.

Scottish Conservatives will set up Advisory Groups – we have already spoken about a few of them in this document. We will ensure that Advisory Groups are supported and engaged in the running of the council with secretarial support and independent chairs.

Our Community

The Council should be open to community groups interacting with it, having ideas and holding the council to account.

We should listen to and interact with the statutory bodies, such as community councils, but we should be more open than that and allow any community group to have its say.

Scottish Conservatives will allow any community group to register with the council to get involved in our consultations and to make positive suggestions for the running of the council.

An Efficient Council

Front line teams who deliver services are often the best placed people to give advice to the council



on policies and procedures. We need to ensure that front line staff have a direct route to make suggestions about the services the council provides.

There needs to be investment in leadership and management across the Council, bringing in expertise from outside and building up our own home-grown talent. It is not about more management, but better management.

Scottish Conservatives will implement a system to allow front line staff to make suggestions directly to committees and councillors to improve services and save money.

Scottish Conservatives will undertake a full review of recruitment policies and procedures to ensure that the right people can be recruited and retained within the Council.

Restoring Pride in Stirling

A Great Team for Stirling

Scottish Conservatives have nominated people who represent the best of Stirling. We have a great deal of expertise and experience to offer, but most of all we represent a dedication to the principle that the people of Stirling come first.



Forth & Endrick

Thomas Heald

A graduate of the University of Stirling, Thomas, has lived in the Stirling area for 14 years and worked in hospitality before taking on a senior role working for an MSP in 2016. Married to a local nurse, he has chosen to set up his family home near to Gargunnoch with his young children.

Paul Henke

Paul is an ex-Royal Navy officer who qualified as a diver and underwater mine clearance specialist. After 9 years he left the RN and joined the Royal Navy Reserve achieving the rank of Lieutenant Commander. During this period, he started a financial services business that he sold to J. Rothschild Assurance. He then became a full-time author. His 20th novel was published in March 2022.

Trossachs & Teith

Elaine Watterson

Elaine is a semi-retired Tax Adviser. She was an elected member of Callander Community Council and held the position of Secretary and Treasurer. She has been involved in many community projects including the Redevelopment of St Kessog's and the Community Support Group.

Martin Earl

Martin has lived in Brig O'Turk for over twenty years with his family. Before first being elected to represent the Trossachs & Teith ward in 2012 he had been chair of the local Community Council and his children's Primary School Parent Council. Martin had run his own business for nearly thirty years dealing in old and rare books.

Bannockburn

Stuart McLuckie

Stuart is a 2020 graduate from the University of Stirling, achieving a 1st Class degree in BA Business Law. He currently lives in Plean and has experience in freelance writing and public sector administration. Stuart wants to invest in Stirling's youth and encourage growth & restoration in Bannockburn's town centre and villages.

Dunblane & Bridge of Allan

Douglas Dodds

Former Police Officer, Douglas Dodds is a well-known community activist in Bridge of Allan. He has served on the Council since 2017 prior to which he was the Chairman of the Bridge of Allan Community Council. He is a community activist who works with community groups throughout Stirling.

Willie Stirling

Willie is a theatre producer, film maker and writer. Since 2013 he has mounted 5 star productions through the Trojan Women Project giving a platform for refugees to tell their stories, having been through a ground-breaking psycho-social support workshop. He also makes documentaries. Previously he worked in construction and finance.

Stirling North

Rachel Nunn

A graduate of Stirling University and mother of two, Rachel started her career in retail and moved into the third sector focusing on community prosperity and environmental sustainability. Rachel has run her own business, set up an environmental charity, advised national governments on climate change strategy as a campaigner and is getting into politics to help get things done. In her spare time, Rachel is a Cub leader and keen gardener.

Stirling West

Neil Benny

Former retail manager and data analyst, Neil Benny, has been a Councillor since 2007. Neil was a cartography specialist who developed techniques for hydro-electric power station developments. Since then he has worked in politics and is leader of the Scottish Conservative group on the Council.

Alastair Pettigrew

Alastair was an ear, nose and throat specialist at Stirling Royal Infirmary. His innovative 3d ear model is still in use to train surgeons worldwide. He is also a great Scottish Country Dancer and fiddle player. He has lived in Stirling for 42 years and is keen to get Stirling Council sorted and bring his experience to the table.

Stirling East

Bryan Flannagan

As a former submarine officer and qualified pilot, Bryan understands leadership at the highest levels and has used his skills over the last 5 years as the Councillor for Stirling East. Since taking office in 2017, Bryan has been a champion of local issues as well as for the veterans' community he is a member of.

