

East Lothian Council **elections 2012**

putting **local**
people first



Scottish Conservatives believe in local government. We believe that decisions should be taken as locally as possible; closest to the communities affected and with local people having a much greater say over the shape of local services.

That's why the Scottish Conservatives are standing on a manifesto of radically devolving power. We will devolve powers from the Scottish Parliament to local councils and we want councils in turn to pass as many of those powers as possible down to individual communities.

All across Scotland, Conservative Councillors are working hard, representing their communities and helping improve the quality of life for local people.

We are fighting for more efficient services and to hold down Council Tax bills. We are fighting for investment to improve local schools, for better leisure services, for good quality rented housing and to protect our environment.

A vote for the Scottish Conservatives on 3rd May is a vote to strengthen our local democracy. It's a vote for value for money, good quality services and to elect Conservative Councillors who care about and want to serve their communities.



Ruth Davidson MSP
Leader, Scottish Conservative Party



For those of us who are fortunate enough to call East Lothian home, we know that it is a great place to live and work, with a really good quality of life. The East Lothian Conservatives care passionately about our county, and will continue to strive hard to maintain and enhance all that is good about living here. We will also work hard to change things for the better wherever improvement is required.

Over the past several years, the Conservatives on East Lothian Council have been working hard to stand up for the interests of the county. Our highly experienced team of Ludovic Broun-Lindsay and Neil Rankin have helped achieve a range of improvements.

As a minority opposition party, we have sought to persuade and influence the Administration in a number of important areas.

- We have for many years urged that more be spent on repairing our roads – this is now being done.
- We have supported, and continue to support, sensible affordable housing initiatives.
- We support Community Care initiatives, as well as Town Centre Regeneration projects.
- We support the retention and enhancement of our rural schools, and actively supported the retention of our small 'Cottage' Hospitals.

With a larger number of Scottish Conservative councillors on East Lothian Council after 3rd May, our influence would increase - and with that, our successes.



Ludovic Broun-Lindsay
Conservative Leader, East Lothian Council

YOUR CANDIDATES

Over the past five years, the East Lothian Conservatives have shown we can make a real difference on East Lothian Council, and are determined to do so again. We are contesting every ward in the county, from Musselburgh in the west to Dunbar in the east, and are steadfastly committed to ensuring that every community receives the representation it deserves.



Katie Mackie
Musselburgh West



Fred Lawson
Musselburgh East and Carberry



Lachlan Bruce
Preston/Seton/Gosford



Robert Cowe
Fa'side



Tim Day
North Berwick Coastal



Ludovic Broun-Lindsay
Haddington and Lammermuir



Michael Veitch
Dunbar and East Linton

Working hard to stand up for the interests of the county

Supporting sensible affordable housing initiatives

Backing Town Centre Regeneration projects

Retaining and enhancing our rural schools

Retaining our small 'Cottage' Hospitals

Committed to ensuring that every community receives the representation it deserves

Our policies

The East Lothian Conservatives have a range of policies which we would wish to pursue if elected this May. The following list contains some of our core priorities, but is by no means an exhaustive list of what we stand for. Indeed, we are extremely keen to hear from you about the issues which matter most to you, and would be grateful for your feedback.

Affordable housing

East Lothian Conservatives believe that high quality, affordable housing is the cornerstone of a strong and successful community. Working together with housing associations, developers, local communities and other partners, we would prioritise the building of sustainable new homes to address the urgent need within East Lothian.

All too often local people are priced out of the local housing market - we will introduce additional weighting for local people and people with a proven family connection to East Lothian, allowing them to continue to live and work in the area. We will also reintroduce a “modernized right to buy”, giving people a greater stake in their local community through home ownership and investing 100% of the receipts to fund new affordable housing rather than place so much of the burden on higher council rents.



Public services

While the current economic conditions have undoubtedly put pressure on budgets, taxpayers in East Lothian have every right to expect high quality public services across the county. East Lothian Conservatives are firmly committed to investing in the services which matter to local people, and will work hard to ensure that funding is ploughed into front line services and not squandered on excessive bureaucracy.

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We firmly believe that public services should be kept as local as possible, and to that end we are absolutely committed to the retention of our excellent local schools, including those in our rural communities. We will also fight any future attempts to downgrade local health facilities such as the Edington Hospital in North Berwick and the Belhaven Hospital in Dunbar.

Council Tax

Scottish Conservatives have been long standing supporters of the hugely successful Council Tax freeze, which has proved to be an invaluable benefit to a great many families in the current economic climate. We are totally committed to retaining the freeze here in East Lothian.

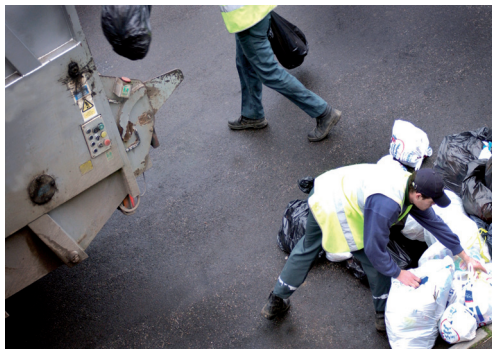
Efficiency

It is disgraceful that for far too many people, local government has become a byword for inefficiency and waste. The hard working tax payers of East Lothian deserve value for money for every pound of council tax they pay, and to that end we will work hard to minimise waste, bureaucracy and unnecessary administrative costs.

We will also work to make the Council far more responsive to the needs of local people, not least by fighting for a far more efficient and stream-lined planning system.

Town centres, local businesses and employment

East Lothian's high streets and town centres - and the small businesses and shops which exist there - are the lifeblood of our communities, and yet a great many are under serious pressure. It would be a tragedy if our town centres were to become lifeless deserts, and we are determined to make sure that does not happen.



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Conservatives have a track record of working to help local business in recent years, having worked to secure the Town Centre Regeneration Fund (which allocated funding to Tranent & Dunbar) and the fast-tracking of cuts in business rates for smaller firms. Here in East Lothian, we held a Business Summit in Musselburgh to meet with local business people and hear their views.

Going forward, we are determined to ensure that planning decisions made by the Council are sympathetic to preserving the integrity of our town centres. We would also work to boost new business start ups and improve town centre parking across the county. Such measures could provide an invaluable boost to East Lothian businesses, and thereby lead to greater employment opportunities for local people.

Transport

The level of transport provision available in the county varies enormously, from excellent in some areas to appalling in others. Most obviously, bus services within East Lothian could be improved significantly, and we would therefore use East Lothian Council's share in Lothian Buses to call for an enhanced network east of Seton Sands/Tranent, where these services presently terminate. East Lothian Conservatives have a strong record in fighting for better bus services, having campaigned hard for the retention of the X29 Port Seton-Edinburgh express.

On rail, we are fully supportive of the need to re-open East Linton station, and would like to see a comprehensive local service operating between Berwick/Dunbar and Edinburgh. We will also work to ensure better car parking at county stations such as Longniddry and Dunbar.



In terms of the local road network -which is maintained by the Council - we will ensure that pot holes are properly repaired and that all local roads are maintained to a very high standard. We will also lobby for improvements to the A1, specifically for the road to be dualled beyond Innerwick and for safety improvements to junctions such as those for Thorntonloch and Oldhamstocks.

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Environment

East Lothian is blessed with beautiful countryside, stunning beaches and a first rate natural environment, which is popular with residents and visitors alike. To ensure that our environment is preserved and enhanced, we will:

- Combat coastal erosion - a serious problem for our county - by lobbying for robust action from national government.
- Support our excellent county farmers, who are the foremost custodians of the landscape which we all enjoy.
- Support tougher planning regulations for wind farms so as to ensure that turbines can only be sited where it is appropriate to do so. We believe there should be a moratorium on wind farms in the countryside around Dunbar where there are already enough turbines.

Anti-social behaviour

Low level crime and anti-social behaviour continue to blight the quality of life in too many of our communities. We will therefore:

- Lobby for a stronger police presence on the beat in communities across the county.
- Support the retention of the Sheriff Court in Haddington, so as to ensure local crimes are prosecuted locally and quickly.
- Vigorously oppose any plans to shut any of the county's police stations.

Stronger communities

Ultimately, East Lothian Conservatives understand that it is not the Council which creates strong communities, but rather it is the people who live there and the various voluntary bodies which work tirelessly in many towns and villages. We will therefore work to improve relations between East Lothian Council and the excellent county-wide network of community councils.

We will ensure that our environment is preserved and enhanced

We will lobby for a stronger police presence on the beat in communities across the county

We will vigorously oppose any plans to shut any of the county's police stations

We will give maximum support to voluntary groups and local civic events

Promoted and published by ELCUA, Fenton Barns, North Berwick, EH39 5BW
and printed by DTP Ltd, 2D West Telferton, Edinburgh, EH7 6UL

