



Holyrood Election 2021



It looks likely that the Holyrood Election will be going ahead on 6th May. Clearly, there might still be restrictions in place so if you need a postal vote please use this link to register:

[Link - Postal Vote Register Website](#)

Remember, you will have TWO votes:

- 1. For the candidate**
(lilac coloured ballot paper)
- 2. For the party**
(orange coloured ballot paper)



Along with telephone calling voters across Almond and Earn prior to the by-election on 25th March, Frank Smith and I have been spending quite a bit of time with several local businesses which are bearing the brunt of many of the Covid19 business challenges. Regrettably, our on-site visits have to be restricted while lockdown remains but we have managed to engage over the telephone and on Zoom. We have just issued this survey after which we will be undertaking follow-up calls.

Your local team for our area

FRANK SMITH

Scottish Conservative & Unionist for Almond & Earn
Council by-election

LIZ SMITH MSP

Scottish Conservative & Unionist for Perthshire South & Kinross-shire
Scottish Parliament election



Dear David A Baird, Kathleen M Baird and Gordon W Shaw,

YOUR COUNCIL BY-ELECTION AND SCOTTISH PARLIAMENT CANDIDATES

In a few weeks we face the start of the campaign for a local council by-election and the Scottish Parliament election. While we won't be able to knock on your door and hear from you in the usual way, we're writing to you to introduce ourselves and hear what matters to you in our area.

FRANK AND LIZ WILL WORK HARD FOR OUR AREA

Frank Smith is your candidate for the Council by-election on Thursday 25th March. Frank lives in Methven with his wife Anne. He worked as golf professional throughout Perthshire and as a supervisor with Sprettaglass in Perth before retiring. Frank is passionate about the countryside and regularly collects litter in and around the village.

Liz Smith is your candidate for the Scottish Parliament election on Thursday 6th May. Liz lives locally in Madderty and worked as a teacher before her election as an MSP for Mid Scotland and Fife, serving the area since 2007.

Frank and Liz both understand the issues that matter in our area because they experience them every day.

IT'S EITHER THE SCOTTISH CONSERVATIVES OR THE SNP HERE

The SNP are saying that if they win big at May's elections they will try to hold another independence referendum as soon as possible - maybe even within the next year or two.

Along with Councillors Kathleen Baird and David Illingworth, we will be a strong local team focussed on the local issues that matter to you, not another independence referendum. We will work hard to help the area recover from the pandemic, enabling schools to reopen safely, and supporting businesses. Whether maintaining our local roads, dealing with speeding in villages, preserving our green spaces or any other issue of concern, you need a local team who will deliver for you.

We are working to make our area an even better place to live, work and visit, and we would like to hear from you to help us deliver for you. That's why we could like to give you the opportunity to let us know what matters most to you. Please complete the survey overleaf and return it in the Freepost envelope provided.

Yours sincerely,

Frank Smith

Your local candidate for the Council
by-election on 25th March

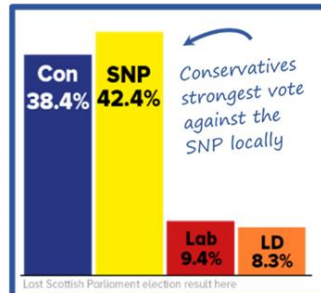
Liz Smith MSP

Your local candidate for the
Scottish Parliament on 6th May

Promoted by C Shiers on behalf of F Smith and L Smith, all of Conservative Office, Control Tower, Perth Airport, Scone, Perth, PH2 6PL. Printed by Scottish Conservatives, 67 Northumberland Street, Edinburgh, EH3 6JG.

**COUNCIL BY-
ELECTION ON
THURSDAY 25TH
MARCH**

**IT'S EITHER THE
SCOTTISH
CONSERVATIVES
OR THE SNP
HERE**



**FRANK AND LIZ
WILL FOCUS ON
RECOVERY FOR
OUR AREA,
NOT ANOTHER
INDEPENDENCE
REFERENDUM**

ALMOND AND EARN RESIDENTS SURVEY

Let Frank and Liz know your views

1. What one local issue would you most like to see action on? Please give details

2. Which of the following things are most important to you as your local community deals with the impact of Coronavirus? Please number 1-5, with 1 being highest

- Working to support local NHS services
- Ensuring key workers have all the support they need
- Enabling children to return to schools in full
- Keeping elderly and vulnerable people safe
- Protecting local businesses and jobs

3. Which of the following things do you think should be a priority for the Scottish Government? Please number 1-5, with 1 being highest

- Economy and jobs
- Crime and policing
- Schools
- Hospitals
- Roads and infrastructure

4. Do you think the Scottish Government should aim to hold a second independence referendum?

- Yes
- No

5. Thinking ahead to the Scottish Parliament elections this year, which party are you most likely to vote for?

- Scottish Conservative and Unionist
- SNP
- Labour
- Liberal Democrat
- Green
- Won't vote

6. Which would you prefer between the Scottish Conservatives and the SNP?

- Scottish Conservative and Unionist
- SNP

7. We would like to keep you updated on our campaigns and local activities. Only complete the boxes below if you consent to being contacted in these ways.

Your name and address were obtained from the Register of Electors, provided to us as a Registered Political Party under the Representation of the People Act for the purposes of democratic engagement. For more information please see our privacy notice available at: www.conservatives.com/privacy. If you do not wish to receive future messages please let us know by writing to Scottish Conservatives, 67 Northumberland Street, Edinburgh EH3 6JG. Your data will be used by the Scottish Conservative & Unionist Party as part of our democratic engagement with electors. Where necessary, your data will be shared with Conservative Party Headquarters, our candidates and elected representatives. It will not be given or sold to anyone else. For more information please see our privacy notice available at conservatives.com/privacy

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The Scandal Surrounding The Crown Office



This may not have been the issue that has captured the major headlines in the last two weeks but it is significant and, yet again, shows the corruption that is at the heart of the Scottish Government.

The Crown Office admitted the prosecution against former Rangers Football Club administrators, Clark and Whitehouse, were malicious and conducted without probable cause. The pair were arrested and detained in November 2014 and were charged in relation to Craig Whyte's purchase of Rangers Football Club. The charges were dropped by the Crown Office in 2016. After the Lord Advocate investigated the prosecution, he concluded that it was carried out without a proper evidential basis and met the legal test for a malicious prosecution. (February 2021, [link](#)).

In a letter to the Justice Committee, the Lord Advocate wrote: "an agreement was reached with each pursuer that he would be paid a sum by way of damages of £10.5 million... In addition to these payments by way of damages, interim payments have been made to each of the pursuers in respect of legal expenses. In respect of Mr Whitehouse, that sum is £1,650,000.00 and in respect of Mr Clark, the figure is £1,436,250.00." These sums add up to a total of £24,086,250. Later he told Parliament that "with other cases pending, the cost to the public purse will increase and the ultimate cost is yet to be seen" (February 2021, [link](#)).

The Scottish Conservatives are insisting this matter is investigated by an independent judge and not one from the Scottish bench. It looks like the Scottish Government will agree to an independent inquiry but, as yet, ministers seem unwilling to speak about who will chair the inquiry.

As far as we are concerned, only a full, independent, judge-led inquiry can restore the public's confidence, in the justice system.

Supporting Local Newspapers



I was pleased to pay tribute to our local newspaper industry in a Scottish Conservative debate ten days ago when we demanded that the Scottish Government extends the period of business rates relief to local newspapers, many of which are already struggling to survive even without the additional burden of the pandemic. These newspapers have, on average, seen a cut of a third in their readership and a huge loss of advertising revenue because so many of their usual clients such as hotels, restaurants and holiday cottages are currently not operating and therefore not advertising their services. Our local newspapers are a crucial lifeline for both news and information, most especially for many older people who are not able to access news online, and they are an essential part of the democratic process in this country.

We do not understand why the SNP has failed to include them in business support - neither does the industry.



In The Local News

Readers know that I have been campaigning for many years to have an upgraded rail-link between Edinburgh and Perth. The current line has seen very little change in journey times for the last century and is significantly behind the efficiency of similar routes in other parts of the UK (which average only 35-40 mins for this journey length in comparison to 60-65 mins). It is inadequate for the increasing commuter belts around Milnathort and Kinross and north Fife and its upgrade is strongly supported by many businesses and the chambers of commerce.

The SNP however, seems set to cut £33m from the rail infrastructure part of the draft budget - something about which I questioned the Finance Secretary, Kate Forbes, at Finance Questions last week.



“”

Liz has supported our business throughout this challenging time, is always accessible and has an unparalleled knowledge of the rural economy and local affairs; a real champion for local business.

Emma and Robin Niven
Loch Leven's Larder



 @MspLiz

 @lizSmithMSP

 Elizabeth.Smith.msp@parliament.scot

LIZ SMITH 

Scottish
Conservative
& Unionist 

The Hate Crime Bill



This highly controversial bill will shortly be coming to stage 3 following lengthy amendments at stage 2 in which the Scottish Conservatives, including myself, have been heavily involved.

It is controversial because of some of the Orwellian moves to interfere in our lives (just as controversial in nature as the named person policy and that is saying something!) and because it has been so heavily opposed by the courts, the police, lawyers and the public at large. For example, the SNP voted down a Scottish Conservative 'dwelling defence' amendment which would have protected people from prosecution for words said in your own home. Plus, the SNP has flatly refused to remove the stirring-up offences which threaten freedom of speech and a free press.

In other words, it will make it easier for you to be prosecuted for words said privately in your own home. For the characteristics of religion, age, disability, sexual orientation, transgender

identity and variations in sex characteristics the bill introduces stirring up of hatred offences. It is an offence to stir up hatred if behaviour is 'intended to' stir up hatred in a threatening or abusive way for these new offences. The Hate Crime Bill also offers no defence for speech uttered privately in your own home.

Genuine hate crime has to be punished but this bill goes too far.

“Yet another defeat for the SNP on education....”



Outdoor Education Centres

Readers will recall that, in the middle of last year, following the first wave of the pandemic, I worked with the outdoor education centres to secure emergency funding until April 2021. The Scottish Government provided £2m of the sector's "ask" of £3.2m but this is not nearly enough for financial viability in the future. It case, that around half our centres are perilously close to closure and therefore urgent action is still required. For the past few months I have been working with the leaders in the sector and with cyclist and adventurer, Marc Beaumont, to encourage others to donate money to a new trust fund which can provide additional funds. On 18th February, the sector launched its new document with the support of myself, Iain Gray (Labour), Liam McArthur (Liberal), Bruce Crawford (SNP) and Alison Johnstone (Green). We will continue to assist them in whatever way we can in order to preserve this

very precious educational asset.

Link - Outdoor Education Booklet PDF



Climate Change Debate



Over the past month at the Environment Committee, Members have been scrutinising the Scottish Government's update climate change plan and, last Monday, held the Cabinet Secretary Roseanna Cunningham, to account over some key issues. These include those issues identified by the witnesses from whom we have taken evidence.

Principally, they fall into the following 5 categories:

1. Given several key Scottish Government targets have not been met (eg landfill, recycling), what has been the main reason for failure?
2. Why have some industry sectors done very much better than others when it comes to moving towards net zero?
3. Why has there not been a more holistic approach to policy-making to ensure all sectors can work together with government(s) – for example should there not be a much more joined up approach between forestry and agriculture?
4. What more can be done to encourage behavioural change?
5. What new skills are required to make green jobs sustainable for the future?

Salmond v. Sturgeon



At last. Alex Salmond should now appear under oath at the Holyrood Committee on Wednesday morning. This follows the prolonged wrangle about the publication of his evidence.

A previous version of the submission had been censored by SNP MSPs on the inquiry in case it breached court orders, privacy or data laws. That prompted Mr Salmond's lawyers to submit a revised version to put the matter "beyond doubt".

However, the Scottish Parliamentary Corporate Body (SPCB) agreed to publish the evidence with some redactions in place.

While this raises questions about the relationship of parliamentary committees to the SPCB, it means Alex Salmond's claims can now be included in the inquiry's final report.

As readers know, Mr Salmond alleges Ms Sturgeon repeatedly misled Holyrood about meetings he had with her in 2018 while he was being investigated by her officials over alleged sexual misconduct.

He claims his successor therefore breached the Scottish ministerial code - a resignation offence which she denies.

Audit Scotland Report On NHS Pandemic Response

Just published for those readers who would like to see what Audit Scotland has said about the NHS aim Scotland during the pandemic

Please see link below.

[Link - Audit Scotland Report](#)

The SNP Is Derailing Scotland's Recovery





Nasa's Mars Landing



Last week NASA successfully landed their latest Mars prop 'Perseverance'. This mission is a stunning achievement, that many people said was against the odds and would fail. Like NASA we need to persevere against the odds and continue our mission to beat the SNP.

Find Out More About Me Here

Perth & Kinross Conservative Website



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