

Candidate in Ward 4

Central Buchan

Council Election

3rd May 2012

Mrs. Carol Donald

Scottish Labour Party

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For the attention of Kate Ramsden, Branch Chair,
Aberdeenshire UNISON

There are currently no Labour councillors on Aberdeenshire Council. I contested the old South Buchan seat and came last in the poll.

5 years ago I stood again and came 6th out of 8 candidates, beating the Lib-Dem candidate (not local to the area) and one of the independents.

I have lived in the area for 43 years, and have 10 children, who are now all adults and have all left home. Also 18 grandchildren (and counting!). My youngest daughter has Down's syndrome and is now living independently in supported accommodation.

I left paid employment many years ago on the birth of my eldest child. I was a librarian (Grade III) with London County Council (L.C.C.) at Hammersmith College of Art and Building in Shepherd's Bush.

② My first job after leaving school was a library assistant with Lancashire County Council in Prestwich and Whitefield libraries, near Manchester. I qualified as a librarian after 2 years part time study and 1 year full time at Ealing Technical College.

The trade union then was N.A.L.G.O which I'm told is now UNISON (and has been for many years). I was not at that time a very political animal, because I had achieved all this before I had attained my majority.

(21 all those years ago)

I am giving you this background information as I feel it is relevant to my answers to your questions.

1) I recognise the value and importance of public services, especially in education and health, and I am always defending them, in a hostile environment often.

e.g. I produce food - what do you do?

Who needs libraries?

I try to protect public services by pointing out that they are free at the point of delivery, in many cases they have been hard fought for by our forebears to give equal opportunity to all and we surely don't want to go backwards.

2) The short answer is yes. Key services need to be kept in control of the council.

3) + 4) Not easy - because too often cut backs are made an excuse for everything. Social care staff need to be

properly trained, at the moment I believe this to be true. but there is a tendency for care, especially for the vulnerable elderly + those with disabilities to be seen as just common sense. A slippery slope to abuse.

I know quite a bit about self-directed payments as there is a consultation on just now to come in in 2013. With an increasing number of elderly people and the fact that Scotland still provides free personal care the demands on funding will grow. However it is more economical to keep people in their own homes for as long as possible - this would be my key argument

5) I'm all for a Living Wage (after all the Labour Party made a start with the National Minimum Wage) Home Responsibilities Protection ensured that I received a full state pension in my own right.

Family carers (unpaid) are not entitled to Carers Allowance once they reach pension age (overlapping benefits rule) effectively reducing the value of their pension. - Remember the fight to get it for married women.

6) This is matter of great personal concern to me. Two members of my family have trained as classroom assistants following the implementation of the Additional Support for Learners Act in 2005, hoping they could give children with special needs a better start than their sister had. Many teachers would welcome his support to promote inclusion and celebrate difference - how else can we move to a more understanding society?

But once again the most vulnerable are seen as an easy target. The word that comes up time and again in carer's support groups is 'fight' - but because we care so much we carry on.

7) 8) ~~9)~~ Now we're really getting down to it. I am absolutely incensed at the cuts in welfare benefits.

Child benefit should remain a universal benefit. With the mobility of families these days divorce, step parents, etc people's incomes changing I feel sure the administrative costs will outweigh any gains.

The rules for uprating benefits have changed. State pensioners - as before - inflation figure for Sept. 2011 - over 5% Got to keep the pensioners happy! Everyone else a much lower figure so in real terms their incomes are shrinking

The same argument applies to the freezing of the pay of public sector workers. We are now told we are in a double dip recession for the first time since the 1970's. Something isn't quite right.

9) Anything that makes for a Greener environment is fine by me. I used to subscribe to the Green Diary (now online only) and follow the reduce, re-use, recycle code.

I am happy for this to appear on the branch website - edited if required. Sorry I don't have all the technology yet.
Thanks. Carol