

ON 4TH MAY RE-ELECT SEAN MORTON FOR FOCHABERS LHANBRYDE

ON YOUR SIDE
A PLAN TO RUN
MORAY TOGETHER

Re-elect Sean Morton

On your side in Fochabers Lhanbryde



To my constituents - my friends and neighbours

Thank you for being such a strong community. Thank you for always coming together when times have demanded it. It has made my job so much easier.

Being a councillor in 2017 is a 24/7 job. The real work doesn't happen in the chamber. It's when someone sees you in the shop or sees that you're online on Facebook that they're more likely to come to you for help. That's the part of the job you won't see in the papers but it's the part of the job I love - being on your side with the everyday problems and getting them sorted.

That's why I've looked back over the thousands of emails, messages, surgeries and calls to come up with ways the council can make life a little easier for folk. Sometimes the problems we face in our own lives or the things that frustrate us in our own village might seem trivial compared to what's happening in the world - but they matter and they should matter to the council too.

The morning after I was elected I had a wee bit of a hangover having had one too many in The Grant Arms. But I was excited to find a note from a lady who wanted my help pushed through the letterbox. I popped round to see her that day and eventually - after a couple of months - we got things fixed. I'll never forget the hug she gave me knowing she would sleep a little easier that night. I knew then I was in the right job. It was nothing big to anyone else but it meant the world to her - and to me. So this is not a manifesto about Brexit or another IndyRef - we can't afford more time and money on those. It's a plan to tackle some of the challenges we are facing as a community - together.

If I've learned anything as your councillor for the last five years it's this: when we work together we win together. So this is a plan to give you much more power at the council. It's a plan to have a team of all the talents, of all parties and none, on your side in the council chamber. It's a plan for all of us to run Moray together.

Serving the community I grew up in has been the privilege of my life. I would be honoured if you would allow me to keep serving you.

I humbly ask for your vote on 4th May.

Sean

A plan to make the council work for you

1. Encourage new councillors to put aside differences and form a rainbow coalition

No one person or political group has all the ideas. If we reach out to each other across political divides we'll do better for Moray. Now is a time for talented people to talk to each other. We need all hands on deck to move Moray forward.

2. Give local councillors the power to veto decisions that only affect their area

No one party should have more than one councillor in each area. I think people should elect a diverse team of three to represent them. Margo, Douglas and I have been a strong team for Fochabers Lhanbryde. A team of one-time rivals we came together often to make sure your voice was heard at the highest levels. But often local councillors can merely show their support for a local cause. They are too often toothless in the face of a big challenge. I want the council to explore giving each local ward a veto over decisions that only affect their area, to be used when all ward councillors agree to use it and to be used only once. That will mean we can stand up for our ward - but not cause gridlock.

3. Cap Senior Executive and Councillor salaries

If sacrifices must be made, let them be made at the top.

4. Give communities the right to appeal planning decisions

It is wrong that communities like Lhanbryde have been powerless in the face of hostile developers who run roughshod over our heritage. This is our community. We should have a greater say over what happens here. The council's legal department should work with councillors and others to give local people a right of appeal on planning matters.

5. Give communities more control over the budget, bin collections, street naming and road repairs.

Too many decisions are made by people you've never heard of. They are undoubtedly good people doing their best - but these decisions don't need to be made behind closed doors. Let the people in. Moray will be all the better for it.

6. Make sure the council spends your money wisely

Local people have the answers to the tough questions and they have the ideas we need to run Moray. We don't need the council spending money on outside consultants paid to tell us what we already know. I will be focused like a laser on stopping wasteful spending by the council. I also don't want to see money that could be spent on teachers, nurses and doctors spent on a second referendum.

A plan to fix the everyday problems

1. Make council house repairs an urgent council priority

If we can't look after our tenants when something goes wrong at home, we need to take a long hard look at ourselves. I don't want to see people waiting and waiting before getting help with even the most minor repairs. I want the council getting things fixed, fast.

2. Reward clean communities to encourage others to become cleaner

I've looked into radical ideas to tackle the blight of dog fouling and litter louts. The idea I like the most is one that encourages good behaviour. Let's make it well known that the communities that keep themselves clean will be rewarded. The less litter and dog poo, the better your village will do.

3. Launch Mobile Moray Council so you can get help and advice in your own village

I want people to be able to speak to someone from the council in their own village. I want them to be able to hand in forms, pay their rent and make complaints - in person, in their village. This could go hand in hand with expansion of our Mobile Library Service.

4. Ensure a rapid response to broken street lights and dangerous overgrown verges

These are matters of public safety and they are not difficult tasks to undertake. The council must come up with a way to respond to problems like this rapidly. Local people should not have to spend hours trying to speak to the right person or wait weeks to get any action. Far too often councillors are the bearers of bad news or no news at all because the council isn't responding swiftly enough to a problem.

5. Let local people spend the money saved by capping their councillor's salary on things that are important to them

It's simple - with my plan to cap councillor's salaries each community in Moray can access the money we save to spend in their own area - on BALL Groups, Men's Sheds, equipment for your local hall - anything that helps the village out.

A plan to grow Moray's economy

1. Build more affordable, fuel efficient homes in Moray

Everyone deserves the security of a warm home, that they can afford. We must meet the urgent demand for the thousands of people on the council housing waiting list across Moray, in an affordable, and energy efficient way.

2. Public services owned by local people

If we are to tackle the problem of dwindling resources, we need to find innovative ways of raising our own funds. Wherever possible, for example, as in the case of PFIs, we should allow local people to buy shares in our public services and run them together for the good of Moray.

3. Help secure A City Region Deal for Moray

I will do everything I can to secure money from the UK and Scottish parliaments, the local authority and local business, for a strong City Region Deal for Moray, that will boost the economy, create jobs and improve infrastructure. Moray contributes a lot to national coffers.

Through a City Region Deal, we will create a business case for some of that money to come back to the local economy. And don't let anyone tell you the great Cathedral City of Elgin is not a City!

4. Appoint a small business champion for a City Region Deal

Moray's small businesses are the lifeblood of our area. We will ensure they are not only part of a City Region Deal but that small business owners, and those who work for them, are the architects of it.

5. Give local start-up's disused council buildings

Our local entrepreneurs should be able to use disused buildings when they are no longer needed.

6. Establish Credit Union saving schemes in schools, led by pupils, for pupils

Credit Unions have supported people the length and breadth of Scotland and beyond, for years. It's never too early to learn the importance of saving and the value of community. I will work with the local community to establish the Alexander Milne Credit Union.

7. Support energy and broadband cooperatives

We need to keep energy bills down and jobs local. Setting up our own energy and broadband cooperatives, here in Moray, will help do this.

A plan to make Moray fairer and more equal

1. Set up a local Fairness Commission

In tough economic times we must protect the most vulnerable in our society. With innovative approaches we can improve the lives of local people, and address poverty and inequality. I will set up a local Fairness Commission to do develop an action plan to address poverty and inequality in Moray.

2. A more diverse range of people on public Boards in Moray

We need all of Moray's people and talents to get the best for our area. That means more women, disabled, LGBT and Black and minority ethnic people on Boards in Moray. I will work with public bodies to ensure they are ready, willing and able to open up their boards, and with employers, colleges and equality groups to equip all of our people to serve on them.

3. More employment for disabled people

I will increase employment opportunities for disabled people by developing a local paid intern programme in the Council.

4. Require 35% social and affordable housing on new developments

We know that if you address housing costs you can substantially reduce poverty. I will work with the council and local developers to ensure 35% of new housing is for social and affordable rent.

5. Publish an equality statement alongside the Moray Council budget

If the council is spending in a way that is doing people down, I want to tackle it. If we are doing well, I want to shout about it. Committing the council to publish an equalities statement alongside the budget will mean they can be held to account on their financial choices.

6. Help close the gender, disability and ethnicity pay gap in Moray

No one should be paid less for the same work. I will work with local equalities groups, the council and local employers, to appoint a Councillor to lead a task force to close the pay gap in Moray.

A plan to look after each other

1. Reverse the council's eleventh-hour cut to NHS and Social Care services

In the final budget meeting the council voted to slash the health and social care budget by £1.3 million even though the board that now runs Moray health and social care is already facing incredibly tough decisions. The cut was brushed under the rug and people around Moray will suffer greatly because of it. I will ask the new council to reverse the last council's mistake.

2. Abolish charges for community care

No one should have to choose between eating, heating or paying for their social care.

Charging people to get out of bed in the morning is just plain wrong. Let's call it what it is, a Care Tax. I have fought against the Care Tax my whole adult life and I won't stop until it is abolished.

3. Set up a commission on social care funding

Our local disabled and older people are being let down because we are not prepared to grasp the thistle on social care funding. Need is increasing whilst budgets plummet. I will set up a commission on social care funding, starting from the principle that social care will be free at the point of delivery. We need ideas from all walks of life in order to give older and disabled people the dignity they deserve.

4. End 15-minute care visits

Not a single carer or social worker entered their profession to work like this - this is not why they do what they do. No one should be forced to live with the indignity of a rushed shower or survive solely on fast microwaved meals. 15 minute visits demoralise staff and put people at risk. I will work with local carers and disabled people, and the Commission on Social Care Funding, to ensure care is funded properly and make 15 minute visits a thing of the past.

5. Ensure that no one waits more than 28 days for talking therapies

1 in 4 people experience mental ill health. Talking therapies can be the difference between life and death. I will work with the local NHS, local support organisations and community mental health specialists to develop a system that ensures no-one waits more than 28 days for therapy. This will include encouraging more people to come here and work in the sector. I will also support campaigns like Heads Together to make sure they reach the people of Moray and end the discrimination and stigma associated with mental health.

6. Train a mental health first aider in all council buildings

Just like we have first aiders on hand to offer first responses to physical illnesses, we will train mental health first aiders in every council building to identify, understand and help a person who might be struggling with their mental health. No one should have to suffer in silence.

A plan to make Moray top of the class

1. Defend the ban on school closures

I did not propose a five-year ban on school closures in the last council so that we would be back at square one. Our community cannot take more threats of school closures. That is why my first promise of this campaign was to defend the ban on school closures.

2. Invest in technical and administrative staff in schools

It takes a whole school to teach a child. We need to invest properly in technical and administrative staff, as well as teachers and lecturers, if we are to improve attainment and support every child to reach their potential.

3. De-clutter the curriculum and let teachers be teachers

Everyone has lots of paperwork in their lives, but it shouldn't get in the way of getting a job done. We should pursue the Government to de-clutter the curriculum to reduce paperwork and allow more time to teach.

4. Resource inclusion in our schools

Every child should have the chance to go to a mainstream school, and this has to be resourced. Disabled children are the future too and we must invest in them.

5. Campaign for minimum national staffing standard in schools

I will ask the council to work with the Educational Institute of Scotland which represents 60000 members in all sections of Scottish Education to ensure a minimum number of staff in every school to reduce class sizes. Every pupil will get the attention they deserve.

6. Oppose league tables and standardised testing

Hours spent drilling pupils increases "anxiety and stress", narrows the curriculum and has limited impact. I will oppose any league tables or standardised testing of schools and pupils in Moray.

7. Expand free school meals

No child should leave school hungry. We must ensure they get at least one meal a day, at no cost. Free school meals are the best way to do this.

8. Provide more young people with music tuition

Milne's has a proud musical tradition. I want to see more people from every village and every background learning an instrument not just because it's good for them but because it's good for school discipline and community cohesion too. The infants of today are The Fochabers Fiddlers of the future.

A plan to help create jobs and build skills

1. End youth unemployment in Moray

I'm ambitious for Moray. That's why I say we can end youth unemployment by the end of the council's next term if we want to. I believe every young person deserves our support in getting a start on the way to a secure, well-paid career.

Getting young people into full-time training or paid apprenticeships at the Living Wage and providing encouragement and incentives to employers and developers in Moray should be a real priority for the council. When Moray's young people do well, Moray does well.

2. Promote Moray to employers around the world and help them locate here

Moray is great place to grow up and work, I want more people to experience the great quality of life that Moray can offer. I will work with Moray Economic Partnership to promote the community we love to the rest of the world. So many people don't know where we are. It's time to change that. Whisky alone is enough to bring people to Moray if we just do more to promote ourselves. The Moray Speyside rebrand should be put to greater use. Learn more at www.morayspeyside.com

3. Implement the Living Wage Plus - £9.20 for carers

Demand for care is soaring. Care workers make sure our families and friends can live the life they choose, with the support they need. We must make care an attractive career choice and give a fair day's pay for a fair day's work. Care work must be rewarded. I'll also seek to ensure that any company employed by the council pays their staff the living wage too.

4. Grow our own teachers and nurses.

Moray has always had a problem with encouraging young people to stay here or attracting the skilled workers we need to fill vital jobs in teaching and nursing. But when people come to live here, like so many from the Forces, very often they like what they see and they either stay or come back. Moray has great potential. If we introduce council training schemes and work with universities and college to provide more placements here in Moray, we can grow our own skills base.

5. Support groups like Moray Men's Sheds to share their knowledge and skills

The Moray Men's Sheds group in Fochabers has gone from strength to strength thanks to hard work and determination. It's not just for older men – it's a place where folk can get together and share skills with each other. I'd like to see more young people – of both genders – learning practical skills from the older generation. Skills handed down the informal, time-tested way, will be good for our young people and good for our economy.

A plan to connect Moray to the world

1. Set up local transport summits in every community

Far too often communities are ignored when we ask for a speed restriction or safety measures in a local community. I've made some progress on this these last five years but I believe that every year there should be a public meeting of local people, transport providers and key decision makers so that local concerns can be raised and acted upon. Your transport, your way.

2. Develop leisure facilities fit for the 21st century

Keeping fit should be easy, and affordable. And that means having the facilities to keep fit, on our doorstep. I will work with leisure providers and the council to outsource some facilities to not for profit organisations so that Moray has the facilities it needs at a price we can afford.

3. Improve mobile coverage and be rid of not-spots

We've all felt the frustration of no mobile signal. I will work to direct public and private investment into local solutions to get rid of mobile coverage 'not-spots'. Those communities with no 3G coverage should be first in line.

4. Set up a bicycle cooperative and invest in cycleways and footpaths

Connecting Lhanbryde to Elgin with a footpath and cycle way has benefited many of us. The council should provide long term investment in both cycling and walking, reaching 10% of the transport budget as soon as possible, so that every community can benefit. The council should also explore setting up a shared bicycle scheme helping both locals and tourists get around.

5. Demand a Scotrail for the people

Moray is one of the areas in Scotland most poorly by the national rail operator. It is good to see new investment but anyone who commutes to Aberdeen or Inverness can tell you that the service is far too often not up to scratch. Trains are few and far between the line. Our stations are more likely to see tumbleweed during the day than an actual train! That means expensive train tickets on overcrowded trains with no available seats. It's not fair on passengers or staff. I will continue campaigning for Scotrail that is publicly owned and focused on the public.

6. Campaign for better regulation of bus services

Stagecoach has ignored the needs of this community for too long. We should hold the government's feet to the fire on their promise to give communities more control over buses. We should consider launching a bus cooperative for Moray that truly responds to the needs of the local community. In 2017 people living around Garmouth, Kingston and Spey Bay still have no way of getting to their GP without a car or a taxi. We can and we must do better.

A few more words since you made it this far...

The ideas in this plan have come from a wide range of people and organisations. Some of these ideas are my own but many of them came from friends, family, people I've tried to help or people I've never met doing good work elsewhere in the world.

Some of the ideas are new and will need a need a good team of people working out the finer details and some of them are tried and tested in other parts of the world.

This is my plan but I want it to become part of our plan. I would be delighted to hear from local people who have solutions or ideas they think could improve the lives of people in Fochabers Lhanbryde ward - whether they support me or not.

After all, if re-elected I'm not there to represent those who agree with me - but those who disagree with me too. That's why I'll be holding public meetings between now and election day all around the ward to hear your thoughts on this manifesto.

Finally, I'm not the only person in Moray who ever had a good idea. There are lots of great ideas out there that none of the candidates have heard yet. And there are undoubtedly other candidates with good policies too. So if you see something in this plan that looks similar to another candidate or party's policies please do let me know - that will make finding common ground after the election all the more easy.

Thanks again

Sean



Re-elect Sean Morton
On your side in
Fochabers Lhanbryde

Join the conversation



fb.com/seanmortonuk



twitter.com/seanmortonuk