

Almond councillor resigns from Liberal Democrat Group

✘ Alastair Shields was elected to the City of Edinburgh Council in 2012 as a member of the Liberal Democrat Group representing the Almond Ward. Following his deselection as candidate for the 2017 council elections at the end of last week, he has decided to resign from the group and the party, meaning that he will sit as an Independent councillor for the remainder of the council term.

Councillor Shields has also confirmed he will stand as an Independent candidate in the 2017 elections against the newly selected Liberal Democrat candidate, Kevin Lang. Lang stood in the Westminster election in 2009 and in the Holyrood election in the Edinburgh North and Leith constituency.

Shields will join former SNP councillor Councillor Jim Orr to sit at the far end of the City Chambers where they will both sit as individuals, leaving the remaining two Liberal Democrats, Paul Edie and Robert Aldridge to carry the LibDem colours. In the last administration the Liberal Democrats formed a coalition with the SNP, but their numbers dwindled to 3 following the derailment of the tram project. The Council Leader, Jenny Dawe and Transport Convener Gordon Mackenzie were among the casualties.

Councillor Shields has shared with us the text of his resignation statement:

"I accept the result last night but as far as I'm concerned I presented a strong record of action and a set of realistic objectives to the Almond Liberal Democrat membership and the majority chose to go for someone else.

"Moving forward, I have officially resigned from the Liberal Democrat Council Group on the City of Edinburgh Council, and

also call time on my entire Party membership. I spent a long time working as I believed to be the type of Councillor the Liberal Democrats needed and proclaim about at party conferences and on peoples doorsteps: hard working, standing up for community empowerment, fighting local causes for the purpose of fairness and justice..

“De-selection has left me confused about what the Liberal Democrats want so I’ll just leave them to it.

“For the minority that voted for me: thanks, it’s a shame we didn’t pull though... But as least I’m still your Councillor. And on that comment, while no longer a Liberal Democrat Councillor, time cannot rest on this recent event and there are many out there I must continue to work hard for, irrespective of this outcome.

My duty from here exists to carry on representing the ward as an Independent member. In addition, with my hunger for doing the best for the people of Almond, I now announce that I will be putting myself forward as an Independent candidate in the 2017 local elections.

I fully relish that challenge with all the hard work I have put in since being elected and the vast knowledge I hold over what the ward needs, what the residents want, and what local community groups and organisations hold dear to their interests. A lot is happening right now, and I’m here to continue taking it on.

Can I finally make clear that my decision has no reflection upon my relationship with former Group colleagues Councillors Paul Edie and Robert Aldridge, both of whom I am very grateful for their support over the last few years.