

# Midlothian Council leader and Lord Provost appointed

## Midlothian Council's leadership has been appointed following an SNP victory at the polls.

At the first meeting of the newly elected councillors the SNP group leader Kelly Parry was appointed council leader with fellow SNP councillor Debbi McCall was installed as the new Provost of Midlothian.

Councillor McCall pointed out that with a female chief executive already in place in Dr Grace McVickers, the local authority was bucking the trend with three women at the top.

The new Provost congratulated Councillor Parry on her appointment saying: "We have a very rare situation in Midlothian where the Provost, the leader and the chief executive are all women – and our cabinet is gender-balanced."

The virtual meeting saw some confusion for the viewing public as councillors agreed to approve amendments naming the new appointments which had not been published.

Following weeks of post election discussions the three parties represented on the council appeared to have agreed motions which "dovetailed" into a joint agreement.

However the council's senior legal adviser had to remind members to make the decision public.

As discussions around amendments were held Alan Turpie said: "I appreciate all members have been sighted on the various proposals from the three groups, however this is a public

meeting and members of the public probably haven't been sighted so it is worth a very brief resume of who will be taking the depute provost leader depute leader role and, I suppose, the effect of the proposals on the committees."

New council leader Councillor Parry confirmed her unchallenged nomination alongside new depute council leader Councillor Colin Cassidy and Deputy Provost Connor McManus – all SNP councillors.

The newly elected council is made up of eight SNP councillors, seven Labour and three Conservative councillors.

Councillor Parry thanked other parties for working 'collegiately' with the SNP following the election.

She said: "It has been really good to have that dialogue and I am sure over the next few years we are going to continue with that."

Former council leader and Labour group leader Derek Milligan described the cross party discussions held since the election as "refreshing" and vowed to continue working together.

He said: "I think with the challenges in front of this council, as the fastest growing in Scotland, there is going to need to be an awful lot of that and we are committed to that, hence I have tried to stop using that word 'opposition' or leader of the opposition rather leader of the second biggest party to make the point we are not here to oppose, we are here to work together.

"Hopefully we will see a lot more cross party working to get the best for our constituents."

Councillors also confirmed the salaries for their roles, with the new council leader receiving £32, 622 and Provost and any senior councillors receiving £24,467 and all other councillors receiving a salary of £19,571.

by Marie Sharp Local Democracy Reporter

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SNP councillors in East Lothian