

# Former SNP chief backs Alba candidate

Two days before the SNP fights for its 16th seat on West Lothian Council its former depute leader Frank Anderson has thrown his weight behind the Alba candidate standing in the by-election in Broxburn, Uphall and Winchburgh on Thursday.

Mr Anderson, until May's election, was the longest serving councillor in West Lothian for the SNP over the last 34 years, initially in Craigshill, and latterly in the multi member East Calder and East Livingston ward.

He was de-selected by the party in the run up to this year's council election and stood as an independent.

Now the former SNP depute-group leader, known for his robust style in the council chambers, has announced that he has joined the Alba Party, formed two years ago by former First Minister Alex Salmond.

He is now working to support Alba's candidate, Debbie Ewen, in this Thursday's by-election.

Mr Anderson told the Local Democracy Reporting Service that the SNP had drifted away from independence and only Alba "could hold Westminster's feet to the fire".

He added: "Having been an SNP member since 1985 and an SNP councillor for 34 years, the SNP was drifting away from me for some years and is now no longer the radical party I joined. It has lost its hunger for Independence and become blinkered in pursuit of single issues like gender recognition and women only lists.

He added: "I am absolutely delighted at meeting the large number of ex SNP activists who are busy campaigning for Alba. Some of them were the most active members of their former party."

Broxburn, Uphall and Winchburgh already has two SNP councillors – Group leader Janet Campbell and long-serving Diane Calder. The party has two councillors in all but three of the county's nine electoral wards

Tom Ullathorne who served alongside Mr Anderson in the last council for six months for East Calder has been selected to fight the seat for the SNP.

The by-election was caused by the death of Labour Councillor Ann Davidson in September.

Two former ward councillors will also join the contest. Tony Boyle will stand again for Labour and Chris Horne, a Conservative councillor in the last council hopes to reclaim a seat in the chambers as an Independent.

## **The full list of candidates standing this Thursday is:**

Tony Boyle, Scottish Labour.

Peter John Clarke, Scottish Liberal Democrats.

Chris Cotter, Scottish Greens.

Debbie Ewen, Alba Party for Independence.

Chris Horne, Independent.

Steven Robert Laidlaw, Independent.

Douglas Smith, Scottish Conservative and Unionist.

Thomas George Ullathorne, SNP

by Stuart Somerville Local Democracy Reporter

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