

Flags fly at half mast for former First Minister

Flags flew at half mast over the weekend as council leaders in Midlothian and East Lothian paid tribute to former First Minister Alex Salmond.

In Midlothian the Saltire above Penicuik Town Hall was lowered in honour of Mr Salmond who died suddenly on Saturday while in North Macedonia.

Council leader Kelly Parry, who is in charge of the county's SNP administration, said Mr Salmond had left a lasting legacy.

She said: "On behalf of Midlothian Council, I extend my deepest condolences to Alex Salmond's family and loved ones at this time.

"Alex Salmond spent his lifetime dedicated to public service and the people of Scotland. His impact on Scottish politics will leave a lasting legacy which will be remembered for generations."

In Haddington, East Lothian, the Saltire above council headquarters John Muir House was lowered to half mast following news of Mr Salmond's death.

East Lothian Provost, Councillor John McMillan, part of the council's Labour administration, said: "Alex Salmond leaves behind a significant legacy on the Scottish political landscape as one of our best known figures.

“While we may not always have been aligned on matters of policy, his incomparable impact through decades of commitment to public service will be rightly recorded as part of our nation’s history.”

Former East Lothian MP Kenny MacAskill, deputy leader of the Alba party, established by the former First Minister after he split from the SNP in 2021, today said the party would live on as part of his legacy.

Councillor Lyn (**CORR**) Jardine, SNP group leader in East Lothian first met Mr Salmond in the Eighties.

She said: “I first met Alex Salmond as a student in Aberdeen in the 80s. Having heard Tony Benn speak at a local rally, I regarded Alex in the same league in terms of oratory.

“He inspired me as a young party member and I campaigned alongside a large number of younger activists who he both motivated and supported.

“His is a complex legacy but there is no doubting the impact he had raising the profile of both the Independence movement and the Scottish National Party.

“My sincerest condolences are with his family and friends. Such a sudden loss is so terrible to bear, especially when there is so much attention from media across the world.”

By Marie Sharp Local Democracy Reporter