

SNP hold Broxburn ward with unlikely help of Reform voters

The Scottish National Party has held on to the Broxburn ward seat in a by-election – with the unlikely help of Reform.

Mike Carlin was ahead at all stages of the Single Transferrable Vote count in the by-election, but Labour's June Andrews began to catch up as the count eliminated other candidates.

When Reform was excluded at Stage 6, their votes transferred, and a significant percentage of their transfers went to the SNP. Labour also received transfers from Reform, but SNP received enough to push Mr Carlin over the winning line and win at Stage 7.

Mr Carlin polled 1,375 votes, 112 more than his Labour rival on 1,263.

Reform's David McLennan, who has contested every by-election since he stood in the July 2024 General Election, again beat the Scottish Conservative's candidate, to come home in third place. He was only eliminated at the end of the Stage 6 of the STV system.

Mr McLennan polled 809 votes to Tory Marnie Taylor's 324.

Mr Carlin's election restores the opposition SNP group to 15 members on West Lothian Council.

He also retained the seat in the face of a potential split in the Nationalist vote from a challenge by former party group depute leader Frank Anderson who stood as candidate for the Alba party.

Mr Anderson – who was deselected by the SNP in the East Livingston and East Calder Ward for the 2022 council elections – polled 135 votes.

The by -election was called in January after the SNP's Diane Calder announced her retirement after representing the Broxburn, Uphall and Winchburgh ward for 12 years.

Mr Carlin will join the party's group leader Councillor Janet Campbell as the second SNP councillor for the ward, which also has a Labour and Conservative member.

Councillor Janet Campbell, fellow Broxburn councillor , and leader of the opposition SNP group said: "I would like to warmly congratulate Councillor Mike Carlin who today joined the SNP group on West Lothian Council. This was a resounding win for the SNP in the Broxburn, Uphall and Winchburgh ward where Councillor Carlin was in the lead at all stages of the count.

"Mike was an astounding candidate who worked extremely hard in order to achieve success for the SNP and for our journey to Independence."

Newly elected councillor Mr Carlin told the Local Democracy Reporting Service on Friday afternoon: "I am passionate about our local community and will always put community interest first. During the campaign I met many residents and listened to their concerns.

"This is a great day for the SNP and I'm delighted to be representing people living in my ward. Now the hard work begins."

Turnout was 25%.

The results:-

Frank Anderson (Alba Party) – 135

June Andrews (Scottish Labour) – 1,263

Mike Carlin (SNP) – 1,375

Chris Cotter (Scottish Greens) – 185

Oliver Thomas Ferrario (Scottish Liberal Democrats) – 229

David McLennan (Reform UK) – 809

Marnie Taylor (Scottish Conservative & Unionist) – 324

By Stuart Sommerville, Local Democracy Report