

Scottish Conservatives the only party of the union after ex-Lib Dem cllr pledges support

- [Home](#)
- [All News](#)
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A former Liberal Democrat councillor in Scotland's capital city has backed the Conservatives, adding "something of a revolution" is building under leader Ruth Davidson.

Alastair Shields, who represented the Lib Dems in Edinburgh's Almond ward last term, said he would now campaign for the Scottish Conservatives in Edinburgh West.

He said the party was "ticking both boxes" when it came to respecting the results of the independence and EU referendums, and "fighting hardest for the centre ground".

Mr Shields is the latest former Labour or Liberal Democrat member to switch to the Scottish Conservatives ahead of next month's election.

Pledging to get his "canvassing shoes on", he said:

"In Edinburgh West, the Scottish Conservatives appeal to the electorate because they spend more time talking about their own campaign pledges and the potential of their candidates.

"They put across a simple message: we will deliver, vote for us.

"It feels like something of a revolution is developing in Scotland. Ruth Davidson puts people and communities at the top of the agenda, leaving talk of independence behind. We've had that discussion and the Scottish people rejected it. Let's move on."

Scottish Conservative Edinburgh West candidate Sandy Batho said:

"Alastair is one of many former Labour and Lib Dem members switching their support to the Scottish Conservatives.

"That's because people want to see a party which will fight the SNP in standing up for Scotland's place in the UK, and respect last year's Brexit vote too.

"All over the country the party is making strides, and it's abundantly clear we are the only ones capable of standing up to the SNP and its divisive drive for another independence referendum."

Below are Mr Shields' remarks in full:

"For me, this election is mostly about which party is fighting hardest for the centre ground and upholding democracy at a time where it constantly appears to be challenged. Right now, the Conservatives are ticking both of these boxes leaps and bounds above the others."

"I'm not a Brexiteer, I voted Remain. I don't think anyone in the country is under any doubt the process will be tough in the years ahead and so much is still unknown. But I appreciate that leaving the EU was the greater choice of the British people and that must be respected. I accept Brexit and believe the Conservatives, under the leadership of Theresa May, stand to represent many people across the country with the same mindset."

"In Edinburgh West, the Scottish Conservatives appeal to the electorate because they spend more time talking about their own campaign pledges and the potential of their candidates. They put across a simple message: We will deliver, vote for us."

"I am looking forward to getting my canvassing shoes on for the Conservatives during this campaign. I last helped them as a student and it feels like something of a revolution is developing in Scotland."