



Rob Thompson for  
*Organisation Convener*

MANIFESTO

for

***CHANGE***



**Rob Thompson for**  
*Organisation Convener*

I'm **Rob Thompson**, standing to be the Organisation Convener of The ALBA Party.

I would like **your** help.



## **About Rob:**

Born in Ireland in 1958 to two teachers one of whom who taught Gaelic in the South and the other who taught in the North.

I and my 2 brothers lived and played in a mixed border community which was slowly ripped asunder by outsiders in the 'troubles' of the 70's and 80's as we progressed through our education. As teenagers we lost classmates and friends to these very 'troubles' on both sides of the divide.

Like so many of our generation two thirds of our family left Ireland scarred by the experience of intolerance and bigotry breaking the social fabric of our rural community. I left to study Pharmacy (my uncle wished me to take over his chemist shop in County Wicklow) in Leicester but in effect I partied and played rugby for a year before heading to the United States to 'discover' the world and myself.

Returning nearly a year later, I applied to join the Royal Navy – someone had to pay for my travel, education, and sport! I joined for 5 years with the intent to go to the North Sea on completion. 33 years later after multiple challenges I was dined out on the Royal Yacht in Leith, received a CBE from the Queen at Holyrood, and met my promise to Fiona, my life mentor and partner, to fight as hard as I could for Scottish Independence.



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With Fiona a Fifer from the farming community of Cupar we threw ourselves into campaigning and selling the dream from 2012. We joined SNP on coming North, soon helping set up our own Branch in West Fife Villages and then moved our Ward from least canvassed to most so in the Dunfermline constituency in 2 years.

Disappointed but not de-energised by the Referendum result, we took committee posts on the Branch and Constituency Association. I became election agent to Douglas Chapman, Shirley-Anne Somerville and ultimately Neale Hanvey – when the party threw him to the wolves in the middle of the last Westminster campaign.

Disillusioned by the attempted destruction of Alex, I was delighted to see him, undaunted, return to the fray by forming the ALBA party and I joined it in that first heady rush of resurgent hope.

Since then, we have fought Holyrood Elections and by-elections with varying degrees of success. My fellow candidates Denise Findlay (the incumbent) and Leigh Wilson (election candidate selection Chair) have been key contributors working tirelessly for the party and I trust if I am successful, they will continue to serve ably in other roles.

As Neale Hanvey's campaign organiser and election agent when he lost the SNP whip mid campaign – I identified and rebuilt our team in time to change strategy and deliver a Scottish Independent to Westminster for the first time in a century against the Labour Deputy leader (Lesley Laird).

My strengths are using others' strengths to achieve the best results possible while having fun as a team.

I undertake to build a campaign organisation within each LACU by using all the talents available. A key lesson I took from my naval years is that a team need not be bosom friends but they can be very effective provided the goals and plan are committed to by all and the personal gives precedence to the team.

What a journey we have in front of us – excited yes, determined yes, and committed yes. **Let's pick up the pace.**

## Foreword

**ALBA are a democratic party answerable to its membership through the decisions made at National Conference, National Council and ultimately the ballot box.**

It is the role of the NEC to take the intent arrived at by the membership, apply the constitution and rules and implement the policy trusted to it through developing the necessary processes and plans to achieve the aim.

As a member of the NEC the Organisation Convener has responsibility to prepare and train the membership to deliver the strategic aim of the party organisation in local, regional and national campaigns.

## Election Readiness Plan

### Connect

With every ALBA LACU to identify our required skillsets within membership to ensure every area of Scotland is election ready.

### Support

Liaise with LACU Executives and National Membership Convener to ensure training & support is provided for each election ready role.

### Engage

With members across Scotland to surface critical local issues are opportunities to support communities and build sustained relationships.

### Prepare

Election Toolkit to raise the bar on Alba's election readiness. Turning learnings into opportunities for success, harnessing members' passion & commitment into election results that deliver independence for Scotland.

## The requirement in brief



**Centralised**



**Decentralised**



**Peer to Peer**

Peer to Peer campaign organisation, canvass and intelligence input.

Always on digital policy development platform.

Standard leaflets templates and stall provisions.

Hi-visibility campaign materials in audio, video, physical formats.

Hyper local campaign co-ordination.

Campaign in a Box - Session + Box training for all organisers.

National and Regional campaign tentpole events

Presidential Style town hall meetings

Empowerment at every level

## **Role of Organisers**

### **Organisation Convener (National Organiser)**

The role of the Organiser Convener (OC) is to create a sense of fellowship, of shared endeavour, and of national pride within ALBA's Organisers and their Activists and their wider membership. To build a team at all levels strongly and clearly led, well equipped, and trained to deliver a campaign strategy tailored to be the best it can be.

#### **This requires:-**

- Trust in and empowerment of the team.
- Early and frequent communication of the NEC aims and intentions
- Superior leader development and training
- Delivery of unity of effort by decentralised actions

The key to the OC making it a reality is by investing in our people at all levels. This requires time, energy and thought so that the OC can build cohesive teams that trust one another, can operate decentralised, can exploit their initiative, and achieve unity of effort while not regularly seeing or talking to one another.

First, the OC should keep plans simple, acknowledging that the more complex they are made then, the more likely they are to fail due to lack of control.

Additionally, the OC should share plans early and often with organisers and always encourage their candid feedback. This non-threatening approach ensures that plans can be refined and that shared understanding of strategic intent for how the campaign will unfold can be achieved.



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The OC should host informal meetings to discuss a myriad of potential tactical situations the organisers and their teams might encounter and discuss what contingencies may be deployed to solve them. This can reinforce common understanding and ensure sustained focus and reduced ambiguity during a campaign.

Finally, we each have a choice as leaders. We can either talk about it or be about it. We can pontificate about applying effective campaign philosophies or we can live them every day through our actions and interactions with our supporters. Organisers must lead by example and prioritise the mentorship of their teams. More emphasis needs to be placed on the honing of campaigning skills through tactical discussion, tabletop exercises and simple trials.

The OC must lead, own the plan, develop the team and communicate clearly and regularly to both encourage and acknowledge the efforts of the Organiser team.



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## **Regional Organiser**

**ALBA is Scotland's newest political party, with over 4 thousand members from all walks of life. We employ 3 centrally located staff in Glasgow and rely on a network of volunteer 'activists' across all regions of Scotland including the Northern Isles. For parliamentary purposes there are 8 designated regions.**

### **Leadership Role**

The Regional Organiser is the key generic organising role in the region, with responsibility for recruitment, retention and organisation of members. He/she acts as a powerful advocate of organising and building branch and membership organisation, and the profile and reputation of ALBA in the Local Authority Campaign Units (LACUs) and with the general wider public.

### **The Regional Organiser:**

- provides leadership ensuring that branches, activists and members are aware of and act in line with ALBA rules and policies.
- supports, guides and develops branches and activists through major periods between elections, ensuring party organisation and influence is maintained and developed through these periods.
- persuades and mentors LACU activists on how to establish an organising approach, identify suitable organising initiatives, evaluate the outcome of initiatives, design and adapt recruitment campaigns to build the LACU organisation, increase membership density, establish and work to membership targets.
- builds LACU organisation and performance, identifies training and development needs of activists, adapts established courses to meet local needs and provides on-going support through coaching and mentoring of LACU organisers and LACU activists
- leads collective knowledge sharing across the range of LACU activities which ALBA organises at local and regional level, analysing complex data and presenting this in an accessible and persuasive fashion.





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- represents organisers individually and collectively, assists LACUs to develop systems and processes for managing and undertaking their campaigns effectively
- represents the region at National level to Organisation Convener, highlighting circumstances, strengths, learning opportunities and training & support needs of his/her region

ALBA structures its operational and campaign programmes to provide for the systematic implementation of policies adopted by its democratic member structures. Regional Organisers are responsible for implementing the operational and campaign plans as determined by the National Executive Council declared policies and adapted to meet the geographic, demographic and resource opportunities and challenges within their region:

- Recruiting, organising and training members.
- Mentoring, encouraging and team building activist groups with LACU organisers within the region by promoting equality and camaraderie.
- Campaigning and promoting ALBA on behalf of members.
- Developing an efficient and effective regional organisation.

The Regional Organiser is a key deliverer of the operational plan for the region between campaigns, which ensures that the resources for their areas of responsibility are directed towards the achievement of the NEC's objectives and priorities. The operational plan identifies regional priorities and establishes progress or performance indicators to enable effective monitoring and evaluation of all work and achievements.

## **LACU Organiser (including role as Campaign Organiser)**

Some campaigns are run with the Election Agent combining the role of campaign organiser.

Unlike the election agent, the Campaign Organiser is not a formal legal appointment.

The Campaign Organiser and other members of the Campaign Team, including the candidate, must therefore give the election agent a final veto over any decisions involving the conduct of the election.

The election agent may take on some of the roles of the Campaign Organiser, but the organiser should not undertake tasks which are properly reserved for the agent.

Campaign Organiser roles include devising a campaign plan and budget, having this approved by the Constituency Association and ensuring that the plan is both implemented and kept under review right up until the close of poll.

### **All of this might include:**

- Preparing a constituency profile;
- Compiling information on past elections;
- Setting realistic campaign targets;
- Monitoring the implementation of the campaign plan against targets and adjusting the plan and targets accordingly;
  - Preparing an election time-line, including a short campaign time-line;
  - Ensuring that campaign materials are always available; and
  - Ensuring that campaign activists remain motivated.

In principle under the ALBA Constitution, the LACU is the fundamental unit of the party. It should be the LACU Organiser who is responsible for implementing the plan devised by the LACU Executive and approved by the Regional Organiser with the role of the Regional Organiser being one of monitoring.

In practice, the Regional Organiser is likely to have to take a significant role in implementing the plan as well. This can stretch to what should be LACU organisational basics – like having an updated set of leaflet runs.

### **LACU Organiser (Routine DAY to DAY Activity plus Local & Constituency Campaigns)**

The LACU Organiser is responsible for organising the political and campaigning activity of the LACU. Co-operating with the Regional Organiser, he/she will be responsible for ensuring the implementation of any constituency campaign plan within the LACU area, organising various types of activity as required – leafleting, door-knocking, canvassing, local street activities etc.

The Organiser should have attended one of the Organisers courses which the Party runs on a regular basis. The LACU Organiser should work closely with the Campaign Organiser (if different), parliamentary election agent (if appointed) and the Campaigns staff at Headquarters. Organisers can keep abreast with best practice via the ALBA website.

#### **Specific Duties:**

- To be responsible for the campaigning activity of the LACU. The Organiser may wish to appoint a small organisation sub-committee to help with this. Organisers may also wish to consider appointing an IT Officer, if someone with the appropriate skills is available, to help develop the LACU's e-campaigning.
- To know the LACU area and to create accurate and up to date records of the streets and roads within the LACU area and the number of houses in each street, with polling district numbers and polling place information for each street. (All this is available from the electoral registers.)



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- To compile lists of appropriate places for streetwork, best poster sites, people willing to put posters in windows, lists of local workplaces, clubs, groups and voluntary organisations suitable for possible candidate visits.
- To organise leafleting and canvassing between and during elections, to keep leafleting records for each area within the LACU territory, to develop an effective leaflet distribution system, prepare up to date canvass cards and to organise door-knocking.
- To record information from canvass cards, leaflet distribution system, marked-up registers, etc on the National system.
- To compile lists of young voters and other specific groups from current electoral registers and organise delivery of letters to each from MP, MSP, councillor, candidate or other ALBA representative.
- To organise recruiting campaigns to increase the LACU membership.
- To mobilise LACU members for campaigning work and to keep accurate details regarding help offered by LACU members; to keep the LACU activist corps in good working order by regular activity.
- To keep abreast of organisational improvements and courses offered by HQ in training activists and to encourage members to attend such courses.

# The Wheel of Success



# The Wheel of Success

## Party Structure

Opportunity exists to map nascent ALBA Party Organisational Architecture. Once completed, this can be utilised to better inform current and future continuous improvement assessment(s). The organisational architecture should be inclusive of Party HQ, NEC and Associated Sub-committees, National Assemblies, Regional Steering Groups, LACUs etc. Critically, an examination of interoperability between all component parts is also required.

## Party Decision Making

Constitutionally, and as an incorporated organisation, ultimate authority and decision-making lies with Party members. However, how is this implemented in the governance of the organisation? Clarity is required over who has responsibility for what and how that is exercised, together with specific 'Terms of reference' (ToR) and job descriptions for HQ staff and National Executive Conveners etc. This should include clear guidance on the implementation of policy decisions made at National Conference.

## Transparency/Communication/Accountability

Having established the organisational (Party) structure and where key decision making is performed, there should be confirmation that efficient and effective stakeholder communication is embedded within the organisational culture. This applies to internal and external communications and should be covered by a clear communications policy, protocol and codes of conduct. This should ensure that accurate written records are maintained in accordance with established document handling protocols and legal imperatives, e.g. GDPR, Government handling requirements etc.

## **Human Resources**

In addition to post-holder ToRs and job descriptions, clearly defined policy, protocols and codes of conduct should exist, including evidence they are implemented, and regularly evaluated. The skills, talents and experience of members require to be identified, recorded and utilised to the most effective aim of the Party. In short – having the right people doing the right thing. Where skills gaps are identified, the organisation should provide relevant training and mentoring programmes to enhance people development. All of this should be undertaken in accordance with the organisational aim and objectives.

## **Effectiveness/Assessment/Continuous Improvement**

A programme of continual evaluation, analysis and audit should be embedded within the organisational culture. Evaluation and assessment should include assurance and compliance with policy, protocols and Party codes. An audit committee is regarded as an essential element of Party structure, and an audit code of practice established with performance indicators identified, evaluated, recorded and improved upon in a cycle of continuous development.

# Leadership vs Management

## The National Political Challenge

Across Theatres:

- UK, Scotland and Fife

Across Silos:

- Devolved – Education, Health, Fisheries etc
- Non-Devolved – Welfare, Trade, Constitution etc

## Do we need Change?

Strategic leadership team is in best position to implement purposeful organisational change – but it must be owned. Major change is fundamentally a people issue therefore requires real leadership. Direction needs to be set from top, most successful change programmes need training and development for the Senior Leadership team (SLT). ‘Making happen’ is the biggest challenge.

## Leadership

*The successful leader is an individual who understands him/herself, the organisation, the environment in which they operate and the people they are privileged to lead.*

## Behavioural Approach to Leadership

### Managers vs Leaders

A **manager** takes care of where you are; a **leader** takes you to a new place

A **manager** deals with complexity; a **leader** deals with uncertainty

A **manager** is concerned with finding the facts; a **leader** makes decisions;



A **manager** is concerned with doing things right; a **leader** is concerned with doing the right things

A **manager's** critical concern is efficiency; a **leader** focusses on effectiveness

A **manager** creates policies; a **leader** establishes principles

A **manager** sees and hears what is going on; a **leader** hears when there is no sound and sees when there is no light

A **manager** finds answers and solutions; a **leader** formulates the questions and identifies the problems

A **manager** looks for similarities between current and previous problems; a **leader** looks for differences

A **manager** thinks that a successful solution to a management problem can be used again; a **leader** wonders whether a problem in a new environment might need a different solution

### **Derailment of Leaders**

#### **Five main reasons for executive failure in Europe**

Poor Interpersonal relationships – 64%  
Inability to develop or adapt – 62%  
Failure to build and lead teams – 24%  
Failure to meet objectives – 16%  
Too narrow experience – 18%

#### **Top 5 Attributes of Bosses**

Vision  
Trust and Confidence (in me/team)  
Decisiveness  
Communication Skills  
Delegation Skills

## **Characteristics of a Successful Leader**

### **Traits:**

Drive, Honesty & Integrity, Leadership/Motivation, Self-Confidence, Cognitive ability, Knowledge of the Business, Creativity, Flexibility.

### **Descriptors:**

Desire for achievement, ambition, high energy, tenacity and initiative.

Trustworthy, reliable and open.

Desire to influence others and reach shared goals.

Trust in own abilities.

Intelligence, ability to integrate & interpret large amounts of information.

Capacity to come up with original ideas.

Ability to adapt to needs of followers and the situation.

## **Find Our Story – Create a Passion for Change**

Numbers do not make an emotional impact but stories and vivid language do.

Three levels: National, Regional, Local

Three tenets: Simplification, Standardisation and Synchronisation

Identify the Problems and Find and Enact Solutions

Prioritise – “Just do it” to gain momentum.

Allocate Resources in Personnel and Materiel to enable medium and long term fixes

Delegate, Assure and Review



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# Campaign

# In

# A

# Box





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## **Objectives:**

Campaign Timelines (Local, Scottish, U.K.)  
Electoral Commission Roles & Rules

Local Resources  
National Resources  
Funding, Budgets and spending optimisation

Voter ID / Canvassing  
Local Marketing (Leaflets, Stalls, Events, Online, Hubs)  
Campaign Management + Communication  
Candidate Management

## **Get out the vote (GOTV) and 'polling day'**

### **Polling Day Preparations**

- Identify Polling Agent and Counting Agent Volunteers early
- Notify personnel details to Fife Election Team
- Source display boards and arrange distribution team
- Hold Briefing session for Polling and Counting Agents
- Election Agent and Candidate roving Brief on Day (external facing)
- Campaign Manager problem solving (internal facing)
- Check ballot boxes at Open and Close
- Voting Snap Shots at between 1200-1300, 1600-1700, 1900 and close

### **On the Day Knock Up - GOTV**

- Decide on and Prepare your Plan at least week before
- Consider number and type of Volunteers available
- Consider GOTV message (card/leaflet) delivery
- Consider who to Knock up e.g miss out Postal Voters
- Publish your plan
- Share work load
- Use of Telephone Canvassing
- Use Feedback on day to concentrate effort if required
- Have a social break planned
- Reward and Communicate with Volunteers
- Record results

### **Signage**

Rules  
Printing  
Sizing  
Early opportunity

## **Supporters Letters and Leaflets**

### **Our Strategy**

- Motivating our Electorate to Vote
- Establish your Volunteer and Activist Network
- Identify availability and skills of team
- Decide on targeting of message
- Nationally produced leaflets – number and timing
- Candidate message
- Supporters Letters (including PV)
- First time Voters
- Any specific local group targeting
- Timings of Delivery
- Produce base schedule
- Delivery window for each message
- Reasonable drumbeat
- Reward effort

### **Supply Chain**

- Printing timings of letters / leaflets
- Rules regarding printing
- Print queues + costing
- Suppliers and relationship building

### **Postal Voters**

- Knock up
- Letters
- Targets
- Importance
- Knock in

## **Outward campaigning**

### **High Visibility**

- Street Stalls
- Canvassing
- Press & Media Goals (Lead times and strategy)
- Videos
- Social Media
- Corex
- Standard Responses
- Quotable politics
- Hustings or Speaking Events
- Planning for incoming attack

### **Media Management**

- Make one or two simple points
- Be brief
- Be witty
- Be time relevant
- Include proof of authorship
- Use email
- Include 'new' information
- Refer to headlines/reports to build credibility
- Don't fight with journalists.

## **Voter ID and Data Gathering**

### **Supporting Documents**

- Sheets
- Boards
- Leaflet design
- Election address
- Registration of Voters and PV's.

### **Identifying our Vote**

- What drumbeat and how long can we sustain?
- Leaflet, Canvassing and other voter engagement
- Effort and reward balance – achievable targets
- Validate and motivate our own vote
- Ensure Registered
- Suggest Postal Vote
- Winning Others
- Weak Others and Undecided
- Will Not Vote/Did not Vote
- Impact of Candidate

## **Campaign Plan and Analysis**

### The Five W's

Who  
What  
Where  
When  
WHY



## **Campaign Planning – How can we maximise vote?**

- Use of Marked Up Register effectively
- Do they do as they say?
- Supporters need persuasion and thank you
- Find the half of our voters we haven't identified
- Understanding our Activists
- Clear credible message to sell
- Deliverable plan with credible drumbeat
- Rational and achievable targets
- Know the Electorate
- Nuanced message on door
- Long Campaign is general and Short Campaign targeted

## **Candidate Specification**

- Picking the right candidates
- Values of the team
- Behaviours of a leader
- Communal commitments
- 'Gold Standard Representatives'

## **Where are we now?**

- Half Blind – we don't know where our vote is
- Missing our Strengths – the Youth vote wants “Hope” and “Change”
- Value our Vote – tell them we appreciate their support
- Improve our Engagement – Social Media must be stronger
- Walk the Walk – continue to deliver change locally

**Be proud, be seen.**



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**ALBA**

*stands for  
Scotland.*

**Rob**

*stands with  
you.*