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LIVINGSTON ELECTION BOYCOTT WINS OVERALL MAJORITY

That over 61% percent of those on the Livingston electoral register decided not to vote for any of the candidates was the opening line of the short, impromptu speech of the humbled Alliance For Change candidate, John Allman. Mr Allman polled only 33 votes, placing him second from bottom in the poll.

Mr Allman went on to accept partial responsible for the fiasco. After all, he had been specifically pitching for the votes of those who were determined to boycott the by-election completely. For example, Mr Allman's election address *leaflet* had opened with the following sentence:

The best thing Livingston's voters can do for themselves and for Scotland is to send a clear message that they have woken up, and realised that the democracy of the whole UK is *broken*, and that they have made up their minds that that it must be *mended*.

The message which was sent by over 61% of those eligible to vote (plus those who spoilt their ballot papers) was close, but not close *enough*, to the message Mr Allman wanted them to send.

Mr Allman added that most of the few he had managed to speak to personally were receptive to the notion that an *alliance* was what was needed, if our broken democracy was ever going to be mended. He apologised that he had failed so dismally to get that message across, clearly enough to transform election boycotters, and those who spoilt their ballot papers, into Alliance For Change voters.

The victorious Labour candidate, who had managed to turn Robin Cook's former Labour stronghold into a Labour marginal, happened to be called Mr Devine, Mr Allman concluded with a reading from the word of "Mr Divine" himself:

Isaiah 10 (New International Version)

1 Woe to those who make unjust laws, to those who issue oppressive decrees,
2 to deprive the poor of their rights and withhold justice from the oppressed of my people,
making widows their prey and robbing the fatherless.
3 What will you do on the day of reckoning, when disaster comes from afar? To whom will you run for help? Where will you leave your riches?