
alexander to stand down

Posted by darkside - 2008/06/28 09:57

Alexander expected to stand down

Wendy Alexander

Ms Alexander broke the rules on donations to her campaign

Scottish Labour leader Wendy Alexander is expected to announce she will stand down, the BBC understands.

Ms Alexander has come under pressure after breaking donation rules and faces a one-day ban from parliament.

The Scottish Parliament's standards committee ruled that she failed to declare donations to her leadership campaign on her register of interests.

Ms Alexander, who became leader last September, is preparing to make a statement at the party's Scottish HQ.

The Scottish Parliament standards committee voted on Thursday to recommend the one-day ban on Ms Alexander.

Parliament is now in summer recess and will have to wait until September to vote on the recommendation.

Ms Alexander, the MSP for Paisley North, said clerks to the standards committee wrongly told her it was unnecessary to declare donations.

It was an extremely damaging and lasting punishment for the standards committee to settle upon

Glenn Campbell

BBC political correspondent

BBC Scotland political correspondent Glenn Campbell said he thought Ms Alexander had "had enough".

He said the possible one-day suspension from parliament would "hang over her for the whole summer".

"It makes it very difficult for her to operate as a political leader in the meantime," he said.

"People are very rarely suspended from parliament, nobody has previously been suspended from the Scottish Parliament for this offence and no political leader has been suspended from the parliament in which they sit.

"So it might have seemed at one level like a slap on the wrists but at another it was an extremely damaging and lasting punishment for the standards committee to settle upon."

The standards committee ruling was the latest development in the saga of donations to Ms Alexander's leadership campaign.

Last year, she expressed "deep regret" that her team accepted an illegal £950 donation from Jersey-based businessman Paul Green, although the Electoral Commission found there was not sufficient evidence to prove an offence and did not report her to prosecutors.

Meanwhile, the Labour MP for East Glasgow, David Marshall, is to resign his Westminster seat for health reasons.

A party spokesman said: "David Marshall has indicated to local members in Glasgow that he will step down as a Member of Parliament.

"We understand that he has written to party members to say that his health has deteriorated and so our thoughts and prayers are with him at this time and we wish him a speedy recovery."

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Re:alexander to stand down

Posted by Levenax - 2008/06/28 11:25

<http://news.bbc.co.uk/1/hi/scotland/7478913.stm>

It's a bit rich that a member of the labour party is complaining about partisan decisions. She should examine the deplorable record of labour in parliament and local councils over the last few ears before whining about others who quite

rightly want to attack her for incompetence and double dealing.

That said I am surprised that Ms Alexander got herself into such a fankle but working with the dinosaurs and deadlegs of the Scottish branch of the labour party must be a soul destroying task.

Let's hope they appoint Jabba the Hut to replace her.

Re:alexander to stand down

Posted by TLJ - 2008/06/28 12:06

So, who'll be the next one ? Margaret Curran ? Andy Kerr ? Will anyone want to do the job ?

A poisoned chalice or what ?

Re:alexander to stand down

Posted by Clare - 2008/06/28 12:27

Yes Lev, I listened to the resignation speech which I thought was pretty nauseating but I only managed to suffer half of it.

She kicked off this particular affair as a liar and ended it in much the same mode, which I personally found very disappointing given the terrible damage it has inflicted on Labour itself.

She more or less said this is ALL down to the SNP and played the victim to the extent that oscars were the order of the day I would say. Pathetic!

Labour made the new laws on donations: Alexander's team sought to find ways around the new laws and were found out. Not just that but in the end it wasn't just about one dodgy donation it was about far more than £950. The "campaign fund" for a campaign that wasn't needed anyway amounted to much more. The skullduggery involved in urging people to make donations of under £1000 was quite obvious when the clear intent was to gather in quite a lot without having to identify donors.

She, and others in her Party, most recently David Whitton (what a terrible interview that was in terms of the cringe-factor associated with it) have made this latest stage (the Standards Committee) seem like the only time the suggestion of guilt has emerged. What utter tosh. They do themselves no favours by adopting such an approach and they do their voters no favours either by continuing along those lines. To blame the SNP for it is frankly ludicrous. It is a lie. Had this matter been handled properly at the beginning she probably wouldn't have had to resign. Alexander has indeed been found previously guilty except the Electoral Commission forgot to tell everyone that they had introduced an informal policy (which undermined the new Law) not to prosecute anyone in the first five years!

Labour in Scotland had better decide quickly that it must now go forward positively after a mini-truth commission behind closed doors. This country deserves a credible opposition and Labour in Scotland needs to turn itself upside down and empty out the trash before doing anything. Carrying on with the same lies about persecution by the SNP can't be called accepting the truth. I have often said that in my view both "old" and "new" versions of Labour destroyed what I would call real Labour used to stand for. In Holyrood there are many who call themselves "new" Labour who are simply old Labour in smart suits. Something was happening in Scotland long before Alexander's "mistake" over donations. The election result over a year ago said so. If anything Labour's antics since then have only further isolated them from people and sent them into complete meltdown mode.

Labour's mini truth commission in Scotland doesn't have to be public but the Party as a body must address its deep divisions and fast. Didn't the most damaging information about Alexander come from within Labour in Scotland? Of course it did. (I have my suspicions about the main (male) culprit behind that so I'm waiting to see what happens next with great interest.)

Cathy Jamieson in the meantime will be difficult to bear also for as Justice Minister she was the darling of the criminal world as far as I'm concerned. Ex Social Work and it showed. Jabba, don't go there Lev, it doesn't bear thinking about. I'm thinking Kerr or even McCabe will emerge as Leader.

Ultimately for it to matter a jot in Scotland Labour has far more work to do on more serious issues the first one being unity within its own Party.

Re:alexander to stand down

Posted by DavieDites - 2008/06/28 12:29

And now she's gone. Her departure speech was a classic, blaming everyone but herself. She was the one who went raising funds when she didn't need any. She was the one who persistently tried to conceal the donations. Why else did she get all those cheques for £950?

Has anybody seen the letter she sent to the parliament clerks asking if they donations had to be registered? It was only sent AFTER she was found out apparently. I saw the response which had a caveat: "in the circumstances you describe ...". What were those circumstances?

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Re:alexander to stand down

Posted by Clare - 2008/06/28 12:34

TLJ wrote:

So, who'll be the next one ? Margaret Curran ? Andy Kerr ? Will anyone want to do the job ?

A poisoned chalice or what ?

T, I'm certain it won't be a woman. The boys invested too much vicious back-stabbing to cope with another one as boss. I think the leaks to the press were what that was all about. I think one particular boy was all set to succeed McConnell and has raged ever since and fed the media carefully in order to finish Alexander. I also think this has all been very exasperating for him as he has come close so often when she teetered on the brink and then stayed on having survived each attempt by him to leak damaging info about her. How many times was she "becoming a liability." yet remained? Ironically it was only the Standards Committee who finally got her to go, and its already being said that the Committee didn't think their judgement would lead to a resignation. So let's see what happens next, but like I said, I'm certain a woman won't be leading Labour in Scotland when their new Leader is appointed. Cathy Jamieson is caretaking meantime I think?

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Re:alexander to stand down

Posted by darkside - 2008/06/28 16:41

TLJ wrote:

So, who'll be the next one ? Margaret Curran ? Andy Kerr ? Will anyone want to do the job ?

A poisoned chalice or what ?

George Foulkes

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Re:alexander to stand down

Posted by scunnert - 2008/06/28 16:59

It's the end of an era. Who will replace her?

But Och! I backward cast my e'e,
On prospects drear!
An' forward, tho' I canna see,
I guess an' fear!

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Re:alexander to stand down

The Gaithering @ Scotsgait - Scotsgait

FireBoard Forum Component version: NEW VERSION GOES HERE

Generated: 9 January, 2009, 04:23

Posted by dws - 2008/06/28 18:15

Hold on, there's something not right here.:blink:

For the past year she's been hanging on for dear bloody life, with the arrogant stance of someone who believes themself completely bullet-proof, she gets what amounts to a slap on the wrist, and suddenly it's all too much?

There is something we're all missing here, I don't know precisely what but I think it may come to light when the leadership is to be decided. As has been previously alluded to, it's less of a competition and more of a game of musical chairs - if you're left standing when the music stops, you're the New Labour leader in Holyrood.:ohmy:

Interesting times indeed...

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Re:alexander to stand down

Posted by Clare - 2008/06/28 19:11

dws wrote:

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Interesting times indeed...

Hi dws

Watching her today it was obvious this wasn't her idea. I think she's been told to stand down.

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Re:alexander to stand down

Posted by dws - 2008/06/28 19:28

Clare wrote:

Hi dws

Watching her today it was obvious this wasn't her idea. I think she's been told to stand down.

Possibly. It may be that she's fed up being caught between a rock and a hard place, and told the clunking fist to find someone else to take the flak. She has, after all, got form for quitting when things weren't going her way. :whistle:

As to her successor, my particular choice would be Margaret Curran; she shows a tendency to lose the plot under not much pressure. FMQ's should be just as entertaining if not more so.;

=====

Re:alexander to stand down

Posted by DavieDites - 2008/06/29 09:30

dws wrote:

There is something we're all missing here

There is a rumour that there is another complaint to the Standards Committee. Apparently someone let that slip on Newsnight but was told to hold his tongue.

Re:alexander to stand down

Posted by Levenax - 2008/06/29 11:37

dws wrote:

As to her successor, my particular choice would be Margaret Curran; she shows a tendency to lose the plot under not much pressure. FMQ's should be just as entertaining if not more so.;

It's difficult to discern what the plot is when Margaret Curran speaks.

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Re:alexander to stand down

Posted by Clare - 2008/06/29 14:37

DavieDites wrote:

dws wrote:

There is something we're all missing here

There is a rumour that there is another complaint to the Standards Committee. Apparently someone let that slip on Newsnight but was told to hold his tongue.

Hi Davie

Whitton mentioned something on Newsnight Scotland the other night which was another "breach" and Rumbles (who was part of the interview) warned him that referring to it publicly was not permitted. Whitton was out of control and furious throughout the entire thing however and was throwing all sorts of allegations about.

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Re:alexander to stand down

Posted by Clare - 2008/06/29 15:24

We may all mock the likes of Curran and others and even Labour in general but one thing is certain, whatever they do now they need to get it right.

The biggest problem for Labour in Scotland is that so far, on Alexander's resignation, only one has talked some sense and that is Jack McConnell.

Politics Now consisted of a bunch of them including Jamieson, McLeish, Browne and Taylor and Campbell (oops, Brian Taylor and Glenn Campbell aren't in the Labour Party are they? Let's leave them in there anyway as they and the BBC are part of the whole problem.) all refusing to take on board the fact that Labour must put its hands up and accept that yesterday was not the result of any conspiracy, it was brought about by Labour itself.

McConnell's view was that Labour should spend the summer taking stock privately and admitting a few home truths, deal with those truths, carefully consider the consequences which brought them to this point and then select candidates for a Leadership contest in a responsible way. He also suggested that once in place that Leader should take Labour in Scotland forward in a completely different way as they had already lost the confidence of many voters and needed to work urgently towards restoring it.

What came over from Jamieson is that she does not support Wendy's "big idea" of a referendum. She also was in no mood to discuss Labour's part in the whole sorry shambles. McLeish tried but failed utterly to condemn Alexander (I think he lost his nerve) and did not do enough to kick into touch either the whole idea that the "system" of investigating the conduct of MSPs at Holyrood is faulty. He wasn't too keen either on admitting that the greatest damage done was by someone on the inside and close to Alexander.

McConnell was the only one who said anything worth listening to. I think Labour in Scotland had better listen to him because he is right. I haven't heard anything to suggest it might happen however with so many still in denial.

Alexander broke the law. The EC found her guilty but just chose not to impose penalties for that. She was not vindicated,

exonerated or found innocent, all phrases employed by Alexander herself and others who chose to go with her script. That strategy sickened many people, including Labour voters, who could see quite clearly what the verdict was and hearing senior figures in Labour insulting them by declaring otherwise did great damage. The fact that they also sought to play down the significance of new laws they had introduced themselves by suggesting those laws shouldn't apply to them caused even more outrage.

I think Jamieson is kidding herself, and Curran is kidding herself too, by hoping to lead Labour in Scotland any time soon. There has indeed been orchestration involved in this whole mess but it wasn't by the SNP. I have thought from the beginning that one man, encouraged by a small group of men, within Labour at Holyrood planned it. Alexander was imposed on them by Brown after a lot of hard work on their part getting rid of McConnell. One man was meant to take over from McConnell until Alexander arrived and destroyed the plan. He has raged ever since and behind the scenes he has plotted her destruction. He will now stand in the Leadership contest. If Labour in Scotland decide however to follow McConnell's advice and privately review all that has happened in the last year they will perhaps yet thwart his plans by appointing someone else. That would be a good thing. For whether you support Labour or otherwise there is nothing good to be said about a person who will play dirty even against those he is supposed to be close to and no one should benefit from such despicable tactics. The fact that his part in this did more damage to Labour in Scotland than any other factor says a great deal. John Swinney made that point today on Politics Now by reminding Glenn Campbell that the information provided to the Sunday Herald could only have come from one source, a source within Alexander's own circle at Holyrood.

I think Salmond and his SNP colleagues at Holyrood have remained dignified throughout the entire mess. Alexander could have shown more dignity yesterday but the main element missing from the big speech was, yet again, the truth. She was responsible for her own downfall by breaking the law and agreeing that her fund raising arrangements were deliberately designed to go un-noticed anyway. The policy to solicit donations of under £1000 proves this. She is no victim and nothing she said yesterday as she held back her tears will change that.

As for BBC Scotland, Politics Now today seemed content to go with the general idea that Alexander has been somehow denied "justice". Maybe over the summer the BBC too should consider its own policy of abandoning facts in order to engage in party-politics which do no service to the people of Scotland and which blatantly disregard the code of conduct that applies in broadcasting. Not once today did Campbell acknowledge the Electoral Commission's verdict that Alexander had indeed broken the law. It was completely ignored. He was happy to suggest that this entire issue was all down to one decision by the Standards Commission and that until then there had been no suggestion of Alexander doing anything wrong. The media in Scotland in fact needs to take a good look at its own conduct as it continued to assist Labour by refusing to accept it had any case to answer. The job of the media is to hold all politicians accountable and in that respect the media in Scotland has failed utterly.

What follows within the Labour Party in Scotland will be interesting in many ways. Lets see if they have the stomach to do the right thing.

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Re:alexander to stand down

Posted by Jimbo - 2008/06/29 17:52

dws wrote:

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Interesting times indeed...

Hi DWS,

I'm told that this donations saga was going to drag on after parliament resumes in September. There was/is to be another investigation into a leak. Apparently on 15th June, Labour leaked to the press that Jim Dyer, the Scottish Parliamentary Standards Commissioner, had submitted a report to a parliamentary committee stating that Alexander should have declared the contributions. I'm told this his leak was in breach of parliamentary rules as parliament had not been officially informed.

<http://tinyurl.com/44ttce>

Labour tried to put the blame for the leak onto the SNP. Unfortunately they were too quick with the leak as Dyer had only informed Alexander. It was only after they had given it to the press that they found out that the SNP had yet to be told of Dyer's report.

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Re:alexander to stand down

Posted by Jimbo - 2008/06/29 19:04

It looks as if Labour in Scotland have learned nothing about how to project a positive image of themselves. The main contenders for Labour leader at Holyrood were briefing against each other within hours of Alexander resigning. It looks as if we're in for a ringside seat whilst they feud, bicker and back-stab to get the prestigious title they so greatly covet. John Smith House is obviously not a place where people are pulling together in a happy atmosphere.

From the Times:

<http://www.timesonline.co.uk/tol/news/uk/scotland/article4232594.ece>

Within hours of her resignation, rivals were already positioning themselves with the question of a poll on separatism foremost on their minds.

Kerr, the former health minister, installed yesterday as 1-4 favourite for the job, made it clear through friends that, under his leadership, Labour MSPs would support a referendum bill in parliament.

"The SNP have cleverly tried to damage us by suggesting we want to deny people a say," said a source close to him.

"Andy wouldn't handle things in the same way as Wendy — he wouldn't do what Wendy did and talk about bringing forward his own bill on a referendum — but he doesn't want to be seen to be standing in the way of it so you can expect him to support it in a vote in parliament."

Gray, the party's finance spokesman under Alexander, has told friends he would seek to block a poll.

"Iain's view is that it would be foolish to support a referendum," said one. "It would just turn into a 'neverendum' because the SNP wouldn't accept a No result, they would just want another referendum and another referendum until they got the right answer. It just plays into the SNP's hands."

The contest also threatens to get personal. Supporters of Gray described Kerr as "polarising" and said colleagues had never forgiven him for briefing against fellow Labour MSPs before he became a minister.

"People have long memories about how he behaved as a backbencher, undermining people like Henry McLeish," said one.

Kerr allies countered that Scottish Labour needs a leader with distance from Brown, now that the prime minister's popularity is at an all-time low. "Gordon Brown would favour Iain, but Brown's writ is all over," said one.

"We need a Labour leader in Scotland who's their own person, clearly responding to the needs of the people of Scotland. Andy would bring the best organisational background to that task. Iain has a problem with projecting himself." Another supporter claimed Brown "only likes Gray because he does what he's told".

Do they think by making this public they enhance chances of success and endear themselves to the electorate? I would have thought they would have kept their bickering and back-stabbing in-house.

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Re:alexander to stand down

Posted by DavieDites - 2008/06/29 19:11

Clare

Talking of BBC Scotland. I was gobsmacked to read this one

http://news.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/uk_news/scotland/7479265.stm

Impartial? It could have been dictated by Wendy herself.

=====

Re:alexander to stand down

Posted by Clare - 2008/06/29 19:38

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Hi Davie

I just read it. Unbelievable stuff and from the BBC too. Aren't broadcasters governed by a code of conduct too? If so how can the BBC and shows like Politics Now get away with such bias? Again, sorry to return to the Electoral Commission's acknowledgement that the law had indeed been broken by Alexander, but how can the BBC just choose to ignore that small but significant fact in all of this? Ok, the EC opted to take no further action, but they still found her guilty. Its as if it just didn't happen.

Jimbo

Kerr is one dangerous man. I hope lots of people remind him of the real mess he made over Monklands, over PFI et al and the fact that his lies over the savings to the taxpayer were exposed bigtime when the real figures emerged.

Tell you something tho, this is Labour in Scotland's last chance to get this right. If they can't deal with the massive internal fueds going on and instil some discipline they are sunk utterly. I think if they get it right they could perhaps restore some credibility but the signs are already that they intend to continue in the same way.

=====

Re:alexander to stand down

Posted by dws - 2008/06/29 20:11

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Hi Clare,

Labour have no clue as to how to deal with the situation, they've never been in the minority up here in living memory (if at all). They've always had the Bogeyman of the Tories to shake at the electorate, and are now completely bereft of ideas as to which way to turn (or spin).

Deep down, they still haven't recovered from their election defeat. It's a first for them in Scotland, and a year later, they're still in shock.

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Re:alexander to stand down

Posted by Robin T Cox - 2008/06/30 10:21

So, who'll be the next one ?

If New Labour aspire to run the Scottish Government, let's hope that they pick someone who has a successful track record of running a large scale operation. Not another party hack who has simply spent time as a student of politics and served as a loyal party researcher. And no more management consultants, please!

Re:alexander to stand down

Posted by LYDIA REID - 2008/06/30 12:22

darkside wrote:

TLJ wrote:

So, who'll be the next one ? Margaret Curran ? Andy Kerr ? Will anyone want to do the job ?

A poisoned chalice or what ?

George Foulkes

I think you are right and he has been put in Scottish Parliament for that reason. What is a shame is there is no mention of Dr Simpson he is actually quite a nice man and unusually for Labour he is honest.

Re:alexander to stand down

Posted by LYDIA REID - 2008/06/30 12:32

The Standards Committee

Convener:

Keith Brown (SNP) (19 June 2007-28 September 2007)

Deputy Convener:

Cathie Craigie (Lab) (19 June 2007-28 September 2007)

Members:

Keith Brown (SNP) (13 June 2007-28 September 2007)

Cathie Craigie (Lab) (13 June 2007-28 September 2007)

Marlyn Glen (Lab) (13 June 2007-28 September 2007)

Jamie McGrigor (Con) (13 June 2007-28 September 2007)

Christina McKelvie (SNP) (13 June 2007-28 September 2007)

Hugh O'Donnell (LD) (13 June 2007-28 September 2007)

Dave Thompson (SNP) (13 June 2007-28 September 2007)

Committee Substitutes:

Bob Doris (SNP) (14 June 2007-28 September 2007)

Trish Godman (Lab) (20 September 2007-28 September 2007)

Mike Rumbles (LD) (21 June 2007-28 September 2007)

David Whitton (Lab) (27 June 2007-20 September 2007)

Everybody that could have saved her abstained.

Re:alexander to stand down

Posted by LYDIA REID - 2008/06/30 12:36

DavieDites wrote:

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http://news.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/uk_news/scotland/7479265.stm

Impartial? It could have been dictated by Wendy herself.

Hi Davie

Not unusual the BBC are totally Labour

=====

Re:alexander to stand down

Posted by dws - 2008/06/30 16:37

I think all would agree that it is healthy in a democracy to have a strong opposition. A comparatively honest and earnest soul at the head of such an opposition would be a good starting point, but what good will it do if said person is merely a ventriliquist's dummy for Westminster?

McConnell's right. Labour need to take a long, hard look at themselves and decide where they're going, before the electorate decides for them.

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Re:alexander to stand down

Posted by LYDIA REID - 2008/07/02 13:53

It was announced today that the election for the leader of Scottish Labour will not take place until after the by-election. Labour do not want to lose this seat to SNP.

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Re:alexander to stand down

Posted by TLJ - 2008/07/02 16:01

LYDIA REID wrote:

It was announced today that the election for the leader of Scottish Labour will not take place until after the by-election. Labour do not want to lose this seat to SNP.

....and it most certainly does not want the first headline following the election of the Leader to be the loss of a seat.

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