

General Election 2017 – More comment following PM's announcement

The shockwaves are still being felt across the country after the Prime Minister made an announcement earlier today that she will call a snap election on 8 June 2017.

This is subject to her getting the agreement of two thirds of the members of the House of Commons tomorrow, but given that Labour leader Jeremy Corbyn has endorsed the move, it appears to be a done deal.

There are 650 MPs in the House of Commons of whom 330 are Conservatives, 229 are Labour and 54 are SNP.

✘ So the Prime Minister needs the support of 434 MPs for the motion to call the election to proceed. The legislation which governs the procedure was introduced by Liberal Democrat MP Nick Clegg. (Wonder if he will stand again?) The idea was to have fixed term parliaments lasting for five years, but the next general election will take place three years ahead of the planned vote in 2020.

In Scotland at present there is one Labour MP, Ian Murray who represents Edinburgh South and one Conservative MP, David Mundell who is the Secretary of State for Scotland. Liberal Democrat Alistair Carmichael who represents Orkney and Shetland was the subject of a legal action by his constituents following his leak of a false memo stating that Nicola Sturgeon preferred David Cameron as the next Prime Minister at the time of the 2015 General Election.

Michelle Thomson and Natalie McGarry were both originally elected as SNP MPs but have had the whip withdrawn owing to police investigations. Ms McGarry faces embezzlement charges

relating to Women for Independence the group she founded. These were laid against her in September 2016 and the matter has not yet been heard in court.

Michael Gray writing in [CommonSpace](#) announced that Rosa Zambonini will seek the SNP candidacy in Glasgow East which McGarry has represented until now. The seat was formerly held by Labour.

Ms Thomson has not been charged with any offence, but wide speculation that the MP would be reinstated to the SNP in autumn last year came to naught. We spoke with Ms Thomson this morning but she did not give any indication whether she will be able to stand or not.

The Prime Minister has repeatedly stated since taking office that there would be no election till 2020, but that is now history.

The Scottish Greens say today's announcement by the Prime Minister of her intention to press for a UK General Election on 8 June shows that Scotland continues to suffer at the hands of a hard right Tory party.

Co-convener Patrick Harvie MSP said: "Brexit is a mess of the Tory party's making, and they are calling this election for much the same self-serving reasons as the EU referendum itself. Since June they have also consistently ignored voters in Scotland and elsewhere who chose to stay in Europe and the single market.

"The Government that's elected on June 8th will still be faced with that question – if a majority of voters here back candidates who are pro-EU and pro-single market, the Prime Minister must finally acknowledge the right of Scotland's voters to be respected.

"I'm sure that voters in Scotland will not allow this election to satisfy the whims of a dangerous hard-right party

determined to damage our economy, public services and threaten our EU friends and neighbours who have made Scotland their home. Instead we must reassert our choice for a fairer and more equal society, and our decision to remain part of Europe cannot be allowed to fall on deaf ears.”

Co-convener Maggie Chapman who was previously an Edinburgh councillor said: “This is the sign of a weak and opportunist Prime Minister who, rather than trying to explain the damage she is doing, has resorted to this desperate tactic. There is only reason for Theresa May to hold an election now and it is that she knows that things are going to get worse as Brexit bites.

“She should be focusing on trying to undo some of the damage her approach to Brexit has done and enabling us in Scotland to have our voices heard. She has, instead, opted to compound her previous mistakes with this move. When the spotlight falls on her unyielding, racist and hate-filled politics, I am confident that this move will backfire.”

Responding to the Prime Minister’s decision to call an early General Election, Deidre Brock MP said: “The election gives the public the chance to give their verdict on the UK Tory Government. Voters across Scotland will be able to make it clear what they think of the callous treatment Theresa May and her Government have handed out to people who are disadvantaged, poor or disabled. There has been a constant stream of bad policies and vindictive actions from the Government in London which have pushed people into poverty, damaged the prospects for Scottish businesses and hit at the fabric of society.

“When a working parent has to go and stand in the queue at a foodbank to feed their children there is a problem; when a disabled person loses the mobility help that got them out and

about and able to find work it is inhumane; and when an EU citizen who has made their home here is told they are a pawn in the Brexiteers' Great Game of Chicken with the EU it is simply disgusting.

"A government that says "you can't get tax credits for your third child but you can get a tax cut on your third million" has a cheek to call itself a government at all; a government that spends billions of pounds on nuclear weapons but imposes sanctions on people who are a few minutes late to sign on isn't acting in society's interests.

"There will be people who try to make this election about who can be toughest – we should make sure that we make it about society standing together against the worst excesses and policy failures of a Tory Government that does not care what damage it does to communities the length and breadth of Scotland. We should make it about Scotland coming together to stand up for what we believe is best for our country."

Theresa May became Prime Minister on 13 July 2016, after the EU Referendum which resulted in the resignation of David Cameron and a short sharp leadership contest.

There are seven parliamentary constituencies in Edinburgh and five are represented by SNP MPs. The others are represented by Labour MP Ian Murray and Michelle Thomson who sits as an Independent MP.