

Prime Minister calls a General Election on 8 June 2017



The Prime Minister Theresa May has unexpectedly announced a snap General Election on 8 June 2017, six weeks from now and a month after the local elections yet to be held across the UK.

The Prime Minister will lodge a motion tomorrow in parliament and, if she gets a two thirds majority, then the election will proceed all within the terms of the Fixed Term Parliaments Act 2011.

Last June she said that she would not call a snap election, but today she made the announcement that the country will indeed now go to the polls for the second time in a couple of years and not wait until 2020.

Mrs May said that she had just chaired a meeting of the cabinet when they agreed that the government would hold a general election on 8 June. She then proceeded to explain her reasons for the decision, what will happen next and the choices facing voters.

She said : “Last summer after the country voted to leave the EU, Britain needed certainty, stability and strong leadership and since I became Prime Minister the government has delivered precisely that. Despite predictions of immediate financial and economic danger since the referendum we have seen consumer confidence remain high, record numbers of jobs and economic growth that has exceeded all expectations.

“We have also delivered on the mandate that we were handed by

the referendum result. Britain is leaving the EU and there can be no turning back.

“And as we look to the future, the Government has the right plan for negotiating our new relationship with Europe.

“We want a deep and special partnership between a strong and successful European Union and a United Kingdom that is free to chart its own way in the world.

“That means we will regain control of our own money, our own laws and our own borders and we will be free to strike trade deals with old friends and new partners all around the world.

“At this moment of enormous national significance there should be unity here in Westminster but instead there is division. The country is coming together but Westminster is not.

“Our opponents believe that because the government majority is so small, our resolve will weaken and that they can force us to change course. They are wrong.

“They under-estimate our determination to get the job done and I am not prepared to let them endanger the security of millions of working people across the country.

“Because what they are doing jeopardises the work we must do to prepare for Brexit at home and it weakens the Government’s negotiating position in Europe.

“If we do not hold a general election now their political game-playing will continue, and the negotiations with the European Union will reach their most difficult stage in the run-up to the next scheduled election.

“If we do not hold a general election now their political game playing will continue. Division in Westminster will cause instability to the country.

“We need a general election and we need one now.”

(these are excerpts from the whole speech)

First Minister of Scotland and SNP leader Nicola Sturgeon said: "This announcement is one of the most extraordinary U-turns in recent political history, and it shows that Theresa May is once again putting the interests of her party ahead of those of the country.

"She is clearly betting that the Tories can win a bigger majority in England given the utter disarray in the Labour Party.

"That makes it all the important that Scotland is protected from a Tory Party which now sees the chance of grabbing control of government for many years to come and moving the UK further to the right – forcing through a hard Brexit and imposing deeper cuts in the process.

"That means that this will be – more than ever before – an election about standing up for Scotland, in the face of a right-wing, austerity obsessed Tory government with no mandate in Scotland but which now thinks it can do whatever it wants and get away with it.

"In terms of Scotland, this move is a huge political miscalculation by the Prime Minister.

"It will once again give people the opportunity to reject the Tories' narrow, divisive agenda, as well as reinforcing the democratic mandate which already exists for giving the people of Scotland a choice on their future.

"The SNP will always put the people of Scotland first – and between now and June 8th we will work harder than ever to retain the trust of the people."

Responding to the announcement of an snap general election, Scottish Liberal Democrat leader Willie Rennie MSP said: "The Liberal Democrats are relishing the prospect of this election.

"It is a chance to change the direction of the whole of the UK.

"Our optimistic agenda is pro-UK, pro-EU and progressive. We stand with the majority opinion in this country.

"At this election we will stand proud for a United Kingdom within the European single market.

"We will avoid a disastrous hard Brexit and keep Britain united. Liberal Democrats are only party that can stop a Conservative majority across the UK.

"If people want a Britain that is open, tolerant and united, this is the chance."

Michelle Thomson MP for Edinburgh West told us that she herself was still reeling from the announcement, but assumes that the Prime Minister must be confident of getting the necessary two-thirds majority. She said : "The Prime Minister must have done the maths up front so that she is confident enough of getting the general election motion put through Westminster. I think it means that some Labour MPs must abstain to give her that majority. In my view Labour are gifting the rest of the UK to the Tories for the foreseeable future.

"This is worrying particularly in relation to the Great Repeal Bill where there are already concerns about the lack of proper parliamentary scrutiny. It is extremely complex and the government want to make it business as usual, but there is a lot of work to be done. There was always a risk that some of it would not be subjected to parliamentary scrutiny and would pass through as secondary legislation. That is now much more likely and the risk in losing that is that some areas like workers' rights could be affected."

Jeremy Corbyn has supported the Prime Minister's decision :

I welcome the PM's decision to give the British people the

chance to vote for a government that will put the interests of the majority first pic.twitter.com/9P3X6A2Zpw

– Jeremy Corbyn MP (@jeremycorbyn) [April 18, 2017](#)

Alistair Carmichael Liberal Democrat MP said this morning that the only party which can stop the Conservatives getting an overwhelming and increased majority are the Liberal Democrats. This view was endorsed by the Liberal Democrat leader Tim Farron MP who said this:

This is your chance to change the direction of your country pic.twitter.com/wfj4wC7yn3

– Tim Farron (@timfarron) [April 18, 2017](#)