

#GE2017 Tories claim their election success in Scotland

Scottish Conservative leader Ruth Davidson hailed the party's best result north of the border in 35 years at a press conference called in the capital's Grassmarket earlier this afternoon.



Ruth Davidson after casting her vote yesterday in Edinburgh

Ruth said the newly elected Scottish Conservative MPs would be "local champions" and "do Scotland proud".

The Scottish Conservatives have increased their number of MPs from just one to 13, and they say that the party received 738,000 votes which is about 28.6 per cent of the vote or a 13.7 per cent increase from the 2015 General Election. It also translates to more than 320,000 votes in seats right across the country.

The Scottish Conservatives say they are now Scotland's main opposition to the SNP.

This is the speech given by Ruth today.

"Good afternoon,

I'd like to begin today by congratulating the 13 Scottish Conservative MPs elected last night.

They will, to a man and a woman, be local champions for their constituencies and I know they will do Scotland proud.

I also congratulate all the other MPs who were either re-elected or who won a seat last night, and pay tribute to those who lost.

Politics is a brutal business and we wish them well. No matter the colour of the rosette you wear, every Scottish MP serves Scotland and I thank those who depart for their service.

Let me first turn to the result in Scotland last night.

This was an election that was dominated by one issue: Nicola Sturgeon's decision in March to demand a second referendum on independence.

We led the opposition to that referendum.

The Scottish people spoke. The SNP's vote down 13%. Nearly half a million votes gone between 2015 and today.

Our vote up 13%. The largest share of the vote for the Scottish Conservatives since 1979.

SNP MPs who last night lost their seats have paid the price for what was a massive political miscalculation on Nicola Sturgeon's part.

This morning, we have heard SNP figures acknowledge that the referendum demands were behind its bad result.

We have heard the First Minister say she will "reflect" on the matter.

I'm afraid that's not enough.

Let me be clear: nobody, not me, not anyone, is expecting the SNP to give up on independence.

That is what it believes in and it is a perfectly honourable position to take.

What people do expect is that, right now, the SNP gives Scotland a break.

Simply put, Scotland has had its fill.

We need to focus on the challenges we face on education, on NHS funding, on the new tax and welfare powers – as well as the huge challenge of Brexit.

Nobody will condemn the First Minister if she now decides to re-set her course.

This is her opportunity to do so – and I urge her to take it immediately.

She must take it off the table.

And if the First Minister really does want to act on behalf of all people in Scotland – she needs to make this clear in short order.

Now, if I may turn to the UK wide picture.

Clearly the result last night fell short of expectations.

Labour's plan for more spending and more borrowing may be illusory but there's little doubt it has struck a chord.

However, the Prime Minister has made it clear it is her duty to get on with the job in hand and I support all efforts to do so.

But just as the SNP must listen to the result on the independence referendum, we also have to listen to voters who did not give the UK Conservative Party the mandate we sought.

It is incumbent on us to listen to other parties in Parliament, and people outside it, about the best way forward.

It is the policy of both the Conservative party and the UK Labour party to respect the Brexit referendum result.

That means we are leaving the European Union. We are leaving the Common Fisheries Policy.

At the same time we must in my view seek to deliver an open Brexit, not a closed one, which puts our country's economic growth first.

I am confident that, once the dust settles on last night's result, we can rise to that challenge.

The truth is that we are still the only UK party with a plan for Britain.

We are the only party that can deliver for Britain.

After a year of upheaval, we owe it to people to get on with it."