

Scotland for a People's Vote cross-party campaign 'confident' of success

Edinburgh politicians announced support for the campaign for a UK-wide referendum with the option of remaining in the EU this morning, just 40 days ahead of Brexit.

Scotland for a People's Vote convened in Edinburgh and told of their growing confidence that a People's Vote on Brexit can be achieved. They claim that UK wide polling now shows a majority for Remain, and want the final say to go back to the electorate.

Their timing was unfortunate due to this morning's announcement from Luton that seven Labour MPs are leaving the party, but their voices were united in a call for a second chance at an important decision for Scotland and the UK.



John Edward who chaired the event in Edinburgh today alongside Kezia Dugdale MSP and Andy Wightman MSP

Kezia Dugdale MSP (Lothian), former Leader of the Scottish Labour Party, Christine Jardine MP (Edinburgh West), the Liberal Democrats' work and pensions spokesperson, Tommy Sheppard MP (Edinburgh East), the SNP's spokesperson for the Cabinet Office and Andy Wightman MSP (Lothian), the Scottish Green Party's spokesperson on local government, communities, housing and land reform all took a moment or two to explain their reasons for supporting the move.

John Edward, former Head of the European Parliament Office in Scotland, chaired the event. He explained : "What we are here to do today is to reinforce the importance of a vote and our growing confidence that one should happen and can happen. I am flanked by a broad sweep of political support for that view – two MSPs and two MPs representing four political parties. I think it is important to stress the moment and that we focus on the People's Vote being realistically the only viable alternative to whatever deal the House of Commons may or may not come up with. No deal is not an option.

"Since we launched in November there has been a vote in the Scottish Parliament supporting the People's Vote and every local authority in Scotland supports the campaign too. Three

quarters of Scotland's MPs support it and a poll of polls published yesterday shows that 111 of 121 polls support the Remain vote too.

"We feel that the impetus and initiative is with us."



Cross-party support from Westminster and Holyrood politicians. Their aim today was to show that the People's Vote campaign is optimistic about achieving a referendum, in light of the Government's latest defeat in the House of Commons last Thursday, and growing support among parliamentarians.

They explained that a referendum on the Brexit deal has attracted the support of parties and parliamentarians representing 73% of Scotland's MPs, including the SNP, Liberal Democrats and majority of Scottish Labour MPs.

Kezia Dugdale MSP said : "I have been a long-standing supporter of this campaign and believe it is more likely now than it ever has been. I want to remind people how bad Brexit is going to be for Scotland's economy and for their jobs. That is the main reason I am against Brexit and why I have been campaigning for a People's Vote for well over a year now. The evidence for Brexit being bad is compelling.

"Our job here today is to show that there is increasing public

support for this and that there is support in the Labour Party and Labour parliamentarians. I hope that continues to grow.”

Christine Jardine MP said: “Like Kezia I have been campaigning for a final vote on the deal for a long time – since shortly after the referendum. We now find ourselves in the situation where going back to the people may break the logjam in Westminster. I would like to ask Prime Minister why she would not take that opportunity now – who now know that the picture if we leave the EU is very different from the one painted by the Leave campaign and it will be massively damaging for our economy. We are talking about stockpiling food and shortages of medicine.

“We’ve learned a lot in two and a half years about what Brexit will really mean, and it’s time we all acknowledged that there is no deal as good as the one we currently have inside the EU.”

“I believe it’s crucial that politicians work across parties to protect Scotland from Brexit, which was successful in the cross-party case to secure the European Court of Justice ruling that Article 50 could be unilaterally revoked.”



Tommy Sheppard MP and Christine Jardine MP who both support

the campaign body

Tommy Sheppard MP said : “We have a weird situation. We have a government which is pushing forward with policies which it knows will impoverish the people that it represents. We now have a situation that the government is doing that in the full knowledge that the people as expressed in opinion poll after opinion poll do not want it. Their only justification for doing so is a mandate from 2016, a very narrow mandate that they received in the EU referendum. I think the message we need to send out is that in a democracy people have the right to change their minds.

“It seems to me that because of the enormous change of circumstances, and knowing what we know now, because of the change of public opinion and the inability of parliament to move forward with this matter the only thing that can now save this government from itself is putting the question back to the people. That is why the SNP are happy to join this cross-party group.”

Andy Wightman MSP said: “I am proud to be here this morning with my colleagues from across the political spectrum. The Scottish Green Party is part of the European family of green parties. We believe passionately that we need a collaborative approach to Europe. The 2016 referendum in our view was not advanced, was not held with a view to debating the merits of cooperation. It was held in an attempt to heal the divisions in the Conservative party. Those divisions have continued.”

Plans were announced this weekend to hold a massive demonstration in London on 23 March 2019 six days before the UK is due to leave the EU. The march will demand that the public are given the final say. The campaign says that it is clear that the UK government will go to the wire in what it describes as ‘desperate attempts’ to secure a parliamentary majority.

7 November 2018 – The Scottish Parliament voted to support a

People's Vote.

30 November 2018 – COSLA backed a People's Vote

15 January 2019 – more than 80 per cent of Scottish MPs rejected the Prime Minister's Deal in the meaningful vote.