

Kezia Dugdale standing down from Holyrood

Former Scottish Labour leader and Lothians MSP Kezia Dugdale is to stand down from the Scottish Parliament this summer.

Ms Dugdale is to take up a post as director of the John Smith Centre for Public Service at Glasgow University, and will leave the Scottish Parliament in July.

Kezia Dugdale served as party leader from 2015 to 2017, and deputy leader from 2014 to 2015, having been first elected as a member of the Lothian list in 2011.

Scottish Labour leader Richard Leonard said: “Kezia will be a loss to the Scottish Labour Party but I am sure she will still play a valuable role in public life going forward.

“Kezia stepped forward at a difficult time for the Scottish Labour Party and on many issues – from arguing to use the tax and social security powers of Holyrood to making the case for federalism, she helped the party rebuild after the devastating losses of the 2015 General Election.

“On behalf of the Scottish Labour party I thank Kezia for her service and wish her well in the next exciting chapter of her life.”

Kezia Dugdale said: “It has been an honour to represent the Lothian region for Labour in the Scottish Parliament, and to have had the opportunity to serve the party in a variety of roles for over a decade – from party organiser to leader.

“All through that time the passion and commitment of our members has been inspirational. No matter how difficult things were activists were always willing to hit the doorsteps to spread Labour’s message.”

“I have devoted my working life to public service, and this is an incredibly exciting new opportunity for me to lead the work of the John Smith Centre.

“Throughout my career I have taken on tough and challenging tasks, and my next task is to rebuild faith in our politics.

“Disruptive events and the rise of populism has led to increasingly polarised and emotional politics where rational, evidence-based thinking has lost its standing.

“Faith in public service, politics and the political process has to be restored and that progress must be sustainable.

“John Smith said ‘the opportunity to serve our country – that is all we ask’. It will be an honour to build on his legacy and inspire his values of public service in a new generation.”