

# **Ruth Davidson steps down as leader of Scottish Conservatives**

**Ruth Davidson MSP announced that she was stepping down as leader of the Scottish Conservative Party at a press conference this morning, saying that she would remain in parliament as MSP for Edinburgh Central until 2021.**

She published the letter which she sent to the Conservative Party chairman and it bore a striking resemblance to the words she used in her short speech. She claimed personal reasons as well as political ones, but most importantly that she could not foresee looking forward to campaigning and all that this would entail while having a family.



Ruth Davidson MSP for Central Edinburgh announcing her resignation as leader of the Scottish Conservative and Unionist Party PHOTO ©2019 The Edinburgh Reporter



*Ruth Davidson MSP for Central Edinburgh announcing her*

*resignation as leader of the Scottish Conservative and Unionist Party PHOTO ©2019 The Edinburgh Reporter*

**THIS IS THE STATEMENT RUTH DAVIDSON MADE TO THE ASSEMBLED PRESS at a hotel near Holyrood this morning :**

“Good morning.

“It has been the privilege of my life to serve as leader of the Scottish Conservative and Unionist party for the past nearly eight years. This has been a remarkable time in politics and I will always be thankful for the opportunity to have a front seat as Scottish political history was being made.

“I am so proud of the teams we have built as a party at Holyrood, Westminster and in council chambers across the country. Proud, too, of the work we have done to reach out to all communities in Scotland – North or South, rural or urban and – after some fallow decades – prove ourselves a truly national party once again.

“But, for me, electoral successes – while undoubtedly important – pale in significance compared to the vital role our party undertook as part of the campaign to keep Scotland in the United Kingdom at the independence referendum. It was – without doubt – the most important contribution of my working life and, I believe, will remain so.

“It is therefore with a heavy heart that this morning I wrote to the Chairman of the Scottish Conservative Party to tender my resignation.

“I explained the changes – both professional and personal – that have prompted this decision.

“You all know – and I have never sought to hide – the conflict I have felt over Brexit. Despite that conflict, I have

attempted to chart a course for our party which recognises and respects the referendum result, while seeking to maximise opportunities and mitigate risks for key Scottish businesses and sectors. I hope and believe that industries as diverse as our fishing fleets and whisky producers have felt well represented by the Scottish Conservatives during this time.

“The biggest change, however, has been starting a family. I cannot thank my colleagues – and especially Jackson Carlaw – enough for their generosity and support to both Jen and myself following the birth of baby Finn. It made my return to work in April as smooth as I believe was possible, while the flexibility shown by colleagues since then has allowed me these last months to continue operating successfully in my role as leader.

“However, as I look to the future, I see the Scottish Election due in 2021 and a credible threat from our opponents to force a general election before then. Having led our party through seven national elections and two referenda, I know the efforts, hours and travel required to fight such campaigns successfully. I have to be honest that where the idea of getting on the road to fight two elections in 20 months would once have fired me up, the threat of spending hundreds of hours away from my home and family now fills me with dread. That is no way to lead.

“Additionally, I fear that having tried to be a good leader over the years, I have proved a poor daughter, sister, partner and friend. The party and my work has always come first, often at the expense of commitments to loved ones. The arrival of my son means I now make a different choice.

“I need to thank the amazing people that work in Scottish Conservative Central Office and my own parliamentary team. They really do spin straw into gold.

“My intention is to continue in my role as the MSP for

Edinburgh Central until 2021. I will always be thankful for the opportunity to serve and to the amazing teams I have worked alongside. And of course, I will continue to support the party, the Prime Minister and Scotland's place in the United Kingdom from the backbenches and beyond.

"Two referenda have split Scotland and, indeed, opinion in the UK. I am convinced that referenda should be used to affirm public opinion but not as a way for political leaders to fail to lead. But looking at the division in our politics I make this plea. The vast majority of people who go into politics do so for the right reasons. To improve their communities and their countries.

"I believe we should always remember that. Respect is what missing from our debates and without respect you cannot understand and you cannot unite which is what we in Scotland and the UK need to do."



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