

Jackson Carlaw resigns as Tory leader

Jackson Carlaw, has this afternoon resigned as leader of the Scottish Conservatives.

He said: "Over the summer I have had the chance to think hard about my role as leader of the Scottish Conservatives.

"Nothing is more important to me than making the case for Scotland's place in the United Kingdom.

"I believe the Scottish Conservative and Unionist party is the most important voice in Scotland for setting out that positive argument. I am clear that nothing must get in the way of doing so.

"In the last few weeks, I have reached a simple if painful conclusion – that I am not, in the present circumstances, the person best placed to lead that case over these next vital months in Scottish politics prior to the Holyrood elections.

"Given the importance I attach to the job, I've therefore decided to stand down with immediate effect.

"It is not an easy call but I have spent a lifetime in politics holding to the maxim that party and country comes first.

"I believe I am doing my duty by holding to that view now.

"I simply believe that a new leader will be able, as we recover from the COVID emergency, to make the case for the Scottish Conservatives and the Union better than me. That is all that matters.

"I leave the job with genuine pride at my time in office, both as interim leader and as leader for the last year.

"I especially enjoyed the eight years as deputy leader and being an integral part of the success achieved.

"Managing the transition from Ruth Davidson's leadership to a refreshed party has been a challenging task but I feel confident that I leave the role with the party in good heart and, crucially, with time to elect a new leader so he or she can prepare for the elections next year.

"The Scottish Conservatives will fight those elections as we have always done – as the one party that will unequivocally speak up for all those Scots who do not want to go back to more division, but instead want our country to move on, as part of the United Kingdom, able to rise to the challenges of the future.

"I will fight that cause hard for these next few vital months as a loyal member of my party."

Prime Minister Boris Johnson said: "Jackson Carlaw has been a tremendous servant to the Scottish Conservative Party for more than four decades.

"As an activist, deputy chairman, deputy leader and leader, he has given his all and deserves our thanks for his efforts.

"It is a mark of his commitment to the cause that he chooses to stand aside at this time and I offer my best wishes to him, Wynne and the family."

I wish Jackson Carlaw all the best. We've crossed swords politically on many occasions, but worked constructively on some issues too – he has, eg, been a strong voice for women suffering mesh complications. Leadership is a tough business and I'm sure his decision wasn't easy.

– Nicola Sturgeon (@NicolaSturgeon) [July 30, 2020](#)

SNP Depute Leader Keith Brown said: “On behalf of all my SNP colleagues I wish Jackson Carlaw the very best for the future.

“Jackson clearly understands that voters in Scotland simply don’t want what Boris Johnson and the Tories are selling.

“Today’s resignation is further evidence of the growing discomfort with their position as a Westminster party.

“With the surge of recent resignations, and a distinct lack of talent in their ranks, the Scottish Tories are in real crisis.

“The fact the only person being thought of as a replacement is an MP who couldn’t hack it at Holyrood and ran off to Westminster shows how slim the pickings really are.”

Scottish Labour leader Richard Leonard said: “I wish Jackson Carlaw well, and I am sure he will continue to make a valuable contribution to Scottish politics. Although a political opponent he has remained courteous and respectful.

“With Covid-19 still a real and dangerous threat, it is important that we work together to tackle the public health and economic crises the country now faces. As part of this approach, it is crucial that the UK and Scottish Governments co-operate in Scotland’s best interests. Jackson Carlaw’s successor will have a special responsibility to persuade Boris Johnson and his Government to do that.

“It is the job of opposition parties to stand up to both governments when they get it wrong, and under my leadership Scottish Labour will continue to do just that. We will scrutinise the serious failures of both governments to prepare for these crises, and set out Labour’s better alternative.”



POOLED IMAGES

Edinburgh, Scotland, UK. 30 July 2020

Pictured: Jackson Carlaw MSP – Leader of the Scottish Conservative and Unionist Party.

Nicola Sturgeon MSP – First Minister of Scotland and Leader of the Scottish National Party (SNP) giving a ministerial statement: COVID 19 Next Steps.

Credit: Colin Fisher/Alamy Live news/SP Pool.