

# Ash Regan launches leadership bid

Ash Regan, MSP for Edinburgh Eastern has launched her leadership campaign just ahead of the deadline for nominees to declare their candidacy at noon on Friday.

She was introduced by Joanna Cherry, KC, MP saying: "Ash has shown that we work best together when we work respectfully together. Leader build teams, and I am very confident that in Ash Regan we will have someone who can build a bigger team."



This is what Ms Regan said to the press who were gathered in North Queensferry to hear her speech:

Good morning everyone, and thank you for joining me at this incredible venue for the launch of my campaign to be the next leader of the Scottish National Party.

I am humbled by the support that I have received from so many SNP members who have nominated me to stand for the leadership of our party.

I am ready to take on this challenge and to lead our party forward towards a brighter future.

But I want to be clear from the outset that this is not just about me. This is about all of us, and our shared commitment to building a better Scotland.

So, I want to take a moment to thank my SNP colleagues in Holyrood, Westminster, and in councils up and down the country.

To those of you who will be endorsing me publicly in the coming days and weeks, thank you.

And to those who have already made commitments to other candidates, I want you to know that I will work with you and support you as leader of our great party.

Our campaign is built on hope, optimism, and a belief in the power of our people.

The truth is, our movement has been divided for far too long by petty differences and personal agendas. But we cannot afford to let these differences tear us apart any longer.

We must come together as one united force for Scotland, because the challenges facing our country are too great for us to face them divided.

If parties stand on a mandate to begin independence negotiations and achieve a majority of the seats and votes cast, then they are entitled to pursue it.

All Unionist politicians used to accept this. It is only now they whine, because they fear losing.

This morning I have sent a letter to all the independence groups, notifying them of my intention to establish an Independence Convention on day 1 of my leadership.

I will unite our movement and ready our country for independence.

---

We have much work to do.

Today I can announce that under my leadership we will not be challenging the Section 35 order in the Supreme Court.

The GRR Bill is flawed and it does not command public support.

This is evidenced by the public outrage over women being endangered in our prison estate by rapists seeking to game the system.

Challenging in the courts will also prolong a debate in terms which are dividing society; much to the detriment of transgender people.

The public will not forgive us as a party for using taxpayers money on something they are clearly opposed to.

Instead, I will seek a consensus.

But I will say unequivocally here: there can be no compromise on woman's rights.

I seek consensus not compromise.

In the absence of consensus and if there were an appetite in the country for it, I would be happy to hand the matter over to a Citizens Assembly and let the people of Scotland decide.

I am the candidate for change, not continuity.

I want to restore the mission which allowed the SNP to replace Labour as the dominant party of Scotland.

That is: Independence for Scotland, and good governance.

I respect everything my predecessors have achieved since 2007.

But recently we have lost our way.

Under my leadership we will re-establish our track record, we will reform our team, and we will reiterate the vision of an independent country, with parity of esteem in the world.

I am the unity candidate for the independence campaign bringing together the despondents who have felt excluded by accident or design.

The vehicle for this is the Independence Convention which I have committed to establishing.

I want the membership of the SNP to be left in no doubt.

For me, Independence is an immediate priority for Scotland.

---

During my first 100 days as First Minister, the Government will concentrate on running the country wisely, fairly and competently.

In tandem we will make the case for Independence by reconvening and emboldening the council of economic advisors, amongst other bodies bringing the best minds in Scotland and outwith, to help ready Scotland for Independence.

We must move on from the Growth Commission, as too much has changed.

The referendum mechanism has been exhausted, including the

‘so-called’ de facto referendum proposal.

Under my leadership the SNP policy will be to explicitly declare on line one of our party manifesto in any election going forward, that should we (in conjunction or not with other parties) achieve a majority of seats and votes cast, then collectively we will ‘begin independence negotiations’ on day 1 of the new Parliament.

This is the ‘Voter Empowerment Mechanism’, and it is designed to let the people of Scotland decide when they are ready.

I will hand Independence back to the people, where it belongs.

---

I am the competent Government candidate.

The key to success is collegiate governance where people of ability are appointed to key positions, and allowed the freedom to flourish in their Portfolios.

An SNP Government must be open to advice and help from all of Scotland in running the country wisely.

I will not shun any section of our party. Far from it.

All colleagues and members will be encouraged to speak up and speak loudly, balanced only by a commitment that they listen earnestly and quietly, if they expect the same in return.

---

A successful SNP can only be led from the left of centre in the mainstream of the Scottish political tradition.

I worked for Common Weal, a leading left-wing think tank, but I recognise that all successful parties are coalitions – and that all successful countries – value enterprise as well as fairness.

The SNP has always been a broad church and I will reaffirm that by healing the divisions that have emerged over the past few years.

Everyone is going to make up and move on.

These are the reasons I am standing for the leadership of the SNP, and why I am asking for your vote, to be the next leader of the Scottish National Party.

We all know that Scotland has a bright future ahead of it, and we must recommit ourselves to making that future a reality.

We believe in the independence of our country, and we are committed to achieving it in a way that is fair, inclusive, and just for all.

But we also believe in human rights, in collegiate governance, and in creating a Scotland that is welcoming and open to all.

We believe in the power of our communities, and we are committed to working with them to build a better future for ourselves and our children.

So, I ask you for your vote, not just for me, but for Scotland.

Let us come together, let us build a better future for our country, and let us do it with hope, optimism, and a belief in the power of our people.

Thank you.

*Instead of using any election as a de facto referendum @AshReganSNP will use a Voter Empowerment Mechanism instead and will establish an Independence Convention. "I am the candidate for change." [pic.twitter.com/oUNaQZbrCT](https://pic.twitter.com/oUNaQZbrCT)*

– Edinburgh Reporter (@EdinReporter) [February 24, 2023](#)