

General Election announcement – reaction from Edinburgh

A general election has been called for 4 July 2024 by the prime minister, Rishi Sunak.

Standing outside in the pouring rain he said that following agreement from King Charles during a conversation earlier today, parliament will be dissolved on 30 May. This will be followed by a five week campaign which will take place at the same time as the Euros, school holidays at the end of June and Wimbledon.

Sunak has been Prime Minister since October 2022 and was faced with either calling an election now – on the day that inflation has subsided to a more manageable 2.3% – or later in the year. He was previously Chancellor of the Exchequer and made mention of his first “meeting” with the UK public four years ago, introducing the furlough scheme during the pandemic.

He said that two major milestones have been achieved – a faster growing economy and inflation returning to “normal”.

Battling to be heard above loud music blaring from the end of the street, he said now is the moment for "Britain to choose its future". He confirmed he had asked the King earlier today for a dissolution of parliament, and the king had agreed.

Mr Sunak said : "This election will take place at a time when the world is more dangerous than it has been since the end of the Cold War."

He admitted that his government has not got everything right but said he is proud of a long list of achievements including tackling inflation controlling debt, cutting workers' taxes and increasing the state pension by £900. He said: "I hope that my work since I became Prime Minister shows that we have a plan and are prepare to take full action necessary for our country to flourish."

He also criticised the opposition under Sir Keir Starmer and said Sir Keir was happy to abandon all promises he had made to become Labour Leader once he got the job. "how can he possibly be trusted to lead our country?"

First Minister John Swinney said: "I very much look forward to leading the SNP in this election campaign.

"This is the moment to remove the Tory government and put Scotland first by voting SNP. We will work night and day to protect them from the damage done by Westminster.

"The SNP offers a better future to the broken Westminster consensus.

"In this election we'll be making the case why decisions about Scotland should be made here – and I'll take that message to every part of Scotland.

"In government, we've grown Scotland's economy, doubled frontline funding for the NHS and ensured Scotland has the

highest number of GPs per head in the UK. We're helping with the cost of living through measures such as free prescriptions, free bus travel for under-22s and off-peak rail fares all day.

"A vote for the SNP is a vote to put Scotland first – and for Scotland to become an independent country."

Scottish Labour leader Anas Sarwar said: "The people of Scotland and the UK are desperate for an election and desperate for change.

"After 14 years of Tory chaos and failure, this is an opportunity that we cannot afford to miss.

"Scotland is crying out for change and that change is only possible with a Labour government led by Keir Starmer that is on the side of working people.

"Voting Scottish Labour means booting out this rotten Tory government, maximising Scotland's influence with Scottish Labour MPs in government and delivering the change that Scotland needs.

"It's time for change and Labour is ready to deliver it."

Scottish Liberal Democrat leader Alex Cole-Hamilton MSP said: "The Conservatives and the SNP have taken people for granted and made a mess of our country for too long. People have had enough, it's time for change and Scottish Liberal Democrats are here for it.

"We want to help everyone who can't get a GP appointment or see an NHS dentist, lift up our schools and deliver for business. We'll reduce your bills and tackle climate change by rolling out a national insulation programme, and we'll get the government-owned water company to clean up its act and stop filling our rivers with sewage.

“Scottish Liberal Democrats want to bring people back together, putting Scotland at the heart of a reformed UK and fixing our broken relationship with Europe.

“People deserve a fair deal and local champions who will work tirelessly for them. From Milngavie to Mallaig, Cupar to Cape Wrath, people are choosing the Scottish Liberal Democrats to make that change happen.

“It is absolutely within our grasp to have more liberals than nationalists in the next Parliament, so liberal voices are heard at the very front of the House of Commons once again.”

Deidre Brock MP for Edinburgh North and Leith said: ““The snap summer election is a desperate throw of the dice from a washed-out Prime Minister leading a government staggering on its last legs. Rishi Sunak could have limped on for a few more months but I’m glad he is putting this chaotic Tory administration out of its misery. The people of Scotland have different priorities and we are tired of picking up the bills for their mess. Now we have a chance to vote for a stronger Scotland and say what we think of Tory austerity politics, the Brexit chaos and the cost of living crisis they created. Bring it on! “

Ian Murray MP for Edinburgh South said: ““After 14 years of this dreadful Tory government the country is crying out for change. Voters will simply ask themselves do they feel better off and things work better today after this 14 years and the answer will be no. We will fight for every vote with a positive policy platform to put our country back on track with a decade of national renewal. My political hero said in his last speech “all we ask is the opportunity to serve” and we will be seeking the privilege to do just that.”

Joanna CHerry, KC, MP for Edinburgh South West said: “I look forward to seeking re-election as the MP for Edinburgh Southwest. Since 2015 I have consistently stood up for people

living in this part of Edinburgh and for Scotland. I have championed universal human rights including the rights of women and girls and fought for democracy and the rule of law including my famous defeat of Boris Johnson's unlawful prorogation of parliament in the UK Supreme Court. My constituency office has helped thousands of people through my constituency support and advice service.

"My track record shows that I know how to get things done and that I am not afraid to stand up for what is right.

"Decisions about Scotland's future should be taken in Scotland. A vote for me is a vote for that vital principle and a vote for an independent minded voice for Edinburgh South West who will stand up for the constituency and Scotland's interests."

Scottish Liberal Democrat candidate for Edinburgh West, Christine Jardine said: "It has been an immense privilege to serve the people of Edinburgh West since 2017, and I hope to earn their trust to do so for another five years.

"The chaotic Conservatives and the scandal-hit SNP have made a mess of our country for too long. People have had enough and it's time for change.

"For nearly twenty years, the SNP have been taking our communities for granted with their relentless focus on independence, ignoring the growing problems facing our doctors, teachers, and our environment.

"Scottish Liberal Democrats want to put Scotland at the heart of a reformed UK and fix our broken relationship with Europe. We want to help everyone get a GP appointment and see an NHS dentist, support our schools, and deliver for business.

"We'll reduce your bills and tackle climate change by rolling out a national insulation programme, and we'll demand tougher action to clean up our rivers and beaches.

“Having been the Lothian’s busiest MP since 2019, it is clear that that when people elect a Liberal Democrat, they get a Member of Parliament that will always fight their corner in Westminster.

“I am committed to making our community a better place to live and work for everyone, and I will continue to stand up the fair deal that everyone in Edinburgh West deserves.

“It’s time for change.”



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