

John Swinney voted in as First Minister

There were several nominations for the post of First Minister – the leaders of the main parties and we heard speeches from all – except the Scottish Greens who then abstained in the vote.

But the honour is for John Swinney to take the office of First Minister of Scotland – an MSP who was first elected to The Scottish Parliament in 1999. This is the Perthshire politician who until last year held the post of Deputy First Minister alongside Nicola Sturgeon, probably not thinking of any possible return to the front benches at any time, let alone just one year later. He will be officially sworn in tomorrow morning at the Court of Session.

Mr Swinney made his speech after hearing from Scottish Liberal Democrat leader, Alex Cole-Hamilton, Scottish Conservative leader, Douglas Ross (who reminded John Swinney he had stood for the position of First Minister before some two decades ago) and the Scottish Labour leader, Anas Sarwar, – all were heard in alphabetical order.

Mr Cole-Hamilton said that for nearly twenty years the SNP have been “ignoring the people who do most of the heavy lifting in our society”. He obtained four votes from the Liberal Democrat MSPs.

Mr Sarwar said he is determined to win the trust of the people to deliver the change Scotland needs. He said: “I believe change is possible. I believe Scotland’s best days so lie ahead of it.

“So when the people do finally get their say, I am determined to win their trust and support to deliver the change Scotland needs.” He obtained 22 votes from his party.

John Swinney mentioned both Humza Yousaf – “a man of unfailing courtesy” – and Nicola Sturgeon the first woman in his speech – although that was the only mention of his old ally.

Mr Swinney said – as he has during this last week, that both sides of the independence debate deserve to be heard.

Douglas Ross again said this government would one more be focussing on independence and received 31 votes. He accused the SNP of not being capable of change in their 17 years in government and said: “We need to get back to the priorities of the Scottish people – and that’s the platform in which I, and the Scottish Conservatives, are proud to stand.”

The votes cast went according to party lines and Mr Swinney was elected as First Minister on the first round of voting.