

Douglas Ross tosses his hat into the election ring

Douglas Ross, Scottish Conservative party leader, and former MP for Moray, has announced he will run as a candidate in the newly created Aberdeenshire North and Moray East constituency.

Following a meeting with the former Scottish Secretary, David Duguid and his wife on Wednesday evening at 6.30 the Scottish Conservative party management board decided that Mr Duguid will not be allowed to stand in the General Election on health grounds. The details of the meetings are under wraps owing to Mr Duguid's health and observing his family's request for privacy. Mr Duguid remains in the care of the Queen Elizabeth University Hospital in Glasgow following a spinal injury a few weeks ago which we are told is "serious", but otherwise unspecified.

Mr Duguid's serious health condition meant that although the party sought a meeting with him to discuss his candidacy this was not possible until 31 May. Following a further meeting on Wednesday Mr Ross has decided overnight that he himself will stand for the seat – part of which was his former Westminster constituency. Mr Ross has not himself spoken with Mr Duguid but confirmed he had exchanged a few messages with him.

Announcing his candidacy Mr Ross said that all of his party wish David all the very best for his continued recovery. He lauded Mr Duguid for his hard work on behalf of his

constituents saying he had built an “impressive reputation”. But he cited lack of time before candidates have to be selected as one of the reasons for stepping up.

Mr Ross said: “After boundary changes, this new seat includes parts of my former Moray constituency, and indeed some of the council Ward I was first elected to serve back in 2007. This constituency will be very competitive, a very hard fought contest, and a close contest between the Scottish Conservatives and the SNP. And I have decided I need to lead from the front. So this evening, I will put myself forward for nomination as a Scottish Conservative candidate for Aberdeenshire North and Moray East to beat the SNP in this crucial constituency, and I am ready and up for this fight.”

Mr Ross reminded everyone that this is where he fought and beat Angus Robertson in Moray in 2017, that he stopped the SNP majority when everyone “suggested they had it in the bag” and “just last month it was my vote of no confidence that forced Humza Yousaf out of office”.

Nominations for the party’s candidates closes at 11am.

Nomination papers for candidates must be submitted to the local Returning Officer by 4pm on Friday. Mr Ross confirmed he will travel north on Thursday afternoon to deliver his nomination if he is selected by the party management board. While Mr Ross is a member of the board he has not taken part in any business since the election was declared.

He confirmed that he intends to continue both as an MSP and an MP if elected, saying he has done so already for the last three years and does not see it as a problem. He also said that voters know that “if they can unite behind the Scottish Conservatives they can beat the SNP, and get the focus away from the obsession of independence and back onto the issues that really matter”.

SNP campaign director Stewart Hosie said: “This is a day of

shame for the Tories, with three-jobs Douglas Ross taking a seat from David Duguid to keep his third salary at Westminster. The way the Tories have treated Mr Duguid is indefensible. The nasty party just got nastier.

“People in Aberdeenshire North and Moray East deserve a dedicated, full time MP and local champion. That’s what SNP candidate Seamus Logan will be. The SNP is the only party that can beat the Tories in this seat and across Scotland. That’s why it’s vital to vote SNP on 4th July to put Scotland’s interests first.”

SNP candidate for Aberdeenshire North and Moray East Seamus Logan said:

“Irrespective of our political differences, it’s clear David Duguid cared very deeply about his constituents – and his treatment at the hands of the Tory Party will outrage many local families. I wish him a swift and full recovery.

“I give a commitment to people across Aberdeenshire North and Moray East that, if I’m elected on 4th July, I will be a champion for everyone who lives here – and I will always put the interests of our constituency first.”



Douglas Ross announcing he will stand in the General Election 2024 PHOTO © The Edinburgh Reporter

Scottish Labour Deputy Leader Jackie Baillie said “This screeching u-turn shows there is no promise flip flop Ross won’t break.

“Douglas Ross is treating his constituents with contempt by refusing to give up one of his three jobs and his shoddy treatment of his own colleague shows how morally bankrupt the Tories are.

“The Scottish Tories can no longer attempt to distance themselves from the carnage we have seen in Downing Street – Douglas Ross has always been right at the heart of this rotten Tory government.

“The people of the Highlands and Islands deserve better than a part-time MSP and Scotland deserves better than this chaotic and dysfunctional Tory government.

“It’s time for change – and this fiasco shows that only Labour

can deliver change in both Westminster and in Holyrood.

“On July 4 we can make sure we boot this disastrous Tory government out of office by voting Scottish Labour.”



Douglas Ross announcing he will stand in the General Election 2024 PHOTO © The Edinburgh Reporter