

# Scottish Conservatives launch their 2024 Manifesto

When Rishi Sunak took the stage in Edinburgh on Monday it was a bit of a farewell to Douglas Ross as the Prime Minister thanked him for his leadership and standing up to the SNP both now and in the 2021 Scottish election.

Ross has already said he will step down as leader after the election and will quit as an MSP if he is elected to Westminster in the seat recently held by David Duguid.

This was a real contrast to the campaign gathering in 2019 when Theresa May was Prime Minister. Then she leapt onto a stage in the centre of a removal firm's warehouse in Granton with Ruth Davidson, then Scottish Conservatives leader just a couple of days before polling day. Then her message was all about denying Scotland any more referenda on independence and building a Better Britain with a "stronger more prosperous future" by getting the best Brexit deal. Now nobody is talking about Brexit.

On Monday in the hotel in the Grassmarket security was tight and the organisation a good deal slicker.









Mr Sunak wasted no time in attacking the SNP saying that they have let down Scotland with an obsession over independence which – if they gain a majority of Scottish MPs at this election would mean another five years of campaigning for secession.

He continued: “Their independence obsession means that they’ve neglected everything else, letting down Scotland’s children, letting down this country. All elections have consequences. But this vote in Scotland matters so much, it will determine whether we have MPs focused on the real priorities of the Scottish people, or whether the divisive constitutional wrangling of the last decade continues.”

The Prime Minister sounded genuinely weary when he said: “A vote for the Scottish Conservatives is a vote to put this issue to bed, to move past these tired and stale arguments, and to go forward united and together. Page one, line one of their manifesto. They have put their political obsession on the line. The 4 July is Scotland’s chance to end the decade of

division, to put independence on the back burner for a generation, to get back to the issues that really matter to communities up and down this country.”

On other matters he focused on taxation. He said: “We want to give you financial security, so we will cut your taxes and let you keep more of your own money, because you know better than the state how to spend it.” Accusing the SNP of hiking taxes at every opportunity, he said that the Tories are cutting tax for workers here in Scotland and across the UK – by around £900 for the average worker by reducing the national insurance tax. And he promised to cut it completely for the self employed if the Conservatives are returned to government. And he had something for the pensioners by saying that the new state pension will never be dragged into income tax.

He concluded the speech to the party members by saying: “In the next five years, if you ask me to continue as your prime minister, I will do everything I can to deliver for you. I want to make Britain stronger, better, more secure. And we conservatives will always stand for our United kingdom and for our values, for aspiration, for freedom, for opportunity, for security.

“And we Conservatives will always stand for our United kingdom and for our values, for aspiration, for freedom, for opportunity, for security. Our country needs a secure future, not more fostering about independence. Our country wants a clear plan and bold action, and it is a vote for the scottish conservatives that will secure our United Kingdom’s future.”



Douglas Ross, Scottish Conservative Leader said: "We have a unique once-in-a-generation opportunity to change course.

"Because, the SNP have put their political obsession with separating our country on the line.

"John Swinney has produced a manifesto that has on the entirety of its first page "Vote SNP for Scotland to be an independent country".

"The Nationalists are not even trying to hide it. They are running a single-issue campaign.

"And treating the general election as a proxy independence referendum.

"The SNP are on the backfoot – and they know it.

"They have nothing positive to offer in this election."

Scottish Liberal Democrat MSP Willie Rennie said: "The Scottish Conservatives' zombie campaign is like something out of Night of the Living Dead.

"They've got an out of touch Prime Minister with no leadership qualities, a Scottish leader who can't wait to quit and a disappointing record of failure stretching back years.

"No wonder morale is so low. By contrast Liberal Democrats are campaigning with a spring in our step and are ready to take seats from the SNP and Conservatives across the UK."

Shadow Scotland Secretary Ian Murray said: "Douglas Ross and Rishi Sunak are hoping Scots will suddenly forget the last 14 years where a Tory government crashed the economy, sent mortgages and prices soaring and partied during the pandemic.

"For all that Tories try to change their clothes or even their constituencies, voters can see the Scottish Tories' empty promises for what they are – the desperate last gasp of an



irrelevant party trying to distract and divide.

“The Tories have had a decade and a half to deliver on their pledges but instead they gambled with families’ savings and put party before country.

“A Labour government will face up to Scotland’s challenges head on with a plan to stabilise the economy, create 69,000 green jobs, make work pay and turn Scotland into a clean energy superpower.”