

Edinburgh's Tory candidates reflect on their General Election losses

The defeated Scottish Conservative candidates in Edinburgh have recognised the scale of their party's collapse on Thursday offering their views on the ways it can recover.

None of the five Scottish Conservative candidates across Edinburgh's constituencies won their seats, or even achieved second place. This mirrors the dismal performance of the UK national party, which lost an eye-watering 250 seats.

While the candidates have acknowledged the extent of their party's defeat, they have eyes on the Scottish Conservatives' next steps.

Edinburgh East and Musselburgh candidate Marie-Clair Munro, who came fourth place with just over 2,500 votes, said that the national result for her party was 'disappointing' but that the defeat of the independence-supporting SNP was the highlight of the night.

The Edinburgh councillor said: "You just have to look at John Lamont MP, who has won his seat again down in the Borders. People are tired of independence, it's a broken record. They want the health service fixed. They want the education system fixed. They want the roads and the potholes fixed. You just

have to look at the fiasco with the ferries. The fact that the A9 has not been dualled, there's lots of things the SNP should have been concentrating on and it's really the SNP that are the losers in Scotland.

"I think people decided that they'd had enough of the SNP, they were tired of independence. They want the economy to recover. I believe as a Scottish Conservative, we were the best party to do that. However, the residents decided on something different and I completely respect what the residents decided."

Meanwhile, Edinburgh South West candidate Sue Webber, who came third with more than 5,500 votes behind the SNP's Joanna Cherry and the new MP, Scott Arthur of Scottish Labour, acknowledged that the Conservatives "had a few shocks" across the country and that a great deal of reflection was in order.

She said: "We will have to sit and really have a look quite critically at both the campaign, but we have been in government for some time and people were expecting us to deliver on some of our messages and we've not been able to do that. We can't blame Covid, but there's been a whole lot of things that no one could ever plan for.

"We must do a serious period of self-reflection. The Scottish Conservatives have got to do so as well. We've got to continue to make ourselves relevant and make sure that there is somewhere that the centre-right approach can be presented and is to the Scottish electorate and that they want to support what we're calling for. We need to firm out some of those policies so people know what we mean and they're not just standing against the SNP."

Alastair Shields, the candidate for Edinburgh West, struggled to go beyond fourth place, something that Mr Shields acknowledged was a downgrade from his party's third place finish in 2019.

He stressed the importance of looking to the future and is confident that “better days will come”, while arguing that his party’s performance in opposition will be critical for its future resurgence.

He said: “We have to see first of all what the new Labour government is going to be like and challenge them where they need to be challenged. We know that there’s still an SNP Government sitting in Holyrood at the moment which is suffering, and suffering as a consequence of what’s happened to the SNP tonight. We need to just be observant and vigilant towards that and know where our strengths are against them. We’re still the opposition in Holyrood and we’re the opposition in Westminster. We take that on board and look ahead and get a better outcome next time.

“We dust ourselves down after this set back tonight and we look at what’s next, whether it’s by-elections in any part of the country, and seek fresh membership as well – both that and look ahead.”





As the outgoing MP Joanna Cherry, KC, was given the opportunity to address the audience at the Edinburgh Count – Conservative candidate Sue Webber is in the background