



The Scottish Parliament  
Pàrlamaid na h-Alba  
Jamie Greene MSP  
Member of the Scottish Parliament for West Scotland Region

3 April 2025

*Dear Russell,*

It is with sadness that I write to inform you that I have taken the difficult decision to resign the Scottish Conservative and Unionist Party whip, with immediate effect.

This is a decision which I have not taken lightly, and one which has weighed heavily on my mind for some time. I have enormous respect for the many Conservative colleagues and activists that I have worked with over the years, who all entered public service, as I did, for the right reasons. I wish the party no ill will, and hope that feeling is reciprocated. I count many of my colleagues as friends, and I understand that my decision will be a disappointment to some.

The unfortunate truth, however, is that the Scottish Conservative Party which I joined simply no longer exists.

When I first joined the Conservative Party and campaigned in local elections, I did so for a modern party, led by David Cameron, with a socially liberal view of the world. I joined the party that supported gay marriage, in which minority communities were welcome, which pledged commitment to a net-zero environment, and which was a political 'big tent and broad church.'

It was an election-winning formula, and I felt as though I had truly found my political home. I joined a successful political movement which promoted fiscal prudence, supported entrepreneurship and ambition, and did so with a true sense of liberalism and decency. It was a party that made a young, working class, gay man from Greenock feel very welcome. I do not regret making that decision.

I was invited to join the Scottish Conservatives in the wake of the 2014 referendum. I proudly supported the upbeat and refreshing leadership of our former leader, Ruth Davidson. She told me that the party would be a welcoming place for ambitious and successful candidates from all walks of life. She told me I had nothing to fear, and for the most part, that was true.

The Scottish Conservative party I joined did the unthinkable and overtook the Labour party to become Scotland's main opposition in Holyrood. Twice. There was a point at which I, and others, believed we might have a genuine chance to govern Scotland as a successful broad-appeal centre right party. That now feels like a distant memory.

This past decade, in good times, and in the tough times, I have supported the party. Even during the aftermath of the 2016 EU referendum, and endless instability and leadership changes at Westminster, I spent every day making the case for a moderate right of centre alternative to the Nationalist government in Scotland.

I have served on our front bench three times. I have led the party on Transport, Education and Justice. I have taken the fight to the SNP on issues which matter, but I have also encouraged us to work constructively across the benches when it was merited or required.

I am proud of my campaigning successes on a range of issues; my Victims Bill proposals and justice reform, the Redress Scheme for survivors of abuse, supporting local drug and alcohol services, tackling domestic violence, promoting education reform, and of course campaigning on the ferry crises. I have stood up for working class communities like Greenock and Ardrossan, as well as our islands.

The issue that I cannot resolve, however, is this; I joined the Conservatives as a *One Nation* Conservative and have always served as a *One Nation* Conservative, but many of us now wonder, what has become of that party? Where has it gone?

Chasing the votes of Reform Party supporters will never see the Scottish Conservatives in government; there simply aren't enough fringe right wing Scottish voters to achieve that.

During the leadership election last year, I warned that we were giving up on the next generation of young Scots. I warned that we were deserting the middle ground. Instead, the party now rests its hopes on a Reform-lite agenda that appeals to the worst of our society, and not the best.

Instead of proudly leading on equality, we now run the very serious and immediate risk of becoming once again the party of social division and morality wars. A cursory glance at our social media output confirms this fear. My generation of Conservative politician helped put the *Nasty Party* name in the bin, but it now appears that it was just filed away in a drawer marked pending. I am not alone in feeling this way, although I am perhaps one of the first to say so publicly.

I do not believe that I have left the Conservative Party. I believe that the party has left me.

On a personal level, I know you have a very tough job, and I have always enjoyed working with you and shared your good humour, but it is my strong belief that those advising you will lead the party to a collapse in support for decent centre right politics in Scotland. I cannot be part of a narrative which has become Trump-esque in both style and substance. Perhaps my split with the party is best seen in that light.

I feel that I can best serve my West of Scotland constituents, the parliament, and my own conscience by stepping aside from the Scottish Conservatives. I will continue to work constructively with colleagues on issues of shared importance.

I hope my departure may come as a source of regret to many in the party, if not now, perhaps one day in the future, when, as night follows day, the party comes to understand that Scottish elections are won in the centre ground, not on the right-wing fringes in a grotesque dance with Nigel Farage.

Yours,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Jamie Greene". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style with a long horizontal stroke at the end.

Jamie Greene MSP