

Milestone marks SNP's 'decade of failure'

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3 May 2017



The SNP has been attacked for a “decade of failure” – on the day it marks 10 years in government.

The nationalists came to power on May 3, 2007, but their time in charge has been marred by a range of failures across devolved areas of responsibility.

Today, the Scottish Conservatives are releasing 51 pledges made in manifestos since 2007 that have been broken by the Scottish Government.

These failures are compounded by an education system in decline, an NHS in crisis and an economy which consistently lags behind the rest of the UK's, and is currently on the brink of slipping back into recession.

On education, the SNP promised it would reduce class sizes, improve performance in the respected global PISA survey and cut the pupil-to-teacher ratio – all of which it has failed to do.

On health, there have been pledges to reduce the number of anti-depressants prescribed, introduce a maximum 18-week wait for treatment and increase early detection of cancer by a quarter – none of which have been met.

In addition, promises on reducing paperwork for farmers, the building of socially-rented houses and scrapping the council tax have also been broken.

Scottish Conservative shadow finance secretary Murdo Fraser said:

“The SNP is marking its 10th birthday in government – but there is nothing to celebrate.

“Instead, the nationalists can reflect on a decade of failure, dozens of broken promises and a country licking its wounds from a divisive separation debate.

“It's a shameful record, and one that's getting worse by the day.

“This is powerful evidence that a party in government obsessed by nothing other than the break-up of Britain is bad for Scotland.

“While Nicola Sturgeon, and Alex Salmond before her, have been focusing all

their attention on the constitution, our schools, hospitals, police service and economy have suffered badly.

“The SNP should use this landmark to reflect on its terrible governance of Scotland, and vow to get back to the day job of running the country properly.”

[Labour candidate to SNP voters: Back us and we'll deliver Indyref2](#)

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2 May 2017



The Scottish Labour candidate in Ettrick, Roxburgh and Berwickshire is openly seeking SNP votes in the forthcoming election – by promising that Jeremy Corbyn will deliver a second referendum on independence.

In Facebook posts on April 26th, Sally Prentice declared, “SNP voters: the only way you’re going to get to ask the question again is if Jeremy Corbyn is in number 10”.

She also posted a graphic declaring: “A vote for Labour in Scotland is a chance of indyref2.”

Commenting, Rachael Hamilton, the Scottish Conservative candidate for Ettrick, Roxburgh and Berwickshire said:

“This is astonishing. On the one hand, this Labour candidate is promising people she will oppose a second referendum.

“Yet, on social media, she is openly trying to win a few SNP votes by backing a second referendum.

“Either Kezia Dugdale knew about this and thinks it’s OK, or she has lost control over her embattled party.

“This is more confirmation that, under Jeremy Corbyn and Kezia Dugdale, Scottish Labour cannot be trusted to defend the decision we made in 2014 to stay part of the UK.

“We said No. We meant it. Why can’t Labour stand up for the decision we made?”

“It also confirms that the only a vote for the Scottish Conservatives will respect the decision we made to stay in the UK.”

[Revealed: The Labour General Election candidate who backs separation](#)

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2 May 2017



Scottish Labour’s attempts to present themselves as a solidly pro-Union party have again been undermined – by a General Election candidate who backed independence.

Douglas Beattie, who is standing in Dumfriesshire, Clydesdale and Tweeddale, urged Labour members to vote Yes in 2014.

The Scottish Conservatives highlighted his comments after Labour’s Alistair Darling attempted to shore up his party’s shaky position on Nicola Sturgeon’s demand for a second referendum.

David Mundell, who is defending the DCT seat for the Scottish Conservatives, said Labour were in chaos on the issue.

Mr Beattie – a councillor in the London borough of Camden – posted a series of tweets backing the Yes side in the 2014 campaign.

After the vote, he said he was “gutted for Yes camp who fought so justly and valiantly”.

He also declared there was “something of the undertaker” about Mr Darling and criticised his leadership of the Better Together campaign as “fearty max”.

Labour have sent mixed messages about their support for the Union.

Leader Jeremy Corbyn has said he is “absolutely fine” with the SNP holding a second referendum.

Before the EU referendum, Scottish Labour leader Kezia Dugdale said it was “not inconceivable” that she might support independence in the event of a Leave vote.

Scottish Conservative candidate for Dumfriesshire, Clydesdale and Tweeddale,

David Mundell, said:

“Yet again Labour are in chaos over the threat of a second independence referendum

“They are trying to present themselves as solidly pro-Union but one of their own candidates backed independence.

“But no-one should be fooled after Jeremy Corbyn said he is ‘absolutely fine’ with the SNP holding a second referendum.

“Only the Scottish Conservatives will stand up to Nicola Sturgeon’s obsessive push for a second unwanted, divisive vote on taking Scotland out of the UK.”

[SNP must say if it will sign Brexit fishing pledge](#)

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30 Apr 2017



SNP MPs have been challenged to say whether they will sign the “Brexit pledge” on fisheries – after the party’s “hypocrisy” on the vital issue was exposed again today.

It comes after two of their MPs – Eilidh Whiteford and Mike Weir – signed a Scottish Fishermen’s Federation pledge declaring Brexit offered a “sea of opportunity” to fishermen last week.

The matter was raised on today’s Sunday Politics Scotland. It emerged that Ms Whiteford and Mr Weir refused to accept invitations to appear on the programme to explain their stance.

Scottish Conservative MSP and Aberdeen South candidate Ross Thompson said:

“The SNP is trying to perpetrate a con here.

“It wants to send powers over fishing straight back to Brussels – at the same time as telling fishing communities it wants powers to come here. Everyone can see right through them.

“The question now for every SNP candidate at this election is whether they will sign the pledge saying that Brexit offers a ‘sea of opportunity’ to

fishing. If they don't, we'll know they are guilty of complete hypocrisy."

Moray candidate Douglas Ross has challenged his opponents Angus Robertson to sign the Brexit pledge.

It comes after Mr Robertson told the Sunday Politics last week that he supported membership of the Common Fisheries Policy.

"Angus Robertson failed to answer a simple question on TV last week.

"Asked if the SNP would take an independent Scotland back into the CFP he didn't want to give the game away until the presenter pressed on the fourth occasion and Angus accepted his party would take Scotland straight back into the CFP, something that convinced many people in fishing towns and village across Moray to vote leave last June.

"While Angus may find answering questions on this issue difficult, I hope signing the Scottish Fishermen's Federation pledge will be easier for him.

"I've done it and now I am asking Angus Robertson to do the same."

[Ruth attacks SNP's 'week of chaos'](#)

30 Apr 2017



Scottish Conservative leader Ruth Davidson has attacked the SNP's 'week of chaos'.

It follows confusion from the party over the Common Fisheries Policy, wider EU membership and whether or not independence would be a key issue in the upcoming General Election.

The party's stated position is for a separate Scotland to have full membership of the EU, which – by definition – would include being part of the hated CFP.

However, days after deputy leader Angus Robertson confirmed this on television, two of his MPs signed a pledge describing Brexit as a "sea of opportunity" and committed never to return to the CFP.

In addition, while Nicola Sturgeon was denying independence had anything to do with the SNP's election strategy at First Minister's Questions, at that very moment her predecessor Alex Salmond was on camera saying the precise opposite.

Scottish Conservative leader Ruth Davidson said:

"This has been the SNP's week of chaos.

"First Nicola Sturgeon made a laughing stock of herself by claiming her campaign had nothing to do with independence. She was forced into a u-turn after Alex Salmond popped up to say that's all it's about.

"Two SNP MPs signed a pledge to leave the EU's failed Common Fisheries policy – just after Angus Robertson declared he wanted Scotland to stay in.

"The SNP failed to clear up its position on Europe and still can't say whether it wants an independent Scotland to become a full member of the EU.

"And to cap it all, Nicola Sturgeon says she's going to hide her next moves on independence until after the election – despite promising to be upfront with Scots.

"People are sick of the SNP's games.

"Nicola Sturgeon and Alex Salmond are trying to take us for a ride – and the Scottish Conservatives are going to use this election to lead the fight back against the SNP.

"To send them a message and say no to their divisive second referendum, vote Scottish Conservative on June 8."

On Monday, Nicola Sturgeon said she does not think this election is about independence

- **Nicola Sturgeon said the upcoming election 'won't decide whether or not Scotland becomes independent'**. 'People who want to make sure Scotland has got strong voices against the Conservatives in this election need to vote for the SNP because that's what this election above all else is about. The election won't decide whether or not Scotland becomes independent. We got a mandate for a referendum in the election last year so this is about Scotland's voice is heard and Scotland's interests are protected' (*Daily Telegraph*, 24 April 2017, [link](#)).
- **Sturgeon reiterated her belief this election is not about independence.** Following an appearance on Scotland Tonight, STV reported: 'The SNP leader...said the forthcoming vote "is not deciding whether or not Scotland is independent"' (*STV News*, 24 April 2017, [link](#)).

But Alex Salmond then contradicted his successor entirely – and said the election is about independence

- **Salmond said every vote the SNP receives in this election will strengthen their case for independence.** '[People] will know that they are voting to support the right of the parliament to decide on the holding of the Scottish referendum. The path is that the Parliament should have the right to hold a referendum through the section 30 order. She's looking to get another election victory which will indicate and

support the right of the Parliament to decide these things' (*Politics Home*, 27 April 2017, [link](#)).

- **Salmond made clear he thinks a strong SNP performance in this election will push independence forward.** 'If we win the election it will do a number of things. It will be a vote from Scotland against hard Tory Brexit. It will show there's one area of these islands where the Tories are not riding roughshod over the people and it will reinforce the democratic mandate of the Scottish parliament to say there should be a Section 30 order and another independence referendum when the time is right. These are some of the huge issues at stake in Scotland, which is why we believe so many people will rally to the Scottish cause, to back the Scottish parliament and defend Scotland's interests' (*The Times*, 28 April 2017, [link](#)).

Then Sturgeon back-tracked and suggested the election is about independence

- **Nicola Sturgeon's spokesman said the SNP would use a victory in this election to push separation.** As *The Telegraph* reported: '[Sturgeon's] official spokesman said Theresa May would have "no basis whatsoever" to continue refusing another independence vote if, as expected, the Tories win fewer Scottish seats and votes than the SNP. But he also said that Ms Sturgeon will not drop her demand for a second referendum if the Unionist parties together poll more than the nationalist parties, arguing that the election would also be fought over other issues' (*Daily Telegraph*, 27 April 2017, [link](#)).

To add to the chaos: the SNP still can't tell us if they want full EU membership

- **Sturgeon repeated she wants full EU membership.** 'I support Scotland being independent and being an independent member of the European Union' (*Scottish Parliament, Official Report: First Minister's Questions*, 27 April 2017, p20, [link](#)).
- **But SNP MPs signed a pledge which would mean withdrawing from full EU membership.** Eilidh Whiteford and Mike Weir signed the Scottish Fishermen's Federation pledge, which stated: 'We must avoid any policy, practice, regulation or treaty which could return us to the Common Fisheries Policy and the enforced giveaway of almost two-thirds of our fish stocks' Membership of the CFP is indelibly linked to full EU membership (*Press and Journal*, 26 April 2017, [link](#)).

And now the SNP have admitted a key part of their EU policy is unworkable

- **Pete Wishart admitted that even a special deal for Scotland from the EU is unlikely.** On *Good Morning Scotland*, when it was put to Wishart that the EU27 will not be willing to secure a separate deal for Scotland, Wishart said: 'I think that's absolutely right. There's lots of work to do' (*BBC Good Morning Scotland*, 28 April 2017, [link](#)).
- **But the SNP put a differentiated deal at the heart of their Brexit paper.** 'We have set out a clear proposition for how a differentiated

position could work – in the event that the UK Government decides to leave the single market – drawing on examples from a range of countries and scenarios which demonstrate that differentiated relationships work elsewhere’ (Scottish Government, *Scotland’s Place in Europe*, 20 December 2016, p45, [link](#)).