



The Scottish Parliament
Pàrlamaid na h-Alba

Edward Mountain MSP

Member of the Scottish Parliament for Highlands and Islands Region
Russell Findlay MSP
Leader
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Edinburgh
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Dear Russen

I wanted to write to you before we start the selection process for the candidates in the Highlands and Islands.

I have had the true honour to be in the Scottish Parliament for nearly nine years. It has been a huge privilege serving people across the Highlands and Islands. There have been many challenges and I have done my best to remain true to my beliefs and political values.

Sadly, in this Parliament I have found that all too often, many good ideas are discounted and shelved by those more interested in promoting the political differences and arguments for independence. The result is that I constantly see good ideas, that could and would benefit Scotland, being thwarted. This is not only self-serving, but also holding Scotland back. The worst of it is that it does little to help the many people that look to the Parliament to make the real changes that would make their lives better.

There is no doubt that my journey in politics has been enriched by some of the great activists that make our party what it is. There are too many to mention them all. However, without the help of Dr Beryll Stevenson, Rita Fenton, Margaret Thompson, Anne Anderson and Donald Mackenzie, to name but a few, there is little doubt that my journey would have been less enjoyable and election success more difficult. I would also like to mention my Head of Office, Tricia Clark, who has been with me during my entire time in the Parliament for which I will be forever grateful.

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In 1979 when I started campaigning for the Conservatives, it was for a very different party to the one we are in today. I have welcomed many of the changes, but not all of them. I also have been saddened by the behaviour of some politicians from across all the parties. They have left me, and I suspect much of the electorate, cold and have given politics and conviction politicians a bad name.

So, looking forward to the elections in 2026 I wanted to tell you, so you have maximum time to find a candidate, that I do not wish to put myself forward as a candidate for the Scottish Conservatives in the Highlands and Islands. By that time, I will have spent over twenty-two years serving my country. I believe it is now time to turn my attention to my family who have often played 'second fiddle' to my aspirations as I focussed on doing my best to live up to the trust that had been placed in me.

You can be assured that in the run up to the 2026 elections I will do all I can to help our party become one that is electable, based on the true conservative values and policies that I hold and have held close to my heart for over forty-five years.

My term in the Parliament has been a true honour. I will forever cherish this time as indeed will I the friendships I have made across all the parties. I remember being told that it is right politicians disagree but that of course it should never be personal, something I truly believe in.

Finally, I would like to thank all those people who voted for me as well as those who came to me for help, for their confidence that I could make a difference. You and they may be assured that I will continue to serve them faithfully until the next election.

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