



# Building for Scotland

Strengthening the Scottish Conservatives

Report and recommendations of the Scottish Conservatives 2010 Commission

November 2010

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Strengthening the Scottish Conservatives

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# Commission Chairman's message

I have pleasure in presenting the unanimous report from the Commission to 'Review the structures, function and operational activity of the Scottish Conservative and Unionist Party'.

Our recommendations are far-reaching, as we felt they needed to be, to rejuvenate and focus the Party's activity. We have welcomed the very high level of submissions the Commission has received.

The consistent themes in the submissions were of a need for clarity of leadership, a distinctive Scottish identity, a welcoming and broader Party, increased decentralisation of the Party structure and the empowerment of the members. These are the themes upon which we have framed this report.

We were all very disappointed by this year's general election result in Scotland and have analysed that result in both a Scottish and UK context to identify how we can rebuild a significant level of support for our Party.

We write this report, though, with a great sense of optimism for the future. A distinct Scottish leader elected by all the members with full responsibility for the Party in Scotland is a very significant change for the Scottish Conservatives, but one which we feel is necessary in a devolved Scotland.

Recognising regional and local differences across Scotland has underlined our commitment to a regional structure and continuation of strong, local autonomy for our constituency associations. A streamlined management board where there will be greater accountability and responsibility, rather than the current large Scottish executive, will ensure that there is a clear link between our grassroots members and the management of the Party nationally. A new approach to developing policy will also be crucial to the Party's future success.

These reforms provide a comprehensive approach to the improvement of our Party's fortunes. The Commission believes it is essential that they are implemented as a complete package of complementary measures, rather than a menu of options.

The desire for change across the Party provides a powerful mandate for the Scottish Conservatives and a transformational opportunity. It allows the Party to aim high, build on its strengths and be bold in delivering the changes required.

To my fellow Commissioners, who gave up so much time for our work, and to everyone who engaged with us – thank you.

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Russell Sanderson". The signature is written in a cursive style and is positioned above a horizontal line.

Lord Sanderson of Bowden Kt. D.L.

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# Introduction and remit

This document is the report of the independent Commission established by the Scottish Conservative and Unionist Party in June 2010.

The remit of the Commission was:

**“To review the structures, function and operational activity of the Scottish Conservative and Unionist Party and to recommend any changes that would strengthen the Party as a modern, effective, political campaigning entity in Scotland.”**

The following pages summarise the Commission’s findings and recommendations.

They comprise a complete package of structural and operational reforms that will help to strengthen and build the Scottish Conservatives.

They have been prepared for the members of the Party but are being published openly to help to engage Scotland in the Party’s development.





**“There should be a distinct Scottish leader with overall authority over the Party north of the border - elected by the Party membership by one-member-one-vote to give the necessary mandate.”**

**Scottish Conservative MSP**

# Summary of recommendations

The report should be read in full for a comprehensive appreciation of the Commission's findings, conclusions and extensive recommendations.

The full set of recommendations comprise an integrated strategy which, implemented as a complete package, will strengthen and transform the Scottish Conservative and Unionist Party.

The Commission reviewed all of the Party's operations. Our work was one of the most comprehensive consultation exercises ever carried out by the Scottish Conservatives.

The need for change is evident from the Party's election performance in recent years, how the Party is perceived by the electorate, a declining membership base, problems with the Party's organisational structure, a lack of professional staff with campaigning experience, and other resource and funding constraints.

However the Scottish Conservatives have many strengths on which to build and a powerful mandate for change from the Party's members and wider Scotland.

## **The Scottish Conservatives should:**

1. Elect a Scottish leader to have overall responsibility for the Party's performance in Scotland.
2. Replace the weak leadership and governance framework with a streamlined, transparent and accountable structure.
3. Create regional campaign centres staffed by campaign professionals.
4. Increase support and resources for the local association network.
5. Develop a clear vision for Scotland, distinct to the Scottish Conservatives.
6. Engage the whole Party and wider Scotland in policy development - and recruit a chief policy adviser.
7. Introduce balloted motions and open debate at Party conference.
8. Overhaul candidate selection and development - and reform the current ranking process for Regional List MSPs.
9. Establish a process to identify and develop future Party leaders.
10. Contest every local government seat throughout Scotland.
11. Launch a new fundraising and membership drive across Scotland.
12. Provide an annual grant to Conservative Future Scotland to help develop the Party's youth wing.

# Our approach

The Commission reviewed all aspects of the Party's operations.

We sought views on a confidential basis from as wide a spread of people as possible across the whole of Scotland from both inside and outside the Party.

All Party members were invited to provide input and over 300 written submissions were received.

Commissioners engaged individually with the Party's elected members, senior officials, constituency chairmen and other officers throughout the country.

We also held individual discussions with other supporters and representatives of business groups, think-tanks, academic bodies, public sector organisations, political pollsters and the media.

In addition, the Commission held hearings at which the Party's senior politicians and officers presented detailed evidence.

Commissioners also met with senior elected members and officials from the UK Conservative Party and the Welsh Conservatives.

We took a strictly objective and open-minded approach to our deliberations. All contributions received and the information and suggestions they contained were considered thoroughly.

This work was one of the most comprehensive consultation exercises of its type ever undertaken by the Scottish Conservatives.

It provided the firm base of evidence needed to inform our recommendations.

In preparing these recommendations, the Commission was guided by best practice and our members' knowledge of the Conservative Party and experience in leading, developing and advising a wide spectrum of organisations.

*This work was one of the most comprehensive consultation exercises of its type ever undertaken by the Scottish Conservatives.*



# The need for change

The last major strategic reorganisation of the Scottish Conservative's structure and operations followed The Strathclyde Commission's Report of 1998. Today there is acceptance across the Party's membership that the Party's structure, governing executive and operational model are no longer effective and need to be changed.

The Scottish Parliament is now the centre of democratic discussion and debate in Scottish politics. In this era of minority government in the Scottish Parliament, Scottish Conservative MSPs are achieving a significant influence on policy development and legislation. While this influence has been recognised by some members of the media and other commentators, it is not widely acknowledged.

All of the many elected members, officials and supporters who engaged with the Commission are keen to embrace a new approach that will allow the Scottish Conservatives to develop successfully.

The need for change is evident:

## **Elected representation**

In the 2010 general election, despite a swing to the Conservatives in England of 5.6 per cent and the return of a Conservative Prime Minister to Downing Street, the Scottish Conservatives secured 80,204 fewer votes than in 1997 when John Major's government was defeated (Table 1). There was a small increase in our share of the vote in Scotland compared to the 2005 general election, but no increase in the Scottish Conservatives' representation at Westminster.

Similarly the Scottish Conservatives have failed to increase their overall representation in the Scottish Parliament over the last 10 years (we now have 17 Scottish Conservative MSPs), although the Party has achieved a welcome increase in the number of candidates elected 'first past the post' (Table 2).

More success has been achieved in local government elections. In 2007 there were 143 Conservative Councillors elected in Scotland – up by 20 since 2003.

In 1992 with 25.77 per cent of the vote and 11 MPs elected in Scotland, the Scottish Conservatives helped to ensure a Conservative parliamentary majority at Westminster. There is no doubt that the Scottish Conservatives' lack of progress since the Conservative defeat in the 1997 general election contributed to the lack of an outright Conservative victory in the general election this May.

Opponents have been quick to write off the Scottish Conservatives as a political force in Scotland. However in this year's general election the Liberal Democrats' share of the vote in Scotland was only 2.2 per cent more than the Scottish Conservatives' but they sent 11 MPs to Westminster. The SNP, which forms the Scottish government in the Scottish Parliament, achieved only 3.2 per cent more than the Scottish Conservatives.

The Party's position in Scotland contrasts markedly with that of the Welsh Conservatives who returned eight MPs this year – up by five since the previous general election.

*Today there is acceptance across the Party's membership that the Party's structure, governing executive and operational model are no longer effective and need to be changed.*

**Table 1: General Election Results in Scotland 1992-2010**

	1992	1997	2001	2005	2010
Number of Scottish Conservative Party MPs	11	0	1	1	1
Scottish Conservatives' vote share	25.77%	17.53%	15.58%	15.83%	16.7%
Number of UK Conservative Party MPs	336	165	166	198	307
UK Conservatives' vote share	41.9%	30.7%	31.7%	32.4%	36.1%

**Table 2: General Election Result in Scotland 2010**

	Votes	%	Number of MPs
Labour	1,035,528	42.0%	41
Scottish National Party	491,386	19.9%	6
Liberal Democrats	465,471	18.9%	11
Scottish Conservatives	412,855	16.7%	1

### Perception

Polling indicates that the Scottish electorate is not clear about what the Scottish Conservatives stand for and what they are delivering.

### Membership

The Scottish Conservatives' membership base has declined in recent years. At present the Party has 10,000 members who pay an annual subscription and there is a wide variation in the level of recruitment activity across Scotland. Many local associations are moribund with membership having fallen by more than half since 1992.

### Leadership structure

The current confusion of roles and responsibilities contributes significantly to what is seen widely to be a lack of clarity of leadership, accountability and decision-making.

### Professional staff

The number of professional agents employed to campaign for Party candidates has continued to decline. As a result the Party has become heavily reliant on the staff at Scottish Conservative Central Office in Edinburgh.

While all target seats had full time staff for the 2010 General Election campaign, these people were contracted for the campaign only and departed afterwards, resulting in a loss of knowledge, expertise and continuity.

Committed volunteers are essential to campaign success but they cannot be a substitute for experienced, qualified professionals in the field.

### Funding and resources

The Scottish Conservatives are fortunate to attract support from a number of loyal donors but the Party is reliant on too small a group of supporters for the greater part of its income. It needs to develop this to secure a more stable financial base that will allow for long-term planning and investment.

### Key strengths

These include:

- A broad and deep resource of skills, experience and expertise within the Party's elected representatives, candidates, officers, volunteers, members, other supporters and executive staff.
- A loyal base of members and supporters across Scotland with a strong commitment to the Scottish Conservatives.
- An established network of constituency associations covering the country, 30 of which own their premises.
- A strong track record of influencing policy and legislation at local, Scottish, UK and European levels to achieve positive change for the people of Scotland.
- The election of a Conservative-led UK government this year, with a Conservative Prime Minister.

### Opportunity

From the comments received by the Commission, it is clear that Scottish Conservatives are frustrated by the Party's performance and ambitious for its future. They are inspired by Conservative success in other parts of the UK and open to a new way of working in Scotland that will achieve the progress they want.

In addition, many people outside the Party believe that Scotland needs a strong centre-right political force.

*Polling indicates that the Scottish electorate is not clear about what the Scottish Conservatives stand for and what they are delivering.*





Dumfries

**“There is a real danger of a ‘pass the buck, it’s somebody else’s responsibility’ situation. We must have clear lines of communication.”**

Constituency association chairman

# Party function

The overarching function of the Scottish Conservative Party is to develop and promote policies that will benefit Scotland, campaign for election to government and represent the Scottish people.

To achieve these objectives, the Party must have:

- An organisational structure that allows it to be led and governed effectively.
- A culture and framework that ensures accountability and inclusiveness.
- A clear vision and strategy for the Party.
- A distinctive proposition for Scotland with a rigorous process for policy development.
- A pool of top quality candidates and elected representatives.
- Sufficient resources to campaign successfully.
- A strong membership base to underpin the organisation.
- Sufficient funding to meet resource requirements for the long-term.

Summarised in the following pages are the Commission's findings and recommendations relating to these requirements.





Dundee

**“Without the sound infrastructure we once had I cannot see us making any headway. The lack of professional agents in Scotland is dire. The lack of trained office bearers is just as bad.”**

**Former Party agent**

# Party structure

## 1. LEGAL STRUCTURE

The Scottish Conservative and Unionist Party is constituted as an autonomous, self-governing part of the UK Conservative Party. Some Party members and external commentators have questioned whether this is the best model for the future.

Their challenge has been prompted by a number of issues, including:

- The need for the Party to build public trust and support by demonstrating it is truly a Party for the whole of Scotland with Scotland's interests at its core.
- Whether the Party can advocate, without restriction, a policy proposition for Scotland on devolved matters that may contain elements which differ from the UK Party's stance.
- Ensuring that the Scottish Conservatives remain fully engaged in the development of Conservative policies for the whole of the UK.
- Concerns about the Party's long-term financial security and available resources to enable it to campaign and develop effectively.

The Commission has considered the other models suggested in submissions from members and external commentators, including:

- Complete independence from the UK Party on the basis of the CSU/CDU model of cooperation in Germany.
- The Welsh model of full integration within the UK Party where the Welsh Conservatives are governed by the UK Party.

We have also researched the structure of other political parties and organisations from which lessons can be drawn.

## Conclusions

Our conclusions and observations are as follows:

- Directly after the 2010 general election, David Cameron, as Prime Minister, demonstrated his commitment to Scotland by implementing a new Respect agenda and protocol for engagement between the UK and Scottish governments.
- The Scottish Conservatives are already free to develop distinct policies for Scotland and a distinct operational approach separately from the UK Party.
- The Scottish Conservatives obtain numerous benefits from being part of the UK Party, including the opportunity to access resources, training and expertise and for members to vote for the UK leader.
- The UK Party also benefits from having the Scottish Conservatives within the Conservative family to share knowledge and inform UK policy development.
- While the CSU/CDU model appears attractive at first, the circumstances in Germany are very different. The CSU is the dominant party in Bavarian politics. It is therefore possible for it to be completely stand-alone and self-sufficient. The Scottish Conservatives have greater advantages to gain from being both autonomous and part of the UK Conservative Party.

- Given the Conservative commitment to Scotland remaining within the United Kingdom, it is both appropriate and beneficial that there should be an integrated relationship between the Scottish Conservatives and the UK Party.
- The challenges facing the Scottish Conservatives are not the result of the Party's legal structure.
- The Scottish Conservatives' legal structure is not an impediment to the Party's development.

### Recommendations

1. The Scottish Conservative and Unionist Party should remain an autonomous, self-governing part of the UK Conservative Party.
2. Measures should be taken to strengthen communication and engagement between the Scottish Conservatives and the UK Party (these are summarised in the sections below).
3. The Scottish Conservatives should make greater use of the resources, training and expertise available from the UK Party.
4. Implementation of the full package of recommendations set out in this report will be necessary to ensure the Scottish Conservatives' development.

## 2. LEADERSHIP STRUCTURE

The Strathclyde Commission's Report of 1998 provided a Scottish Party structure that anticipated the establishment of the Scottish Parliament and its evolving (now central) role in Scottish politics.

As a result, the Scottish Conservatives currently have a UK leader, a Scottish parliamentary leader, a chairman (who is also the Party's chief executive officer), an elected deputy chairman (who is the leader of the Party's volunteers), as well as political leaders in the parliaments of Westminster and Brussels.

The Conservative leader in the Scottish Parliament is elected on a one-member-one-vote basis by all Scottish Conservative members. In all three terms of the Scottish Parliament, there has never been a contested election.

The chairman of the Party in Scotland is appointed jointly by the UK leader and the Scottish executive (the Scottish Conservatives' current governing body). The deputy chairman of the Party is elected by all Scottish Conservative members on a one-member-one-vote basis.

### Conclusions

- There is a lack of clarity in the current configuration of roles, responsibilities and accountability of the various people involved in leading the Scottish Conservatives and, as a result, the processes of leadership and decision-making within the Party are unsatisfactory. This was a constant observation in the submissions and evidence the Commission received.
- The Scottish Conservatives are not alone in lacking clarity of political leadership in Scotland. The arrangements within the Scottish Labour Party are similar.
- The Scottish Conservatives' structure has to take account of the importance of the Scottish Parliament in Scottish politics and this must be reflected in the scope of the Party's leadership.
- The Commission found no support for the continuation of the Scottish Conservatives' current leadership structure.
- We found overwhelming support for the clarification and consolidation of the position of 'Scottish leader'. This support is not motivated by a desire for the Scottish Conservatives to break ties with the rest of the UK Party, but an acknowledgement that the new dynamics of political and public life in Scotland require absolute clarity in the political leadership of the Party in Scotland. Looking at other political party models, the Liberal Democrats have been able to accommodate a UK and a Scottish leader successfully.

*There is a lack of clarity in the current configuration of roles, responsibilities and accountability of the various people involved in leading the Scottish Conservatives.*



*Party members would like to see contested leadership elections which the Commission believes are important to establishing leadership credibility.*

- In examining the structures of other political parties, the Commission was impressed by the argument that a leader need not be a member of a specific legislative body. Flexibility is required to ensure that the Scottish Conservatives' leadership structure is not constrained by current electoral fortunes but able to accommodate future opportunities.
- Party members would like to see contested leadership elections which the Commission believes are important to establishing leadership credibility. A reasonable and achievable threshold of support from within the Party membership will need to be set for leadership candidates to meet.

### Recommendations

1. There should be a distinct political leader of the Scottish Conservative Party – the Scottish leader, who should be held responsible for the Scottish Conservatives' performance.
2. To secure a clear mandate, the Scottish leader should be elected by the whole Party membership on the basis of one-member-one-vote.
3. To allow for future flexibility, the Scottish leader need not be a Member of the Scottish Parliament.
4. The first Scottish leader election should take place directly after the next Scottish Parliament election in May 2011.
5. Scottish leader elections should be contested elections with more than one candidate standing.
6. The position of Scottish leader should be subject to re-election after each Scottish Parliament election (every four years) and a trigger mechanism should be available for a leadership challenge to ensure the Scottish leader is held accountable for his or her performance.

To stand for election as Scottish leader, any prospective candidate would need to secure the nomination of 100 Party members whose names would be published. The Commission believes that this threshold is high enough to demonstrate support for a candidate within the Party but not

too high to preclude contested elections. Clear rules of the election will need to be established.

Submissions on this matter all acknowledged that a contested election, involving hustings across Scotland, would be vital to giving authority to the Scottish leader as well as energising the Party around candidates' campaigns.

We suggest that an appropriate threshold to trigger a leadership election would be for 1,000 Party members, whose names would be published, to support a leadership challenge.

### 3. GOVERNANCE AND MANAGEMENT STRUCTURE

At present the Scottish Conservatives' decision making body is the Scottish executive (the executive), chaired by the Party chairman, with various committees reporting to it. The executive is responsible for the overall management of the Party and is composed of 15 members of whom only five are directly elected to the executive by the Party membership.

The Party also has a Scottish council (the council) which is convened by the executive to receive reports from it and consider all aspects of Party policy. It has a membership of some 200 people comprising the members of the executive, constituency chairmen and other voluntary officers as well as a representation of elected politicians.

Evidence collected from members of the executive and the council indicates that neither body functions satisfactorily.

The Party conference is the supreme constitutional authority of the Party which all Party members are entitled to attend.

The Party has area campaign forums across Scotland but their success has been variable. While some have worked well as campaigning units, others do not function.

Our view is that excessive centralisation and weak regions have not only weakened the Scottish Conservatives' campaigning organisation but also removed the 'ladder' by which volunteers can rise within the Party from constituency to regional and then to national office.



Euro Central

**“I personally feel the reinstatement of an effective regional setup might help to bring the Party together. New regions would have to be formed and led by someone who has a knowledge of the area.”**

**Party activist**



We studied evidence from other parts of the UK, especially Wales, in considering the merits of different approaches to Party structure and decision-making. In Wales the Party's management board consists of officers and regional representatives who are elected by Party members on a regional basis. This ensures that regional points of view can be embraced and enables the regions of Wales to have an accountable voice at the heart of decision-making.

We also examined the operations of constituency associations across Scotland. It is clear there is real cause for concern about the Party's organisational strength at a local level. Many associations are, in effect, moribund. This is undoubtedly a symptom of a lack of professional campaigning staff in constituencies and has led to an over reliance on centrally employed staff (who need to focus on national election campaigns) to provide local support.

The weakening of local associations has also been exacerbated by the lack of guidance, training, mentoring and support available to association officers. While targeting and a focus on winnable constituencies are vital for election campaigns, effective campaigning requires strong local associations throughout the whole of Scotland.

### Conclusions

The Commission has found that:

- Significant weaknesses exist in the Party's governance, decision-making bodies and operational structure.
- There is a lack of clarity and accountability in the roles and responsibilities of those involved in the Party's governance (see Leadership structure above).
- Party members and voluntary officers working at local constituency level are not sufficiently engaged in strategy development, policy development and campaign planning.
- Since one of the central philosophies of the Scottish Conservatives is that of localism, the Party must be prepared to apply this to its own structures and trust in local decision-making and the aggregation of local opinion at a national level.

- There is no formal infrastructure to support Party development and campaigning at a local level.
- Communication and the flow of knowledge and information throughout the Party are variable, exacerbated by the above.
- The success of the Welsh Conservatives provides compelling evidence for the need in Scotland for greater communication throughout the management of the Party and with all elected representatives, and the involvement of members on a regional basis.
- There is a deficiency of skills and resources within the Party's network of constituency associations. The Party needs to have a functioning and viable Scottish Conservative association in every Westminster constituency.

### Recommendations

1. Replace the Party's existing governance structure with a new structure comprising:
  - An overarching **management board** with full responsibility for all of the Party's business, accountable to the Scottish convention (see below).
  - A **fundraising and finance board** responsible for fundraising and financial stewardship – chaired by the Party treasurer and reporting to the management board (see Funding, page 40).
  - A **political strategy group** responsible for policy development and campaigning – reporting to the management board and accountable to the Scottish convention.
  - A **candidates board** responsible for candidate selection and development – reporting to the management board.
  - Three **regional councils** responsible for campaigning and organisation at a local level – reporting to the political strategy group and advising the Scottish convention.
  - A **Scottish convention** to hold the management board to account – open to all Party members.
2. Replace the Party's existing management structure with a new structure comprising:
  - The **Scottish leader** (see details above) – elected by the Party membership (one-member-one-vote).
  - The **Party chairman** – appointed by the Scottish leader after consultation with the UK Party leader.

*At present the Scottish Conservatives lack a clear vision for the Party's future and a clear strategy for its delivery. All organisations require a clear vision and strategy if they are to develop and be successful.*

- A **conference convener** – a voluntary officer, who has previously held office as a regional convener, elected by the Party members at the Party conference.
  - Three **regional conveners** – voluntary officers elected by their regional council.
  - The **Party director** – the chief executive of the Party appointed by/accountable to the management board.
  - Three **regional campaign managers** – full time executives appointed by/accountable to the Party director and working with their regional convener.
3. The Commission recommends strongly that the Party chairman should represent the Scottish Conservatives on the board of the UK Conservative Party, which has representation from Conservatives across the UK.
  4. To engage expertise from outside the Party, the management board should set up an **advisory group** composed of a small number of senior people from across Scotland. This group will have no formal constitutional role but will add value to the management board's work by offering constructive challenge and ideas.
  5. Adopt the Welsh Conservatives' model of communication involving regular telephone conferences and electronic communication to ensure that all elected representatives, executive staff and voluntary officers are kept informed of strategy, policy and campaign developments on a daily basis and that the Party membership is fully briefed.
  6. Develop an ongoing programme of training and mentoring for key volunteers, including constituency association officers.

## KEY POINTS TO ACTION

### 1. Strategic direction

At present the Scottish Conservatives lack a clear vision for the Party's future and a clear strategy for its delivery. All organisations, whatever their function or structure, require a clear vision and strategy if they are to develop and be successful. Political parties are no different.

It is important that this gap is addressed to provide a shared goal for all of the Party's members and a clear direction of travel that everyone can get behind.

General aspirations for improving performance in elections and achieving influence in parliament, for example, plus short-term election-driven campaigns are no substitute for an unambiguous, focussed and sustained approach.

The process of developing vision and strategy is an important organisational discipline in itself and, correctly undertaken by involving all of the Party's membership and other groups, will build engagement and support.

This should be a core responsibility of the management board.

### 2. Management board

The management board should be chaired by the Party chairman. The additional members, with full voting rights should be:

- The Scottish leader.
- The conference convener.
- Regional convener (West).
- Regional convener (East).
- Regional convener (North).
- The Party treasurer.
- The Party director.

The Party should still retain the position of honorary secretary to provide legal advice.

The conference convener should be responsible for chairing the Party conference and the Scottish convention and supporting associations and the wider network of volunteers within the Party. The conference convener should be elected at conference to serve from the close of conference. Following the Welsh model, this individual should be a regional convener demitting office. This approach retains continuity of experience on the management board from within the Party's volunteers. As the regional convener positions will be new, the position of conference convener should not be filled initially and conferences in the interim should be chaired by regional conveners.

*This new regional infrastructure should be regarded as a starting point and a base minimum requirement which the Party should aim to expand to encompass Scottish Conservative campaign offices in all Scottish cities.*

### **3. Political strategy group**

This Group will be of crucial importance to the Party's development. It will be responsible for the Scottish Conservatives' short, medium and long-term political strategy and for all campaign preparation and implementation. The group should be chaired by the Scottish leader. The other members should be:

- The Party chairman.
- The senior Scottish Westminster parliamentarian or their representative.
- An MEP nominated by the Scottish Conservatives MEP group.
- A Councillor nominated by the Scottish Conservatives Councillors' Association.
- When the Scottish leader is a Member of the Scottish Parliament, an additional MSP appointed by the Scottish leader.
- The Party director.
- The chief policy adviser (a new role – see Policy formation, page 26 – in attendance, non-voting).
- The director of media (in attendance, non-voting).

As is the case with the Welsh Conservatives, the group should meet on a weekly basis to ensure a single cohesive focus on political strategy. Directly following meetings, all elected members and key Party officers and staff (including the conference convener, regional conveners and regional campaign managers) should be briefed. They should immediately disseminate information to candidates and colleagues in local constituency associations.

### **4. Scottish convention**

The Scottish convention, to be chaired by the conference convener, will replace the Scottish council, which is a weak forum that merely hears reports from the current Scottish executive. In the interests of ensuring openness and transparency within the new Party structure, the Scottish convention should be open to all Party members. It should meet twice a year and be responsible for holding to account the management board and political strategy group. Therefore the Party chairman and the Scottish leader should be required to present to the Scottish convention. Ideally, Scottish convention meetings should be held on the same day as events designed to engage members in policy discussions.

### **5. The regional structure**

This new regional infrastructure - encompassing regional councils, regional conveners and regional campaign managers - should be regarded as a starting point and a base minimum requirement which the Party should aim to expand to encompass Scottish Conservative campaign offices in all Scottish cities.

To begin with, three regional areas should be established to cover Scotland: the West, the East and the North. Although covering a larger area than the current forums, these regions will be properly resourced and have stronger professional and financial support. They will provide the critical mass necessary to give the Party a strong regional campaigning structure and allow for greater local autonomy.

Each region should have a regional convener and a campaign manager who will be a full time professional employed by the Party. Regional conveners will require support from a strong team of voluntary officers.

Regional councils should consist of constituency association chairmen and two other representatives from each association nominated at the association AGM. In addition, all elected representatives, candidates and professional members of staff employed by the associations within the region should also be members.

### **6. Constituency associations**

As part of the new regional structure, each association will work with their regional convener and regional campaign manager to strengthen the Party organisation and campaigning approach within their constituency. The regional conveners and regional campaign managers should conduct an annual audit of organisational capacity in each association, leading to a campaign plan for each association to be presented to the regional council.

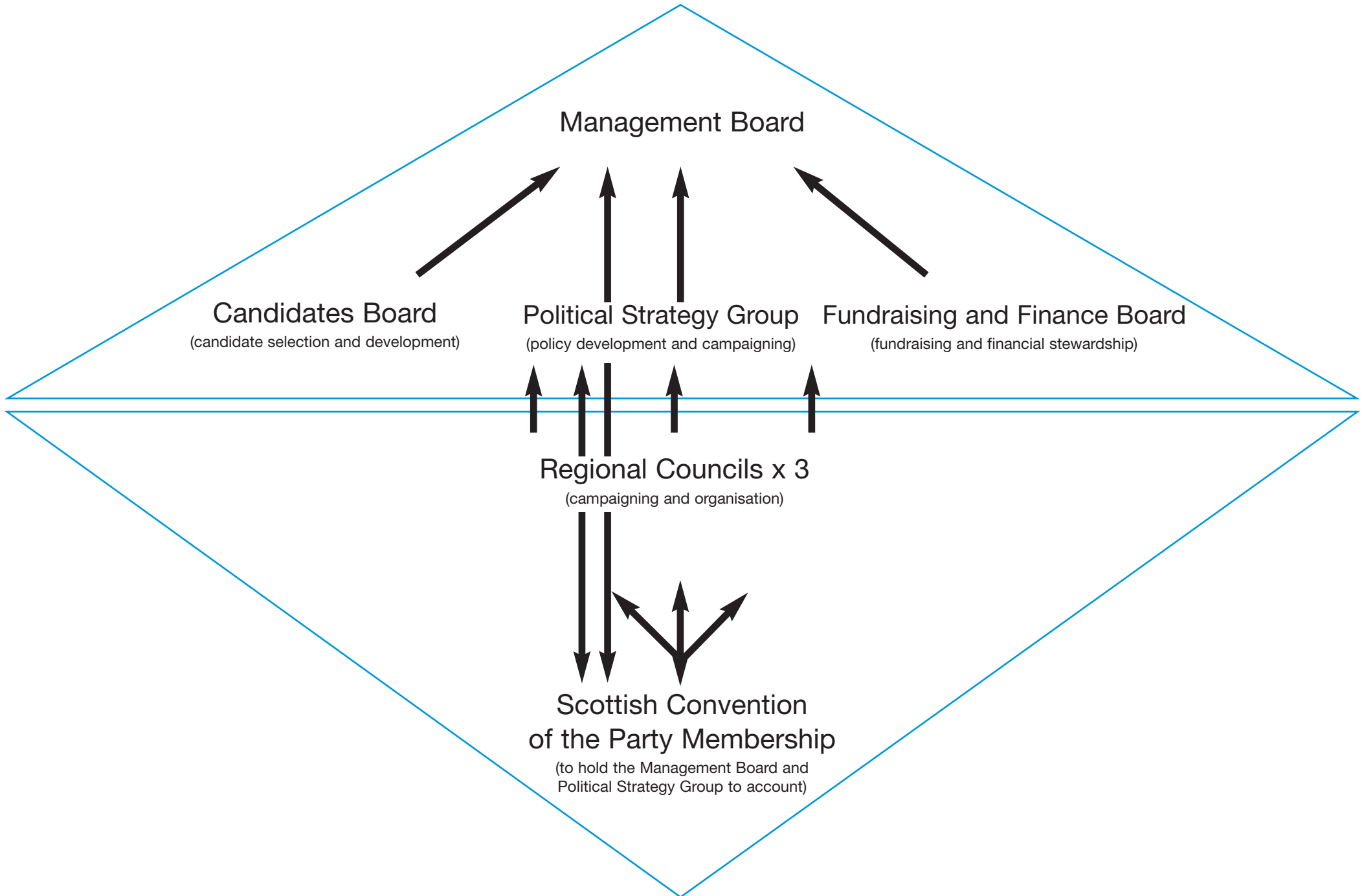
We are also aware that because of the lack of training for new officers, Party members lack confidence in volunteering to take office within their association. This is a key area where the Party can benefit from the volunteer programmes being created on a modular basis by the UK Party.

To help encourage the regular refreshing of association office bearers, the existing guidance that constituency association chairmen must serve for no more than three years should be strongly adhered to. A constituency chairman who wishes to continue in post for more than three years should be required to seek approval from the Party's management board which would need to be satisfied that there was no-one else suitable to take on the responsibility.

#### **7. Delivery**

Clear job descriptions, clear performance criteria and regular performance evaluation for all office holders (elected, voluntary and executive) will be required. Also vital will be the consistent promotion of a culture of accountability, openness and inclusiveness throughout the Party. This is the management board's responsibility and will need a new approach to communications and ongoing effort and monitoring.

# New Governance Structure





# New Management Structure

**Scottish Leader**  
(elected one-member-one-vote)



**Chairman**  
(appointed by the Scottish Leader after consultation with the UK Party Leader)

**Director**  
(appointed by the Management Board)

**Regional Campaign Managers x 3**  
(appointed by the Director and Regional Conveners)

**Regional Conveners x 3**  
(voluntary officers elected by their Regional Councils)

**Conference Convener**  
(appointed by the Party members at the Party Conference)



**“The centralisation and lack of influence of the ‘grass roots’ has made them feel valueless. This has not been good for the Party in Scotland.”**

Party volunteer

# Policy formation

How the Party goes about forming policy is another major concern to Party members. There are major weaknesses to be addressed urgently relating to:

- The process of policy development.
- Inclusion of members' views.
- Engagement with external groups and practitioners.
- The professional resources available to support policy development.
- Engagement and communication with the UK Conservative Party.
- Priority policy issues.

## 1. THE NEED FOR A FORMAL PROCESS THAT ENGAGES PARTY MEMBERS AND EXTERNAL STAKEHOLDERS

Annabel Goldie and Derek Brownlee have facilitated an exchange of policy ideas to prepare the Scottish Conservatives manifesto for the 2011 Scottish Parliament elections. However despite this work it is clear there is no formal structure or process within the Party for including the views of members, external practitioners, think-tanks and even the UK Party in London when forming Scottish Conservatives policy. As a result, Party members feel disenfranchised over policy formation, and think-tanks and other third parties feel there is not enough engagement from the Party in Scotland.

We believe it is a positive and essential dynamic of a political party for there to be political debate within that party. The Scottish Conservatives conference should be an opportunity for real policy discussion to demonstrate to the wider Scottish public that the Party is an active, thinking

organisation. It should encourage open debate and Party members should be allowed to submit balloted motions. At local level, the Party's policy forums have not been given sufficient opportunity or support to input into policy formation. The Welsh Conservatives have a mechanism by which these groups are easily engaged. On a rotational basis, each Party spokesman on the Welsh Assembly produces a brief for that month's policy discussion. This ensures that policy spokesmen get regular feedback on current and future policy options relevant to their areas of responsibility.

The Commission has observed that much more is done in London than in Scotland to cooperate with existing think-tanks when working out the long-term vision and direction of the Party - and to study and respond if necessary to fresh and innovative ideas.

All politicians involved in policy formation must initiate discussion with third parties outwith the Party membership. In addition, the Scottish Conservatives need to be more proactive in identifying experts from within the membership to help formulate policy. As a matter of course, Party spokesmen should be consulting with practitioners in the various policy areas as well as user groups from inside and outside the Party. We recognise that this does happen, but it is only on an ad hoc basis and needs to be formalised.

In addition, the Party needs to increase the professional staffing resource dedicated to supporting policy development. At present, the role is shared among a small team of staff with other responsibilities. There is no full time professional resource.

*Party members feel disenfranchised over policy formation, and think-tanks and other third parties feel there is not enough engagement from the Party in Scotland.*

*We are not troubled by policy difference between the Scottish Conservatives and the UK Party. It is an inevitable and healthy consequence of devolution that there will, from time to time, be a difference of opinion.*

### Recommendations

1. The new Party structure is designed to allow a streamlined process of policy formation engaging the whole of the Party and informed by local experience – not ‘top down’. This process must be formalised and adhered to rigorously.
2. Policy formation must involve an ongoing process of consultation, development, challenge and review inside and outside the Party – at present it is too focussed around preparation for elections and reacting to opposition parties.
3. Elected representatives should engage in dialogue with respected think-tanks, such as Reform Scotland, as a part of the Scottish Conservatives’ policy development process.
4. Elected representatives should also engage more with experts from inside and outside the Party.
5. Comprehensive policy motions and discussion must be an integral part of the Party conference. At conference there must be genuine, open debate and ballots held to select the motions for discussion.
6. Monthly policy reviews should be held on key policy briefs, led by Scottish Conservative spokesmen on a rotational basis.
7. This process should be augmented by two specific policy conferences each year, in addition to the Party conference. These should follow on from the Scottish convention meetings to ensure all Party members have the opportunity to contribute.
8. An online forum open to Party members only should be available for members to discuss policy with Party spokesmen and other elected representatives.
9. The Party should also encourage the establishment of a Scottish ‘Conservative Home’ to capture centre-right thinking in Scotland.
10. The Party should appoint a full time chief policy adviser.

## 2. ENGAGEMENT WITH THE UK PARTY

The Commission believes it should be recognised that the situation regarding Scottish Conservative representation in the new Conservative/Liberal Democrat UK government has been affected radically by the coalition arrangement since the Cabinet representation for Scotland is in Liberal Democrat hands. As a result the Scottish Conservatives’ voice in government risks being diminished.

In this era of coalition government there is a need for a Scottish Conservative presence at Westminster, as well as direct communication between the Scottish Conservatives and the Conservative members of the UK coalition government. It is important that a gap does not develop which isolates the Scottish Conservatives from UK Party thinking both on policy as it affects reserved matters and on devolved matters.

We are not troubled by policy difference between the Scottish Conservatives and the UK Party. It is an inevitable and healthy consequence of devolution that there will, from time to time, be a difference of opinion, policy and emphasis between Scotland and the rest of the UK. The Scottish Conservatives should not be uncomfortable, after proper discussion and liaison with colleagues in London, to take a different position.

### Recommendations

1. To aid the process of Westminster and Holyrood communication within the Conservative Party, and as a visible statement of our commitment to the Union, regular meetings should take place between senior Conservative Westminster and Holyrood parliamentarians.
2. To help facilitate this, the Conservative minister at the Scotland Office must have adequate support.
3. There needs to be a structure which allows policy discussion at senior level between the Conservative Party in government and the Scottish Conservatives:
  - This structure should be built around a pairing arrangement involving regular dialogue between the Conservative spokesmen in the Scottish Parliament and their Conservative opposite numbers in Westminster.

- Scottish Conservative MSPs would need to take responsibility for their part of the relationship and initiate discussion, while their counterparts in London must undertake to ensure they are regularly accessible.

### **3. PRIORITY POLICY ISSUES**

While the Commission's remit is not on policy itself, we cannot ignore the quantity of submissions on whether or not Scotland should have greater fiscal accountability. This matter is of enormous significance to the future of Scotland and needs to be discussed fully between both the Scottish Conservatives and the UK Party as well as forming the basis of a fully informed debate within the Party membership.

#### **Recommendations**

1. The Party must have a comprehensive debate on the issue of fiscal devolution.





Aberdeen

**“We have got to be seen as a Scottish Party and to have Scottish policies. We have failed to get across the advantages of our partnership with the rest of the UK.”**

Party member

# Candidates

One of the Party's most important resource is its candidates. Candidates from across Scotland took an active part in our consultation and contributed detailed observations and proposals. Issues affecting candidates were also mentioned by the majority of members - especially constituency association officers - who engaged with the Commission.

## 1. CANDIDATES BOARD AND SUPPORT FOR CANDIDATES

The constitution of the Scottish Conservative candidates' board (SCCB) lacks the full confidence of the Party's candidates and volunteers. It consists of only three people and some members are questioning its ability to function satisfactorily as a result.

The SCCB is also poorly resourced and its function is limited to producing selection process rules and dealing with candidate discipline issues. (The exception to this was the process used to support and develop target seat candidates for the 2010 general election, which was undertaken outwith the auspices of the SCCB.)

Within the SCCB and within the Party as a whole, there is no formal process for either identifying and recruiting new candidates or supporting, developing and retaining existing ones.

In addition, the Party does little to recognise the huge commitment expected of candidates who seek selection and stand for election, and the impact this has on their personal and professional lives. In general, candidates who do not achieve election are 'dropped' by the Party

directly after the election result is declared and it is only candidates' determination and commitment that keeps them involved.

Candidates who are successful in being elected also receive little support. For example, there is no process to mentor elected representatives, monitor and evaluate their performance and ensure their skills are developed.

### Recommendations

1. The SCCB must be chaired by an independent chairman from outwith the management board and its membership increased:
  - Five members would be a more appropriate but still manageable number.
  - The SCCB should include a parliamentarian, a senior Party volunteer, a Party member who brings the necessary professional skills and an independent external assessor.
  - The chairman and members should be appointed by the Party's management board.
2. Extend the SCCB's remit to include:
  - Proactive recruitment of candidates – a core responsibility.
  - Producing tailored personal development plans for candidates.
  - Advising and supporting candidates before, during and after election campaigns.
  - Ensuring that candidates are fully involved in the Party's work (candidates bring a wealth of personal and professional expertise to the Party that is rarely engaged).

*The Party does little to recognise the huge commitment expected of candidates who seek selection and stand for election, and the impact this has on their personal and professional lives.*

3. The SCCB should also be tasked with developing mentoring support for elected representatives and a process to assess their performance and support their personal development.
4. Candidates and elected representatives should be encouraged to network together and share information, advice and best practice.
5. Candidates and elected representatives should also be consulted as the above recommendations are taken forward.

## 2. CANDIDATE SELECTION PROCESSES

Constituency associations are very concerned that association chairmen are excluded from the preliminary stages of candidate selection. At present the names of candidates are not made known to them until selection meetings take place.

There are also concerns about the processes of selecting candidates for target seats and that the use of a priority list system may limit the opportunity to select local candidates.

The Commission is fully convinced of the value of priority lists for target seats to help ensure that constituencies have access to the very best candidates available. However local associations should not be prevented from favouring an approved local candidate who may not be on the priority list.

Many selection meetings in local constituencies are poorly attended and current rules prevent the wider community who are not Party members from taking part in the process of choosing their Scottish Conservative candidate.

### Recommendations

1. Constituency association officers should be involved in the candidate selection process at the earliest stage possible and be given information about applicants before selection meetings takes place.
2. There should be a priority list process for target seats for both Westminster and Scottish Parliament elections.

Local applicants may apply for target seats if they are on the approved candidates list, but need not be on the priority list.

3. To engage the wider electorate and Party support base, closed and open primaries should be allowed where the local association wants to use this mechanism for candidate selection.

## 3. RANKING

One of the issues about which we have received most comment is the current ranking process for Regional List MSPs. This may have been prompted by the timing of our evidence gathering, but there is a widespread, strongly-felt view within the Party - and particularly among candidates - that the current approach needs to change. This is a major concern which we share.

### Recommendations

1. The SCCB should re-evaluate and reform the current selection rules for Regional Lists to ensure the process is fair to all candidates. In undertaking this re-evaluation, the SCCB should consider all selection process options including those proposed in the many submissions made to the Commission on this issue. The Commission will make details of these proposals available to the SCCB.

We would like this recommendation to be carried out immediately. However we recognise that because the candidate selection process for the 2011 Scottish Parliament election is almost complete, reform will have to be deferred until after that election, in readiness for the next Scottish Parliament election in 2015.

## 4. LOCAL GOVERNMENT CANDIDATES

Despite achieving a steady increase in the number of Scottish Conservative Councillors in recent local government elections, the Party does not field local government candidates in every ward. This is mainly due to the reluctance in some areas to engage with local government elections.

*The Commission is fully convinced of the value of priority lists for target seats to help ensure that constituencies have access to the very best candidates available.*

The experience in Dumfries & Galloway and The Borders demonstrates the implications of this. In both these local authority regions, there was resistance to opposing independent Councillors in the past. However in both regions since the Party began contesting all wards, there has been a significant growth in the local government and parliamentary strength of the Scottish Conservatives.

Our conclusion is that to be fully engaged with local issues and local people and to be credible in all elections, the Scottish Conservatives need to contest local government elections. Other political parties adopt this approach to their advantage. The Scottish Conservatives need to as well.

#### **Recommendations**

1. The Scottish Conservatives should contest every local government seat throughout Scotland.
2. Candidates who are aiming for parliamentary election should be encouraged to contest local government elections to gain political experience and build a strong relationship with their constituency.

### **5. FUTURE LEADERSHIP DEVELOPMENT**

Looking to the future, the Party needs to put in place a process to identify high calibre people of leadership potential. No such process exists at present, either to develop existing candidates (as mentioned above), or to look outside the Party and recruit new talent. An ongoing effort is required to develop and maintain a pool of top quality leadership candidates.

#### **Recommendations**

1. The management board should establish a continuing initiative involving members of the SCCB, advisory group (see Party structure, page 19) and other relevant experts to identify, attract and develop potential future leaders.





Clydebank

**“Scotland needs a visionary Conservative Party and the Party needs visionary candidates. We must recruit the brightest and the best - and nurture our leaders of the future.”**

**Scottish Conservative candidate**

# Campaigning

The cohesive package of recommendations presented in this report is designed to strengthen the Party as a modern, effective, political campaigning entity in Scotland. This section summarises the Commission's findings on the Party's current approach to campaigning and makes recommendations on strengthening campaigning resources. Firstly it addresses the issue of how the Scottish Conservatives are perceived by the electorate in Scotland and the impact the Party's brand identity has on campaigning.

## 1. PERCEPTION AND BRAND

Polling indicates that the majority of the Scottish electorate does not understand what the Scottish Conservatives stand for, thinks the Party is anti-Scottish and has an inaccurate view of the Party's historical record.

Because of the Party's lack of electoral progress and the negative perceptions that exist, many Party members are concerned the Scottish Conservatives brand may be damaged. Some members and external commentators have suggested the Party should change its logo to emphasise its Scottish focus and commitment, or even change its name if it is to win more trust and support.

We have considered these issues carefully and conclude that:

- The Scottish Conservatives need to communicate a distinctive vision for Scotland and the values and beliefs for which the Party stands. The Party must also communicate information about its work more

widely and listen to and engage more with interest groups across the country. An example of good practice which should be built on is Annabel Goldie's 'Goldie Direct' – where people are able to question and learn about Scottish Conservative policies and views.

- Clear and consistent communication of the Party's vision and values and the work it is doing to help Scotland is vital to dispelling negative perceptions and winning trust and support.
- The Scottish Conservatives are too slow to correct the inaccuracies often stated about the Party, for example relating to policy plans and the impact of previous Conservative governments in Scotland. Often the Party takes no action at all when false claims are made about it.
- With regard to the Scottish Conservatives brand, the problem is not the Party's name or logo, but its failure to convey clearly and consistently what it believes in and stands for.
- The political strategy group should be responsible for addressing all of these issues.

### Recommendations

1. Develop a clear vision for Scotland, distinct to the Scottish Conservatives, and a clear set of distinctive policies that will realise the vision.
2. The vision and core policies should endure beyond the electoral cycle so there is consistency in the Party's

*The Scottish Conservatives need to communicate a distinctive vision for Scotland and the values and beliefs for which the Party stands.*

message. They must also be widely communicated to the people of Scotland (a coordinated communications campaign will be required).

3. The Party must not allow false claims made about it to go unchallenged. It must be rigorous in de-bunking inaccurate myths about its past and inaccurate comments about its present position and plans. This will also require a coordinated, proactive effort.
4. Increase the level of engagement with interest groups across Scotland and continue to expand initiatives such as the 'Goldie Direct' public meetings.
5. Undertake a full review of the Party's approach to branding and develop a brand strategy.
6. There is no requirement to change the Party's name.

## 2. CAMPAIGNING APPROACH AND RESOURCES

Party members across Scotland have numerous concerns about the current campaigning approach, including:

### **How Scottish and UK Conservative parliamentary election campaigns are coordinated.**

In a devolved Scotland, communication between the UK Party and the Scottish Conservatives is vital because policy priorities in Scotland and the rest of the UK can differ.

### **The need for flexibility so that campaigns reflect local issues.**

Candidates and local associations acknowledge the need to promote core Party messages and for there to be a quality control process in place to ensure messages are conveyed correctly in campaign literature and activity. However they want more freedom to highlight local issues and related policies.

### **The resources available to support campaigning in non-target seats.**

Several local associations – especially those adjacent to this year's general election target seats – believe that the profile and additional resources given to target seats places other

constituency campaigns at a disadvantage. While there is a general acceptance of the requirement to resource seats which the Scottish Conservatives have the greatest chance of winning, associations want a more coordinated approach – for example to participation in VIP visits and how the Party positions target seats publicly.

### **Campaigning capability on the ground in constituency associations.**

The lack of campaigning professionals and infrastructure on the ground has already been highlighted in this report. It is one of the Party's major weaknesses of which candidates and local associations are well aware. It will be addressed by the new Party structure with regional councils, regional conveners and regional campaign managers working with, supporting and developing constituency associations and their officers and staff.

### **The need for more volunteer activists to help campaign.**

While the Scottish Conservatives are fortunate to have dedicated and hard-working activists across Scotland who help on a voluntary basis with canvassing, leafleting and the many other tasks involved in election campaigning, there are far too few of them. This is a reflection of the moribund position of many local associations. A lack of awareness among the Party membership of what volunteering involves together with a lack of training and guidance for activists contribute to the problem. There is also a tradition of reticence within associations about approaching Party supporters and asking them to help. In examining this issue, the Commission has found that the Party has supporters who would help with campaigning but have not been asked.

### **The need to reach out beyond the Party to strengthen campaigning.**

As well as involving Party supporters more effectively, the Scottish Conservatives need to extend their engagement further afield to strengthen their approach to campaigning. Not enough is done at present to establish links with professionals outside the Party who may be able to help. For example, some people have expressed an interest in mentoring Scottish Conservative candidates. There are also recognised campaigning experts that the Party could consult with to review best practice.

*Not enough is done at present to establish links with professionals outside the Party who may be able to help. For example, some people have expressed an interest in mentoring Scottish Conservative candidates.*

### **The infrastructure that supports gathering information about voting intentions.**

The Commission was especially impressed by the work that has been done by several associations to gather voting intentions. However the Party's central canvassing database has not yet been fully deployed across Scotland and more needs to be done to ensure that the information gathered is utilised effectively in developing campaigns and helping to recruit more volunteer activists.

### **The Party's limited use of electronic communications and 'new media' in campaigning.**

There is a widespread acceptance across the Party that the advantages of electronic communications and 'new media' are not being utilised in campaigning, communications and the Party's operations overall. Professional expertise, training, standard communications protocols and investment in communications infrastructure are required.

### **Recommendations**

1. The political strategy group should be responsible for campaigning and must address all of the above issues.
2. The political strategy group must ensure effective coordination between the Scottish Conservatives and the UK Conservative Party for all parliamentary campaigns.
3. Central campaign coordination should continue but more local flexibility is required. The new regional infrastructure will guide and support this.
4. More care must be taken to ensure the approach to target seat campaigns does not disadvantage campaigns in other constituencies.
5. Weaknesses in local campaigning resource and expertise must be addressed by the new regional teams.
6. Initiate a volunteer recruitment drive throughout Scotland and train all volunteers who are involved in campaigning, making full use of the UK Party's training resources.
7. Seek help and advice from professionals outside the Party to support campaigning and ensure best practice.
8. Complete deployment of the Party's central canvassing database across Scotland and complete related training of association staff and activists.
9. Utilise electronic communications throughout the Party and recruit a 'new media' specialist to the Party's communication team.
10. Take up offers made by senior people in Scotland to help mentor candidates.





Stirling

**“Volunteers are older and fewer. We need to recruit and train more activists - and use other campaigning tools such as social networks, innovative media and more central database management.”**

**Scottish Conservative candidate**

# Membership

In 1992 the Scottish Conservatives had 40,000 paid-up members. Today there are 10,000 (less than three per cent of the people who voted Scottish Conservative in this year's general election).

Conservative Future Scotland, the Party's youth organisation, has an active cohort of mainly student volunteers, but the majority of the Party's members are older people and other parts of the age spectrum are under-represented.

A declining membership base is not unique to the Scottish Conservatives as other political parties and membership organisations face similar challenges. However the Party has allowed the trend of attrition to continue.

Our review has highlighted the following issues which have contributed to this position:

- At present the Party sets no membership targets and has no formal process for recruiting new members and retaining existing ones.
- The Party's membership committee has only recently been reconstituted after lying dormant for several years. Membership policy was last agreed 10 years ago.
- The Party's membership offering is poorly defined. Various categories of membership exist, which are confusing to potential members, and there is no clear subscription or benefits structure.

- The route to joining the Party is also unclear to potential members. The current policy is that people who approach the Party's central office to enquire about membership are referred to their constituency association but may join the Party as 'central members' if they do not want to be involved locally.
- Membership recruitment and retention is mainly left to local associations for which membership subscriptions are the principal source of income. Membership subscriptions provide a relatively small and unpredictable income for the Scottish Conservatives' central operations and there is no central oversight of membership levels or means of ensuring consistent 'product quality' (i.e. what constitutes the membership offering across Scotland).
- Few local associations are proactive in recruiting new members and most lack the necessary knowledge and expertise. The large majority of associations concentrate on retaining a dwindling base of loyal members who have subscribed for many years and providing events to suit them only, rather than expanding their activities to attract a wider spectrum of members from across their constituencies.
- In addition to paid-up members, there is a much broader base of people who support the Party but are not tapped in to its work or encouraged to become members.
- Unconnected and disjointed databases mean the Party cannot clarify its full universe of supporters - existing and potential - or manage its engagement with them.

*In addition to paid-up members, there is a much broader base of people who support the Party but are not tapped in to its work.*



*Members of Conservative Future Scotland are the backbone of the Scottish Conservatives' campaigning effort as was evident from their substantial contribution to the 2010 general election campaign.*

- Communication with members is very patchy and most members are not kept informed of the Party's policies, activities, plans and news. Some members reported receiving no communications other than an AGM notice once a year and requests for donations. Unsurprisingly, they do not feel valued.
- Without a strong and growing base of young members, the Scottish Conservatives have no future. Polling evidence across the UK suggests that today's Conservative Party appeals strongly to young people. Members of Conservative Future Scotland (the Party's youth wing) are the backbone of the Scottish Conservatives' campaigning effort as was evident from their substantial contribution to the 2010 general election campaign. However the Party provides no formal support to Conservative Future Scotland, which is run wholly by volunteers. In addition, the Party offers few events for young people and give them little opportunity to become involved in its policy development and decision making. Most Party events are held at times and in venues which are inconvenient for students and young people starting careers and families.
- Members of Conservative Future Scotland want the Party to address these issues. They also want it to do much more to encourage young people to be active in politics and help them to pursue career opportunities within the Scottish Conservatives – as elected representatives or professional staff.

#### **Recommendations**

1. The management board should set up a membership taskforce, reporting to it directly, to develop and oversee delivery of an ongoing membership recruitment and retention campaign for the whole of Scotland. In developing the campaign, the membership taskforce should consider:
  - Membership income flows within the Party.
  - Membership benefits and subscription levels.
  - Ensuring quality control of the membership product.
  - The Party's database and knowledge management requirements.
  - Training needs – particularly in local associations.
2. The campaign strategy must:
  - Have clear membership recruitment and retention targets owned at all levels of the Party - including the management board, regional councils and constituency associations.
  - Ensure Party membership is representative of Scotland at large and of all parts of the age spectrum.
  - Deliver clear membership offerings to appeal to this wide representation.
  - Encourage the development of special interest groups/networks within the Party membership and affiliation from other bodies.
  - Be supported by:
    - A comprehensive marketing plan to promote membership; and
    - A comprehensive communications plan to ensure that all members are kept fully informed of Party policy, activities, plans and news.
  - Ensure efficient and effective management of membership information.
  - Ensure effective monitoring of the overall campaign.
  - Be properly resourced.
3. To encourage young members, the Party should:
  - Provide an annual grant to Conservative Future Scotland to assist with the organisation's development.
  - Create a sabbatical position for a member of Conservative Future Scotland.
  - Ensure the Conservative Future Scotland annual conference is addressed by senior parliamentarians from Holyrood and Westminster.
  - Engage more with young peoples' groups around the country.
  - Organise a national intern and mentoring scheme to put young people in direct contact with elected representatives at all levels – Councillors, MSPs, MPs and MEPs.
  - Provide work experience opportunities in its local, regional and national offices.
  - Ensure its events are held at times and in venues to suit young members.



Inverness

**“I am happy to donate but there is much more I could do to help. The Scottish Conservatives should be far more proactive in involving people from the business community.”**

Scottish business leader



# Funding

The Scottish Conservatives are responsible for their own fundraising, which is not widely understood and has led to some misconceptions among Party members, the media and other commentators.

The Party's support base is generous but small and this reliance on a few individuals is neither a robust nor a sustainable arrangement.

The Party's base of potential donors is much greater than that currently being targeted. Only an ad hoc approach is taken to fundraising, mostly prompted by short-term needs. There is no long-term strategy in place.

In addition, the Party's fundraising effort is centrally driven. There are no regional fundraising groups and there is little involvement of constituency associations – few of which are proactive in raising funds beyond the requirements of local election campaigns.

The management of Party relations with donors is also poor and donors can be confused about where their point of contact with the Party should be.

The Scottish Conservatives have only one treasurer and the present finance committee has eight members, not all of whom are proactive or engage.

The Party needs to take a new approach to managing its finances to ensure it is properly resourced and can plan for the long-term. Resources are already stretched, particularly the executive team at Party central office in

Edinburgh. Additional professional staff and resources are necessary to provide the strong operating and campaigning platform we are recommending in our report.

A new approach to fundraising is therefore essential in order to provide the necessary funds for this expanded platform - and this fundraising approach must be kept distinctive and at arm's-length from the Party's political structure.

## Recommendations

1. For the Scottish Conservatives to be properly resourced and have a stable and necessary level of income to fund a modern, effective, political campaigning entity in Scotland, a new financial and operating arrangement is required with the UK Conservative Party. This arrangement should recognise the many benefits to be gained from sharing know-how and resources, such as training, with the UK Party.
2. The changes to the Scottish Conservatives' fundraising activities set out below are expected to enable all running and campaigning costs to be met from funds raised by the Scottish Conservatives. While these reforms are being put in place, the UK Party will be required to meet all costs until the Scottish Conservatives achieve financial self-sufficiency.
3. The current finance committee should be reconstructed into a smaller fundraising and finance

board. This board should report to the management board, operate at arm's-length from the Party's political structure and be responsible for the Party's fundraising and financial stewardship (see Party structure, page 18). It should be chaired by the Party treasurer who should sit on the management board.

4. Up to six additional treasurers should be appointed to assist in raising funds from members and other supporters.
5. The fundraising and finance board should adopt a structured and coordinated approach to fundraising through:
  - The treasurer taking the lead in establishing a fundraising strategy involving a spread of different approaches and routes to securing funds.
  - Ensuring that the central database of potential donors is significantly improved and an improved system for managing existing donors is introduced.
  - Setting up regional fundraising groups working with the central team.
  - Establishing clear fundraising targets which are allocated appropriately among local associations, regional fundraising groups and the central team.
6. The Party's membership is a valuable source of funds so a drive should be instigated to increase membership significantly. Over 400,000 people voted for the Scottish Conservatives in the 2010 general election and less than 2.5 per cent of those are Party members.



Edinburgh

**“Speaking to people on my travels around Scotland, I find that many are Conservatives at heart. We need to reach out and harness their passion.”**

Party member



# Implementation

The recommendations within this report form an integrated strategy that will strengthen and transform the Scottish Conservative and Unionist Party.

They will result in fundamental and necessary reform of all aspects of the Party's operations including how the Party is structured, how it is led, how it functions and the activity it undertakes, as well as how it is resourced and the roles and responsibilities of the many people involved.

**To be effective, all of our recommendations must be implemented in a coordinated way as a complete package of complementary measures. They are not an optional 'pick and mix'.**

## Recommendations

1. Implementation should begin immediately and be phased to allow the Party's 2011 Scottish Parliament election campaign now underway to proceed smoothly.
2. Transitional arrangements will need to be made for the governance of the Party leading to the election of the first Scottish leader directly after the Scottish Parliament election in May 2011, at which point the new leadership and governance structure should come in to effect.
3. Implementation of the structural changes will require some changes to the Party's constitution. These should be addressed immediately and will need to be in place by May 2011.
4. Five additional full time members of staff will need to be appointed: three regional campaign managers, a

chief policy adviser and a 'new media' manager. Work should begin immediately on scoping roles and recruitment.

5. In addition to these new staff positions there are new voluntary roles at national and regional level, including the three regional conveners, the extended candidates board membership and up to six further treasurers who will need to be elected/recruited as indicated in the report.
6. The programme of training and development that needs to be put in place for candidates, officers and other volunteers should draw on the existing resources available within the UK Party.
7. The Scottish Conservatives will also need to undertake a full review of the Party's communications and knowledge management systems and databases, and put in place the fully integrated approach and infrastructure needed. This will require professional guidance.
8. The new operational processes for policy development and communications will require the new governance and management structures to be in place but transitional improvements can be implemented immediately.
9. Strong leadership and momentum will be required throughout the planning and delivery process, and everyone involved at all levels will need to work together closely.

*All of our recommendations must be implemented in a coordinated way as a complete package of complementary measures.*



The above recommendations indicate how implementation should begin, starting now. They are not a comprehensive list of the work that needs to be done.

The Party should not underestimate the extent of change it is embarking on. The work will need to be properly planned, resourced and managed. Organisations of similar scale and complexity to the Scottish Conservatives put in place a dedicated team equipped with the necessary skills and resources and tasked with delivering the changes to a defined plan, timescale and budget - with strict milestones identified along the way. This is the approach the Party must take.

It is important to note that the strategy will take time to impact on the Party's electoral fortunes. Expectations will need to be managed. We would expect progress to be reflected in the outcome of the 2012 local government elections.

**It has been a pleasure and a privilege to undertake this review and develop the approach that will strengthen the Scottish Conservatives to allow the Party to build for Scotland. Scotland needs a strong Scottish Conservative Party. The real work starts now.**

**SCOTTISH CONSERVATIVES 2010 COMMISSION**

*The Party should not underestimate the extent of change it is embarking on. The work will need to be properly planned, resourced and managed.*

# Commissioners' biographies



## **Lord Sanderson of Bowden**

Russell Sanderson was born in Melrose in 1933 and joined the Party as a branch member in 1964. He served as chairman of Roxburgh, Selkirk and Peebles Association and subsequently was elected president of the Scottish Conservative and Unionist Association in 1977, serving for two years culminating in the Party's successful general election result in May 1979.

He was then elected onto the Party's National Union and became chairman of the Executive Committee in 1981, serving for five years during which he was closely involved with the government, as the Party's chief volunteer, and with candidate selection and running the Party conference.

Russell was knighted in 1981, raised to the peerage in 1985 and became a Minister of State at the Scottish Office in 1987 with responsibility for agriculture, fishing, highlands and islands tourism and all matters relating to Scotland in the House of Lords.

In 1990 he was appointed by the Prime Minister to be chairman of the Scottish Conservative and Unionist Party, and served for three years during which he led the Party's successful 1992 general election campaign.

His career outside politics is mainly connected with the textile trade. He ran his own yarn agency and merchanting business and became a director of companies including Johnston of Elgin and Illingworth Morris plc. He has also served on the boards of several companies in other industry sectors and was chairman of Scottish Mortgage Investment Trust plc for 10 years and of Clydesdale Bank for five years from 1999. He is currently chairman of The Hawick Cashmere Company and on the board of Accsys plc.

Russell holds honorary degrees from Glasgow and Napier Universities and is a past master of The Worshipful Company of Framework Knitters. He has also served as Vice Lord Lieutenant for Roxburgh, Ettrick and Lauderdale and is the current chairman of the Abbotsford Trust, which is in the process of restoring the home of Sir Walter Scott.



### **Neil Benny**

Neil Benny (28) was elected to Stirling District Council in 2007 and is presently the Council's youngest member. As chairman of the Council's Governance and Audit Committee he is heavily involved in pursuing value for money and good governance in Stirling.

Neil joined the Scottish Conservatives in 1998 and has been involved at many levels of Party since, including serving as national chairman of the Scottish Young Conservatives. He has a degree in economic history from Edinburgh University and was vice-president of the Edinburgh University Union in 2003/4.

Following the completion of a graduate training scheme with a national supermarket chain he worked in retail until he was elected as a Councillor. Until recently he worked in the renewable energy industry. Neil is also a trustee of his local museum and a keen supporter of Stirling County Rugby Club.



### **Kim Donald**

Kim Donald was born in Hampshire in 1954 and educated in Surrey where she became active in the Conservative Party. From 1973-1978 she worked in London for Conservative Central Office and then at Imperial College. She moved to Ayrshire in 1978 then worked at Paisley College. During the last 20 years Kim and her husband have run their own firm of chartered surveyors, land agents and property managers, recently merging with CKD Galbraith. Kim now runs her family's property company.

Based in her home constituency of Kilmarnock & Loudoun, Kim has worked her way up the Scottish Conservative voluntary 'ladder'. She has held every voluntary elected office in succession, up to her election as vice president and then president of the Scottish Conservative and Unionist Association from 1994-1998.

Thereafter Kim became the first elected deputy chairman of the Scottish Conservative Party and served in that role from 1998-2000 when she represented Scotland on the UK Party board. During the 1990s she served on the Scottish Conservative Party's candidates board, and worked extensively with elected Councillors and area and constituency officers, taking a particular interest in membership and communication within the Party.

Kim is currently chairman of the Glasgow Unionist Association Trust which funds and runs the Mossspark Project for the Party in Glasgow. She is also a trustee of the Scottish Unionist Association Trust and has served on several public bodies including the Scottish Consumer Council and the Ayrshire Health Trusts.



### **Rt Hon Lord Forsyth of Drumlean**

Michael Forsyth was born in 1954 and served in government for more than a decade as Secretary of State for Scotland (1995-97), Minister of State at the Home Office (1994-95) and the Department of Employment (1992-94) and as a Minister of State and Parliamentary Under-secretary of State at the Scottish Office (1987-92). He was Parliamentary Private Secretary to the Foreign Secretary from 1986-87. He represented Stirling in the House of Commons for 14 years.

Following his defeat in the 1997 election Michael joined Flemings as a director of corporate finance (1997-99) and following the bank's sale to JPMorgan Chase became vice-chairman investment banking Europe at JPMorgan (1999-2001) and deputy chairman JPMorgan (2002-5).

Michael is a non executive director of J&J Denholm Ltd., the Centre for Policy Studies and of NBNK Investments PLC. He is also a senior advisor to Evercore Partners and was chairman of the Tax Reform Commission. In addition, he is a member of the House of Lords Select Committee on Economic Affairs.

Michael was nominated to the Privy Council in 1995, was knighted in 1997 and appointed a Life Peer in 1999. He was a member of the Commission on Strengthening Parliament (1999-2000), the Select Committee on the Monetary Policy Committee of the Bank of England, the Joint Committee of both Houses of Parliament on Reform of the House of Lords and the Select Committee on the Barnett Formula.

Michael is a former Parliamentarian of the Year (1996) and chairman of the Scottish Conservative Party (1989-90).



### **Amanda Harvie**

Amanda Harvie is the managing director of The Harvie Consultancy advising leaders of companies and organisations on how to engage with the various stakeholders that affect their interests around the world. She has worked across a range of international sectors and markets during her career and has particular expertise in corporate strategy and business advocacy and representation.

Amanda is a former chief executive of Scottish Financial Enterprise and of Aberdeen and Grampian Chamber of Commerce. She began her career in public relations consultancy then ran her own PR practice before helping to start 125 new businesses as regional manager of The Prince's Scottish Youth Business Trust.

Amanda was born and educated in Glasgow. She is a graduate of London University, a qualified business advisor and a member of The Chartered Institute of Public Relations and The City of London Guild of Public Relations Practitioners.

Amanda has served on Scottish and UK government forums relating to the financial services industry and was a founding trustee of the leading independent think-tank, Reform Scotland.

Amanda served as a member of the advisory group convened last year by George Osborne MP to guide the Conservative Party on implementing its plans to reform the regulation of the financial services industry in the UK. She was selected as the Scottish Conservatives' candidate for Aberdeen South just one month before the 2010 general election and delivered the highest number of votes achieved for the Party in all elections in the constituency since 1997.



### **Lord Lindsay**

Jamie Lindsay is currently chairman of SAC - Scotland's leading agricultural higher education institution and specialist research and advisory organisation, and UKAS Ltd. - the UK's national accreditation body. He is also chairman of the renewable energy company Greenfield Holdings Ltd. and a non-executive director of British Polythene Industries (BPI) plc and Scottish Resources Group (SRG) Ltd.

Between 1995 and 1997, Jamie served as Under Secretary of State for Scotland with responsibility for agriculture, environmental protection, countryside, rural affairs, food and food safety, forestry and culture. His government appointments since 1997 have included the Better Regulation Commission (BRC) and the Risk & Regulation Advisory Council (RRAC), where he served as deputy chair and joint chair respectively. He also served as a member of the Calman Commission on Scottish Devolution.

Jamie is currently an associate director of the National Non-Food Crops Centre and a member of an advisory group at the Department for Business, Innovation & Skills.

In the private sector, he has been a non-executive director of UA Group plc and chaired Scottish Quality Salmon (SQS) Ltd., Assured British Meat (ABM) Ltd., Food Certification International Ltd., Genesis Quality Assurance Ltd. and MSCI Ltd.

Jamie is chairman of the Moorland Forum, president of the Royal Scottish Geographical Society and vice-president of the RSPB. He is a director of the Leven Valley Development Trust and a former president of the Royal Highland and Agricultural Society of Scotland and the International Tree Foundation. Jamie recently stepped down from being chairman of Elmwood College in Fife.



### **Sandy Manson**

Sandy Manson is a member of the Institute of Chartered Accountants of Scotland (CA) and is the chief executive of Johnston Carmichael, Scotland's largest independent firm of Chartered Accountants.

Sandy studied accountancy and business studies at the University of Edinburgh where he graduated in 1982 with a Bachelor of Commerce (with distinction). He trained and qualified as a Chartered Accountant with Arthur Andersen in Edinburgh then gained experience working in Zurich and London before returning to his native North-East in 1991. He joined Johnston Carmichael in 1991 and became a partner in 1993 and chief executive in 1997.

Sandy stood as the Scottish Conservatives' candidate for Banff and Buchan in the 1992 general election. In 2010, he ran the London Marathon in aid of charity and lives with his wife and two children beside Oldmeldrum in Aberdeenshire.





### **Martyn McIntyre**

Martyn McIntyre was born and raised in Dumbarton. He attended Dumbarton Academy, before going to Strathclyde University and graduating in 2003 with a degree in politics. After graduating, he worked as the parliamentary assistant to a Conservative Member of the Scottish Parliament until 2007. He is currently the policy officer for the Federation of Small Businesses in Scotland.

Martyn has broad experience within the Scottish Conservative Party having stood for election to West Dunbartonshire Council, the Scottish Parliament, (Glasgow Govan – 2007) and Westminster, (West Dunbartonshire – 2010). He also holds the position of chairman of West Dunbartonshire Conservative Association and vice-chairman of the West of Scotland Conservatives.



### **Boyne Stewart**

Boyne Stewart was educated at Dollar Academy and is an economics graduate of Strathclyde University. He has extensive international experience in running management consultancies as part of a worldwide group and of consulting as an individual.

His work has involved bringing about major change by persuading people to adopt completely new business models; operating internationally as a director of overseas companies; implementing HR strategies to mirror business strategies; and leading and developing consultancies in competitive markets.

Boyne's work with the Scottish Conservative Party includes membership of the Party's candidates board from 1999-2001. Over the last four years he has designed and implemented new competency based selection and development processes for both Holyrood and Westminster candidates. He has also acted as coach and mentor for target seat candidates in the 2010 general election and canvassed extensively with them.

Boyne's other experience includes membership of two university courts including chairing a taskforce to completely reform university governance.



### **James Stewart**

James Stewart, a Scot, and Vice Chairman of the Commission, is a partner at ECI Partners LLP one of the longest established private equity firms in the UK which he joined in 1996. He is a business studies graduate who, after four years with the international management consulting division of Arthur Andersen & Co., joined N M Rothschild & Sons Limited.

James transferred to Rothschild Ventures Limited in 1988, where, as a director, he was involved in leading a wide range of investments as well as holding a number of non-executive directorships. At ECI he has been involved in numerous buyouts and buy-ins to leading industrial and consumer businesses. James has worked in the UK private equity industry for over 20 years.

James is a treasurer of The Conservative Party and has been involved in a number of donor forums. He is a former chairman of the Party's City and Entrepreneurs Forum and is the current chairman of its Renaissance Forum.



### **Amy Thomson**

Amy Thomson graduated from Aberdeen University this year with an honours degree in politics and international relations. Recently she joined the Civil Service in Whitehall in a policy based role.

Amy's interest in politics led her to work with the Scottish Conservatives' 2010 general election campaign and with Conservative Future Scotland.

Amy is a former vice-president of Aberdeen University Conservatives and former area officer for Conservative Future Scotland. In addition to politics, her interests include hiking and rock climbing.



### **Murray Tosh**

Murray Tosh is a former Member of the Scottish Parliament for the South of Scotland and West of Scotland regions. He was convener of the Procedures Committee in the Scottish Parliament's first session, and a Deputy Presiding Officer in its first and second sessions. He was also a co-founder of the Scottish Parliament's Cross Party Group on Affordable Housing.

A graduate in history, politics and economics of the University of Glasgow and of Jordanhill College of Education, Murray went into teaching, being principal teacher of history at Belmont Academy in Ayr before election to the Scottish Parliament.

Murray has a long track record in the Scottish Conservative Party and was a constituency chairman in Central Ayrshire and Ayr and an area officer. From 1987-1996 he represented a Troon ward on the former Kyle and Carrick District Council and, latterly, was convener of the Council's Housing Committee.

A native of Ayr, Murray was brought up in the Borders and Ayrshire. He will not be seeking election in 2011 and has no remaining political ambitions, but will continue to help the Scottish Conservatives on a voluntary basis.

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# **Building for Scotland**

**Strengthening the Scottish Conservatives**