General election special

Nicolson celebrates but says his return is soured by Boris blitz

KATHRYN ANDERSON



Delivering success John Nicolson, pictured earlier in the campaign with Nicola Sturgeon

The SNP's John Nicolson has taken the Ochil and South Perthshire seat from Luke Graham in a result the Tories put down to tactical voting.

Mr Nicolson, who was ousted from his East Dunbartonshire seat in 2017 by Jo Swinson, will be returning to Westminster with a majority of 4498 votes.

Mr Nicolson secured 26,882 votes in the first December election since 1923.

There was a 73.56 per cent turnout in Ochil and South Perthshire, up by 2.9 per cent from the 70.66 per cent turnout in the 2017 vote.

The SNP victory echoed wins in neighbouring Perth and North Perthshire and Stirling, as well as across Scotland.

But despite his triumph, Mr Nicolson told the PA he was worried about the overall result.

He said: "I'm very pleased with the result across Scotland, but my pleasure is tempered by what I see south of the border. Boris Johnson has a thumping majority.

"It's terrifying what that means for the constituency and the country.

"It's bad news for Scotland. Boris Johnson owes us absolutely nothing.

"I intend to go down to Westminster to fight hard to resist the sort of policies Boris Johnson will implement."

In his acceptance speech, Mr Nicolson lashed out at the Conservatives saying: "I have been intrigued at the message the Scottish Conservatives have been running throughout this campaign which was 'give Nicola [Sturgeon] a message'.

"Well, you know what? Scotland has given a message to Nicola tonight and the message is quite clear.

"The message is we do not trust Boris Johnson. We do not believe in his sham prophecies over 'getting a Brexit deal done'.

" It is perhaps the most vacuous political slogan of modern times.

"The Scottish Conservative Party when told to jump by Downing Street has only one question – 'how high?'

"Voters want MPs who will go down to Westminster and stand up for Scotland in Westminster – not to represent Westminster in Scotland.

"So I have only one intention when I go down to Westminster, and that is to fight for this constituency and to fight for Scotland every single day, because Boris Johnson is ghastly enough now.

"Can you imagine what he's going to be like with his huge majority?"

> "Boris Johnson is ghastly enough now. Can you imagine what he's going to be like with his huge majority?
> **John Nicolson**

A dejected Luke Graham told the audience at Alloa Town Hall: "It's never a great result to lose. All I would just say, in these jobs you should try and give your everything to represent and stand up for the communities that you live in and you serve in and trying to represent down in Westminster.

"I thank my team who have worked tirelessly since I got elected back in 2017. There is still plenty going on in Scottish politics and British politics and we are the only party that want to play fair in both, so I look forward to having plenty more action here in Clackmannanshire and in Perth and Kinross."

Afterwards, he told the PA: "I am obviously disappointed. My vote has held from 2017 but tactical votes have come into play."

The Conservative won the 2017 vote with 22,469 seats but lost the 2019 election with 22,384 votes.

Mr Graham said he still had some work to wind up and vowed to "continue to help in any way" with local community groups such as the Sauchie Community Group and for both the Tay Cities Deal and Clackmannanshire UK city regional deal. The 34-year-old insisted he is not done with politics, adding: "I think I have a few rounds left in me."

On the night Jeremy Corbyn announced he was preparing to stand down, Labour's Lorna Robertson said: "It's been a disappointing night for the Labour Party.

"Luckily enough I love my job in the NHS and I will be back there on Monday."

Liberal Democrat Stefanov Iliyan Simeonov said: "I have improved the result [from last time, by 1742].

"I hope Luke continues working for the constituency and we will all be looking to John to deliver on his promises."

UKIP candidate Stuart Martin lost his deposit with only 382 votes and did not appear for the declaration.



Yellow army Pete Wishart celebrates his re-election with partner Sara O'Hagan and supporters

Full results

Perth and North Perthshire – SNP hold
Pete Wishart (SNP) 27,362 (50.6%, +8.3%)
Angus Forbes (Tory) 19,812 (36.6%, -5.6%)
Peter Barrett (Lib Dem) 3780 (7%, +2%)
Angela Bretherton (Labour) 2471 (4.6%, -5.8%)
Stuart Powell (Brexit) 651 (1.2%, +1.2%)
Turnout: 74.63% - 54,181

Ochil and South Perthshire
SNP gain from Conservatives
John Nicolson (SNP) 26,882 (46.5%, +11.2%)
Luke Graham (Con) 22,384 (38.7%, -2.8%)
Lorna Robertson (Lab) 4961 (8.6%, -11.4%)
Iliyan Stefanov (LD) 3204 (5.5%, +2.3%)
Stuart Martin (UKIP) 382 (0.7%, +0.7%)
Turnout: 73.56% - 57,944

A night



Rivals Pete Wishart and Tory council leader Murray Lyle chat at the count

ROBBIE CHALMERS

The SNP's hold on the Perth and North Perthshire seat will reach a third decade following a resounding victory yesterday morning at Bell's Sports Centre.

Pete Wishart threw his hands in the air after retaining his position at Westminster with 27,362 votes – winning by a 7550 margin from Conservative candidate Angus Forbes.

A palpable atmosphere shrouded the North Inch sports centre, but the evening was also tinged with an air of inevitability with polls leaning heavily on Mr Wishart as the stand-out favourite in the run-up to the count.

At the 2017 general election, Mr Wishart squeezed through with a mere 21-vote margin following two recounts, but it was a different story just two years later .

The long-serving SNP MP won in the region for a sixth time, gaining over 5000