# Conservative Party faces crisis as Aberdeenshire defections bolster right-wing alternative



In a politically charged atmosphere, Aberdeenshire has become a battleground for the Conservative Party, casting serious doubts on its future viability in local governance. The recent defections of four councillors to an emerging right-wing alternative signal deeper fractures within the Tory ranks, disrupting what was once seen as a secure footing during the last local elections.

The turmoil began when Gillian Owen, the resigning council leader, stepped down as Tory group leader, reportedly venting her frustrations towards colleagues in vulgar terms. This departure has precipitated what could only be described as an “absolute shambles,” with insiders warning that the party is on the verge of complete collapse. Stewart Adams, her successor, now faces an uphill battle in a climate rife with dissent and disillusionment.

In the 2022 local elections, the Conservatives held a commanding position with 26 councillors, bolstered by cooperative arrangements with the Liberal Democrats and independent members. However, these recent defections pose an existential threat to this coalition, prompting local leaders to rethink their strategic alliances. The partnership with the Liberal Democrats, previously a stabilizing force, now looks increasingly precarious as they consider new directions. Anne Stirling, leader of the Aberdeenshire Lib Dems, has been suggested as a potential council leader, but doubts linger about the sustainability of that alliance.

Dissatisfaction within the Conservative ranks is reaching a breaking point, with notable defections that expose frustrations over integrity and respect within the party. The recent departure of John Crawley epitomizes this sentiment, as he publicly declared that the current Conservative leadership has failed to uphold these essential values. His sentiments were mirrored by former Tory councillors Mark Findlater and Laurie Carnie, who joined the ranks of a burgeoning right-wing movement, sparking discussions of further defections. Their actions reflect a significant political shift, as this alternative party aims to bolster its influence ahead of the 2026 Holyrood elections.

The atmosphere surrounding these defections is charged with animosity, as accusations are exchanged between former colleagues and their critics. Accusations of a lack of accomplishments from defectors now ring hollow in light of the Conservatives' growing inability to govern. Interestingly, those within the emerging right-wing party have expressed little concern for the potential implosion of the Conservative administration, viewing it as an opportunity for their own ascent. The long-awaited notion of stability remains elusive in Aberdeenshire politics, with another party leader hinting at discussions for realignment, capitalizing on the current Tory disorder to advocate for change.

As the leader of the right-wing party gears up for a campaign in Aberdeenshire, the prevailing narrative emphasizes resilience and determination. The political landscape is ripe for transformation, with anticipated defections potentially saddling the Theresa May brigade with more challenges. The local political atmosphere hangs in a delicate balance, where discontent within the Conservative Party may allow this emerging right-wing alternative to assert a significant influence. The coming months, leading up to the 2027 local elections, will be critical as political dynamics shift, marking a period of sustained disapproval of the Conservatives and a growing appetite for a genuinely alternative vision in Aberdeenshire.

Source: [Noah Wire Services](https://www.noahwire.com)

## Bibliography

1. <https://www.pressandjournal.co.uk/fp/politics/6768406/inside-aberdeenshire-council-chaos-as-nigel-farage-picks-tories-apart/> - Please view link - unable to able to access data
2. <https://www.pressandjournal.co.uk/fp/politics/6752121/ellon-councillor-aberdeenshire-tory-reform/> - John Crawley, an Ellon councillor, has become the latest Aberdeenshire Tory to join Nigel Farage’s Reform UK party. Crawley expressed his disillusionment with the Conservative Party, citing a lack of integrity and respect within the party, particularly at the local level. His defection follows that of former Aberdeenshire Tory leader Mark Findlater and ex-Conservative colleague Laurie Carnie, who joined Reform UK last year. The move highlights growing discontent within the Conservative ranks in Aberdeenshire and signals a strengthening presence of Reform UK in Scotland.
3. <https://www.scotsman.com/news/politics/aberdeenshire-reform-momentum-4839271> - Two Aberdeenshire councillors, Mark Findlater and Laurie Carnie, have defected from the Conservative Party to join Nigel Farage’s Reform UK. This marks the first time Reform UK has councillors in Scotland. The defections are seen as a blow to the Conservatives, with Reform UK expressing confidence in gaining more councillors in Scotland. The move reflects a growing momentum for Reform UK in the region, with discussions about potential further defections and the party's plans to campaign hard in the run-up to the 2026 Holyrood election.
4. <https://www.pressandjournal.co.uk/fp/politics/6613041/aberdeenshire-councillor-defect-reform/> - Former Aberdeenshire Council leader Mark Findlater and Mearns councillor Laurie Carnie have joined Nigel Farage’s Reform UK after resigning from the Conservative Party. Their defection is seen as a significant development for Reform UK in Scotland, with the party planning to campaign hard in the run-up to the 2026 Holyrood election. The move highlights growing discontent within the Conservative ranks in Aberdeenshire and signals a strengthening presence of Reform UK in Scotland.
5. <https://www.heraldscotland.com/news/24676338.scottish-conservative-councillors-defect-reform-uk-party/> - Two Aberdeenshire councillors, Mark Findlater and Laurie Carnie, have defected from the Conservative Party to join Nigel Farage’s Reform UK. This move is seen as a significant development for Reform UK in Scotland, with the party planning to campaign hard in the run-up to the 2026 Holyrood election. The defections highlight growing discontent within the Conservative ranks in Aberdeenshire and signal a strengthening presence of Reform UK in Scotland.
6. <https://www.thenational.scot/news/24676297.two-scottish-councillors-aberdeenshire-join-reform-uk/> - Former Scottish Conservative MSP Michelle Ballantyne defected to Reform UK in 2021 but lost her seat in the Holyrood elections later that year and resigned as the party's Scottish leader in February 2022. In response to defections, Reform UK leader Nigel Farage has called on Conservative Party councillors to join his party, stating that the Conservative Party is a 'busted flush' and urging those who believe in their country and share Reform UK's values to join.
7. <https://www.gbnews.com/news/politics-latest-corbyn-khan-apologise-gangster-chris-kaba> - Nigel Farage has invited Conservative councillors to join Reform UK, offering them a 'lifeline' ahead of re-election. In an email to all 1,352 Tory councillors up for re-election in May 2025, Farage explained the 'risk they face' if they stand for the Conservative Party against his party. The email suggests the choice is between a leader who has undergone a 'Damascene political conversion' and one who 'won’t leave' the European Convention on Human Rights, something Reform UK considers central to their contract.