

Scottish Greens Leadership Nominations Revealed Amidst Internal Tensions

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The Scottish Green Party has formally opened nominations for its summer 2025 co-leadership contest, following the decision by long-standing co-leader Patrick Harvie to step down. The party will choose a new leadership pair to guide it into the next Holyrood election in 2026. Current co-leader Lorna Slater is seeking re-election, while Gillian

Mackay and Ross Greer, both sitting Members of the Scottish Parliament (MSPs), have also declared their candidacies.

Lorna Slater, who has served as co-leader since 2019, has welcomed the contest and encouraged broad participation from party members. She described the race as “wide open” and a valuable opportunity for internal discussion on the party’s future direction. Patrick Harvie, who has held leadership roles for nearly 17 years, will remain in post until his successors are formally elected later this summer.

Ross Greer, the MSP for West Scotland, announced his leadership bid in early July. Once considered a more radical figure, Greer now represents a centrist and pragmatic wing of the party. His campaign is focused on building electoral momentum, organisational stability, and countering internal divisions. He has positioned himself as a unifying figure aiming to modernise the Greens while retaining core principles.

Also standing is Central Scotland MSP Gillian Mackay, known for her legislative work on buffer zones around abortion clinics and her background in grassroots activism. Mackay has emphasised the need for strong female leadership and aims to drive electoral growth while reinforcing the party’s social and environmental values.

The leadership race comes amid reports of growing tension within the party. Harvie himself has urged candidates and members to avoid “toxic” infighting and instead promote a respectful, values-based debate. The divide within the Greens has increasingly reflected a clash between those aligned with the centrist, coalition-friendly leadership and members, largely based in Glasgow, who favour a return to the party’s eco-socialist roots and a more independent identity.

The outcome of this leadership contest will shape not only the party's strategic direction but also its alliances and messaging in the lead-up to the 2026 Scottish Parliament elections. The new co-leaders will play a critical role in defining how the Greens balance environmental priorities with political pragmatism in a changing political landscape.

The results are expected in August, concluding a pivotal chapter for the Scottish Greens at a time of renewed scrutiny and shifting internal dynamics.