

Goodbye Nicola Sturgeon

Published: January 13, 2026, 6:32 pm

As I am heading to Scotland this morning to discuss politics on Debate Night on BBC Scotland this evening news has broken that Nicola Sturgeon is to resign as Scottish First Minister after eight years in office.

I have to admit to some relief. Many from outside the SNP and Scotland have seen Sturgeon as a smooth political operator. Those within it have not seen it that way. There have been serious questions about:

- Her authoritarian control of the SNP, which has been managed by a tiny coterie around her and her husband.
- Her commitment to independence, when dithering about when and if another referendum might take place has become the norm.
- Her commitment to neoliberal economics and austerity, most especially seen in the notorious Growth Commission recommendations.
- Her refusal to listen to her party over the issue of Scottish currency, and much else.

There have also been questions about:

- The case against Alex Salmond.
- Her management of the Trans issue.
- Her government's record in office.

In that case am I sorry to see her go? No, not at all. She was not the radical or brave politician Scotland needed to drive forward the case for independence, let alone a very different form of government to that seen in Westminster. Scotland did not need the reinforcement of a rather comfortable status quo for a small SNP leadership that she supplied.

The big question will be will her successor be very much different?

NOTE: As a result of this I am not now on Debate Night this evening.