

May surprises Tory colleagues with shock call for June election

Theresa May shocked the country with her decision to call a snap election in June – including, it seems, her own Conservative colleagues.

Political observers had forecast she may call a general election to exploit the Tories huge lead in the opinion polls but the prime minister had previously insisted she would see out the whole term to 2020.

South Thanet's Craig Mackinlay, who has the smallest majority of all Kent's 16 Conservative MPs, admitted being genuinely shocked at yesterday's announcement.

He said: "Myself and other colleagues did not see this coming but in the cold light of day it makes sense to unify the country and not get challenged at every step of the way.

"We have been winning Brexit votes in parliament by 30-40 votes so we had a working majority.

"But Brexit is so important to get right and we do not want the threat of being derailed, so in that sense it is wise decision."

Mr Mackinlay, whose party faces a police probe into election expenses over the 2015 campaign, will be hoping his seat does not become the focus of national media attention due to those standing against him.

Last time Ukip's Nigel Farage ran in the constituency as did comedian Al Murray.

Mr Mackinlay took over from Laura Sandys who stepped down after just one term having beaten Labour's Steve Ladyman in 2010.

Dover and Deal MP Charlie Elphicke praised the decision to



From left: South Thanet MP Craig Mackinlay; Dover's Charlie Elphicke with Theresa May; Labour councillor Pam Brivio

go to the country.

Mr Elphicke, who won the seat in 2010, and currently holds a 6,294 majority, said: "This is fantastic news. Theresa May is right to go to the country.

"Labour, Lib Dem and SNP MPs will stop at nothing to scupper the Brexit process.

"We must give the prime minister the backing she needs to strike the best deal for Britain.

"This election will enable her to do just that."

Labour will be hoping to win back the seat they lost in 2010 when Gwynn Prosser was ousted after 13 years as the area's MP.

Speaking outside 10 Downing Street yesterday, Mrs May said she had "recently and reluctantly" made the decision.

The motion will be put before

the House of Commons today, and will need a two-thirds majority to go ahead.

Explaining her change of heart on an early election, Mrs May said: "I have concluded the only way to guarantee certainty and security for years ahead is to hold this election."

Justifying the decision, she said: "The country is coming together, but Westminster is not.

"It is with strong conviction that I believe it is necessary to secure a strong and stable leadership this country needs."

Her decision won overwhelming approval from readers on KentOnline, with 73% saying it was the right move.

Pam Brivio, a Labour town, district and county councillor for Dover, said: "We are hopeful we

will get Dover back as a Labour seat. We have policies that would be acceptable to Dover, which is a low wage area.

"This has certainly taken me by surprise and it will happen just a month after the county council election.

"But we believe that we will be ready and we will choose a candidate shortly."

The MP for Dover tends to reflect the government of the day. The constituency had Labour

MPs during the Harold Wilson government of the 1960s and all through the New Labour era from 1997 to 2010.

The MPs were Conservative when Edward Heath was prime minister in the early 1970s and throughout the Thatcher and Major eras of 1979 to 1997.

One exception was during 1974 to 1979, when Tory Peter Rees was MP during the time Labour's Harold Wilson and James Callaghan were in power.

IN BRIEF

Town meeting open to public

Deal Town Council will host its annual town meeting on Friday. The event, open to the public, will include short presentations from representatives of community groups on what they have achieved in the past year and what they will be working on in 2017.

The chairman of the Inward Investment Working Group, Cllr Sue Beer, will give an update on progress for Coastal Community funding and will be asking for ideas and views on projects for the town.

Residents will also be able to express their views and ask questions about issues relating to the town and community.

It will be in Deal Town Hall at 7.15pm with light refreshments served afterwards.

Blood sessions

The chance to give blood will be at Trinity Methodist Church in Union Road, Deal, on Monday, May 8.

Sessions will be held from 1.30pm until 4pm and 5pm until 7.30pm. For more information visit blood.co.uk or to book an appointment, phone 0300 123 23 23.

News updates

www.kentonline.co.uk



Tuncay Yildirim, manager of Marmaris Kebab, made changes to get shop's late licence back

Kebab shop doorman helps deliver return of late licence

A popular kebab shop in Deal has employed a doorman to help win back their late licence.

Marmaris Kebab in South Street has been forced to shut at 11pm instead of 2am since September last year, after police felt it seriously breached one of the four licensing objectives – prevention of crime and disorder – during an incident in 2015.

Dilber Tasim was brought in as the new manager and sent staff on conflict management training

and made a new application to Dover District Council in October last year, which included conditions such as a doorman would monitor the door from 9.15pm until 2.15am on Fridays and Saturdays. The shop also started working with pubs in the town as part of a Pubwatch scheme run by DPAC's (Dover Partnership Against Crime) to share information and images of problem individuals and groups. The application was initially

rejected but was accepted after appeal last Monday. Miss Tasim said: "The court decided the council's decision was right in October but the steps I've taken to make improvements are visible and we deserve to get it back.

"It's been a hard six months. It's had a huge financial impact on our lives. We've had to pay solicitors fees and let staff go."

Tuncay Yildirim who works in the shop said: "We're delighted to be able to serve again."

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