

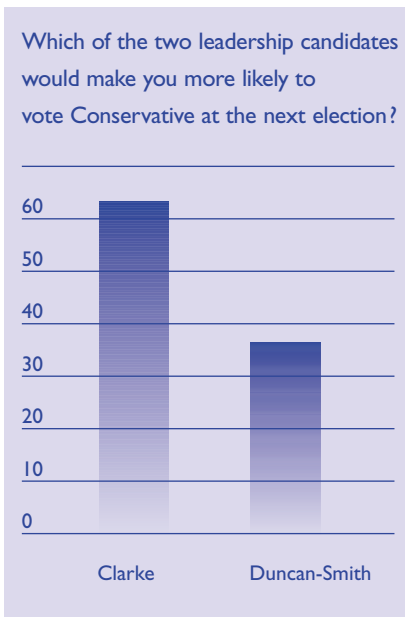
The Conservatives
need a leader
who can win the next
general election.



We've just had an election which Labour won. Not because they are a good government. They aren't. But because we failed to offer voters a believable alternative.

So the big decision we face now is not so much who should lead the Conservatives, but who can lead us to victory.

A recent independent poll by NOP* shows that I have by far the best chance of winning back the votes of lapsed Conservative supporters.



When we fight, and win the next election, I want it to be on the issues that are important to all of us.

The crisis in our health service, the problems in our schools, the crumbling public transport system, the bureaucracy stifling small businesses, the plight of the countryside and the lack of law and order concern everyone.

Yet in the last election we could not persuade people that any of this would change very much under the Conservatives.

We need to tackle the enormous task of devising policies that will make a real difference. Imaginative, distinctive and effective policies will attract younger people, and will bring back the six million voters who abandoned us during the last decade.

In creating these policies, I will call upon the resources of the whole party - not just the Shadow Cabinet, not just our MPs, but the skills and good sense of all those, like you, who are committed to a Conservative victory.

I can offer over 20 years' experience in Government and in the Cabinet. I ran the Departments of Health and Education under Mrs Thatcher and I was Home Secretary and Chancellor under John Major. I have expertise and experience in all these policy areas which I will use to head up the planning of new Conservative policies.

The Conservative Party also needs to end its internal debate about Europe. We need to respect each other's opinions and bring into the Party the widest possible range of Conservative views on Britain and Europe in a sensible balanced way.

No Conservative is a federalist and I am certainly not. I believe that we should be members of a Union of independent nation states. The governments of those nations should continue to take the key decisions and be answerable for them to their own parliament and people.

I have always opposed any increase in the EU budget and always argued that it should be spent more sensibly. I have always insisted, and still do, that we must retain the national veto on taxation, public spending, border controls and treaty changes.

I am not asking anyone in the Party to change their own opinion on Europe. I would favour a Shadow Cabinet in which the majority will be Euro-sceptics in order to reflect the balance of current Party opinion. We would put forward a balanced non-federalist, deregulating, decentralising Tory view of the future of Europe.

On the single currency, I would allow freedom of speech for all shades of opinion. Whether we

ever join the Euro will be decided by a referendum. It will never be decided by a General Election. We have no idea when, if ever, a referendum will be held. If we take a more open and tolerant position on the subject it would be easier to get the public to pay attention to our policies on the big General Election issues.

Let us prove that we Conservatives can fight and win elections again. We are capable of moving our Party back into the mainstream of British politics and tackling all today's big economic and social issues. If we restore our Party we will also be able to build a better future for our country.



The Rt Hon Kenneth Clarke QC MP

You can write to me at my Campaign Office: Room G3, Central Hall, Storey's Gate, London SW1H 9NH or telephone 020 7654 3879. I also have a website at www.kennethclarke.net

*NOP interviewed 502 people who had previously voted Conservative at a general election, but who did not do so in either 1997 or 2001. Interviewing took place by telephone on 24 and 25 July. Of those expressing an opinion, Ken Clarke led by 63% to 37%.

Ken Clarke: A Winner

“Each contender for the Tory leadership has advantages, but Kenneth Clarke is a winner, and the Conservative Party needs a winner. It’s as simple as that.”

Matthew Parris in The Times, 30 June

“His robust good humour and punchy put-downs would give him the edge on Blair.”

Daily Mail, 18 July

“The ex-Chancellor is undoubtedly the only Tory leadership candidate with a chance of giving Tony Blair a run for his money.”

The Sun, 27 June

“[He] is one of the most formidable politicians of the generation.”

Sunday Telegraph, 22 July

“[Clarke] is the one politician who can expose Tony Blair for the political pygmy that he is.”

Paul Routledge in the Mirror, 18 July

“The Party needs a Leader who has national stature and a warm and effective rapport with the British public. That man is Kenneth Clarke.”

Rt Hon Sir Malcolm Rifkind QC,
President of the Scottish
Conservative Party, 23 July

“We want to win the next general election and we want to win seats again in Wales. We believe that the best person to achieve that is Ken Clarke.”

Nick Bourne, Leader of the
Conservatives in the Welsh
Assembly, 4 July

“We will campaign against the single currency in the referendum when it comes. But there are other issues of more importance to the constituents we serve - the issues which we believe Ken Clarke is best placed to articulate and promote.”

Derek Conway MP, Greg Knight MP,
Andrew Mitchell MP and
James Paice MP, 15 July

www.kennethclarke.net