

## Topic Page: [Kennedy, Charles Peter \(1959 – 2015\)](#)

Summary Article: **Kennedy, Charles Peter**

From *The Hutchinson Unabridged Encyclopedia with Atlas and Weather Guide*

UK politician, leader of the Liberal Democrat party 1999–2006. He was elected successor to Paddy Ashdown, inheriting a party that had made a huge advance into government through its coalition with the Labour Party in the Scottish Parliament. He led a strong general election campaign in May 2005, promising investment in public services and protesting against the 2003 Iraq War, and the party attracted 22% of the vote and won 62 seats. However, although popular with the general public, in 2005 he lost the confidence of senior party colleagues, partly due to his private struggle against alcoholism, and in January 2006 he resigned as party leader. He remained a backbench MP until he was defeated at the May 2015 general election, as part of a broader national collapse in the Liberal Democrat vote.

Kennedy was elected MP for Ross, Cromarty, and Skye in 1983, becoming Britain's youngest MP at the age of 23. He was the first Social Democrat MP to back the merger with the Liberal Party in 1987. As UK party president from 1990 to 1994, he earned a reputation as a tireless campaigner and skilled parliamentary debater.

Under his leadership of the party, from 1999, while continuing to work with Labour in certain areas, relations became less close, and in 2003 his party opposed the Blair government's decision to enter the US-led war in Iraq, on the grounds that it did not have broader United Nations backing.

He was spokesperson for the party on a range of issues 1990–99, including social security, trade and industry, Scotland, health, European affairs, and agriculture and rural affairs. He also took a lead in organizations such as the European Movement and the cross-party electoral reform group 'Make Votes Count'.

Born in Inverness, Scotland, Kennedy was brought up in Fort William and studied at Glasgow University, where he was elected president of the Students' Union. After working as a journalist and broadcaster with the BBC, he was awarded a Fulbright Scholarship in 1982. He was working on a PhD at Indiana University in 1983 when the opportunity arose to seek the Social Democratic Party (SDP) nomination for Ross, Cromarty, and Skye. He was elected to the House of Commons and his studies were cut short.

### quotations

Kennedy, Charles Peter

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Kennedy, Charles Peter. (2018). In Helicon (Ed.), *The Hutchinson unabridged encyclopedia with atlas*

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## APA

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## Chicago

"Kennedy, Charles Peter." In *The Hutchinson Unabridged Encyclopedia with Atlas and Weather Guide*, edited by Helicon. Helicon, 2018. [https://search.credoreference.com/content/topic/kennedy\\_charles\\_1959](https://search.credoreference.com/content/topic/kennedy_charles_1959)

## Harvard

Kennedy, Charles Peter. (2018). In Helicon (Ed.), *The Hutchinson unabridged encyclopedia with atlas and weather guide*. [Online]. Abington: Helicon. Available from: [https://search.credoreference.com/content/topic/kennedy\\_charles\\_1959](https://search.credoreference.com/content/topic/kennedy_charles_1959) [Accessed 12 November 2019].

## MLA

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