

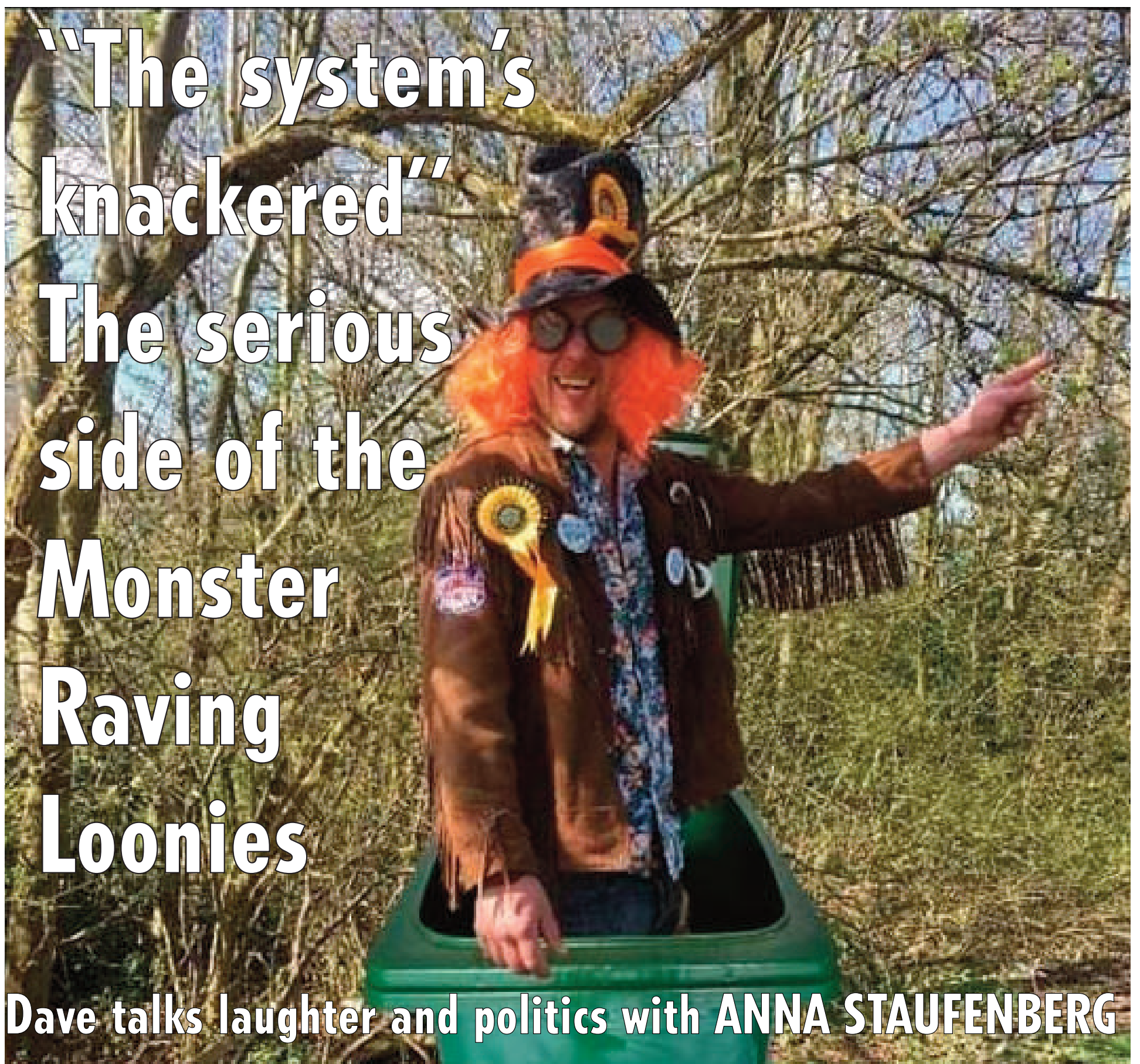


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BATTLE FOR NO 10  
**THE FINAL COUNTDOWN**  
GENERAL ELECTION SPECIAL

**YOUR ULTIMATE GUIDE TO THE MOST IMPORTANT ELECTION IN YEARS**



# “The system’s knackered” The serious side of the Monster Raving Loonies

Dave talks laughter and politics with ANNA STAUFENBERG

**D**ave is in the middle of making his tea when I ring him one evening, with just over a week to go before the General Election.

Otherwise known by his catchy candidate name, Farmin’ Lord F’Tang F’Tang Dave, Dave is, shockingly, a farmer. He’s standing once again in Denton and Reddish for the Monster Raving Loony Party, having done so in 2017, and his cheerful answers to my questions are punctuated with hearty chuckles.

I start by asking him how he got involved in the MRLP.

“Well it was a bet really,” he explains. “One Christmas I were speaking to a lad and we were going on about politics and all that, and I said why don’t you stand, and he said: “I can’t, I’m a civil servant.” So I ended up doing it and I won 10 pound. So it went on from there really, and they’re a great set of lads and lasses.”

And what about the name? It doesn’t exactly roll off the tongue, I wonder where it came from.

“F’Tang F’Tang comes from the Monty Party election night special sketch. He was one of the candidates - actually, it was Tarquin Fin-tim-lin-bin-whin-bim-lim-bus-stop-F’tang-F’tang-Olé-Biscuitbarrel.”

Impressive.

“Yep.”

We start talking about the campaign for the General Election next week, and what sort of reaction he’s getting from people. He explains that he hasn’t done much yet although they’d ventured through the Christmas markets the day before, which everybody “seemed happy about.”

Here Dave hesitates.

“It’s just to lighten the mood of a very...what’s the word...everyone’s become very fragmented, and there seems to be a lot of animosity flying about. So anything to lighten that load from people - that’s why we do it, really.”

The MRLP brands itself as the protest vote, the alternative to not voting: ‘If you’re going to vote, vote for insanity,’ ‘The only wasted vote is one that isn’t used,’ and so on. I’m interested if Dave’s motivations for standing are just a desire to mock something deadly serious - this Gen-

eral Election is being hailed as the most important one in a generation, after all - or whether actually his reasons go deeper.

He answers immediately.

“In the last general election the number of people that didn’t vote was 18 million, I think. And the party that got in got 13 million votes. So it’s a massive majority of people that just don’t bother ‘cos they think they can’t change things, when they can really.”

“I know the system’s knackered,” he continues. “That first-past-the-post is a waste of time. You’re turning off a massive amount of people, not being represented properly in elections, because of the system we have.”

He touches on the subject of his home turf, a solid Labour stronghold led by Andrew Gwynne since 2005.

“Labour will get in and that’s it, everyone else that goes out to vote knows it’s really just a protest vote.”

“Over in Europe we’ve got PR (proportional representation), and we’ve even got PR in the EU elections. So it’s like, you know, what’s good for the goose ain’t good for the gander.”

So a sense of humour, that’s clearly a central part of the MRLP. Does the party have a more serious outlook for its future in British politics, though?

Dave points to a number of MRLP-born proposals that “have ended up getting into law somehow.” To my surprise and delight, these include passports for pets, abolition of the 11+ exam, and the 24-hour-opening for pubs - referring to the 2005 Licensing Act which allowed pubs to serve alcohol 24/7.

Dave goes on to tell me how the party was founded in the first place.

It was born out of the National Teenage Party, he says, which was founded in 1963 in an attempt to get 18-, 19- and 20-year-olds to vote. The man behind it, Screaming Lord Hutch, is according to Wikipedia a ‘serial parliamentary candidate’ - perhaps referring to the fact he lost a record 40 elections.

“A few years ago we proposed to lower the voting age to 16, and now there’s a lot of people jumping on that. So now we’re proposing it should be five years old to emulate how MPs go about their behaviour in the



House of Commons.”

Of course.

I'm still intrigued by the apparent contradiction in the party's desire to engage those who would otherwise shirk politics, with the fact they clearly delight in satirising and mocking the whole thing.

Dave sees what I'm getting at.

“No, we're pro-politics, definitely pro-politics. We're not anarchists. I've been accused of being an anarchist once, but that's exactly what we're not about.

“We're about getting out there. If somebody votes in this election for me who hasn't voted before and then they get into the habit of voting, perhaps even reading what all the other parties are doing - they might start voting Green or whatever, you know what I mean?

“It's about getting people into the habit of it, then hopefully we can change the system so we can have a proper go at it one day.”

I wonder what Dave thinks about Andrew Gwynne's reign.

“Ah he's done alright hasn't he,” he chuckles. “I know Andrew quite well and his family and yeah, he's done alright he has. He takes one too many selfies of himself though, that's my only criticism.

“But that's the way it is. It's show-biz at the end of the day, that's what you have to do to get elected - and fair-dos! But I'm not one for showing off, wearing silly hats or taking selfies...”

He lets the joke hang for a second before snorting.

The conversation turns, inevitably, to the EU. Martin Powers for the Brexit Party is predicted to get 13% of the vote in Denton and Reddish, taking it seems a large chunk of voters from Labour and what had been UKIP - UKIP isn't standing in Denton and Reddish this time round.

I ask Dave what he thinks about the fact that the Brexit Party is set to do so well, considering they're first-timers having formed only earlier this year.

“Ah, the one trick pony rode by a one man band, as I like to call it...”

He thinks for a second and his tone switches.

“People round here, they voted leave and they're very upset. Andrew's got to toe the party line with all his collective responsibility, but there's a lot of people really pissed off just about that one issue. It's become a religion re-

ally, hasn't it? It's not left or right anymore, it's leave or remain.

“Get it sorted, stop kicking it into the long grass. I'm not bothered, it doesn't matter to me. But it's very toxic, there's a lot of anger floating about. We need to all, ooh...come together as a country.”

It's quite refreshing, in a depressing sort of way, to hear someone in politics speak so brazenly about what they do and don't care about. I wonder how Dave's view fits into the MRLP as a whole, and ask him whether the party has an official Brexit policy.



“Oh yeah hang on...”

A pause and a clearing of the throat.

“The border in NI will be made out of sponge to prevent a hard border.”

Another pause.

“We'll stay in the EU then re-negotiate..’ no, wait...hang on I'm reading it here.. ‘We'll re-negotiate to stay in the EU then sack the other 27 countries.”

Dave mumbles something about that last policy “not being very...”, but interrupts himself.

“Actually we wanted an ‘in out shake it all about’ referendum - that's what we first came up with back in 2005 when it all started.

“So the deal's ‘shake it all about,’ the Greens

and Libdem they want ‘in’, the Brexit Party want ‘out’, and Labour want to do the Hokey Cokey and turn around somehow - but not really get on the dance-floor to do it.”

So Dave's primary emotion regarding Brexit seems to be apathy, and the party he represents avoids political sincerity like the plague.

Yet he clearly still thinks politics is the avenue through which to affect change. I ask him what policies he'd genuinely push for should he beat Labour next week.

(Of course, Dave only got 0.5% of the vote in 2017 and so presumably didn't see his £500 deposit returned - so this outcome is unlikely, but firstly, we can hope, and secondly, ‘winning’ doesn't really seem to be the aim.)

“Well the environment's bugged isn't it,” he says. “I see it as a farmer. I've been doing it for 25 years now and we get stuck in these spells of weather.

“And people have too much *stuff* and keep buying stuff,” he goes on, “and it just uses so much energy all the time.

“We also just need to get on a bit better don't we? Set up a Ministry for Laughter or a Ministry for Togetherness or something like that.”

Aha! I think. So is that actually all that the MRLP is trying to do - bring people together through laughter and fun?

Dave says “Yeah!” about six times.

“We've had our party conference in Belper (Derbyshire) for the last two years, and basically we just take over a pub.

“Everyone's invited, everybody comes in and nobody speaks about politics. And we set world records while we're there - 110 kazooists playing ‘Eye of the Tiger.’”

We both wince at the thought.

I had entered the conversation intrigued by Dave and the MRLP, as with anything that reveals in the weird. Ultimately however, a body which mocks traditional politics only encourages an already angry and apathetic electorate, I thought.

Behind all the silly hats and terrible dad jokes, I come away thinking though there's a deadly serious message at the heart of the party's identity. It stands for the millions of the effectively disenfranchised, who might just start to engage with politics by first being disarmed with laughter.

Political apathy is a luxury we may not always have, after all.



**PIONEER:** Screaming Lord Sutch founded the Monster Raving Loony Party in 1983



# Manchester's Homeless: How will the parties help?



**With over 5,000 homeless people in Greater Manchester, what has each party pledged to do to aid those in need? Billy Brake investigates...**

A walk through Manchester city centre goes far enough to show the plight of the scores of people without warmth, shelter, or food. How does each party intend to manage the issue?

Greater Together Manchester reported that, in 2017/18, there were 5,564 homeless in Greater Manchester, with 1,804 of those in Manchester itself.

homeless.org reported that from 2014 to 2018, the number of rough sleepers grew to 123 people.

Over the last five years, Manchester city council has spent £63 million on the building and maintenance affordable housing, while it's refurbishment of the town hall, a six-year project from 2018-2024, is predicted to cost £326.4 million.

## LABOUR

In a bid to combat the crisis of homelessness in the United Kingdom, the Labour party promised to build new homes at a rate of 150,000 by the end of Parliament.

Furthermore, Labour promises to end rough sleeping within five years and use the levy on holiday homes to do so.

Labour has also stated it will earmark £1 billion a year for councils to spend towards homelessness services.

## CONSERVATIVES

Conservatives intend to eradicate rough sleeping by the end of Parliament by advancing initiatives such as Housing First, and by implementing a stamp duty surcharge on non-UK resident buyers.

It is vague about the creation of new homes, promising to continue its "progress towards our target of 300,000 homes a year by the mid-2020s."

However, it does promise to protect both tenants from no-fault evictions and the possession rights of "good landlords."

## LIBERAL DEMOCRATS

The Liberal Democrats have similar pledged to build total homebuilding extends to 300,000 per year, with 100,000 of those for social rent. All homes will be built to zero carbon standards.

In addition, they intend to enable councils to raise council tax by up to 500% and implement a stamp duty surcharge on overseas homes similar to the Conservatives.

The Lib Dems promise to scrap the Vagrancy Act to decriminalise rough sleeping, to provide emergency accommodation, and to exclude the homeless from the Shared Accommodation Rate, which is the maximum a person can get in benefits when renting a room in a shared house.

## GREEN PARTY

The Green Party vows to create 100,000 new council homes every year, which will use 90% less energy for space heating than other homes and are all served by environmentally friendly transport routes. Recipients of Housing Benefit will continue to receive it.

They will also repeal the Vagrancy Act, but otherwise mentions little about a direct plan to assist rough sleepers and combat the crisis.

Despite his socialist beliefs being far from the extreme they are caricatured to be, Corbyn's policies, while in the right direction, are still too hasty and jarring to attract swing Conservatives in this election.





# Corbyn's 'radicalism' can't beat Johnson

Billy Brake looks at the reasons the Labour leader is struggling to attract swing voters with his plans...

**D**espite his socialist beliefs being far from the extreme they are caricatured to be, Corbyn's policies, while in the right direction, are still too hasty and jarring to attract swing Conservatives in this election.

The pull of the Labour party towards the centre of the political spectrum made sense. James Callaghan's Winter of Discontent and the economic resurgence under the Thatcher administration ensured left-wing policies came under extreme scrutiny.

However, Thatcher's policies, infamous for their decimation of the North and promotion of the city, ensured success for the few not the many.

Blair's new Labour succumbed to the will of the opposition and so the New Labour movement was born, supporting equality of opportunity and the utilisation of the markets to deliver economic efficiency.

Much like Ed Miliband's attempt to pull Labour back to the left, Corbyn and his party champion policies and causes which aim to return Labour to its roots, and to create government they believe is for the people.

But the shift in ideals from Blair to Corbyn mean that politics within Britain has become increasingly polarised, as countless are left between the two and forced to make a choice.

Consequently, British politics is dangerously stepping closer to the disparity the United States is victim to.

And just like the United States, where it will take a more moderate Democratic nominee to draw on-the-fence Republicans away from Trump, so too the same applies to Britain.

If Corbyn hopes to defeat the Conservatives in his election, he has to ensure that his left-wing populism provides a safe space for those repelled by Johnson's leadership.

A recent YouGov poll, conducted with with The Times and Sky News, predicts the Conservatives to beat Labour by a slim margin of only eight percent.

While the Conservatives would maintain their 42 percent margin from 2017, Labour would drop by seven percent, nearly five percent of that seeing the Liberal Democrats rise to twelve percent in 2019.

As such it would appear the Corbyn's campaign of advancing socialist causes, within the British political spectrum, has seen a decline in his popularity. This, or the tiresome figure he cuts at the head of the opposition.

His perceived extreme policies, while undoubtedly satisfying a significant amount of the youth vote seem to have deterred the remainder.

The abolition of tuition fees would cost up to £13.6



billion by the end of parliament, which Corbyn intends to offset by removing the cost of administration and increasing corporation tax.

Furthermore, the policy of nationalising BT Openreach would effectively end market competition in that sector – and eliminate nearly 181,000 jobs, which have yet to be accounted for. It must be presumed they'd be taken into BT as it would expand.

Labour's policies are feasible and logical, that much is true. But they appeal to a specific group and alienates those which outside of this group. Perhaps the want of all political parties, but none more extremely than seen in the current climate.

When it comes down to it, Brexit makes up a significant portion of the December 12 election and Corbyn's refusal to discuss his party's position on Brexit encourages the Conservative camp.

It's not the case that Corbyn is outright the wrong per-

son to defeat Johnson and the Conservatives in this election.

If the debate showed anything, it was the Corbyn appears a far more composed and sophisticated candidate, unafraid to debate in his policies and work towards a more equal Britain.



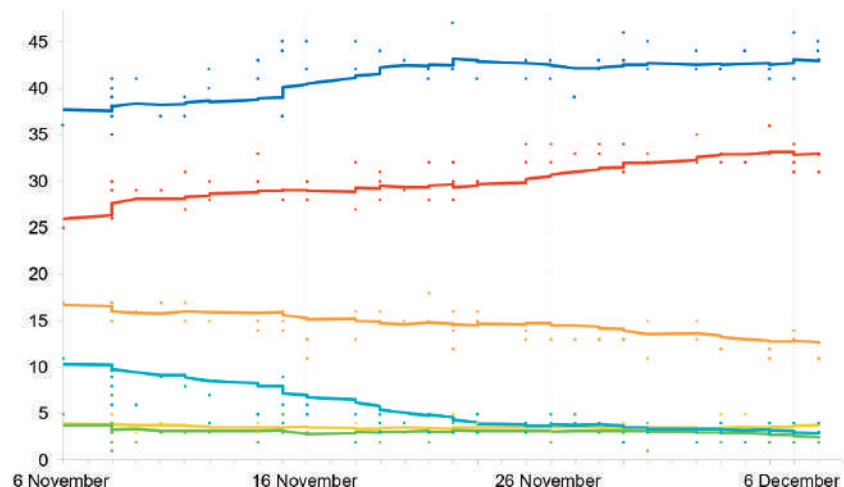
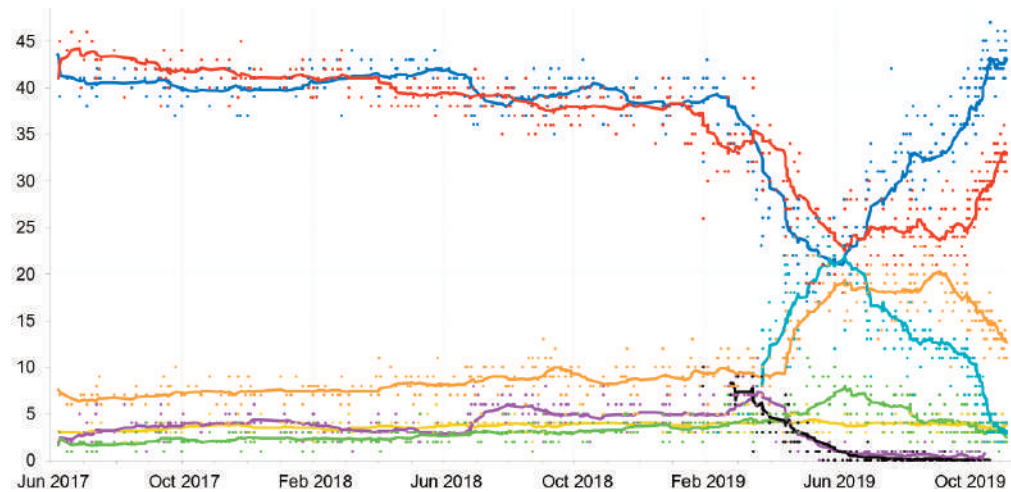
But it will prove a challenging task if he is to maintain such a web of leftist ideals that will be hard-pressed to attract those disillusioned with the Tories.

Labour's manifesto isn't particularly radical, and certainly not be European standards. Government would still have less of a part to play than in a country such as France.

The issue is that it's arguably Labour's most radical manifesto of the last 35 years and Corbyn is seeking a shift in ideology so extreme it's blinded by its hopefulness.

Granted, this is an indictment of the austerity that the United Kingdom has woefully and slowly allowed itself to become accustomed to, and there is undoubtedly a needed change across the country. But while Corbyn's visions may allow for that change, he goes too far to achieve it in one foul swoop.

UK opinion poll trends since the 2017 general election (below) and over the last month of campaigning (bottom).





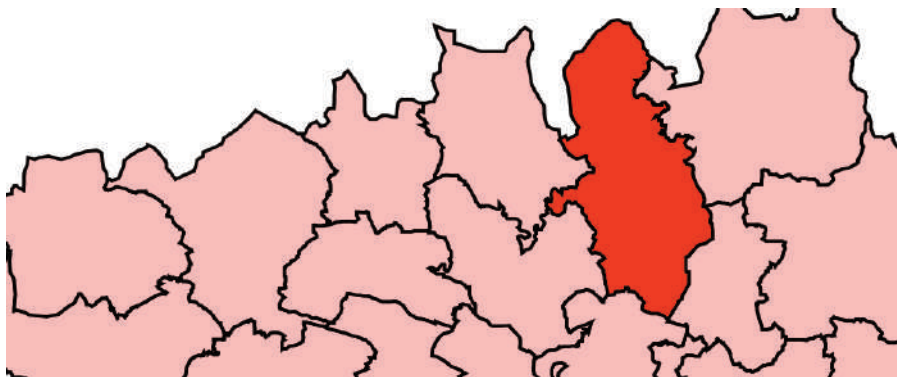
# Meet the Tory vying to end 36 years of Labour rule



*"She hasn't even been bothered to move to the constituency."*

By Chris Bradford

Ever since its creation in 1983, Heywood and Middleton has had 36 years of uninterrupted Labour rule. Situated between Manchester and Rochdale, Liz McInnes has been the MP since winning a by-election in 2014 and she is seeking to increase her majority of 7,617.



In previous elections, Heywood and Middleton would be considered as a safe Labour seat. However, this election could be difficult for McInnes as, if the YouGov MRP poll is to be believed, Labour is only 2% ahead of the Conservatives in this seat – 40 versus 38.

Chris Clarkson is aspiring to become the first Tory MP to make history and become the first Conservative MP to represent the seat. His vote share increased by 18.9% in 2017, compared to the 2015 election, as the UKIP vote collapsed by 25.7%.

In an interview with MM, we discussed all sorts of issues ranging from representation in parliament, Brexit, the police, unemployment and the future of the NHS and a long-term plan for health and social care.

**Why did you decide to contest the election in Heywood and Middleton again?**

"To be honest, because I had such a good time doing it last time (in 2017). I really love the place. I really enjoy working with the people I was working with. There's so much potential there to do really good things for the area. You can sense that people were starting to think that there was something different they could do. I think it has been taken for granted for a very long time by the Labour Party. I think on the ground, people are starting to realise that they have been taken for granted.

**How important is it for Members of Parliament to have a constituency link?**

"In an ideal world, yes they would – but the reality is that they have had an MP who hasn't even been bothered moving to the constituency for five years. I've actually made a pledge to move to the constituency if I win. It is important to be based there, because if you want to represent them then you need to understand what is going on in their day-to-day lives.



We've got the plan to get Brexit done and unleash Britain's potential.

Ten things you need to know about the Conservative Manifesto:

- ✓ Getting Brexit done
- ✓ Strengthening our economy
- ✓ 50,000 more nurses
- ✓ 50 million more GP surgery appointments
- ✓ 20,000 more police
- ✓ Tougher sentencing for criminals
- ✓ An Australian style, points-based immigration system
- ✓ Lowering your taxes
- ✓ Tackling climate change
- ✓ More money for our Armed Forces

As the campaign enters its final week, Clarkson will be hoping to communicate the Tories' policies into 10 commandments in the same way that Boris has done.

**Isn't 'Get Brexit done' misleading given if Boris Johnson manages to secure a working majority given there will be more arduous negotiations ahead?**

"No, because we will have left the EU, that's the whole point. It has been blocked actively by MPs at the moment – including Heywood and Middleton's MP who has voted



against it every single time despite over 60% of her constituents saying that they wanted to leave. We are getting Brexit done by leaving the European Union. As soon as that deal is passed into law, we are no longer members of the European Union.

**20,000 police officers - isn't that just overturning the cuts that took place under the coalition?**

"It's levelling back up to where we were before austerity, absolutely. Some tough decisions had to be made in order to undo some of the massive damage to the economy that Labour had done. But, I think it's a welcome start. Certainly, over the course of the next parliament, I'd like to see what we could do to increase police numbers and give them more powers.



**The Conservatives have never won in the constituency. How are you planning to change the perception of the party?**

"Well, we're not having to do a lot of the work to change that perception. People are looking what's going on around them and they are seeing we're the only ones who are actually talking about what they care about now. We are the only ones listening to them what they said in the referendum in 2016 and we're the only ones who are willing to put our money where our mouth is and deliver.

**The unemployment rate in Heywood and Middleton is 5.6%, above the national average. How will the Conservatives increase employment in the area?**

"Well, I think we will have to be innovative. We are going to look at the reasons that the employment rate is lower in the area. It has to be things like the lack of proper infrastructure to attract businesses to the area. So it's going to be about making sure – one: the conditions are there to attract businesses to the area. Two: there is affordable housing - built, ideally, on brownfield first – that is acceptable to people and is not subject to ridiculous land rent charges. Beyond that, we also need to work with schools to make sure there are the right skill sets available to the industries in the area. I don't want another situation like in Salford Quays where they spend billions of pounds building this fantastic new development where none of the jobs are accessible to local people.

**By not offering a second referendum, is the party worried that there is no support for one specific type of Brexit?**

"No, not at all. Look, a second referendum is just the unicorn that the remain campaign has tossed out because they want to make it sound like they are not trying to ignore the will of the people. That ballot paper had a very simple question on it: remain a member of the European Union, or leave the European Union. People chose the latter option. We have to leave the European Union; it is as simple as that. A second referendum is simply another way of dodging the issue and trying to overturn the referendum result.



**Particularly as the constituency voted 62% to leave the EU in 2016, what impact do you think the Brexit Party will have?**

"Well, luckily we are having enough conversations on the doorstep that they realise that their only real role is to be a spoiler. Liz McInnes must be absolutely delighted that they have decided to stand. Colin Lambert is former Labour member and as far as I am aware, has a bit of a grudge against Liz McInnes and that's why he's standing. So it's not really about Brexit for him at all. But, people are starting to see that – we've had conversations where people have said well I was going to vote Brexit, but I can tell you're the only ones that can beat her.

**Why is the manifesto pledge on health and social care policy vague? Is it just trying to avoid a repeat of 2017?**

"Well, no, I think in reality it's not vague so much as open-ended. The idea is that this is not going to be an issue that can be boxed in one quick sitting. We are going to have to

sit down with all parties because in a democracy, there is going to come a point when we're not the party of government anymore and that policy needs to be sustainable and implementable for all parties. I think it is a national responsibility.

**How can we be certain whether the NHS will remain off the table in any future trade negotiations?**

"It's as simple as this – Boris has said from pretty much the get-go that he is willing to walk away from negotiations with Brexit and in this case, he is willing to walk away from negotiations on trade if there is a red line crossed. It's as simple as that. I mean the only people who are talking about privatised the NHS are the Labour Party, who ironically are the only party which has privatised part of the NHS. It's the same lie they have told in every single election. You don't need to look very far on Twitter to see the clipping from Private Eye where they just show every time the Labour Party have used this lie in an election. And that's all it is, it's a lie.



MM approached the Liz McInnes' (below, right) constituency office, but as of yet, we have not received a response



Colin Lambert, (pictured below) is the Brexit Party candidate in this constituency. He was formerly a Labour councillor and was leader of Rochdale Council between 2010 and 2016.



Responding to Clarkson's accusation, he said: "I am very clear why I joined and campaigned with the Brexit Party. I first campaigned to leave the EU in 1975 when was was 17 (sic). Strangely it was against Labour then.

"I am standing for democracy and the right for people to have their vote respected.

"And unlike the Tory candidate I have lived here for over 40 years and worked here and brought up our children here. Politics must never be about personalities. So he clearly does not know what he is talking about."



Picture: Twitter (@ForChange\_Now)

# The Party Formerly Known as Change UK



As they prepare to fight for three constituencies, *Dan Haygarth* takes a look at the checkered ten month history of the Independent Group for Change

On 18th February, citing dissatisfaction with Jeremy Corbyn's leadership, the Labour party's Brexit policy and its handling of anti-Semitism; seven Labour MPs left the party to form 'The Independent Group'.

Built around the slogan "Politics is broken, let's fix it", the group eventually registered as a party under the name 'Change UK – The Independent Group' and set about becoming a centrist, pro-European Union alternative to the two main parties.

Fast forward to December and the party, now known as 'The Independent Group for Change', is only fielding three candidates for the forthcoming general election and the only change they've managed to bring about has been to their own name.

So, what happened to Change UK?

Well, things didn't exactly start well. Mere hours after announcing that she had left Labour and was part of this new group, Angela Smith, MP for Penistone and Stocksbridge, had to apologise after appearing to refer to people from a BAME background as being of a 'funny tinge' on BBC 2's Politics Live.

Smith's apology overshadowed the group's glitzy press conference reveal, which had drawn praise for its speeches and led some to declare that a new political force was born.

Liverpool Wavertree MP Luciana Berger condemned Labour's handling of anti-Semitism in a passionate and uncompromising speech, saying that she was: "leaving behind a culture of bullying, bigotry and intimidation".

Chuka Umanna, MP for Streatham, dismissed comparisons with the Liberal Democrats, stating that the group wanted to "build a new alternative" and dismissed any possibility of a merger with the party. More of that later.

After initial excitement, the group increased in numbers. Joan Ryan joined from the Labour party the following day, before Anna Soubry, Heidi Allen and Sarah Wollaston left the Conservatives to join a day later.

Despite receiving criticism for no longer representing the parties with whom they were elected, the group was seen by some as the answer to their Brexit-related prayers and the future of centrist politics - a modern equivalent of the SDP. Others weren't so keen, criticising the members' respective voting records and the lack of colour in their branding.

With tinge-gate behind them and their glossy reveals garnering support, the group set to work on changing politics. They decided not to stand in the May local elections, instead focussing on the European elections later in the month. This was where the fun really began.

The group's registration as a political party under the name "Change UK – The Independent Group" was confirmed by the Electoral Commission in April. However, they ran into trouble after their emblem, which contained a hashtag the use of the acronym TIG, were rejected by the commission. Fortunately, the party's bar code-style logo was eye catching and inspiring enough. Who needs a hashtag?

Having cleared that hurdle with relatively little fuss (by the group's standards, at least), they began to announce their candidates for the elections. Former BBC journalist Gavin Esler, writer Rachel Johnson (sister of Boris) and former Polish Prime Minister Jacek Rostowski were their big hitters and were joined by some former Conservative, Lib Dem and Labour MPs and MEPs.

Just a day later, scandal hit again. We had a short-awaited sequel to the tinge-gate moment. MEP candidates Ali Sadjady and Joseph Russo decided to stand down after The Independent uncovered offensive tweets of theirs.

In November 2017, Sadjady posted: "When I hear that 70% of pickpockets caught on the London Underground are Romanian it kind of makes me want Brexit.", while a post of Russo's from 2012 stated: "black women scare me".

Russo, who was the party's lead candidate in Scotland, was replaced by David McDonald. Unfortunately for Change UK, it didn't take long for McDonald to become the first high-profile defector from the party established by defectors.

He encouraged people to vote for the Scottish Liberal Democrats and appeared to start a trend of Change UK members trashing their own party.

Five days before European polling day, Rachel Johnson described herself as the "rat that jumps on the sinking ship" in an interview in The Times, before lamenting Change UK as a "terrible name".

Campaigning wasn't exactly going to plan either. After registering as a political party,



Picture: Twitter (@ForChange\_Now)





First @TheIndGroup meal out before votes tonight at Nando's! - @ChukaUmunna, 25/02/2019

Change UK switched their Twitter handle from @TheIndGroup to @ForChange\_Now. However, they had failed to shut down the former account, meaning it was hijacked by an online prankster, who renamed the account to "Cringe UK" and set to work mocking the party.

Upon announcing their new Twitter page, Change UK stated: "Sadly our former handle has been hijacked by someone making mischief. Our message is clear - politics is broken, we need to change it." Good thing they were such great communicators.

If you're beginning to think that this isn't the best way to prepare for an election, things were about to get a lot worse. Three days before polling day, interim leader Heidi Allen revealed that the party may not exist by the next general election and two days later she stated that she wished to urge remainers to vote for the Lib Dems in the European elections. She did, however, deny that she had considered defecting to the party. Again, more of that later.

Picture: Twitter (@ChukaUmunna)



Polling day came around and Change UK prepared for their big moment. Was this their chance to become the centrist, progressive force that Britain was apparently pleading for? Were they about to become the third party, that would keep our politics in the nice, sensible and grown up centre ground?

In a word, no. The party claimed 3% of the vote and failed to win a single seat. The Liberal Democrats, on the other hand, won 15 new seats and finished second nationally to Nigel Farage's Brexit Party – Change UK's ideological enemies.

The fallout from the election performance was staggering. Needless to say, Anna Soubry wasn't too happy with the result and lambasted Allen's previous comments. She told the Today Programme: "I think it is rather bizarre for an interim leader on the eve of poll to tell people essentially not to vote for their party." She has a point.

Soubry's mood was reflected among the party's MPs, six of whom defected again after a meeting at the start of June. Five of them subsequently formed a non-party group in parliament called "The Independents", just to make sure there wasn't any homogenisation of centrist politics. God forbid people with similar views might work together.

Chuka Umunna, however, made a straight transfer to the Liberal Democrats, reneging on his previous statements. He stated that the idea that Britain's politically homeless wanted a new party was misguided and that he underestimated how difficult it was to create one.

A previous critic of the Liberal Democrats' role in the

coalition government, Umunna seemed to start a trend. Allen, Berger, Wollaston and Smith all followed suit to join their third political party of the year. Change UK was all but dead.

Change UK was, in fact, dead, but out of the ashes rose "The Independent Group for Change". The party was forced into another name change by the behemoth of petitions website Change.org. They had said that the party had hijacked their branding and they had a point. Soubry had once slipped and referred to the party as Change.org in parliament.

What had started with the best intentions and had excited many has crashed and burned. 10 months of shambles have led to the party only contesting the seats of Broxtowe, Ilford South, and Nottingham East at this general election, with Soubry and former Labour MPs Mike Gapes and Chris Leslie battling on.

I'm sure the people of those three constituencies cannot wait for their broken politics to be fixed.

#### The Independent Group for Change Parliamentary Candidates

##### Anna Soubry

Picture: Twitter (@Anna\_Soubry)



A former barrister and journalist, Soubry has been the Member of Parliament for the Nottinghamshire suburban constituency of Broxtowe since 2010.

Formerly of the Conservative Party, where she held the roles of Minister of State for Small Business, Industry and Enterprise and Minister of State for Defence Personnel, Welfare and Veterans, she resigned on the 20th February, stating that, "the right wing, the hard-line anti-EU awkward squad" had taken over the party.

*"She was an excellent Minister and a force in the House of Commons. I will be delighted if she is returned to the next Parliament."*

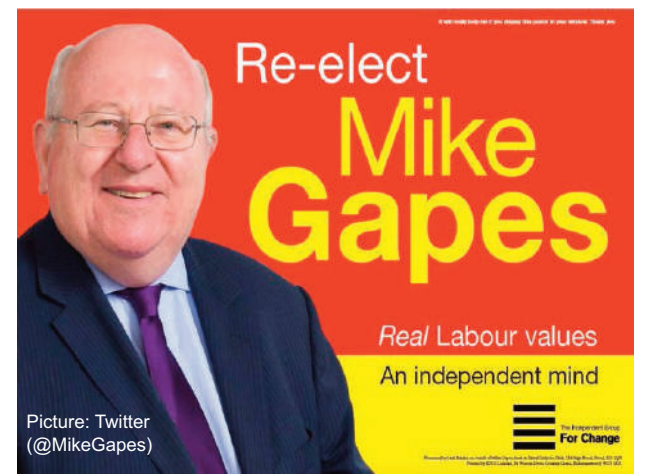
Ken Clarke on Anna Soubry

After joining The Independent Group, Soubry was made Spokesperson for Exiting the European Union and the Ministry of Justice before becoming leader of the party on 4th June, when six of its MPs left following poor results in the European Elections.

She is standing again to be Broxtowe's MP and the Liberal Democrats have stood aside in an effort to ensure that the seat is held by a pro-European Union voice.

However, Soubry will have to face off against The Church of the Militant Elvis Party. Their leader David Bishop is standing in Broxtowe and is concerned with the depletion of the Amazon rainforest, climate change, the power of Tesco on the British high street and the power of large corporations.

##### Mike Gapes



Mike Gapes was the Labour MP for the Greater London constituency of Ilford South from 1992 until he left the party in February's Labour split, from which Change UK was born.

He was a key figure in Tony Blair's Labour party and voted in favour of the government's invasion of Iraq, as well as declaring his wish for closer ties to the European Union.

*"Nearly 10 years of Conservatives in government. But Johnson wants you to believe it was nothing to do with him. Seems that both Johnson and Corbyn have the same denialism disease"*

Mike Gapes

Gapes was consistently critical of Jeremy Corbyn's leadership of the Labour party, lambasting his apology on behalf of the Labour party for the Iraq war.

He has referred to Corbyn as "the racist anti-semitic" and cited the party's current leadership and its handling of Brexit and the anti-semitism crisis as his primary reasons for leaving. He recently drew ire on Twitter for attempting to correct Diane Abbott's punctuation, but Gapes himself was wrong, adding a possessive apostrophe to "its".

Seeking re-election in South Ilford, Gapes has also been criticised for his posters, which share Labour's colour scheme and refer to his previous affiliation with the party.

Picture: Twitter (@ChrisLeslieMP)



##### Chris Leslie

Like Gapes, Chris Leslie was a long-serving Labour member. He has been MP for Nottingham East since 2010 and before then he was Shipley's MP from 1997 to 2005.

Leslie served as Parliamentary Under-Secretary of State for Constitutional Affairs in Tony Blair's government and led Gordon Brown's party leadership campaign in 2007.

Similar to Gapes, Leslie was critical of Jeremy Corbyn's leadership and disagreed with his economic policies in the 2015 leadership election, calling them "starry-eyed, hard left."

Instead he backed Yvette Cooper for the role and resigned from Labour's front bench following Corbyn's victory.

Leslie was one of the six MPs to quit Labour and form The Independent Group in February and is now the party's Spokesman for Economics and Trade.

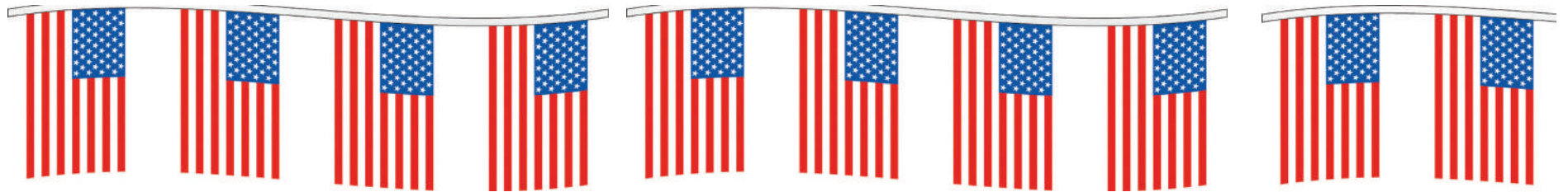
However, YouGov has predicted that his seat will remain Labour, with new candidate Nadia Whittome, who is only 23, estimated to win 59% of the vote.



Picture: Twitter (@ChrisLeslieMP)



# The US View



By Dane Massey

**M**ore often than not, one can generally predict the likely outcome of an election.

In this year's December snap election in the UK, the consensus is that Boris Johnson's Conservatives will gain the most votes, but it remains up in the air whether or not he will get a majority.

Labour Party leader Jeremy Corbyn ran a strong election campaign two-and-a-half years ago. His campaign cut Tory lead from 15% before the campaign was launched to just 2% by the time of the polls as the Conservative Party retained control of the country seven years after gaining power.

Most believe Johnson will still hold the keys to Downing Street come the turn of the year, but elections can spring surprises. Just ask America.

In the 1948 American election, the ever-reliable *New York Times* reported that Republican Thomas E. Dewey was the new US President, only to find out they had reported 'fake news' and that Harry Truman had in fact won the Democrats their fifth straight election.

Twelve years later, the Republicans were unexpectedly ousted again when charismatic Massachusetts Senator John F. Kennedy edged out Vice President Richard Nixon by a 0.2% margin.

The Republicans have been on the right end of Presidential electoral surprises though. The dress-rehearsal came in 1980 when Ronald Reagan, a film star with little political experience, swept away Jimmy Carter during the Cold War with the Soviet Union where the US were threatened with nuclear war following the USSR's invasion of Afghanistan in 1979.

It was a dress-rehearsal for 2016, where long-term business tycoon Donald Trump came from nowhere to ruin Hillary Clinton's dreams of becoming President.

There are alleged scandals behind Trump's victory, namely involving Vladimir Putin and Russia, but the simple truth is that Trump's election campaign was far better than Clinton's.

It's fair to say that Corbyn isn't Trump's biggest fan, but he can certainly take inspiration from the result of the 2016 American election, as well as the Presidential elections of 1948, 1960 and 1980.

Trump's victory was no fluke. It was a resounding one as he took 30 states, with his opposite number Clinton claiming just 20.

Although he was outspoken in relation to issues on the US-Mexico border, Trump's 'America first' policy formed the basis of his electoral campaign – a campaign which proved successful.

The states of Florida, Iowa, Maine, Michigan, Pennsylvania and Wisconsin endured a shift from Democrat in 2012 to Republican in 2016, thus swinging the election in favour of Trump.

Trump also maintained the support of all 24 states who won a Republican majority in 2012.

Four years on, Trump remains popular amongst Americans and he's odds on to win the 2020 Presidential election.

There's no doubt that Trump will stick with his winning formula of 2016 by maintaining his 'America first' stance, but the 2020 election across the Atlantic could arguably affect the UK just as much as the US.

Britain's two electoral candidates have opposing policies when it comes to America; Johnson is pro-America while Corbyn is quite the opposite.

In a January 2018 visit to the UK, Trump made a pledge to Theresa May that Britain would be backed by US military force should the UK become entrapped in any kind of world conflict.

When he visited London again in June 2019, Trump stood beside May and lauded the UK as a "wonderful country," as well as stressing the importance of a close relationship between the UK and the US – referring to US-UK relations as the "greatest alliance in



history."

Trump will return to the UK for a NATO summit on December 3-4 where the White House chief will address the UK public again. He will no doubt be asked to give his views on the election which takes place 10 days after Trump's visit.

He's a proven expert in influencing American voters, and when he visits London he will be attempting to influence British voters ahead of the huge snap election.

Trump has several times expressed his interest of

opening up a trade deal with Britain, and this is something that would be met with open arms by Johnson but almost certainly rejected by Corbyn.

"He'd back Tehran [Iran's capital city] over our 'friends' in America," Johnson said of Corbyn during a House of Commons debate in July.

US-Iran tensions in the Gulf have increased since Trump withdrew the US from the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action in May 2018 which the EU and Russia is also a part of, announcing that the US would instead reinstate nuclear sanctions on Iran.

Should Johnson fulfil his promise of Britain leaving the EU and form closer relations with the US, it could be the case that Britain becomes embroiled in tensions between the US and the Middle East as they did in 1979 – the year Margaret Thatcher was elected.

US foreign policy towards Britain will no doubt differ depending on who gets elected.

From an American point of view though, a Johnson majority would be the best outcome – something Trump made crystal clear last month.

Trump told Brexit Party leader Nigel Farage and LBC radio: "I have a great relationship with many of the [British] leaders, including Boris, who's a fantastic man – I think he's the exact right guy for the times.

"Corbyn would be so bad for the country, he'd be so bad. He'd take you in such a bad way.

"He'd take you into such bad places. But your country [UK] has tremendous potential, it's a great country."

Soon after Trump made his views on British politics clear, Johnson announced the taglines for his election campaign – 'Unleash Britain's potential.'

Make of that what you like, but if it works as effectively as Trump's 'America first' policy in the United States three years ago, then Johnson will gain the majority he so badly needs.





# Is the revolution coming again? How do Saint Petersburg in 1917 and London in 2019 compare?

By Dane Massey

**O**n October 12th 1942, former Chinese leader and Communist dictator Mao Zedong wrote an editorial in Shanghai Communist newspaper *Liberation Daily* entitled 'The Turning Point in World War II.'

He was referring to the Battle of Stalingrad as the "Red Verdun," with the German army halted in eastern Russia in World War Two as they had been in Verdun in the First World War.

The French Second Army halted the German advance in Verdun in 1916 in World War One on the western front, and the far left Communist forces of Russia stopped their Nazi counterparts in the winter of 1941/42 on the eastern front.

But how had the two extreme political forces of Nazism and Communism been given the pathway to exist together?

Think back to 1917 when a certain Vladimir Ilyich Ulyanov – Lenin – returned from exile in Switzerland, to launch the biggest and most successful socialist revolution in history. The seeds of Stalinism, and consequently Nazism and Maoism, had been sown.

With the continent of Europe in a war of attrition during the First World War, Russia lost confidence in Tsar Nicolas II who abdicated in March 1917, so conditions for Lenin to organise a coup had finally arose.

Alexander Kerensky's Provisional Government was up in tatters and the workers lost confidence both in the Tsar and in the Provisional Government, so joined forces with Lenin's Bolsheviks to successfully overthrow the right and seize an unprecedented form of power at the time.

What followed was the darkest chapter in the history of the whole world.

When an ideology as big as Marxism comes to the fold, and a leader as charismatic as the ruthless Lenin is at the head of a unique revolution, opposition will inevitably form and consequently multiply – and that's just what happened.

Civil War followed World War when Alexander Kolchak's white anti-Communist movement collided with Lenin's Bolsheviks fighting for power in Russia.

Lenin's forces emerged victorious, but at the cost of their leader falling ill and eventually dying in 1924.

To this day, Lenin remains the single most influential political figure of the twentieth-century. Leninism indirectly led to Stalinism.

Stalinism in Russia largely gave rise to Nazism as a counter-force. It also laid the blueprint for Maoism in China, who like Russia, overthrown a long standing dynastical regime using the conditions of a World War to their advantage.

Communism was a detested force, and in his rallies German leader Adolf Hitler repeatedly expressed his desire to crush Communist Russia and use it as 'living

space.'

This was in essence, the pre-existing conditions of the Battle of Stalingrad which Mao went on to label a "turning point in history" – with Soviet victory resulting in Communism further on the rise as Nazism began to decline.

Mao was proven right. The spread of Communism after World War Two led to a Cold War between the historically anti-Communist United States and Russia under Soviet rule.

But to put it bluntly, the Cold War didn't start in 1945 - the Cold War started in 1917.

The 1917 Revolution wasn't a victory for the workers, it was a defeat. Under Marx-

would be wrong because there could well be a twist in the plot between now and the election.

It's important to note that in 1917, Russian workers saw Lenin's promises as an opportunity for freedom, and many UK citizens currently see a Corbyn government as an opportunity for them to break free from and better their position in the of the system of business and commerce.

Corbyn is promising a lot for the workers, as Lenin did in 1917.

However, these promises have been exposed as both disingenuous and cruel to the naive electorate who would vote for Corbyn.

Debunkers include director of the Institute for Fiscal Studies (IFS) Paul Johnson, who last month said: "It's impossible to understate just how extraordinary this manifesto is in terms of the sheer scale of money being spent and raised through the tax system. "The Labour manifesto suggests they want to raise £80bn of tax revenue and they suggest that all of that will come from companies and people earning over £80,000-a-year. That is simply not credible. "You cannot raise that kind of money in our tax system without affecting individuals.

"If you are looking at transforming society, which the Labour Party is absolutely upfront about doing, then you need to pay for it and it can't be somebody else that pays for it. We collectively will need to pay for it."



ist-Leninist rule, the Soviet Union and China became politically, socially and most importantly economically broken. Although it appeared so at first, there were no winners of the October Revolution in 1917. It wasn't a coup for the Russian workers; it was a coup for the socialist government.

And if Jeremy Corbyn seizes power on December 12th, Downing Street in the 21st century will become the centre point for the start of a potential social democratic revolution, just as the Winter Palace was in the 20th century.

And just like in winter 1917, there will be no winners if Corbyn wins a majority.

Like the Provisional Government in 1917, Conservative Party leadership is being questioned after three-and-a-half years of failing to deliver a Brexit deal that satisfies Brussels and the European Union.

Current Conservative Party leader Boris Johnson is favourite to win the election, but writing Corbyn off



What does remain certain is that if Corbyn wins the election, Britain will have more enemies than they do friends on the world stage – including potentially their most important ally – the United States.

In 1917, there was the ongoing problem of the First World War. In 2019, there's the ongoing problem of Brexit negotiations.

They're two very different situations, but it emphasises the difference between the two worlds and what's happened over the past century.

Whatever happens on December 12th, Britain must move forward and deal with the real issues at hand – the more serious issues than Brexit, such as climate change, the NHS and other public service.

If it doesn't, then more divisions will occur both nationally and worldwide, and the many current ones will intensify just as was the case after the 1917 October Revolution.

That ended well, didn't it?

## The October Revolution

There were two revolutions in Russia in 1917- the 'February Revolution' which seen the Provisional Government forced the Tsar to abdicate and 'October Revolution' which seen the Bolsheviks overthrow the Provisional Government.

Lenin was influenced by German philosopher Karl Marx and Russian revolutionary democrat Nikolay Gavrilovich Chernyshevsky, who believed in violent revolution.

The year 1917 seen an overthrow of the Romanov Dynasty which ruled Russia for over 300 years.

Civil War (1918-21) followed the revolution

When Lenin died in 1924, the leadership struggle to replace Lenin was a long one eventually won by Joseph Stalin in 1929.





**Daniel Rees looks at how the General Election is playing out north of the border.**

**N**ext Thursday's General Election has been dubbed 'the Brexit election' – a fitting label given the result will shape how the UK goes about negotiating its departure from the European Union.

But the outcome will have more than just a bearing on what kind of deal will be agreed in Brussels. The future of the union itself will be heavily influenced by whichever party wins a majority next week, for both the Labour and Conservative parties – despite pledging to maintain the union – have proposed differing means of keeping the UK together. A coalition with either the Liberal Democrats or the Scottish Nationalist Party brings further complications still.

It is a well-worn cliché that Brexit has divided the nation. Yet in Scotland's case, the nation was already divided, instead on the question of independence. Brexit has therefore split Scotland a second time: there are voters who are pro-union and pro-Brexit, pro-union and anti-Brexit, anti-union and pro-Brexit, and anti-union and anti-Brexit.

This makes for a mind-boggling conundrum for the Labour, Conservative, and Liberal Democrat parties as to how they garner support north of the border, for their appeal is dwarfed by the SNP. With 59 seats available in Scotland, the lack of appeal of the three main UK parties to Scottish voters firstly weakens their election prospects; it secondly loosens the ties between and the rest of the UK.

For Scottish voters, this election boils down to what they oppose more: Brexit or independence. At the 2014 Independence Referendum, Scotland voted by 55% to 45% to remain in the union. Two years later at the European Union Referendum, Scotland voted overwhelmingly in favour of staying within the EU (62% to 38%). The independence question had ostensibly been quashed by the 2014 Referendum defeat; but in the face of the Brexit result, it has re-emerged as a matter of real political urgency. Being forced to leave the EU against Scotland's wishes massively strengthened the case for independence, for Scottish voters will be handed the opposite of what they voted for in what was the most important vote in living memory.

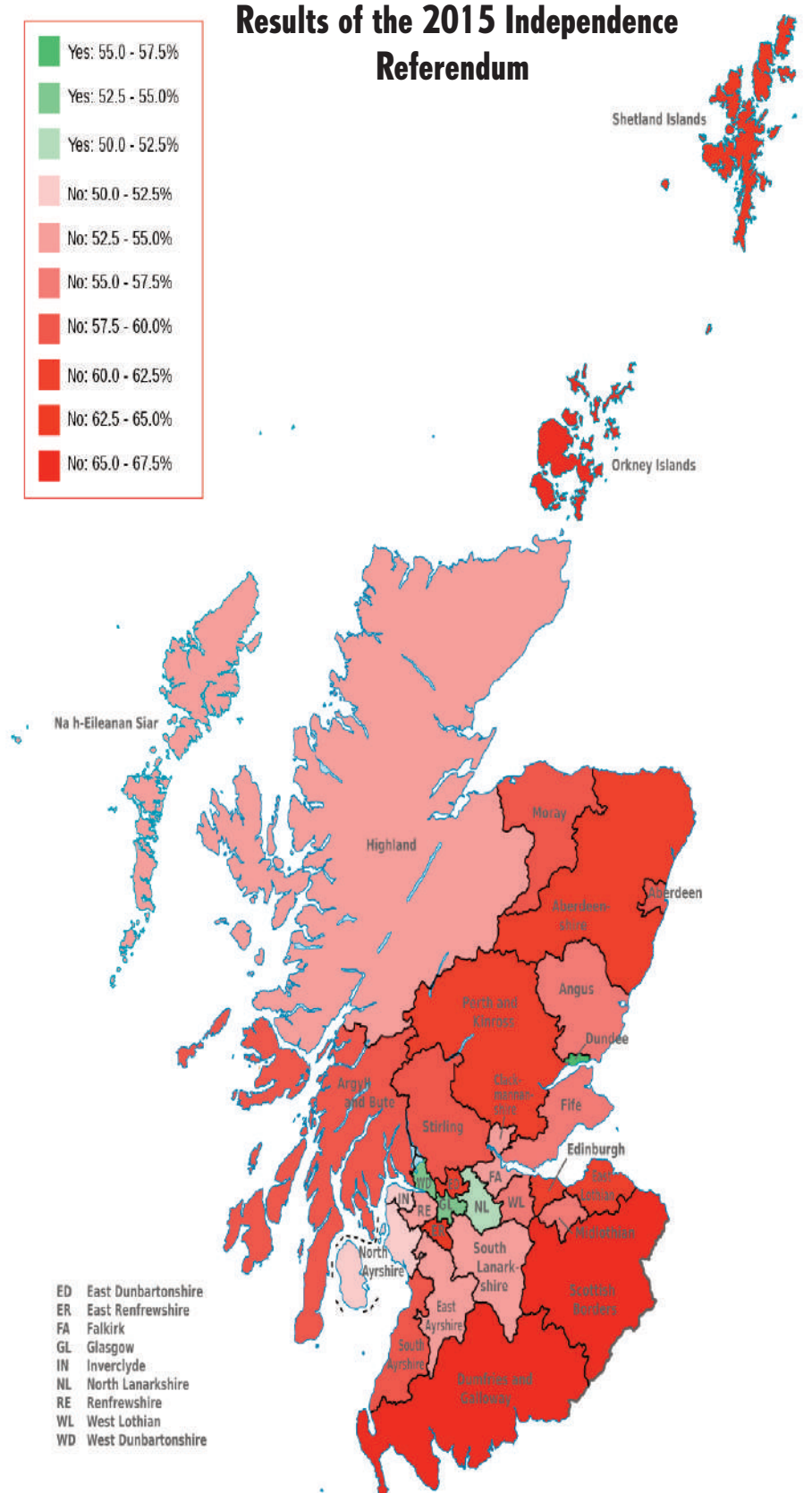
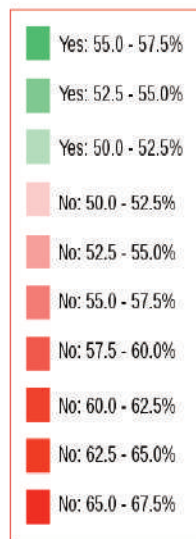
So how does each party try and win seats in Scotland, and how optimistic are their prospects? Let us first look at the results at the previous two elections in Scotland and how each party fared.

The 2015 General Election came less than a year after Scotland voted No to independence. In spite of this, the SNP accrued 56 of the 59 available seats. That the SNP won 95% of the seats on offer was an astonishing result – but given it was with 50% of the popular vote, the number of seats won became a somewhat misleading statistic. Part of their success in 2015 was down to the personal appeal of Nicola Sturgeon, who had succeeded Alex Salmond as the leader of the SNP in the aftermath of the referendum defeat. The party had also shifted the focus of their campaign to devolved powers. It revolved less religiously around the question of independence. Switching their focal point away from nationalism actually worked in the SNP's favour, as this saw them extend their appeal from beyond their base of nationalist supporters.

This self-same election saw the other three major parties' fortunes plummet. The Labour, Conservative, and Liberal Democrat parties were left with one seat each. Whereas the Conservatives performed predictably poorly, clinging onto their one and only seat of Dumfriesshire, Clydesdale and Tweeddale, Labour's performance was worse still. Miliband saw his party lose 39 seats in a disastrous result. The Liberal Democrats, meanwhile, lost ten of their eleven seats, leaving them with the UK's northernmost seat of Orkney and Shetland.

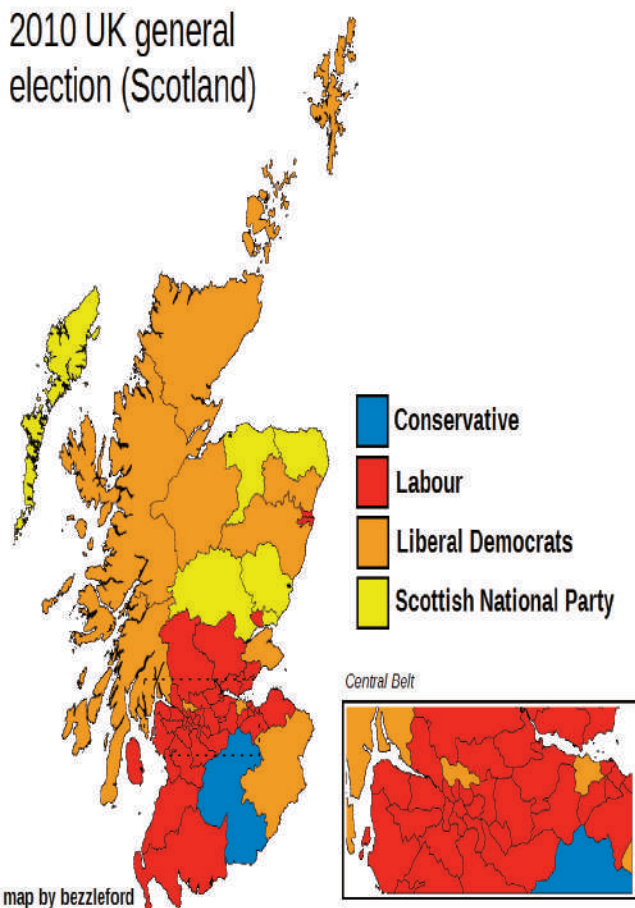
The 2017 campaign told a different story. One year after the UK voted to leave the EU, Sturgeon's SNP suffered a multitude of surprise defeats, losing 21 seats to leave their total at 35.

**Results of the 2015 Independence Referendum**

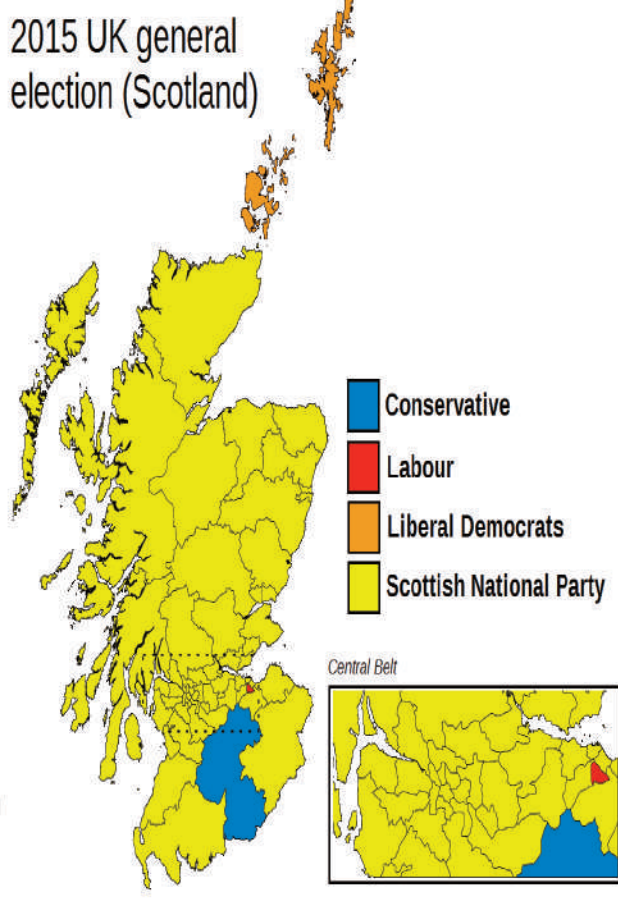




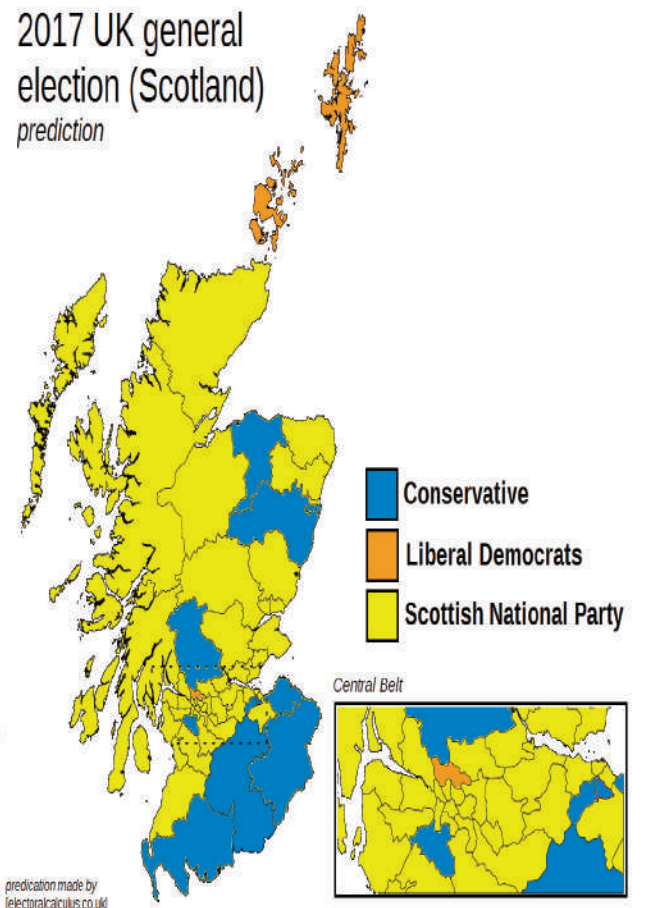
## 2010 UK general election (Scotland)



## 2015 UK general election (Scotland)



## 2017 UK general election (Scotland) prediction



Both Labour and the Lib Dems vaguely recovered their fortunes, each gathering a handful of seats. But it was Ruth Davidson's Conservatives that rallied in response to the SNP's diminishing appeal, upping their tally to 13 seats – their best performance since 1983.

The key reason behind to this performance was that Leave voters in Scotland prioritised leaving the EU over leaving the UK. Brexit held a stronger sway over voters than independence, even if Scottish Brexit voters were in the minority.

The forthcoming election, however, is highly unlikely to see the Conservatives, Labour, and the Lib Dems hold on to their new-found ground in Scotland. Whereas previous elections had straddled the right-wing versus left-wing dichotomy, the General Election 2019 will be decided on voters' position on Brexit – and this is where the major UK parties fall down. The SNP's position on Brexit is far more appealing to Scottish voters than that of any other party.

Sturgeon's party is clear that remaining in the EU is the crucial point, but the only way in which to do so is to leave the UK. This is an attractive position for Remain voters (which made up 68% of Scotland's electorate in 2017) and Yes voters, many of whom are emboldened by the EU referendum result.

The Conservative position is unequivocal on independence – each Scottish Conservative candidate has signed a pledge that opposes any attempt by the SNP to hold a second referendum. Yet whilst the Conservatives vow to keep Scotland in the UK – appealing to pro-unionists – they simultaneously aver to take the UK out of the EU, thereby alienating the 68% of Scottish voters who opted to remain. The Conservative

campaign in Scotland therefore emphasises independence in the hope that there are more pro-union voters than there are pro-Brexit – and that they feel more strongly about the UK than they do the EU. This message, as well as the absence of the affable Ruth Davidson, makes for a problematic combination for the party. Though their approach to independence is clear, it is a thinly veiled distraction for their position on Brexit that risks disaffecting the majority of Scottish voters. They appeal to only a narrow demographic of those who voted Leave in 2016 and No in 2014.

Labour's stance is less clear-cut, and it is because of this that they are less appealing to the Scottish electorate than they have ever been. Although Labour do not endorse Scottish independence, they are prepared to offer Scotland an independence referendum should they win power – two seemingly contradictory messages. Their Brexit position is equally conflicted in that they want to negotiate a deal with the EU and put it to a second referendum in 2020. Voters who voted No or Leave are more likely to vote Conservative, and voters who voted Yes and Remain are more likely to vote SNP. Kezia Dugdale, the former leader of the Scottish Labour Party, neatly summed up her party's predicament: "This is an election were voters want full-fat choices: Yes or No, Leave or Remain. Labour is offering diet versions of both Brexit and independence." This is what will see Labour struggle in Scotland, where their prominence was once one of their major strengths.

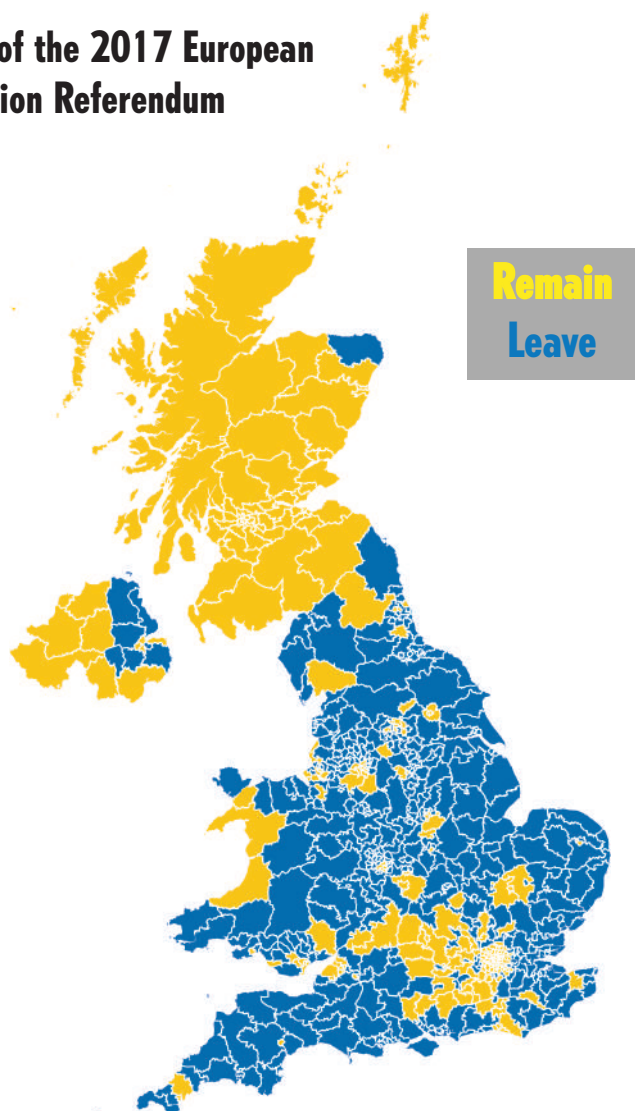
The Liberal Democrats are different case again. They are staunchly committed to revoking Article 50 and keeping Scotland in the UK. Their approach is far

less ambiguous than Labour's in that the Lib Dems appeal directly Remain voters and No voters, both of which make up the majority of Scottish voters after the 2014 and 2017 referenda. Ostensibly, the Lib Dems should be very appealing to the Scottish electorate, but Sturgeon's SNP are seen as a much more natural party of power, and the Conservatives more aggressive stance on the unionist cause is of stronger appeal to No voters.

The SNP therefore have a very strong chance of regaining the large swathes of ground they lost at the 2017 election. As Professor Sir Tom Devine, historian at the University of Edinburgh has predicted, the barrier standing between the SNP and a result akin to 2017 is the obstinacy of No voters: "[This is] the stubborn robust nature of the anti-independence position in Scotland. It's a 50/50 split in terms of polls over independence and there's still therefore a very large number of people in Scotland who are fundamentally opposed to a referendum and to independence. That is the basic reason why the conservative vote is holding up."

This brings us back to what the Scottish electorate are more opposed to. Voters opposed to independence are most likely to see the Conservatives as their party of choice. Those who voted Remain will see the SNP as the best option. Either way, it would take a momentous swing to further displace the SNP – and even then, the Scottish Independence question would merely be kicked into the long grass. Regardless of the result, the future of union will grow ever more precarious as the Brexit process continues.

## Results of the 2017 European Union Referendum



First Minister Nicola Sturgeon has led an SNP government at Holyrood since 2014





# Labour and Conservative manifestos... the small print



**You've seen the headlines, but there's a lot more inside...**



**T**he Conservative and Labour manifestos have both been released ahead of polling day on December 12th.

Realistically, few people – bar the seriously committed – will read through the entire things. Die-hard party devotees will likely vote for their party of choice regardless of what either manifesto says.

But for the voters who are on the fence, willing to be swayed, or just interested in learning more about what each party stands for, the manifesto is vital reading.

For the parties themselves, the manifesto represents no less than their entire purpose; it can be the linchpin of a successful campaign.

There's another bonus, too. Public debate seems to have been largely focussed on Brexit for the past three years, and while it is not doubt an important issue, there are some that think that domestic issues have been overshadowed by it.

Party manifestos are a chance for each party to lay out their proposals across all issues which affect the country and the world, from climate change to social care, the NHS to local government and many more.

Again, with Brexit dominating the political landscape, it may be a welcome change to read up on what else the parties believe in.

Headlines across the country will pick out the major aspects of each manifesto, but having a proper rifle through the pages will usually reveal some interesting kernels of information.

Did you know, for example, that Labour will immediately recognise the state of Palestine? At a time when the party must surely scrutinise every single

step it takes towards any issue involving Israel or Judaism, this is a particularly stand-out aspect of the manifesto.

In addition, The party is also planning on instigating an investigation into the effects of British Colonialism over the years.

In terms of social policies, we can expect an extra £1bn per-year investment to tackle homelessness.

The Conservatives were the last of the major parties to release their manifesto.

It is certainly more 'safe' than Labour's proposal; much of the pages reference what the party has already been doing so far into its parliamentary stint.

Much of the big numbers have already been splashed across the media. 50,000 extra nurses and more police officers, for instance.

However, new laws on animal sentience, an increase in teacher starting salaries and an increase in the amount that overseas NHS users will have to pay may have been skimmed over by many outlets.

Find out more about the policies here, and use the page numbers to go straight to the relevant manifesto page.





# Labour...

*An income tax increase for those earning £80,000 or more, abolition of University tuition fees, free broadband, nationalisation of rail, mail and water, and a second EU referendum have been headline-making aspects of Labour's manifesto so far. Here's some of the small print.*

## Permanent fracking ban - page 8

...in addition to '90% of electricity and 50% of heat from renewable and low-carbon sources by 2030'.

## Remove need for food banks in 3 years - page 12

...and halve food bank usage within one year.

## End to mixed-sex hospital wards - page 16

## Ban fast-food restaurants near schools - page 17

## Extend paid maternity leave to 12 months - page 20

## Scrap primary school SAT exams - page 21

## Establish a Royal Commission into substance abuse - page 24

...the party say this will focus on 'harm reduction rather than criminalisation'.

## Bring PFI prisons back in-house - page 25

...plus no new private prisons.

## Appoint a Commissioner for Violence against Women and Girls - page 26

## Look into a legal right of public interest defence for journalists - page 29

## Ban unpaid internships - page 33

## Introduce a broader 'public takeover test' to prevent hostile takeovers - page 34

## Misogyny and violence against women will become hate crimes - page 36

## Reinstate the Access to Elected Office Fund - page 37

...to enable disabled people to run for elected office.

## Scrap 2014 Immigration Act - page 38

## £1bn Fire Safety Fund - page 43

...for sprinkler etc. in all high-council and housing association tower blocks. In addition, the party also says it will enforce the replacement of 'dangerous Grenfell-style cladding on all high-rise homes and buildings.'

## Levy on overseas companies buying housing - page 45

## Earmark an additional £1bn a year for councils' homelessness services - page 46

## Extra £1.9bn to end austerity in Northern Ireland - page 48

## Conduct an audit of impact of British Colonialism - page 52

## Suspension of arms sales to Israel/Yemen - page 53

...the party has vowed to halt the sale of arms to Saudi Arabia for use in Yemen and also to halt the sale of arms to Israel 'used in violation of the human rights of Palestinian civilians'.

## Recognition of Palestine - page 54

...the party has suggested it would work towards a 'two-state solution – a secure Israel alongside a secure and viable state of Palestine'. It has said it would 'immediately recognise the state of Palestine'.

## Issue full apology to black and Asian colonial soldiers - page 55

...this apology will be made to black and Asian soldiers who fought in Britain's colonial armies and 'explore ways to compensate them for the discriminatory demob payments they received compared to their white counterparts'.



# Conservatives...

*50,000 more NHS nurses, 20,000 more police officers, a Brexit date in January, a points-based immigration system and a £14 bn increase for school funding over three years have been main highlights of the Tory manifesto. What else have they said?*

## £5k - 8k maintenance grant for nursing students - page 10

This comes after the party had previously scrapped nursing bursaries back in 2017.

## Introduce an 'NHS Visa' - page 10

This will give qualified overseas medical professionals fast-track access to the UK if they are offered an NHS job.

## Increase NHS surcharge paid by those from overseas - page 11

## Extra £1bn every year for social care staff - page 12

## Raising teacher starting salaries to £30k - page 13

## Raise National Insurance Threshold to £9,500 - page 15

...the party say this would represent a tax cut for 31 million workers.

## Publish a National Strategy for Disabled People in 2020 - page 17

...this will 'look at ways to improve the benefits system, opportunities and access for disabled people in terms of housing, education, transport and jobs'.

## Cut the number of foreign nationals in UK prisons - page 18

...and increase penalties to stop them returning.

## Make intentional trespass a criminal offence - page 19

...on travellers, the party say they would give police new powers to arrest and seize property and vehicles from 'trespassers who set up in unauthorised encampments'.

## People will no longer be allowed to claim child benefits if their child lives overseas - page 23

## Publish an English Devolution White Paper - page 29

...the party stresses its ambition for 'full devolution across England'

## £1bn investment into a fast-charging network for cars - page 27

...the aim, according to the party, is to have everyone within 30 miles of an electric vehicle fast-charging station.

## Reduce business rates for retail businesses - page 32

## Double max prison term for tax fraud - page 35

...to 14 years for 'the most egregious examples of tax fraud', and implement the Digital Services Tax.

## Extend the entitlement to leave for unpaid carers to a week - page 39

## Ban export of plastic waste to non-OECD countries - page 43

## In Northern Ireland, devolve responsibility for corporation tax - page 44

## Review alcohol duty - page 46

...to ensure that our tax system is supporting British drink producers'.

## Repeal Section 40 of the Crime and Courts Act 2014 - page 48

...and not go forward with the second stage of the Leveson Inquiry.

## Back a potential UK and Ireland bid for the 2030 FIFA World Cup - page 51

## Introduce a veteran's railcard - page 52

## Introduce new legislation to tackle the vexatious legal claims that undermine our Armed Forces - page 52

## New laws on animal sentience and ban imports from trophy hunting of endangered animals - page 54

## £500 million Blue Planet Fund to protect oceans - page 55



# “There is no Planet B” warn Manchester Greens

*Manchester Central candidate Melanie Horrocks on why this is 'The Environment Election' and not a second Brexit referendum*



By Elizabeth Botcherby

Next Thursday's election is being billed by politicians and the media alike as *The Brexit Election*. A second EU referendum in all but name. Boris Johnson's "Get Brexit Done" versus Jeremy Corbyn's promise of people's vote.

However, whilst everyone is getting sucked into this tired narrative, the Green Party are desperately trying to shine the light on another issue this election: the environment.

Speaking to *Mancunian Matters*, Green Party candidate Melanie Horrocks (*above, inset*) said "Brexit is important to a lot of people but this really is an environment election. There is a climate emergency and we can't ignore it."

She continued, "Brexit is something I am fundamentally against but, for all the bad things I fear would come with it, it is reversible. Brexit itself is a reversal of 1975 when we elected to join the common market. But, we can't reverse a climate emergency if we don't act now so for us as a party it really is climate first."

"The science is telling us how serious the situation is," she stressed. "Brexit can be undone if it is the will of the next generation but if we see a rise in temperature across the planet, if we lose Venice and the Arctic that can't be undone."

The party has pledged £100 billion a year to cut carbon emissions, the planting of 700 million new trees by 2030 and a ban on single use plastics as well as significant investments in social care and the NHS. Their manifesto has been praised by Greenpeace, topping their climate league table with 38 out of a possible 40 points.

Their closest rival, Labour, had over twice as many points as the Conservatives but Ms Horrocks does not believe that any party is taking the climate emer-

gency as seriously as the Greens.

"The nearest to us [environmentally] is Labour but even they don't go as far as we need to go. They talk about new fossil fuel investments which isn't made better by planting a few trees," she said.

"There is an awful lot of good in all of the manifestoes. [The problem is] everyone is running to catch up with where we've been for a long time and they just haven't got near yet."

Ms Horrocks is standing for election in Manchester Central, an historic labour stronghold with the city centre at its heart and compass points of Hulme, Moss Side, Bradford and Moston. Incumbent Labour Co-op MP Lucy Powell holds a substantial 31,445 majority whilst Labour have taken more than 50% of the vote in every election since the seat was created in 1974.

In 2017, the Green candidate (Rachael Shah) received only 846 votes and Ms Horrocks acknowledges that it would take a swing of astronomical proportions to see her on a train to London on the 13th.

For that reason she is using her place on the ballot to encourage people to vote for what they believe in instead of voting tactically.

She accepts that tactical voting is a necessary evil in swing seats, especially with a divisive topic like Brexit at the forefront of everyone's minds, but, with Labour a shoo-in in Manchester Central, she sees this election as an opportunity for Mancunians to raise their environmental voice.

"Whoever Labour put up will be elected. It's about giving people a voice and an opportunity to vote for what they believe in," she said. "A vote for the Greens sends a message to the other parties that the environment is important."

Dispelling the myth that a green vote is a wasted vote, she continued, "If everyone who told me they would vote Green if we stood a chance actually did

vote Green, we would have a parliament full of Green MPs!"

Another item on her campaign agenda is to encourage people to think local when marking their ballot.

"Look at what's happening in your local area and consider what's best for it. Look at what we're saying and what we can offer you. You aren't voting for Jeremy Corbyn in Manchester. There is more to the election than who ends up in Number 10."

If the improbable happens, and Ms Horrocks becomes the first person to oust Labour from Manchester Central, she has grand plans for the constituency. Education and access to legal aid are high on her priorities but her main bugbear is cycling infrastructure.

"One of the things that drives me bonkers about this city is the transport," she said. "We don't have good bike provisions. I send my partner and my son off on bikes and it terrifies me. We shouldn't have cyclists having to wear helmet mounted cameras in case they get knocked off."

She promises a cycle network in the style of Amsterdam or Berlin with designated cycle paths, storage facilities and spaces for bikes on trams and buses to make green commuting more accessible.

"[These changes] would revolutionise my constituent's lives," she proclaims.

Returning from that dreamy scenario, Melanie Horrocks has one final message for voters not only in Manchester Central but the city as a whole:

"Go and look at the children protesting outside Central Library on a Friday. Vote for them because there is no Planet B."

*Manchester Central candidates: Lucy Powell (Labour Co-Op), Shaden Jaradat (Conservative), John Bridges (Liberal Democrats), Melanie Horrocks (Green Party), Sarah Chadwick (Brexit Party) and Dennis Leech (Socialist Equality Party).*



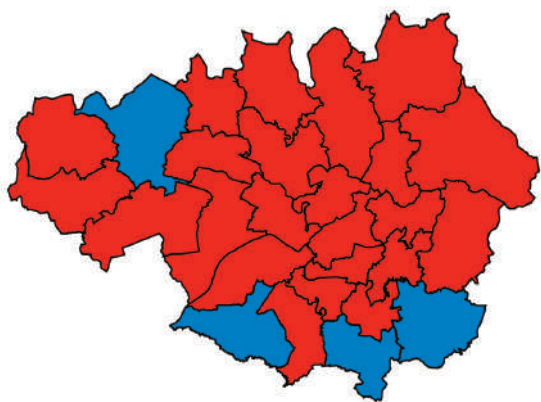
# Facts and figures: the key election numbers



## Stats behind the ballot in Greater Manchester

By Elizabeth Botcherby

**27** Number of constituencies in Greater Manchester. Currently, Labour hold 21 seats, Conservatives 4 and 1 each for Change UK (formerly Labour) and Independent (Labour).



The size of Conservative Chris Green's (below, left) majority in Bolton West in 2017, the smallest in Greater Manchester. Labour's Afzal Khan (below, right) had the highest with 31703 in Mcr Gorton.

**936**



**1**

Number of MPs who are standing down for this election. Stockport's Ann Coffey served as the area's MP from 1992 to 2019, firstly for Labour and later Change UK after resigning from the party earlier this year.

**3**

Number of seats where Labour and Conservatives did not occupy the top two positions on the ballot in 2017.



Bury South has the most candidates on a single ballot with eight.

**27,095**

Size difference between the smallest and largest constituencies in Greater Manchester. Hazel Grove is the smallest with 63,166 people whilst Manchester Central is the largest with 90,261.

The number of different parties standing across Greater Manchester

**13**

- Labour
- Conservative
- Lib Dems
- Green
- UKIP
- Brexit
- Monster Raving Loony Party
- Independent
- Communist League
- Socialist Equality
- Liberal
- Women's Equality
- Proud of Oldham and Saddleworth

**55.1%**

Manchester Central had the lowest voter turnout in 2017 with just over half of the 90,261 constituents turning out to vote. Cheadle had the highest voter turnout with 74.3%.



**22 yrs**

The longest serving MPs who are standing for election are: Conservative Sir Graham Brady (Altrincham and Sale West, left), Ivan Lewis (Independent, Bury South) and Sir David Crausby (Labour, Bolton NE) who were elected in 1997.





# So, what do YOU think? In three words sum up the election

Emma Downey and Liv Clarke took to the streets to see what the public had to say about the upcoming election. Responses ranged from angry, witty and a plea for help.







**A**s the much anticipated general election nears the finish line, politicians are on a countdown sweating and squirming in their seats hoping a magical dust descends upon them bringing the election votes in their favour.

They may be in the middle of their campaigns; however, their voters are indulging in a spot of Christmas shopping, cups of mulled wine and mine pies at the Christmas Markets.

MM's Liv and Emma decided to extinguish some of their festive spirit as they took to the streets of Manchester to ask the great British Public the best question since chip barm or butty – what three words would you use to describe this election?

It was no easy task as some people were quick to declare that their words wouldn't be publishable while others ran for the hills when we mentioned the word 'election'. But there were some interesting responses.

Armed with photos of the key political players, Boris Johnson, Jeremy Corbyn, Jo Swinson, Nicola Sturgeon and Nigel Farage, we asked people to pose with the person they loved or hated.

While most people opted to give their three words on the upcoming election, others decide to go straight for the politician.

What is certain is these responses captured the mood of the nation; we are divided by vastly different parties and exhausted by what is the third general election in four years.

Brace yourselves for the answers.





# General Election for dummies (or people that don't like politics)



From how to vote, to choosing a candidate, to understanding what safe seats and tactical voting means, we've got the general election covered for people who struggle to understand or find interest in politics...

## Could Lib Dems win Cheadle and Hazel Grove seats in NW?

By Emma Gibbs

**Up in Greater Manchester the Liberal Democrats are proving popular in the parliamentary constituencies of both Cheadle and Hazel Grove in Stockport.**

Despite Conservative coming out slightly higher in voting intention estimates there is currently a 5% margin between the two parties in Cheadle, and just over 10% in Hazel Grove.

The two parties have been battling for the votes.

Over the past two elections Conservative won the Cheadle seat in 2015 and again in 2017 with Mary Robinson standing as MP for the constituency. Conservatives secured 8.3% majority of the vote.

Robinson took the post from Liberal Democrats who won in 2010 with Mark Hunter.

Robinson is standing as candidate for Cheadle again.

Robinson is prioritising the protection of green spaces, investing in roads and railways, effective local policing, improving the standards of education as well as championing charities and community groups.

Tom Morrison is a new Liberal Democrat candidate for Cheadle.

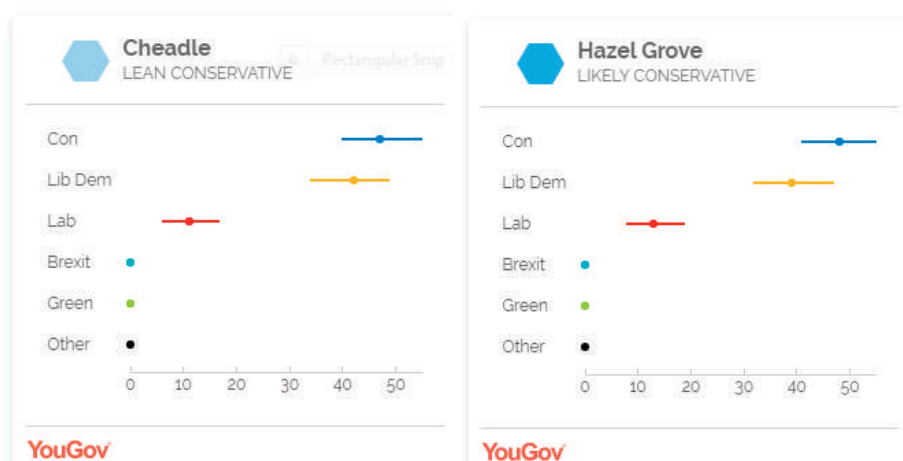
Morrison is vowing to beat the Conservatives with his priorities for Cheadle including fighting for more police funding, demanding better support for Stepping Hill and NHS services and the provision of more affordable homes for local people.

Morrison aspired to join the Liberal Democrats after the party got his mum a council house and became aware of the "positive impact politics could have on people's Lives."



MARY ROBINSON  
CONSERVATIVE CANDIDATE FOR CHEADLE

TOM MORRISON  
LIB DEM CANDIDATE FOR CHEADLE



The third and final candidate for Cheadle is Zahid Chauhan who is standing for the Labour Party. Chauhan is a GP and currently cabinet member for health and social care at Oldham council. He is also the creator of the Homeless-Friendly Charity which helps vulnerable people in the community. Chauhan is rooting for a smoother Brexit deal and wants to bring communities together.

The picture is a similar one in Hazel Grove, where Conservatives also won the seats for the past two consecutive elections, while Lib Dem won in 2010.

This general election William Wragg is standing as Conservative, while Lisa Smart is the Lib Dem candidate. Tony Wilson is standing for the Labour Party.

In the 2017 election Conservative held 12.5% of the majority vote in Hazel Grove.

Despite Conservatives proving strong, it remains to be seen whether Liberal Democrats could take over the seats of Cheadle or Hazel Grove.

Across the UK the Liberal Democrats are estimated to get 12% of the votes this General Election. Securing 13 seats this would make them the third most popular political party in the UK, behind Labour and Conservative respectively.

Some key constituencies they are expected to win include Sheffield Hallam, St Albans, Bath, and Oxford West and Abingdon.



By Emma Gibbs

**If you feel your eyes glaze over every time you hear 'politics' mentioned at the dinner table, you are not alone. We've created a simple, concise, no frills guide to this year's general election that hopefully won't have you falling asleep.**

This December 12 will host the first general election since Theresa May called a snap election in 2017.

We're detailing what it's all about, explaining some of the confusing terms like 'First Past the Post' and giving essential tips on how to vote. So let's begin...

## What is it all for?

A general election is part and parcel of living in a democracy - a society that freely chooses its leaders and embraces freedom of speech.

The general election ultimately decides who will be Prime Minister and the new face of British politics. On a more local level it determines who will represent your area in parliament.

A general election usually takes place once every 5 years.

## General Election Glossary

There's nothing more frustrating than trying to navigate the world of politics to be confronted with a wall of jargon and complex language. Many newspapers assume its readers know the lingo.

That's why we're breaking down the wall one word at a time.

## What is a constituency?

A constituency refers to a political district. It is a specified area where voters elect an individual to represent them. In this case a member of parliament (MP).

In Greater Manchester there are 27 constituencies. These include Salford, Eccles, Stockport, and Manchester Central, Wythenshawe & Sale East, and Blackley & Broughton.

If you want to know what constituency you live in you can check out the UK Parliament website and simply enter your postcode. You can also refer to your polling card to find out which constituency you belong in.

## What does First Past the Post mean?

First Past the Post refers to the system we use to elect MPs.

On the day of the election, everyone votes for one candidate. The candidate with the most votes in your constituency becomes your MP and wins a 'seat' in the House of Commons. The party that has the most MPs becomes the new government.

This system works on a majority basis, and sounds simple enough. However, it has been criticised for not being truly representative of votes and can pose problems when the votes between parties are too close to determine a majority. This leads us to our next point.

## What is a coalition government?

You may remember after the 2010 election, we suddenly had not one but two parties in power - the Lib Dems and Conservatives. This was a coalition government which formed after there was no overall majority won in the election. Therefore we had David Cameron and Nick Clegg essentially in power at the same time.



## What is a 'hung' parliament?

A 'hung' parliament refers to the period when parties form a coalition after an election with a no majority vote. Rumour has it we may have one of these this year.

## Safe seats explained

You may have heard people drop this phrase into conver-

sation a lot over the past month or so.

A safe seat is a constituency which is regarded as fully secure. In other words a certain political party is sitting smugly because they know there is very little chance of a seat changing hands as the political leanings or popularity of a candidate in that area are consistent and strong.



The opposite of a safe seat is a marginal seat. This is far more exciting and refers to a constituency where the gap between the two or more leading parties is relatively small - often less than 10%. This means the seats could swing either way so the gloves are on!

This is currently seen with Cheadle and Hazel Grove in Stockport where the election estimates suggest less than a 10% margin between the Liberal Democrats and Conservatives.

## Tactical voting explained

You may wonder how on earth voting could be tactical? Surely you just vote the candidate you want and that's that.



However, some voters choose to vote for a party they don't want in order to prevent another less liked party getting the post. Still confused? So are we.

## General Election FAQ

### Can I vote?

Remember, if you want to vote you need to be registered. The deadline for registering was Tuesday 26 November. Currently, you have to be over 18 to vote in a general election.

However, if you are under 18 and interested in politics, there's no need to despair. You can still take part in the Youth Participation Project or even stand as a youth MP.

### How do you know which way to vote?

Once you know that you can and want to vote, the next hurdle is deciding who you want to vote for.

First of all, you will want to know the list of candidates for your area. Candidates will often be members of a party, however, you can also have independent candidates.

## The Parties

The main parties running for this election include: Conservative, Labour, Liberal Democrats, Green Party, Brexit Party, Scottish National Party, Plaid Cymru, and Northern Ireland.



## The Candidates

Sometimes the candidates can seem pretty much for muchness or you might find it difficult to choose if you like the candidate but not the party they represent.

A key question to ask yourself is what is important to you, or what affects you? If a candidate or party has the same values or campaigns for causes that resonate with you then that is a good place to start.

To find out more about each candidate in your area you can visit the Democratic Dashboard.

This helpful website shows you all the candidates in your area along with some interesting statistics. The site also acts as a portal to each candidate's social media pages and websites which should give you a flavour of what they stand for and the policies they would like to prioritise.

## How do I vote?

There are three ways you can vote: in person, by post, or by asking someone to vote for you (also known as voting by proxy).

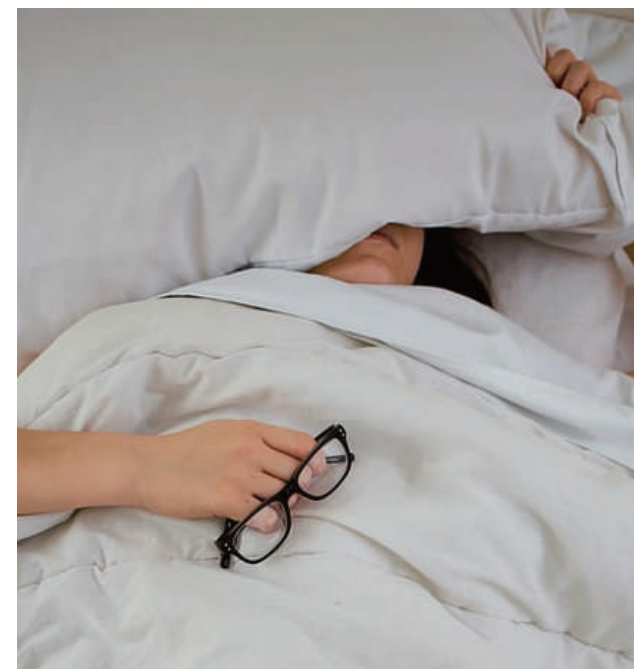
Voting in person involves going to a polling station, usually a public building such as a school or town hall. Your polling station is written on your polling card. You do not need to take your card with you to vote. You simply have to give your name and address.

You will be given a ballot paper with the list of candidates and you select one of them by putting a cross in the box next to their name. You then put your paper in the ballot box, like so...



Polling stations will be open from 7am to 10pm on 12 December ('polling day').

Now you have everything you need to know about the general election you can join in the conversation with the political aficionados in your life. Or, you could take a much needed nap to process all this rather dull but necessary information. Just make sure you make the effort to get out of bed and vote on December 12.







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BATTLE FOR NO 10  
**THE FINAL COUNTDOWN**  
GENERAL ELECTION SPECIAL

**YOUR ULTIMATE GUIDE TO THE MOST IMPORTANT ELECTION IN YEARS**



# Meet the candidate telling our politicians 'Time's Up'



Photo: George Torode

## Gemma Evans chats women's equality and domestic abuse with MM's Isabel Baldwin

**The Women's Equality Party are unique in this General Election. Instead of standing for seat, they are standing for a policy - and no, for once, it's actually not Brexit.**

The WEP are only fielding candidates in seats where the current or former MP has faced sexual allegations in a stance to highlight the treatment of women.

However, the party have announced they would be willing to step down in exchange for another party's candidate adopting their policies.

Their main policies include reinstating the Recall Act, extending the role in tender for women's organisations from one year to three and introducing universal childcare.

In Bury South, Gemma Evans, a domestic abuse survivor, is running as a candidate for the party in ex-Labour MP Ivan Lewis' former seat.

"If we were to win some seats then that would be fabulous," she laughed.

"But that's not our aim. Our aim is to ask other parties to adopt our policies. And we would happily stand down if they were to do this. So it's not about winning seats in Parliament, it's about being fair.

"We don't want to have to stand and fight against other people. We just want it to be fair and to say you know these policies are important and they do matter."

The party originally stood candidates in five constituencies of male MPs accused of sexual misconduct, however two have already stood down as part of a pact with the Liberal Democrats.

Lib Dem candidates Chuka Ummuna and Laura Gordon have adopted the WEP's policy of pushing for amendments to laws to give the power to the public to force MPs guilty of harassment out of their seats.

Ivan Lewis was investigated of sexual harassment before resigning from the Labour party in 2018.

The former MP stated his reason for leaving the party due to the party's anti-semitism, but his resignation meant that the party disciplinary process following the allegations of sexual harassment could not be concluded.

However, he is now standing as an independent candidate in the seat.

"For us he shouldn't be allowed to stand until he's either been proven guilty or not guilty. We're not saying he's guilty or he's not guilty. What we're saying is this policy needs to be put in place to protect everybody," said Evans.

"There were unresolved allegations of sexual harassment or violence. And because nobody is now investigating these they'll just be forgotten about. And that is what the Women's Equality Party are there for, to say no they can't, you can't it's serious.

"I can't speak on labour's views because I'm not a Labour representative but I think that he should have still been held accountable for these allegations while he was still a Labour MP."

The lack of disciplinary action against MPs is a principle issue the WEP are fighting for.

The #MeToo Movement seemed to barely ripple through Westminster when it hit the rest of society two years ago and the Women's Equality Party believe time really should be up for our politicians.

"[It's] Definitely Westminster-wide. We've been standing against five MPs, four of which stood down and that's

what we know about. That's what's been in the press," said Evans.

"If they think it's correct and they practice what they believe everyday, then they're sending a signal out and there's absolutely no doubt the reason why we've got one in four women getting abused or sexually harassed.

"They are politicians, they are leaders of our country so people do look at them to see how to behave.





"I have two boys and I don't want them to watch Westminster or to watch the news and see how they're going on in Parliament because I don't want them to have those views. Women are equal in my house as what men are. And we treat each other with respect.

"I think right now, they [Parliament] are probably trying to represent women. They do know there is a problem there and they've tried not to highlight it.

"[But] By letting these MPs stand again, then no they don't represent women.

"Basically what parliament is sending out to the rest of the country is even if you do report it and it gets investigated these men still might get to go out and do their daily thing. So in that case, what's the point of reporting it?"

The Women's Equality Party is campaigning to reinstate the Recall Act, which would allow constituents to petition for an MP to lose their seat if facing an allegation of an offence, and for independent bodies to investigate these allegations.

"It shouldn't take for the Women's Equality Party to have to actually do what we do," claimed Evans.

"In an ideal world, I wish there was no reason for the WEP. That these things would happen naturally. And that these people would be investigated and suspended if need be and sacked if need be.

"But it's unfortunate that we have to stand. We need somebody who is independent to actually look at it for what it is rather than 'well he's stood down now so forget about the problem'."

Lewis will be standing against his old party and candidate Lucy Burke.

"We were happy that they are standing a female candidate. And I've been speaking to Lucy and I've said you know if you adopt my policies I am happy to stand down," explained Evans.

"I would like to hope that they can still adopt our policies and I would like to hope that Lucy as another woman would be open to adopting it. So we'll just see what happens in the future.

"If they're not interested in adopting our policies then they're not interested in women's rights. Basically they're sending out that women aren't equal."

Brexit has gripped British politics for the past three years and continues to dominate all debates in this election.

However, this has meant other important issues have been neglected.

"Brexit is an important issue, it's a very important issue, but the world is still happening outside of Brexit. And there's so many important things being overlooked because everybody's time is being taken up with Brexit," said Evans.

"We do feel it is a one policy election and all eyes are on Brexit. And things that are really important are massively getting neglected."

An issue particularly close to Evans' heart is the topic of domestic abuse, yet with the election being called the Domestic Abuse Bill, which was introduced under Teresa May's government and had its second reading in October, has fallen.

"It's [Domestic Abuse Bill] dropped to the bottom of the priority list. I believe domestic abuse is very much like mental illness, it's a taboo subject. You either are comfortable speaking about it or you are not. I know domestic abuse is not something that everybody thinks happens.

Some people are still very ignorant towards it. So it won't be the top of their priorities list but it should be," explained Evans.

"Even in my own instance, I thought domestic abuse was a hit a punch or a slap. I thought it left a mark.

It wasn't until I was out of the relationship that I realised that I was actually in a coercive control relationship. So just because we don't see it, doesn't mean it's not hap-

pening.

"Being a victim of domestic violence and now being a survivor, I believe that more interaction with victims and survivors is needed for this bill to be actually written based on that.

"Someone who hasn't ever actually experienced domestic violence has no idea of how it can impact the life or what happens. So, it's not really fair that they write the bill for that."

In the Greater Manchester area alone the GMP recorded a total of 45,713 domestic abuse related crimes reported in 2018. However, only 3,959 domestic abuse related crimes led to a charge being made against the perpetrator.

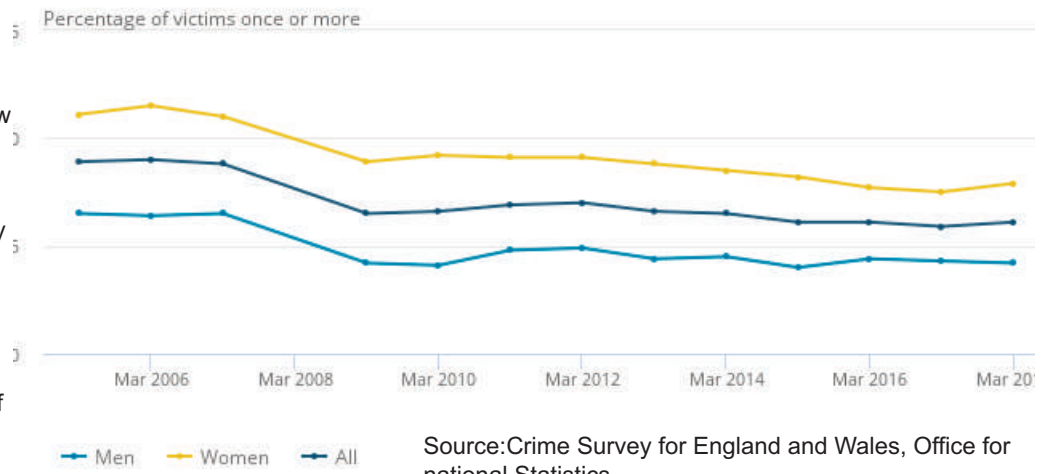
As of June this year, 22,410 domestic abuse related crimes had already been reported to the GMP, yet only a mere 1,499 charges were made in connection to a domestic abuse related crime.

Based on her own experience of suffering a coercive control relationship, Evans feels more improvements need to be made to the policing and justice system to help do-

you a victim of domestic abuse', because in my case I would have said no because I thought it was a hit. These

Figure 2: Prevalence of domestic abuse in the last year for adults aged 16 to 59 years, by sex

Crime Survey for England and Wales, March 2005 to year ending March 2018



Source: Crime Survey for England and Wales, Office for national Statistics

questions should be being asked by every local authority that a woman comes across.

Evans also believes more information needs to be provided to women who are at risk of entering into a relationship with a perpetrator of domestic abuse.

"So Clare's Law is out and I think that's absolutely an amazing thing. However, when you first meet somebody, they don't come across as a perpetrator. They are the nicest person in the world on the first, second, third, fourth, even fifth, sixth, seventh, eighth dates until they've got you under their hook.

"So, this information needs to be more widely given to women. Not just to women but to victims who are men also."

Since her own traumatic and scarring experience with domestic abuse six years ago Evans has worked closely with women, victims and survivors.

"I have seen a massive change in the last year. There's been a worldwide shift", she said.

"More people are standing up and saying 'well yes, it does happen'. But that can't just be the general public. That needs to be the authorities.

"The Women's Equality Party we're saying, it needs to be across the board. It doesn't just need to be in one area of the country, or again a postcode lottery.

"Sexual harassment is sexual harassment regardless of where you live or where you work. Domestic abuse is domestic abuse regardless of where you live or where you work.

"It shouldn't be brushed under the carpet just because you're in a high profile job or it shouldn't be highlighted more because you come from a less affluent area. It's still classed as against the law.

"Women need more support. When a woman is a victim of domestic abuse she has to leave her home, she has to uproot her children and leave her home to be safe. And the perpetrator gets to just carry on life as normal. And that shouldn't happen either. It costs the government more money to uproot a woman and her children and change schools than it does to uproot one man."

Although the name may suggest it's a female exclusive party, Evans is keen to stress anybody can vote for the WEP regardless of gender.

"I've been out in the local area, in Bury South, and I've been speaking to local people and I have had a couple of men go 'oh, I'm not a woman', yes we know that but it's for everybody," she exclaimed.

"We need equality for everybody. We need to respect each other. So just because you're not a woman doesn't mean to say you don't respect our views.

"It's equality for women which would be equality for everyone."

Evans has been out canvassing in the local area in the lead up to the General Election and has been pleased with the positive reaction she has received.

"I've so much positives come from it [campaigning] and letters that were happy to see that somebody is actually standing up and doing something about it," she enthused.

"Lot's [of people] saying we're really happy that somebody else is coming forward. A lot are happy for the reason I'm doing it, for the recall act, for the tender and for the universal childcare.

"If anything people are really confused as to who to vote for because you can only have Brexit."



domestic abuse sufferers.

"It's definitely because of the system. And a woman is more in danger when she's actually left that relationship. And I speak of that from my own experience.

"There's a massive lack of understanding throughout the country in different places and not just for police officers as well, but for medical staff and civil servants and people who could potentially be dealing with a victim of domestic violence.

"But because of their ignorance towards it or because they haven't been trained on it they miss it. And that could

be the difference between somebody's life.

"For me, when I called the police it was either the luck draw of who I got on that day, which police officer, whether they would understand or whether they would just go 'oh they've had an argument'.

"The whole policy against it needs changing.

There's not enough signposts for women to go get help.

"You know, when women are going into the doctors' surgery they need to be getting asked, not as blunt as 'are

Year	Reports of DA crimes in Greater Manchester	Charges made in relation to DA crimes In Greater Manchester
2014	18668	7761
2015	18910	6845
2016	20381	5415
2017	38711	4842
2018	45713	3959
2019 (up to 30.06.2019)	22410	1499



# The darker side of British politics



By Jack Flintham

“Ah well another day, another death threat. It just doesn't bother me anymore.”

That is the response of Alex Tant-Brown, a 21 year-old Conservative Party member after receiving abuse for his political beliefs.

It was not what Alex was expecting when he got into politics before the EU Referendum in 2016. He recalled to me how he initially became involved with the Conservatives.

“I didn't think I knew enough in terms of politics. I went out and did some research and found that they (Conservatives) best represented my values and my thoughts on not just the economy but also social issues at the time.

“It was a party who had been in government and brought in equal marriage rights legislation whilst also having economic responsibility, so I felt it was the right party for me.”

However, it was only once he began canvassing that he experienced a darker side of politics.

“We are always seen as the nasty party when I canvass in left-leaning constituencies.

“Most people are fine. They will tell you what they think but they will do it in a respectful manner.

“But then you have some people who do like to lay it on: ‘You are a disgrace. You are a traitor’ because I am a working class person who is promoting the Conservatives. You do sometimes get absolute dog's abuse.

“The minority are very, very vocal. I have heard of people who get absolutely shouted down by people who tell them to get off their property.

“We are told to f\*\*\* off and every other sort of variation you can think of calling us Tory b\*\*\*\*\*.”

The abuse reached a crescendo a few months ago as Alex was attacked on a night out in Sheffield.

“I went into a club and got jumped as they recognised me as being a Tory and as they were punching my lights out they were going ‘You Tory b\*\*\*\*\*’.”

Alex decided to raise awareness about the attack on Twitter but that only served to heighten the scale of abuse he received.

“As soon as I tweeted it out the death threats began to pile in. People were tweeting me going ‘they should have finished the job; they should have brought a knife’ it was absolutely unreal.

“Luckily I am a strong character and I was able to laugh it off but also if this had happened to someone else it could really hurt people and put them off politics.

“Fortunately I was able to see it as ‘ah well another day, another death threat’.”

Of course it is not only people on the right wing of politics who receive verbal and physical attacks. In the past year there has been a sudden rise in Islamophobia in Britain.

The far right is now the fastest growing terrorist organisation in the UK with referrals to the anti-radicalisation programme Prevent rising from 10% in 2016 to 18% in 2018.

Meanwhile, a third of all terror plots to kill in Britain since 2017 – seven out of 22 – were driven by those with extreme right wing beliefs.

The increase in the hostile rhetoric which surrounds British politics has led to the police warning politicians canvassing during the General Election alone.

National Police Chiefs' Council chairman, Martin Hewitt has said that because of the general election being called there has been an increase in abuse aimed at MPs and in order to keep political canvassers safe they have published an 8-point guide to advise political activists.



- 1 Engage with their single point of contact within their local force for candidate security.
- 2 Take active steps around personal safety to keep themselves and their campaign staff safe.
- 3 Not to canvass alone and make sure someone knows where they are canvassing.
- 4 Keep records of any intimidating behaviour or abuse.
- 5 Conduct an online health check to ensure sensitive personal information is not widely available.
- 6 Report intimidation or abuse to internet service providers and social media platforms.
- 7 Make sure they go out with a fully-charged mobile phone.
- 8 Think very carefully about the language they are using so that they are not inflaming the already highly-charged environment.



# What issues will the voters be considering on December 12th?

Jack Flintham looks at which of the topics will be more important as electors get ready to hit the polling stations...

With the election just under a week away many voters are now beginning to weigh up how they will vote in the General Election.

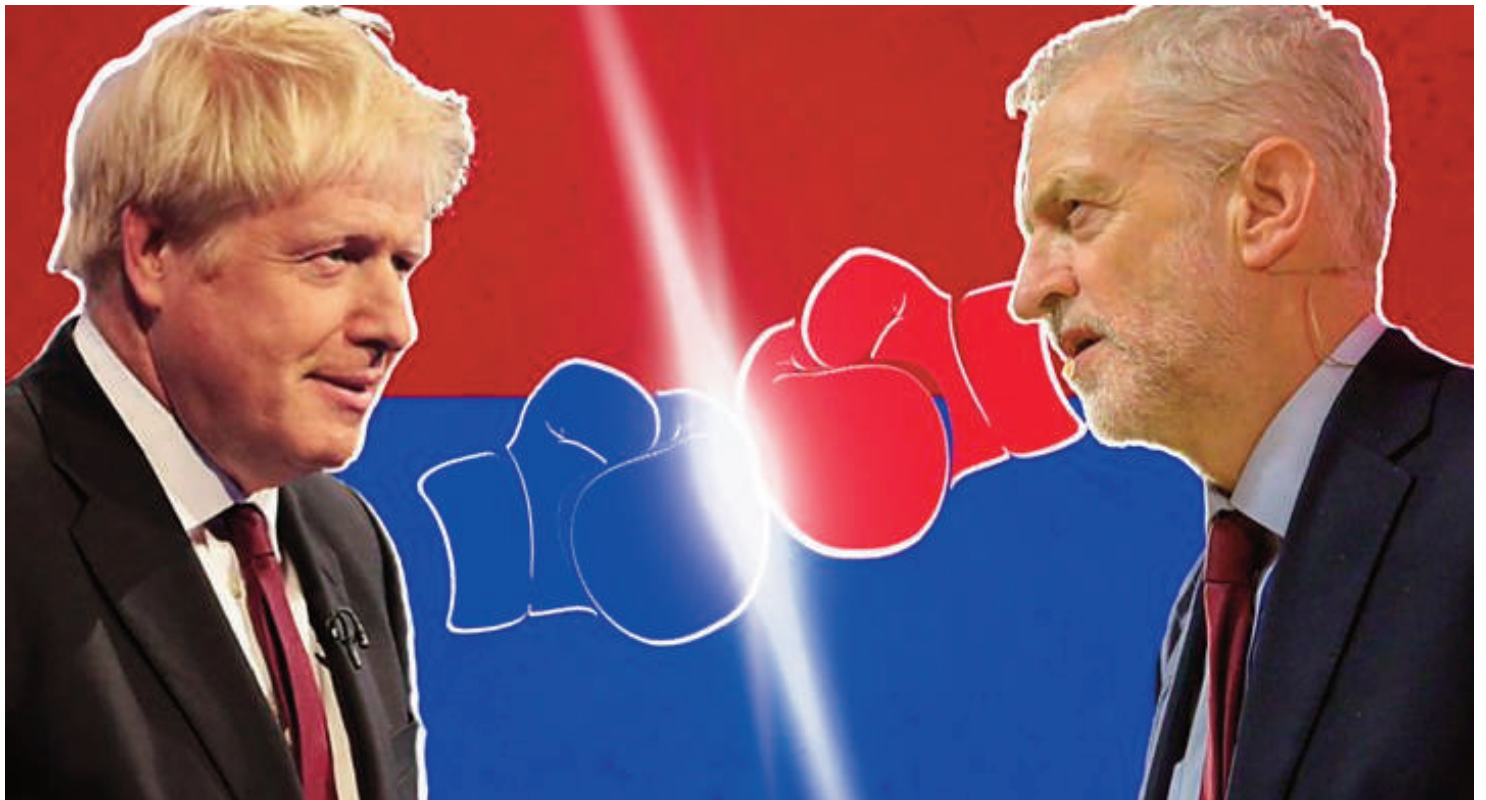
The two major parties in the UK have very different tactics however when it comes to promoting their causes.

The Conservatives are desperate for voters to focus on Brexit solely when they enter the polling station.

Boris Johnson will be hoping his battle cry of "Get Brexit Done" will resonate with people who are keen to see Brexit carried out as soon as possible and it is clear that he sees making the election Brexit centric as his best chance of winning.

To the contrary, the Labour Party are wanting to make this election multi-issue.

Yes, Jeremy Corbyn has set out a plan for what his party would do with regards to Brexit, but he is also looking to bring funding for the NHS and education to the fore-



front – both topics where Labour are perceived to be stronger.

But which of the parties is playing the right tactics according to the polls?

On the face of things the Conservatives appear to be the ones in the driver's seat.

Brexit is believed to be far and away the most important issue facing the country according to people surveyed by YouGov.

68% of those questioned ranked it in their top three issues whilst people's concerns about health and education have decreased since the election in 2017.

This all makes grim reading for Mr Corbyn but there is a glimmer of hope for him.

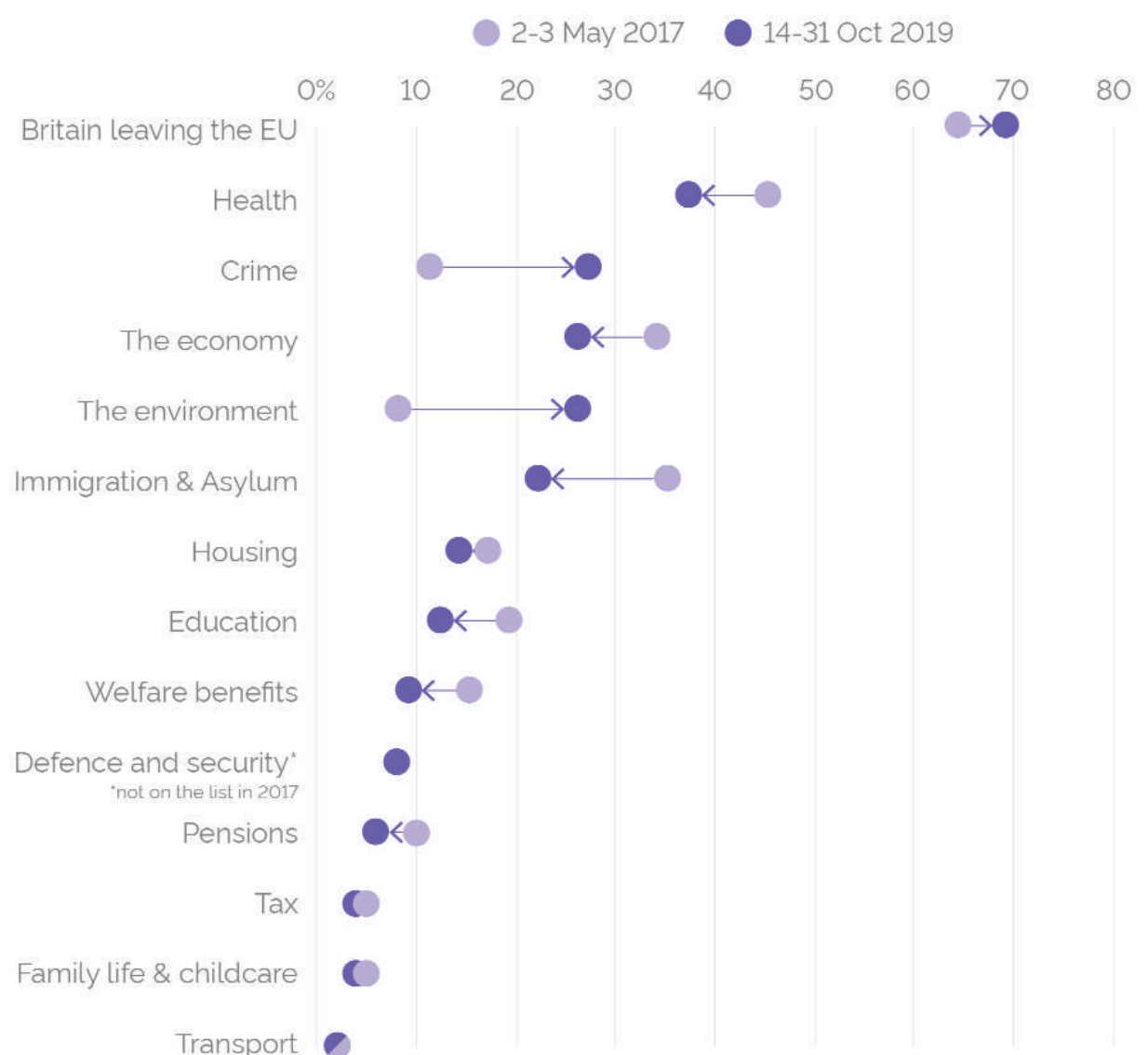
The issue of the economy has dropped significantly in voter's minds with just 25% of people ranking it as an important topic.

Meanwhile the environment is now a concern to more people than ever before with a quarter of people questioned seeing the election as an opportunity to bring in a party who is willing to focus on saving the planet.

By missing the Climate Change Debate on Channel Four last week, Mr Johnson may well have made a fatal error and his absence could prove costly on December 12th.

## Environment and crime are seen as much bigger issues now than they were at the same point in the 2017 election campaign

Which of the following do you think are the most important issues facing the country at this time? Please tick up to three. %



YouGov

Latest data: 14-31 October 2019



# A two-horse race? Don't bet on it!

crats  
**BREXIT**  
ITER FUTURE

Liberal Democrat  
**STOP BREXIT**  
BUILD A BRIGHTER FUTURE



## Jack Lacey looks at the chances of the medium-sized parties as the General Election looms large...

The last election result was billed as a return to two-party politics. In 2017 Labour and Conservative won 82.3% of the between them at the last election. Despite many predicting the electorate had grown tired of the major parties and their leaders, both were trying to claim the election as a victory.

Two years on we could once again see Conservative and Labour dominating the vote share, but a number of medium size parties are aiming to take advantage of the discontent at both Corbyn and Johnson. What will they be hoping to achieve this time round?

### Liberal Democrats

Is this finally the year the Liberal Democrats finally turn a lot of noise into a good result at a general election?

The Lib Dems are coming into this election on the back of a relatively successful European election campaign from earlier this year. Renewed momentum for the traditional third party may give hope to Remainers, but leader Jo Swinson has face growing scrutiny since the campaign begun.

It could be that the Liberal Democrats were taken aback by the speed of the election announcement. Labour's efforts to entice Remainers with a second referendum on Brexit could also squeeze the LD vote. Despite this Swinson will still hope to make progress and is targeting so big Tory seats that could create a minor political earthquake.

Many Labour voters that are put off by Corbyn or the party's "bothways" position on Brexit may be inclined to vote Lib Dem, particularly if they want to stop Boris's hard Brexit pathway. As ever though translating vote share into seats is hugely challenging.

They certainly believe they can win in key pro-remain seats such as Richmond Park, Cheltenham and Sheffield Hallam, which would give Swinson the foundation for a solid set of results.

The problem is the Liberal Democrats are perhaps still not truly out of the re-building phase from their 2015 election wipe out. The disastrous strategic move to give Nick Clegg another campaign after 5 years of propping up Conservative rule, led to an awful return of just 8 seats and sent Clegg into the political wilderness.

Protest votes against Brexit may only take them so far.

The party has been able to take defectors from both Labour and the Tories, but has not been able to capitalise as many would have hoped. No one realistically believes they get anywhere near the 306 new MPs they need for a majority.

Tim Farron's poor campaign from 2017 led to an even worse result. Realistically although Jo Swinson continues to make noises of been better equipped to be PM than Johnson or Corbyn, realistically the best possible result for the Lib Dem's is to maximise tactical voting opportunities and hold enough seats to hold a piece of the balance of power in Westminster. If Boris Johnson doesn't have a majority when the dust settles on December 13th, they will paint it as a success regardless of whether they actually have more MP's than before the election.

**Prediction: 20 Seats**

### SNP

They may only stand in 1/4 of the UK but over the last 2 elections the SNP have become the third largest party in Westminster. First Minister Nicola Sturgeon's charismatic leadership has seen an SNP surge, making her predecessor Alex Salmond look tired and out of touch by comparison.

The SNP will hope strong Scottish support for remain can help them win every seat they stand in, turning North of the border yellow.

Once fantasy talk has now genuinely become a realistic possibility, although Scotland has a high percentage of marginal seats, meaning extra scrutiny on the SNP campaign.

The departure of Scottish Tory leader Ruth Davidson combined with the Conserva-



tive party's closer alignment to a hard Brexit, has led to many of their seats North of the border becoming key targets for Sturgeon and she will be quietly confident of shifting all conservatives out of Scotland.

Seat's such as Banff and Buchan have become key objectives. There the Conservative majority is 3,693. If the SNP can win here it will be a real blow to Johnson's hopes of a strong majority and be the strongest indicator yet every corner of Scotland feels under-represented in Westminster.

If they can get close to the magic 59 seats The SNP could be in a position to form what they describe as a "progressive alliance", although Sturgeon has confirmed support for any Labour minority would be on an issue-by-issue basis rather than a formal coalition.

Prediction: 54 seats

### Green Party

A remain alliance pact with the Lib Dems and Plaid Cymru could see the most successful election yet for the Green Party since 2010, when they returned an MP for the first time in their history.

Since then Caroline Lucas has continued to be a strong voice in Westminster and helped the party grow year on year.

Arguably if remain had won the referendum in 2016 and quelled Brexit, this election would be the climate change election. Although it is still one of the key issues of the campaign, the Green's won't be able to capitalise quite as strongly as they might have been.

The party will enter 497 candidates, with the shortest swing needed 16.97% in the Isle of Wight constituency.

Co-leaders Jonathan Bartley and Sian Berry have also set Bristol West – a seat Green's have threatened to win in the past as a main target.

Winning seats will as ever be a real, nigh-on impossible challenge for the Greens, with the exception of Lucas in Brighton.

Prediction: 1 seat

### Brexit Party

Can Nigel Farage finally become a member of parliament after years of influencing British politics?

Well the answer is no, because he is not actually standing as an MP, but he will be hoping for a re-affirmation of Brexit support from the British public.

It is a first general election for the Brexit Party, and after some excellent results for the party in the European elections earlier this year, they will hope for further success.

Farage helped form the party after quitting UKIP 12 months ago following what he described as a fixation with anti-Muslim policies from leader Gerard Batten.

He is unlikely to leave the British political scene until a hard Brexit is complete, and perhaps his biggest success of the campaign is merely getting the Brexit Party viewed on the national platform, he has even taken part in some of the campaign TV debates.

Realistically returning any MP's for a party formed in the same year will be an incredibly difficult ask, albeit a historic achievement if they could pull it off.

The fact Farage agreed to not stand in the seats the Conservatives won in 2017 is an indicator Johnson's Brexit focused Conservatives may have in fact squeezed him out of any real opportunity for seismic success.

They still think they can win in Labour seats that voted to leave in 2016, with Hartlepool and Redcar in particular big targets. However, both have been held strongholds for Corbyn's party since 1974 and the red rosette won't be shifted easily in either.

Prediction: 0 seats

# A Brief-ish Guide to the Exit Poll

By Jack Lacey

Nothing thrills quite like an election night. Reporters dotted up and down the country.

Runners darting around to help their seat declare first. Reaction and analysis from all the major parties.

Staying up until the sun comes up the next day.

And yet for all the excitement, the result is partially given away just seconds after Big Ben strikes 10

with the exit poll.

For the last 6 general elections the contents of David Dimbleby's envelope have called the outcome,

before any of the 326 constituencies' results are known.

The Exit Poll is based on data received from thousands of interviews outside polling booths in key

seats across the country.

The interview has one simple question, which way did you just vote?

The collected results are then projected into a national prediction once all variables have been

accounted for, including past voting preferences. This is why an exit poll could not be used in the

2016 EU referendum, because there were no previous figures to compare with.

This is also why 2019 may provide an interesting variable that could skew the exit polls accuracy.

The Brexit Party could collect a large amount of the vote share even if this does not translate in actual seats.

As they are a brand new party, the pollsters have no previous baseline to work from



which could prove problematic for the Curtis and his team.

The BBC first commissioned an exit poll in 1974, and from 2005 agreed to a joint one with ITV produced by MORI.

In theory, this is why the exit poll should always be far more accurate than regular polls that spring

up throughout the campaign, which have so far given the edge to the Conservative Party.

Political guru Professor John Curtice is the chief of the exit poll helping co-ordinate it on election night.

He is then normally explaining the data process and analysing the results within minutes of the poll being revealed.

Normally at this point a senior figure from the party that has been defeated in the poll, comes on-screen to remind the nation that - "the exit poll is indeed just that - a poll"

It has not always been a bulletproof way to confidently say who has won. Infamously in 1992 the exit

poll forecast a hung parliament, but in the end John Major's Conservatives won a comfortable majority of 336.

Even in 2015 when the exit poll correctly predicted the Conservative's would be the largest party it

stopped short of confirming it would be an outright majority, predicting David Cameron would get

316 seats. When every seat had declared the Tories actually ended up with 330.

Although you will be able to be either on the verge of either celebrating or collapsing after seeing the poll (depending on your political beliefs) remember it is only a forecast.

Even an error of 5-10 seats could make all the difference in what is predicted by many to another

closely fought election. That is what they said in 2015 though.

If the election is as close as some observers are predicting, Curtice and co's prediction could under greater scrutiny than any other previous election.

The fight in marginal seats, tactical voting and the unusual time of year to have an election (which could lead to lower turnout) could all play a key part in deciding the result.

It could make this general election the hardest the exit poll has faced. Whatever the envelope is saying at 10 o'clock on Thursday, don't think it is a completely done deal till every vote is counted.





# How are political parties using Facebook adverts in the election campaign?



By Jake Clay

**While the latest elections are underway political parties remain determined to discover new ways of attracting voters. One of the newest methods involves using Facebook which almost everyone has an account for meaning they are reachable targets for political propaganda.**

The Conservatives, Labour and the Liberal Democrats were the first parties to launch their advertisement, as the weeks went by, the Brexit Party and Scottish National Party started spreading their material.

The Facebook adverts would consist of many slogans, images and videos that promote the party as well as their policies.

Conservative

One of the Conservatives biggest assets is their leader being the Prime Minister as most of their Facebook adverts revolve around Boris Johnson.

Even on their upcoming events section the message is encouraging votes for Johnson rather than the Conservative party.

The first thing you see on their Facebook page is a video following Johnson visiting schools, hospitals and town centres. It promotes the current Prime Minister as engaging with all the institutes in the country. The strongest sign of the Conservatives amplifying their leader is their spending of more than £22,000 on ads from Johnson's official page in the first week of the election campaign while Labour spent £178 on ads from Jeremy Corbyn's page.

The subject of Brexit is startling clear in the conservative Facebook adverts as the headline 'Get Brexit Done' may just look like catchphrase but it outlines one of the conservatives main subjects on their criteria that they want to sort out.

The conservatives don't just focus on their leader; they have targeted other party leaders such as Jeremy Corbyn's campaign. For instance, their attempt to get

#CostOfCorbyn trending shows they are not just using Facebook to promote their party but to hamper their rivals.

Between the 13th and 17th of November both the Conservatives and Johnson's Facebook page released adverts encouraging people to sign up for postal votes rather than trying to recruit new voters. These ads reached roughly 170,000 people, costing the party £700. The Tories seemed to be targeting these types of voters due to postal votes increasing in each election. For instance 18% of voters in the 2017 general election were a 1.6% increase on the 2015 election.

At the same time Facebook adverts have put the conservative in a bad light as one of their adverts which have been classed as damaging to the BBC's reputation was taken down by the social media site.

Particularly over the last week where Election campaigning has gone into overdrive, the Facebook Ad Library showed that roughly 2,500 adverts paid for by the Conservatives were live.

Labour

Unlike the Tories, Labour has prioritised prompting policy over their figurehead for their election campaign. This means rather than making Jeremy Corbyn the focus, the policies are the highlights.

This can be perceived as taking the personality out of their campaign but it's a shift to their safeguard of policy.

There is an emphasis on having a second referendum if they were to gain power meaning they are appealing to those wishing to remain, who will see voting Labour as a way of turning Brexit around. This has led to a slew of ads

## COST OF CORBYN

### CONFIRMED NEW TAXES

1. MARRIAGE TAX
2. STEALTH TAX ON DRIVING
3. STEALTH TAX ON HEATING
4. HIGHER INHERITANCE TAX
5. PENSION TAX
6. SMALL BUSINESS TAX

### POTENTIAL NEW TAXES

7. REMOVING THE PERSONAL ALLOWANCE
8. HOMES TAX
9. MOVERS TAX
10. GIFTS TAX
11. PETROL TAX
12. HOLIDAY TAX





# VOTE LABOUR AND SAVE OUR NHS



outlining Labour's Brexit policy and is a key instigator in attracting voters.

In terms of the age group they are targeting the Labour party seem to be releasing different adverts for the younger and older generation. Adverts urging postal votes are being shown mostly to over-35's which includes messages such as "don't get caught out in the cold this election". Younger voters are being exposed to messages condemning the Conservative by saying they would rather young people don't vote.

**Liberal Democrats**

The Liberal Democrats have had a radically different advertising campaign to the predominantly big two parties in the country. They have not leaned on individualism that has given Boris Johnson and Jeremy Corbyn more spotlight for the Tories and Labour.

Despite this move away from using an individual to amplify their election campaign, Lib Dem leader Jo Swinson appears in a number of adverts sometimes on her own or contrasting with other leaders.

The difference comes from the public recalling the Liberal Democrats by their party status rather than the leader at the top.

They spent significantly less on their adverts compared to their rivals; however they produced a lot more of them. In one day from the first week of the campaign the Lib Dems had 1394 adverts online and published on Facebook while the Tories had seven and Labour had ten.

Lib Dems use a Facebook process called dynamic process which uploads images and text options that act as the best-performing combination for the audience.

Their common message within their campaign was their mission to stop Brexit and condemns the Tories

and Labour as the 'two old parties' who have failed Britain.

**The Brexit Party**

The Brexit Party Facebook campaign was very quiet since they announcement about withdrawing from 317 seats, but now have sprung into life.

Their page uses a single video which targets multiple constitutes by just changing the name at the start of each advert. This has led to their social media campaign as being a 'personalised kids' book' method of advertising.

Has a similar feeling to the Tories in terms of relying on their protagonists in terms of Nigel Farage what will drag attention to their Facebook adverts.

There is an emphasis on targeting people as an individual as the slogan in bottom corner of their adverts 'contract with the people' highlights what types of voters they are aiming for.

**The Scottish National Party**

The Scottish National Party is targeting their natives as they are trying to reach which is epitomised by their slogan on their Facebook promotion video 'This is the most important election in Scottish history'.

There is a clear opposition to the Tories as they are encouraging viewers to vote for them because they can help Scotland escape Brexit and not leave it in Johnson's hands. Hence like the other parties, Brexit remains the principal policy they say the SNP will resolve.

The Scottish National Party focuses their campaigning on buying local adverts from their national party page.

## Socially speaking... How are the other platforms being used?



- Twitter announced they would be banning political adverts from the 21st November ahead of the Election.
- Instead parties are focusing on getting re-tweets from their followers.
- Very limited spending on Snapchat and however political leaders own snapchat accounts have proved popular due to them taking snaps wherever they go.
- Political leaders will be promoting their party through their own twitter account in an attempt to attract new voters
- Instagram is another popular social media platform as the Facebook adverts can be converted into Instagram votes that can appeal to people who use Instagram more than Facebook.
- Because of the videos on other social media platform there isn't as much emphasis on using YouTube to stream political videos.



# WHAT WOULD LABOUR'S NAV MISHRA BRING TO STOCKPORT?



The constituency of Stockport has been Labour since 1992. But in February of this year the former MP Ann Coffey resigned from the Labour party to form centrist fantasy, Change UK, now, The Independent Group for Change. Coffey is not running this election leaving Navendu (Nav) Mishra the favourite for the seat as the new Labour candidate in the 2019 general election.

Nav came over to England when he was 14 after his father transferred his job over from India and the candidate has lived in Stockport since 2010.

The 30-year-old first ran for Labour in 2017, in the Stockport borough constituency, Hazel Grove, where he finished 3rd behind the Liberal Democrats and the Conservatives.

Nav is keen to praise his party but also the trade union movement for helping him get to the position of running for parliament a second time just 16 years after moving to the UK.

"I never thought that I'd be in this position, even in 2017 standing in Hazel Grove. "The Labour party and especially my trade union, Unite have given me some wonderful opportunities and I'm very grateful for them."

Running twice in the Stockport constituency is no coincidence and Nav feels like his engagement in the community puts him in a great position to help the local residents.

"In all fairness, I lived for a majority of my time a stop over in the Hazel Grove constituency. But it's the borough of Stockport, so I have a good understanding of the issues and how the council works and the councillors and the kind of thing that residents expect and want.

"On a personal note, I wouldn't want to stand for parliament anywhere outside of the Stockport borough."

Nav has five key points for his campaign which he believes are ready to help the people of Stockport in the areas they need the most.

"My first pledge is ensuring that there are high numbers of good quality social but also affordable homes and buildings for Stockport because the waiting list for a council house is quite high."

Recently, the Mayor of Greater Manchester Andy Burnham announced plans to expand the Metrolink system to other local areas but many parts are still left neglected when it comes to transport.

"We need improved public transport to make sure that it's reliable, but also people can afford it.

"Unfortunately we don't have access to Metrolink Tram in the borough of Stockport. So we are campaigning to bring that into Stockport as well."

Better transport services would make it easier for Stockport residents to travel around the Greater Manchester area and help incentivise businesses to come to the borough.

"We don't want Stockport to just be a community town where people live and commute to places like Manchester or Bolton for jobs.

"You want good low paid skilled jobs in Stockport and it's about attracting that kind of investment into the town."

Labour recently announced plans to compensate the "Wasp women", a group of women born between 1950 and 1955 who have been badly affected by pension changes.

This Labour policy is in direct opposition to what the Conservatives who say there isn't enough money to help a group of people forced into monetary limbo.

Nav feels strongly that Labour are planning to do the right thing and believes help for the over 65's is vital for the Stockport community.

"The fourth pledge is about older people and retirement age. So there are talks of increasing the retirement age beyond 66 and I'm against that because we need to ensure that people who work hard all their life, get some rest, in their retirement.

"A part of that is a big campaign about justice for WASPI women. a central plank of Labour policy is to make sure that there's justice for everyone.

"And on a personal note, there are lots and lots of people in Stockport who are affected by these changes and these women need justice and they need to make sure that they're compensated fairly."

Nav's last pledge focuses on the schools and colleges in Stockport, a divisive and hotly debated topic.

"Regardless of where you live and what kind of area you live in, you should have access to high quality education with reasonable class sizes.

"And, you know, teachers shouldn't be having to feed the kids because they're going hungry or supply materials from their own pockets."

Brexit is not included in his five pledges, but Nav feels Labour has the best policy for residents no matter what side they're on.

The constituency was mixed on Brexit with not much between Leave and Remain

Labour's policy is a middle ground giving the chance for both sides to have their say.

"Labour is the only party that's offering a sensible option on Brexit, putting it back to the people, making sure that environmental standards, living standards, workers' rights, consumer rights aren't negatively impacted by a damaging Tory Brexit."

Coffey, who Nav is hoping to follow into office served as the Stockport MP from 1992 but resigned from Labour in February of this year, citing the party's lack of action on anti-semitism.

She is not the only one critical on the topic, but Nav disagrees with Coffey's assessment whilst being firmly critical of those who engage in antisemitic rhetoric or abuse.

"I personally don't think that Labour is institutionally antisemitic or a racist party, I think it's welcoming to everyone of any faith or no faith or gender or background or skin colour.

"The party membership has gone over half a million and you're always going to get a handful of people who have some difficult and problematic views and we should tackle that and we should address that.

"If these people have made or said things or done things that are racist or discriminatory in any way, there should be a fair process and they should be removed from party membership."

Having come up through the trade union movement and been heavily involved in work for both Unison and Unite, the Stockport resident makes a compelling case for joining a union.

"Even if you work in a workplace that isn't unionized, you should join a trade union because it's really important that you have the protection.

"The only way to make sure that we don't fall down a black hole even further and make sure that we lift people's standards is to return to collective bargaining as a return to trade union activism.

This might sound cheesy, but as an individual you don't have any rights, but as a collective, you can make a bigger difference."

When Nav was running to become the Labour candidate for Stockport he got a major boost when Shadow Chancellor John McDonnell and Shadow Secretary of State for Education Angela Rayner endorsed him.

These endorsements gave weight to his candidacy, with McDonnell a powerful figure in the party and Rayner born and bred in Stockport and well liked in the local community.

"Who wouldn't want support from John McDonnell, the man is very intelligent and very well liked in the Labour community.

"But going back to Angela Rayner, Angela is absolutely brilliant. She's from Stockport. She never hides the fact that she's from Stockport.

She's an expert in her policy brief, education. You could ask her tricky questions and she'd give you really solid responses.

"She's such a positive role model for people, not only in the Labour Party but in Stockport and the Northwest throughout. People in Stockport are very fond of her and she's a great representative from our town."

When it comes to tactical voting in an attempt to oust the Tories Nav doesn't hold back in his criticism and is firm in his belief that Labour is the only viable option.

"Labour is the only political party in the Stockport constituency that can beat the Tories. Tories came second in Stockport, to Labour, and actually Liberal Democrats in 2017 got 4.3% of the vote which means they lost their 500 pound deposit.

"So a vote for the Green Party or the Liberal Democrats is actually a vote to strengthen the conservatives and the constituency and stop what's been Labour since 1992.

"And Stockport deserves a Labour MP."





# THIS IS THE ELECTION POLITICS TURNED AGAINST THE MEDIA

By James Crump



Politics has turned nasty. Not on the streets, it has been that way for a while, but towards the media.

It used to be brutal behind the scenes, now it is all out in the open.

Gone are the days when spin doctors ruled the roost, working with and manipulating the papers and broadcasters to run their mistruths and massaged perceptions. Now the Tory spinner (certainly not an all-rounder), Dominic Cummings is mocked regularly with attempts at spinning dismissed as the transparent facade they are.

Cummings, Johnson and co. haven't sat back and licked their wounds, but instead brought the assault directly to the media institutions.

It's looking more likely by the day that Johnson will refuse to be interviewed by one-man political tornado Andrew Neil, despite interviews with the Labour leader, Jeremy Corbyn and Liberal Democrats leader, Jo Swinson already airing.

The BBC must take a large portion of the blame for this, but the debacle highlights something only implicit before, Boris Johnson does not respect our media institutions.

If that wasn't enough, Thursday's climate debate minus Johnson, comically replaced by an ice sculpture, was taken over by the Tories despite the sculpture amounting to the sum total of their presence on stage.

Johnson, in an act even an eight-year-old me would have been embarrassed about, sent his old frenemy Michael Gove alongside his father, Stanley Johnson to confront Channel 4 and get a Conservative voice in the debate.

Again, this was mishandled by the broadcaster, who instead of turning them away agreed to ask the leaders if they would be happy sharing the stage with an uninvited, unqualified man. They said no and that's when the nastiness didn't just rear its head, but spit in the face of the broadcaster.

In a not-so-subtle bit of timing, The Conservatives threatened to review the partly state-funded broadcaster's remit, with Tory spokesperson, Lee Cain saying they had breached the broadcasting code with "a provocative partisan stunt."

The attack didn't stop there and Gove claimed the party leaders were scared to debate a Tory, blaming everyone else but his woefully equipped and verifiably afraid leader.

The depths that the Tories will seemingly plunge to distract and to obfuscate is funny at times, but there isn't room for humour at the moment.

In a little over a week the next party in charge of this country will be decided and the role of the media in the campaign, especially the broadcasters funded partially or otherwise, is to take the parties to account and to cut through whatever spin they push on the public.

The Andrew Neil interview with Jeremy Corbyn was a perfect example of this. Corbyn suffered under Neil's intense, caustic style being directly asked to apologise for anti-Semitism in the Labour party and visibly flummoxed when questioned about their taxation plans for those earning less than £80,000 a year.

Neil probed Corbyn, generating negative headlines and added scrutiny. The interview was labelled a "car crash", so it seems immeasurably unfair and against impartiality that Johnson thinks he doesn't need to participate.

But it has become very clear that if Johnson and the Tories don't want to do something, they just don't do it. So far this campaign, they have edited videos to make opponents look foolish, thrown Mirror journalists off their 'battle bus' and shown contempt for the media at all and any point.

It doesn't look likely that Johnson will face Neil before the public goes to the ballot box on December 12 and it's a real shame. This election will likely be remembered for gaffes and blocks of ice, but what it should be remembered for is a turning point, the election politics turned against the media.

## MIDDLE EAST EXPERT WANTS FOREIGN POLICY IN THE DEBATE

By James Crump



This general election campaign has focused on many things; Brexit, misleading information, the future of the NHS and even blocks of ice.

But one topic that has mainly been ignored is foreign policy and the UK's role in international intervention.

To find out why this should be a larger part of the election campaign, I spoke to David Wearing, a leading researcher and writer on foreign policy and the Middle East.

Wearing feels foreign policy has been left out of the discourse during this election campaign and points specifically to Yemen as a situation that should have been given a greater platform.

"The main one I'd point to is Yemen, the world's worst humanitarian catastrophe is a man-made humanitarian catastrophe for the most part.

"And the leading cause of that is a blockade being imposed on Yemen by a Saudi led coalition that's intervening in the Yemen civil war."

The British government is involved in the conflict and Wearing explains that without their support the Saudi effort would struggle.

"A huge proportion of the war effort is British supplied fighter jets which the Saudi's are operating and those planes can't fly without our support.

"It's created the world's worst humanitarian catastrophe in the idea that 85,000 children have died."

The policies of Britain's two biggest parties, Labour and the Con-

servatives differ wildly in relation to Saudi Arabia, as the writer explains.

"Britain's directly complicit in that because it's enabling the Saudi war effort and in terms of the choice, you've got the Tories who have been doing it for four and a half years and you've got Labour who are saying they'll withdrawal support for Saudi's immediately."

It is not just the general election where coverage on Yemen has been sparse and Wearing is keen to praise numerous journalists for the work they are doing around the topic.

However, he feels the higher powers in the mainstream media have failed to highlight the good work done by reporters and to convey the severity of the issue to the British public.

"I find it quite troubling actually, it's one thing for the government to be doing it, but it says something quite damning about our wider political culture that we're not even talking about it.

"It's one thing to help the Saudis kill loads of people, it's another thing to pretend as though you're not doing it, to not talk about it."

Brexit has dominated UK political discourse for the last three years and at times it can feel like it's the only issue that anyone cares about.

Wearing is well aware of this, but doesn't buy into the idea that it is the biggest issue facing voters on December 12th.

"What's the worst thing that the British government's doing? I think people talk about it as if it's Brexit and Brexit is right up there, it's bad, but the worst thing we're doing is failing to deal with climate change.

"Because of the impacts on the Global South. Anyone who's young now is going to live through horrors in their later life, in this century if we don't deal with it."

"And after that it's Yemen. I'm not using the words in terms of rhetoric, it's a literal statement. The fact is that Britain is acting as an accessory to mass murder."

Climate change has been afforded partial focus in this campaign, with Channel Four airing a special leaders debate on the topic, where Prime Minister Boris Johnson was noticeably absent.

Even so, discussions around the environment have tended to focus on domestic issues, but Wearing feels that ignores the people who will be affected the most.

"One party (Labour) is saying net zero by 2050, the other party's (Conservatives) saying it's zero perhaps 20 years earlier.

"When you've got 10 years left to deal with climate change or it gets away from you and you're choosing the government for the next five years, that's an enormous choice.

"And the impacts of climate change on the state and talking about in terms of foreign policy, the impacts of climate is felt most sharply in the Global South."

Labour and the Conservatives have very different policies on foreign policy and it's clear that the level of detail in the former's manifesto makes a big difference in explaining their wider position.

"The Labour manifesto is a really serious substantive document and a thick document.

"The Tory manifesto is half the length and more than that, when you look at it, it's a series of fairly platitudes' bullet points, very thin and in terms of the foreign policy bit specifically, quite different to what Labour is doing."

On Labour, the Dartford born writer is impressed, not just by their foreign policy but by their attempts to bring Britain's history into the discussion.

"(Labour are) trying to propose a kind of more enlightened internationalism that says, let's focus on diplomacy, let's de-emphasize military solutions. Let's focus on climate change and more radically let's think about our relations with the Global South.

"And this shouldn't be radical, but it is, let's think about how the legacy of empire has shaped our relationship with the rest of the world and what can we do to kind of unstitch that.

"Let's think about it in terms of how can we use the power we have as a state to promote justice in economic terms or climate terms, and that level of respect for other people and awareness of history, I think is really admirable."

There has been a lot of talk this election that the country has a choice between the better of two evils with many commentators refusing to endorse any candidate on those grounds.

Wearing doesn't buy into this idea and believes the differences in both domestic and international policies sets the two leading parties apart.

"A lot of centrist commentators and political journalists making out there's no choice in this election is nonsense, it is massively consequential in terms of human life.

"It's a matter of life or death for a lot of people generally. And in terms of the philosophy, the outlook, I think there's a good subset of difference as well."

With the election on December 12th, Wearing wants you to not only think about how your vote will affect this country, but people all around the world.

"Who governs Britain after next Friday is literally a matter of life or death. So, people should be thinking about that when they vote."



# Swinson looking for an early Christmas present...



Joseph Hagen-Duckers looks at whether history could be about to repeat itself...

**A**t the 2010 UK general election, the Liberal Democrats under Nick Clegg's leadership won 57 seats, five less than their total in the previous election in 2005.

Nevertheless, the rocky political climate at the time meant no party won an overall majority with Britain staring in the face of a hung parliament for the first time since 1974.

After succeeding Tony Blair as leader of the Labour Party in 2007, Gordon Brown went into the 2010 election as Prime Minister, but a poor campaign meant his party lost their majority in the House of Commons. Brown has cited his inability to "rally the nation" in his autobiography as a contributing factor to the Labour Party's downfall, which opened the door to David Cameron.



Cameron's Conservative Party had won the highest number of votes with 306 seats and required another party to ensure he became Prime Minister, and after five days of talks with the Lib Dems a coalition government was formed.

After five years of the Cameron-Clegg coalition, the UK then held another general election with another hung parliament expected by many political commentators.

After increasing their seats in the House of Commons to 330, the Conservatives no longer needed Clegg and the Lib Dems to form a government, after winning a 12-seat majority.

Whereas the Conservatives benefitted from the coalition government, the same cannot be said for the Liberal Democrats who suffered political humiliation in what Clegg labelled as a "cruel and punishing night".

The party were reduced to eight seats in parliament, losing 49 seats and their leader Nick Clegg, who resigned following their worst ever electoral result.

Crucially, it became a sobering truth for the party that their voters in 2010 had felt betrayed by Clegg's decision to get into bed with the Tories.

One year after the 2016 EU referendum, the political situation had altered drastically, Theresa May was now Prime Minister, and Britain was set to leave the European Union after joining the institution in 1973.





May then played with fire, subsequently called a third general election in seven years, hoping her Conservative Party would increase their majority and ensure a smooth Brexit.

She got burned and lost her majority.

A one-billion-pound deal with the DUP kept the Tories in power but the 2017 election didn't do many favours for

of remain in 2016.

On the other hand, its Brexit policy may fail to resonate with voters in leave areas such as Worsley and Eccles South.

Joe Johnson-Tod is the party's candidate in the area but believes their Brexit policy will not stop them from gaining



the Lib Dems as well. They did manage however to increase their seats to 12 but it was still a far cry from their electoral results in the decade prior.

We are now days away from the upcoming general election, and the Liberal Democrats with Jo Swinson as their leader, their fourth in as many years, will be hoping the British electorate can see past her party's 'Tory enabler' image.

Swinson was a member of the Cameron-Clegg government, and her voting record has been shunned by critics, and may prove costly for a party trying to start afresh.

In Manchester Central, a traditionally Labour seat, has voted for the party ever since its inception in 1974.

Lucy Powell has been the MP for the area since 2012, winning a 63.2% majority in 2017.

John Bridges, the Liberal Democrat candidate is contesting Powell in the area and is adamant his party has changed.

"I think we have evidently moved on, two thirds of our membership is different. Most of them were not with us in 2010 and we have a new leader."

In the event of a hung parliament, and despite Swinson's former role in the Conservative-Liberal Democrat pact, Bridges is certain history will not repeat itself.

"The chances of us doing a deal with Boris Johnson's Conservatives given that they are pro-Brexit are zilch. It is not going to happen; I think we can safely say that."

Significantly, the Lib Dems will be hoping to make inroads into remain areas after announcing they would revoke Article 50.

Bridges is hoping this policy will prove to be popular in Manchester Central, after the area voted 63.64% in favour

votes in leave areas.

"When a lot of people are voting, they will not just look at Brexit. I think they will look at the progressive and evidence policies that the Liberal Democrats are proposing in other areas."



Furthermore, critics have called the party's decision to cancel Brexit without another referendum as 'undemocratic', but Johnson-Tod is in total disagreement with this.

"The revocation of Article 50 will only be the case if we win a majority government. That is a fully democratic course of action.

"When we have a general election, we do not never vote again and just accept the result, we have another election in five years-time."

Another policy the Lib Dems are advocating is the scrapping of businesses rates, replacing them with a levy on landlords.

Swinson believes this would help small businesses and breathe "new life" into the UK's declining high street, where 1234 shops have already closed in the first six months of 2019.

Both Bridges and Johnson-Tod were supportive of these plans, despite business rates currently providing the treasury £30 billion a year, and believe it would stimulate the economies in their respective constituencies.

Clearly, this is an effort to gain business owners' trust, however, the party's reputation was hit earlier in the campaign when it produced a misleading bar chart.

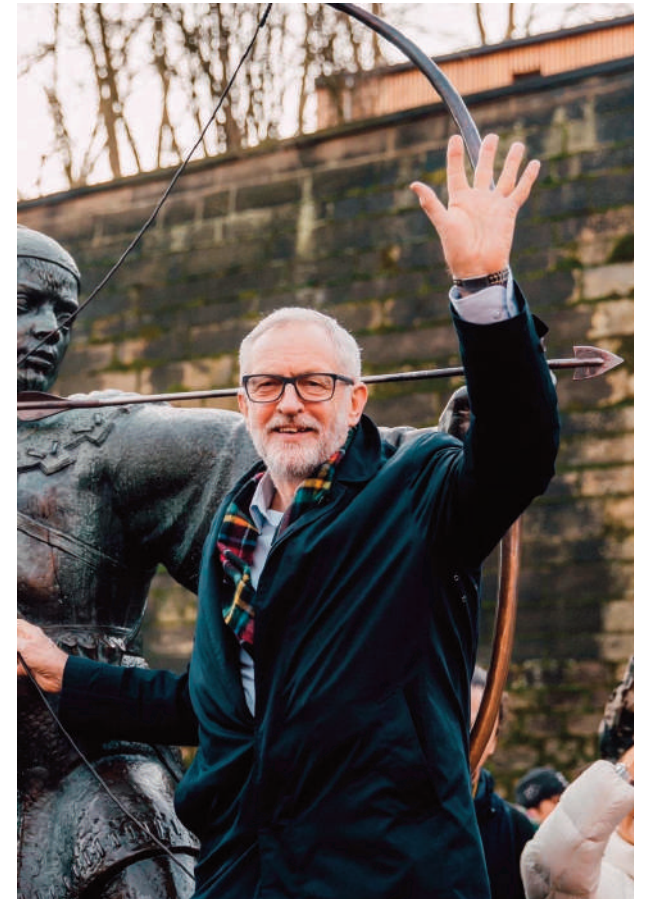
A local branch of the party in Bath and North East Somerset published a bar chart on its twitter page depicting a survey it had conducted with 405 people.

The respondents were asked to imagine the North East Somerset seat was exclusively contested by the Conservatives and Liberal Democrats.

However, at the last election, when the Conservative's Jacob Rees-Mogg won a 18.9% majority and the Labour Party's Robin Moss finished in second place with 14-thousand more votes than the Liberal Democrat candidate, Manda Rigby.

As expected, this brought ignominy to the party and Johnson-Tod is unequivocal the survey was undertaken by a select few and not representative of the whole party.

"These bar charts are entirely up to the digression of



local parties. It is not a Lib Dem national course of action to commission these bar charts and it is the local party who done so."

Nonetheless, this brought embarrassment to the Liberal Democrats, who will undoubtedly hope this doesn't affect voters next week.

Voters will be heading to the polls on 12th December for their first winter election since 1974.

YouGov's last poll predicted Boris Johnson's Conservatives were set to win a majority as Labour's well publicised problem with anti-Semitism continues to affect their progress under leader, Jeremy Corbyn.

The poll also had worrying signs for Jo Swinson and her party.

The poll only predicts that they will only gain one seat at the election, and another disappointing result could see a new leader in charge in the coming months.

Swinson herself was a big proponent of an early election, backing the SNP's plans in October.

However, in a real twist of fate, the Lib Dem leader is now in danger of losing her seat, East Dunbartonshire, to Nicola Sturgeon's party.

Crucially, the latest poll in London possibly underlines the party's strategy on Brexit is not working.

The Labour Party, which were already the most popular in the capital city have according to the latest poll extended their lead to 17 points.

However, eight of these points have appeared to come from the Lib Dems and other smaller parties.

The Lib Dems are now polling at 15%, after losing four points since November, highlighting that their pro-Remain Brexit policy has failed to attract voters in a heavily Remain area.



**Is modern politics  
more about  
'personal brand'  
than party policy?**





# From Boriswave Beats to the Corbyn Factor, the world of social media is causing a shift in how we value political candidates, and how they are appealing to the mass market...

By Louise Hall

It's no secret that the digital age has changed the face of political campaigning as we know it.

Very rarely do we see households emblazoned with placards displaying voting preferences lining the local streets or find ourselves shoving countless printed flyers in the recycling bin.

With more and more people flooding online to consume content and social media having a wider reach than ever appealing to an internet audience, and namely the huge proportion under 35's, has become more crucial than ever.

In the wake of the "Youthquake" of 2017 and 2.5 million under 35's registering to vote on December 12, politicians (and their respective publicity teams) are willing to go to long lengths to exploit the possibilities of generation digital. A result it seems party leader personal image is becoming one of the most parties most important selling points.

Whether publishing chillout track of 'lofi boriswave beats to relax/get brexit done to' or panicking the second a party leader touches a coffee cup that's remotely unsustainable, wherever they can parties are trying to monopolise on the growing model of 'image' politics that appeals to the youngest in our society.

Back in 2010, the win of the Cameron Clegg coalition marked a turning point in the influence of image in modern politics. Brown was once again overturned despite widespread unrest in favour of the younger, more sleek, and seemingly professional Cameron. The party leader was simply perceived better from an image point of view.

This planted the seeds of a change in campaign culture. With the first ever televised election debate recording over 10 million viewers no longer was campaign 'drama' confined to the satirical m62 billboards. The very public 'performance' of party leaders in competition with one another for our entertainment. This kind of expose, consumed on such a large scale, meant the way politicians needed to represent them-

**"With more and more people flooding online to consume content and social media having a wider reach than ever appealing to an internet audience; image has become more crucial than ever."**

selves as individual figures shifted.

Flash forward to 2015 and before you know it, party leaders aplenty were filling the ITV studio stage to maximum capacity in what resembled a multicoloured weakest link general election special. The political campaign trail had quite literally become what seemed like a reality show personality contest rather than a general election.

Campaigns started to feel more centred around individuals than parties. It's no surprise that a generation bred on reality tv, cancel culture and dissociation with political figures jumped on the bandwagon faster to facilitate this shift than you can say Farage.

Then the Millifandom arrived. A phenomenon that stumped mainstream British media, social media turned the leader of the Labour party into an online satirical sex icon draw more attention than any news about a party manifesto's could.

Sadly for Milliband in this first instance demon-

strated how the creation of online image and persona could be as deadly as it was powerful. Campaign gaff's in the form of a badly timed breakfast butty, a misjudged 10 commandments esque slab of concrete and an air of frivolity illustrated for the first time how online image could have a tangible impact on public perception of Millibands capability as a leader and consequently, a loss of votes.

That's not to say image and relevancy has not al-

**"Flash forward to 2015 and the political campaign trail had become what seemed more like a reality show or personality contest than a general election."**

ways been a key player in politics. But the memories that stand out from circa the noughties digital revolution are heavily cemented in party perception. You only have to count of the number of people saying 'I've voted labour all my life but I can't vote for Jeremy Corbyn' to see how much of a shift the image of party leader is having against party allegiance.

Even in the era of Blair billboard satire, platforms for lampooning politicians images were more restricted and less widely received.

Tongue and cheek stunts attacking leader image were confined to ring roads and the front pages of newspapers, but now anyone with a Twitter account and a smartphone can put their opinions to the millions.

Corbyn's unlikely idolization by the young electorate in 2017 saw an unprecedented utilization of image, the youth vote and the digital tools they monopolise.

18-25's were largely swayed by an infatuation with the Jeremy Corbyn Factor and image of a figure of change rather than a significant shift in political beliefs or motivation.

When it comes to Boris Johnson there a lot of evidence to point towards the fact that his image is more carefully curated than he would like people to believe. Most will agree his utilisation of the 'harmless bafon' Mayor of London, with messy hair and penance for being hilarious in public and on social media, did play a substantial part in his rise to notoriety in the party and in the estimations of a large proportion of the British public.

In this election individual perception of party leaders are now under more severe and constant scrutiny than ever before. A refusal to engage or appeal with the 'personality contest' of elections seems to crash and burn alongside it. Theresa May and the fields of wheat we're looking at you.

No longer are politicians held on policy alone, but their capacity to dance in public, ride a zipwire and take a milkshake to the chest with dignity.

And while the court of public opinion has always had the capacity to hold politicians to account, the growing importance of image has meant UK politics deviating from the era of party loyalty to individual appeal.

The things that stick out in elections now are not the party manifestos but the impressions of candidates, their online and public appearances and the meme's surrounding their campaigns.

Four years down the line from a 'coalition of chaos', built on the faces trustworthy looking men, the culture of campaigning is completely different, and not one single party member is underestimating the power of this influence this time round.





# Where does South Manchester stand this election?

Seats south of the city could prove key. By Lyell Tweed

Stockport had been held by Labour's Ann Coffey since 1992, but with Conservative constituencies around it, and Labour very nearly pushed to fourth in the recent European elections, could this stability fall?

Since 1992 Coffey was able to command large majorities at each election, her lowest being 17.3% in 2010, with neither the Conservatives nor the Liberal Democrats able to compete.

However, Coffey's defection to Change UK, subsequent resignation and verbal support for the Lib Dem candidate may give the opposition hope just yet.

The council is currently, and has been under, a condition of no overall control since 2011, with the Lib Dems faring better in recent local elections.

Labour narrowly came third in the European election with the Lib Dems again succeeding in these, closely followed by the Brexit party.

The Guardian reported after the European elections that Stockport voters were abandoning the Labour party, suggesting that voters were following Ann Coffey in leaving the party.

Labour's muddled stance regarding Brexit may have something to do with this.

Stockport voted 53.21% in favour of remain potentially boosting the Lib Dems chances especially following a vote of confidence from the long-standing Stockport servant in Coffey.

She has been actively campaigning with Lib Dem candidate Wendy Meikle.

Aside from local politics suggesting Stockport may be open to opposition parties this election, the constituencies which border the town may highlight the varied nature of politics south of Manchester.

While constituencies closer to the city such as Denton and Reddish and Manchester Gorton are as safe as it gets for Labour, a Liberal history can be seen around Stockport.

To the west the Lib Dems will be hoping to close in on Conservative incumbent Mary Robinson.

Cheadle voted heavily in favour of remain (57.35%) and reduced Mary Robinson's majority to just under 8% in 2017.

With the Brexit debate likely to play a leading role in this election, the Conservatives policy of leaving the EU could be detrimental in constituencies that voted to remain.

Cheadle was a Liberal Democrat seat through the 2000s to 2015 and the party will hope the constituencies lean to remain will help turnover the Conservative's slim majority, with the M.E.N predicting this to be a very closely run contest.

To the East Hazel Grove, while voting marginally to leave the EU, also has a very strong Liberal tradition, and will be hoping to sway voters away from Brexiteer William Wragg.

The Lib Dems held the seat from 1997 to 2015 with YouGov predicting the Lib Dems are in with a chance with a strong performance at the polls.

John Leech is vying to make a comeback in Manchester Withington on the border of Stockport after losing out to Labour in the last two elections.

This area voted over 75% to remain perhaps giving hope to the Lib Dems again that it could follow the same path as Stockport voters and vote for the clearer remain party.

Therefore it is theoretically conceivable that South Manchester could provide some of the biggest shocks this coming election.

It then comes as a surprise that no major Lib Dem figure has gone to these constituencies to try to convince the voters.

While most of this would still come as a great surprise the volatile nature of politics in this election could potentially throw up some interesting results.

Much could change in the last week of campaigning with challengers pulling out all the stops to represent what South Manchester has to offer.



Former Stockport MP Ann Coffey on the campaign trail with Lib Dem candidate Wendy Meikle. Coffey recently stepped down soon after defecting to Change UK.

*"I'm absolutely convinced that Wendy has that passion and commitment and that's why I'm supporting her"*

*- Ann Coffey*



# What are the Lib Dems trying to tell us with their bar graphs?

MM takes a look through some of the best statistics the Liberal Democrats could come up with. By Lyell Tweed

This one regarding the Cedar Valley constituency in West Yorkshire is another example of the Lib Dems using any election they can find with a positive result for them and trying to translate that to a general election.

This example comes from a council ward by-election in Walsden in which the Lib Dems gained a seat. However, another closer look will again reveal not all is as it seems.

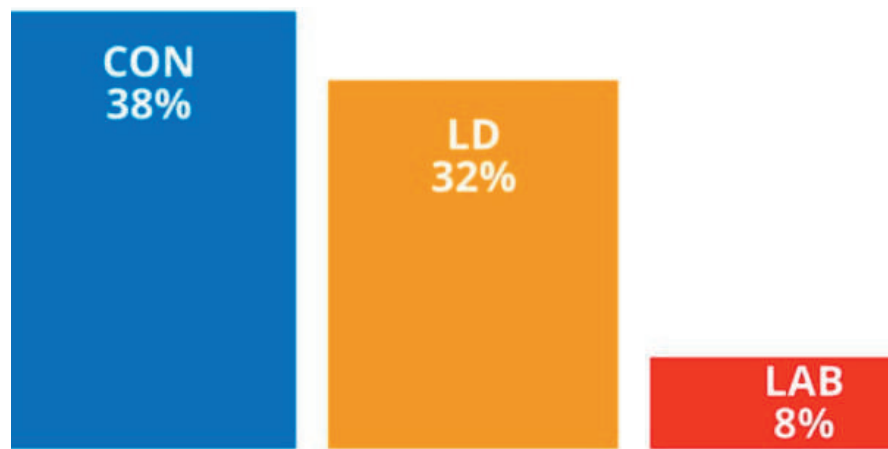
Only 494 people voted in this election. Hardly a comparison to the 79,045 eligible voters in the constituency as a whole.

YouGov predicts that on a good day the Lib Dems will win a maximum of 12%, and this would certainly be an improvement on their 2017 attempt.

Although it is still far away from Labour's potential return of 46%.

This seat does promise to be a close run one, looking at 2017 with only 609 votes in it, but unfortunately this is between Labour and the Conservatives, not the Lib Dems.

*“Honesty in politics matters, whether it’s in a speech or in a leaflet. It’s misleading to present a mix of data from different polls and constituency boundaries as an accurate predictor of local results this December” - Will Moy, Full Fact*



Survey polled 405 respondents aged 18+ living in NE Somerset with the question: "Imagine that the result in your constituency was expected to be very close between the Conservative and Liberal Democrat candidate, and none of the other parties were competitive. In this scenario, which party would you vote for?" Fieldwork: 16th-18th Oct. Others 6%, Don't know 8%, Refused 2%

This graph tried to show the voters of Jacob Rees-Mogg's constituency of North East Somerset that the Liberal Democrats had a real chance of ousting the harline Brexiteer.

A closer look at the graph showed that it is based on the question: "Imagine that the result in your constituency was expected to be very close between the Conservative candidate and the Liberal Democrat candidate, and none of the of the other parties were competitive. In this scenario, which party would you vote for?"

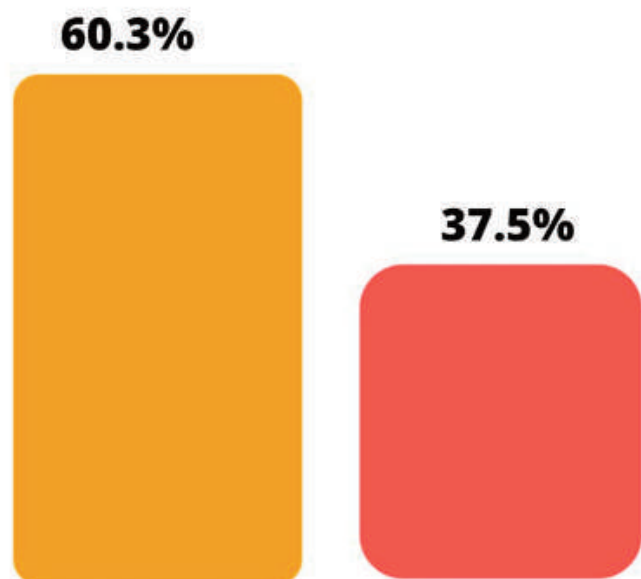
The Lib Dems only achieved 8.3% of the vote in 2017.

Their vote share increase from 2015 to 2017 was only +0.4% with the opposing Labour candidate increasing their vote share +9.9% as well as Mogg pulling away.

YouGov predict the Lib Dems to come third in this seat with Mogg returning to the seat with another large majority.

A bizarre graph to say the least.

## Liberal Democrats can win in Calder Valley



The Walsden by-election (25/07/2019) in Todmorden was the last election held within the Calder Valley Constituency. The Liberal Democrats gained a seat from Labour with a 60.3% percent share of the vote. This was in a Labour held Council Ward. It demonstrates that the Liberal Democrats can win in elections within the Calder Valley Constituency.

Ealing Central and Acton narrowly changed hands from the Conservatives to Labour in 2015. In 2017 Labour breezed to victory, winning with a majority over 13,000.

This graph again tries to use a result from a different election and translate it into general election success.

However, general elections tend to not follow the same path as other elections for a number of reasons.

Even if the results of the European election were to have a direct bearing on voting intentions in a general election. It does not work in this specific example.

The Labour party won the European elections in Ealing by over 6,000 votes, with the Lib Dems the party trailing in second.

In terms of the last general election, the votes that count the most, Labour won the seat with a vote share of nearly 60%.

The Lib Dems came a distant third with 5.6% of the vote share.

Totnen in South West England provides an interesting look into the Lib Dems and their bar graphs.

Totnen has been a safe Conservative seat for some time. However, Sarah Wollaston, who was the Conservative MP and hence a reason for this safety has since defected to Change UK and is now running with the Lib Dems.

While the incumbent factor would give the Lib Dems some hope of the Conservative voters sticking with their long-standing MP – it is not as easy as that.

In 2017 the Lib Dems trailed the Conservatives by over 20,000 votes, with Labour finishing in a comfortable second ahead of them.

While YouGov do predict the Lib Dems to achieve second this time around, the thought of a safe, leave-voting Conservative seat, flipping so dramatically to the Lib Dems is as far-fetched as it sounds.

## Verdict:

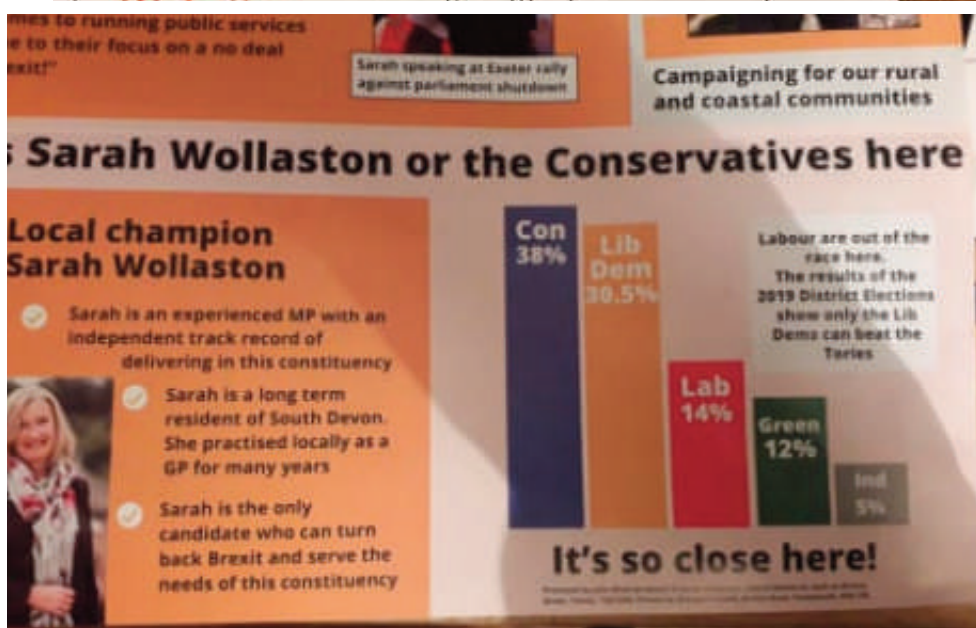
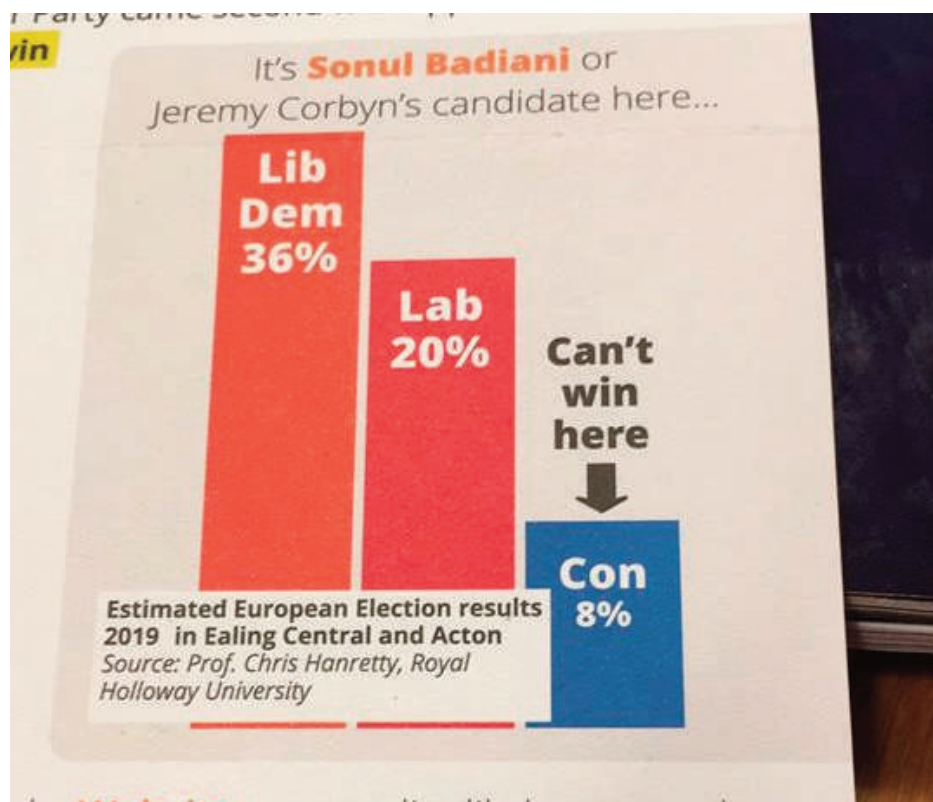
The Liberal Democrats may be simply being naïve and polls on election leaflets are not a surprise. But the obvious attempt to deceive voters is very questionable.

People looking at a graph of a poll will almost certainly believe they are looking at a poll for a general election, not a result for a council election as some of these graphs depict.

Flavible is not a member of the British Polling Council and has been found to be predicting wildly different results to other mainstream polling websites.

The Lib Dems have defended the use of this, with a lot of graphs based off single polls with a very small data set.

It is impossible to gauge how much of an effect local leaflets in general have on peoples voting intention; although the idea of publically publishing misleading data does leave questions to be asked.





# Tactical Voting enters new realms as voters consider continent over candidate



**Matt Chivers takes a look at where a small amount of votes could make all the difference...**

**N**ext week we will all be glued to our televisions, anticipating a dramatic climax to the election.

But during this election a different concept of TV will be more prominent: Tactical Voting.

For those who are not familiar with this concept, it is when someone, who might staunchly vote for the same party in each election, abandons this trend in order to vote for another party which has more of a chance to defeat a particularly disliked candidate.

At the 2017 election, 174 MP's were elected having gained less than half the vote.

In the world of tactical voting, if the voters of the third and fourth-placed parties had decided to vote for the runners-up, then things could have been different.

That is tactical voting, and I have shown that it has been used in the past. But this year is different.

Voters will not vote strategically against a certain candidate as such but could vote differently than usual based on their views on Brexit.

This situation could leave staunch Labour supporters in a dilemma. The Labour Party has not declared whether they prefer to Remain or Leave.

Therefore some Labour followers who prefer to leave may find themselves regrettably voting for the Tories.

On the other hand, if you wish to remain in the EU, you may be required to tactically vote against the Tories, and the Brexit Party, in order to prolong Britain's involvement in Europe.

It is also worth considering that no matter how tactically someone wishes to deploy their ballot, some constituencies would need huge swings if serious change was to occur.

In 2017, Salford and Eccles was dominated by Labour's Rebecca Long Bailey (left), who won the seat 19,000 votes ahead of the Conservative Party's Jason Sugarman.

Although this constituency narrowly voted to leave the EU, Labour should have no worries.

Similarly, Labour's Yvonne Fovargue comfortably took the Makerfield seat with a 60.2% share of the count.

Although 64.91% of Makerfield voted to leave the European Union, it would take an almighty tactical performance to overcome the Labour Party there.

We know that in many constituencies across the



country, there will not be any Brexit Party candidates in a pledge of support for the Tories.

So, what does this say for the Brexit Party candidates that are running against Labour, but also running against the Tories?

In Manchester Withington, both Shengke Zhi of the Conservatives and Stephen Patrick Ward from the Brexit Party have a mountain to climb to take down a massive Labour stronghold with Jeff Smith, as well as defy the 75% of Remain voters from the referendum.

However, in constituencies such as Bury South, tactical voting could be pivotal.

In the 2017 election, Ivan Lewis won for Labour by just under 6,000 votes.

Lucy Burke now represents this party and Ivan Lewis is running independently.

In the referendum, Bury South voted leave with a 54.51% majority.

With a close vote to come and the Brexit Party

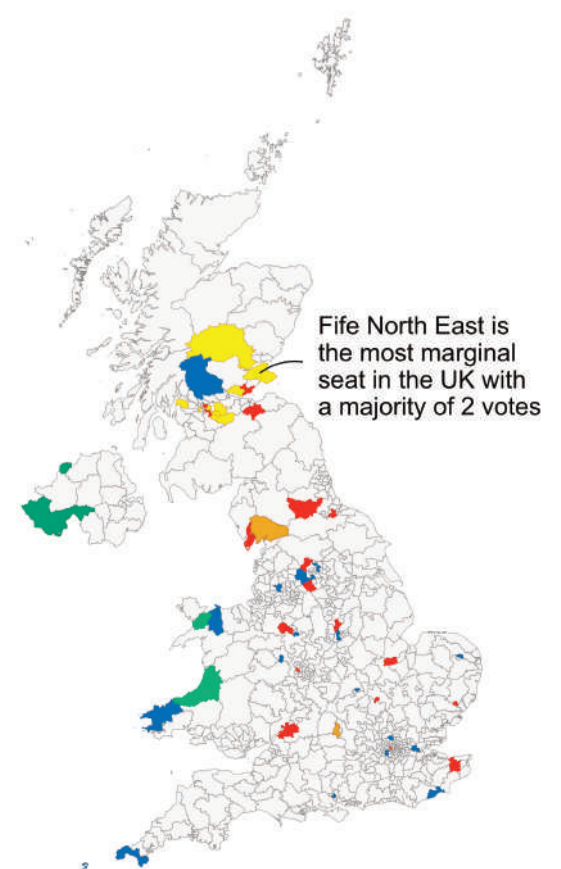
also running in this constituency, the Tory Party could turn it around if there is still a strong intent to leave the EU.

It is worth considering that this piece is just a focus on Greater Manchester.

If tactical voting is used effectively throughout the country, you'd be a brave man to call what conundrum this election machine generates.

## It's a close call...

The 51 'ultra-marginal' seats with less than a 2% majority



Fife North East is the most marginal seat in the UK with a majority of 2 votes





**Manchester Central Facts**  
 The venue was converted from Manchester Central train station, which closed in 1969. It was converted into an Exhibition centre and is also known as the G-Mex Centre. The new incarnation was opened in 1986 by the Queen. The progress of the centre has benefitted from the European Regional Development Fund. The centre has an auditorium, conference rooms and large halls to cater for a variety of events. In September, it hosted the Conservative Party Conference, which sparked protests in the city.

# Remainer Groups stay resolute despite Boris' vow to leave EU



By Matt Chivers

**What Britain voted for in the referendum was very different to what Manchester wanted, and this has shown through the emergence of many pro-Europe groups in and around the city.**

With delay after delay being placed on the Brexit process, one man's frustrations are another man's progress and the existence of key pro-Europe groups in the North West shows the regional contrast in political motives.

At the 2016 vote, 60.4% of Manchester voted to remain in the European Union, which was the highest percentage in the North West. Wigan and Tameside were the lowest, with less than a 40% vote to stay.

In the years of chaos since the verdict, Manchester for Europe has become a growing and influential group that campaigns for Britain to remain in the European Union.

The key arguments that the group assert is the effects the EU has had on many features of Manchester, such as the airport, the city's university and the Metrolink.

According to the group, the city's Metrolink tram system has benefitted from over £10 million in EU grants, and the vehicles can be transported from Austria without tariff charges.

The group also say that Manchester Airport has benefitted from the Open Skies Directive which allows airlines to operate through other member states and as a result, the UK has become the largest aviation network in Europe.

What has been most noticeable is the group's presence on social media. They have over 20,000 followers on Facebook and over 9,000 followers on Twitter.

The lengths of the group's desire to stay in the EU stretch to offering voting advice on their website, urging people to

vote tactically in order to prevent the Conservatives enforcing Brexit on 31st January.

Manchester for Europe were active in marches and public events, with a strong presence at the march from

Whitworth Park to the Castlefield Bowl on 29th September, during the Conservative Party conference.

The intentions of the group echo some extremely one-sided votes that emerged from the referendum in certain constituencies in Great Manchester. Manchester Gorton had a 61% majority to remain, while Withington had a massive proportion with 75%.

Stockport and Wilmslow have also formed pro-Europe groups, gaining a combined following on Twitter of over

8,000 people.

Wilmslow is located in the constituency of Tatton, which had a 54% remain vote and currently a strong Conservative hold with Esther McVey.

Liverpool for Europe has also become an effective group that has grown in numbers. They aim to engage with the wider community of Liverpool and achieve their main goal of persuading the public to back a further delay to Brexit.





# Weight of thei



## Matthew Smith meets the teenagers from Manchester who are confronting MPs to end the use of violent language in politics

**O**livia may not be old enough to vote on December 12, but that hasn't stopped her making an impact on this election.

As part of RECLAIM, a Manchester-based charity that works with young people across the region, she is one of five activists holding politicians to account for their behaviour in the Commons and on the doorstep.

The inspiration came after the now infamous debate on Boris Johnson's so-called surrender bill. During the debate some MPs suggested the use of language like 'betrayal', 'traitors' and 'surrounding' was too inflammatory, some invoking the death of Jo Cox who was murdered the week before the EU referendum. The Prime Minister dismissed those calls as "humbug", and the session descended into a shouting match.

It also brought into view other incidents of how politicians, including the Prime Min-

ister, have discussed marginalised groups. Boris Johnson has spoken on "tank-topped bumboys", "flag-waving piccaninies" and said that "that it is absolutely ridiculous that people should choose to go around looking like letter boxes" when referring to Muslim women wearing burkas.

And it seems they're not alone with their thinking - over 67,000 people signed their petition in two months, before it was handed to then-Speaker of the House, John Bercow.

Now, with an election looming they decided to build upon that support. Last week the five activists launched a new video, #IfWeDidThis, a mock-Party Political Broadcast.

The video highlights the difference between how politicians behave in the spotlight and the standards the rest of us, and those from marginalised groups especially, are expected to follow.

Olivia, 17, said the group had the idea



Roukagia and Olivia point out if they acted the way politicians do in the House of Commons they would face more harsh punishments





The members of RECLAIM's #IfWeDidThis meet the then-speaker John Bercow to hand over their petition and encourage the introduction of a code of conduct for politicians (RECLAIM/Facebook)

to: "create a video alongside the election, a time when things are going to get heated (...) and it's only going to spark both positive and negative opinions.

"[The video] shows what young people are thinking about the election, our opinions on it, and a reminder to [think about] their language and behaviour."

One issue that has especially frustrated Olivia is how female politicians are still being treated in the Commons: "A lot of men in particular had a lot to say about how MPs looked and how they dressed, but it shouldn't be about how they look - it should be about what they stand for.

"You can criticise opinions but going for looks is so low, especially in such a professional job."

In addition to the campaign video, the group has also launched a Code of Conduct that they want MPs to commit to.

Roukagia, 18, explains that it's a simple agreement: "Just stating that politicians will stop behaving in a negative way and stop using derogatory language that targets specific marginalised groups, holding them to account"

The group have already taken the code

to the House of Parliament, gaining the support of then-Speaker John Bercow - even if he wasn't able to provide all the answers.

For those involved, it shows that it is possible for young people to make a change to the establishment beyond the ballot box.

Beyond this political activism, the RECLAIM Project works with high school students in the Greater Manchester area, which is where all these members got involved at first. Their other campaigns include trying to tackle toxic masculinity, and giving young women more confidence to express their views.

Now studying at the University of Law, Roukagia started working with the charity after realising "society isn't the level playing field" that it was meant to be: "RECLAIM has massively improved my confidence, it has given me a platform to express my opinions and views. I would definitely not be where I am now if it wasn't for RECLAIM."

**More details about RECLAIM are available from [www.reclaim.org.uk](http://www.reclaim.org.uk)**



The Labour leader in Whitby during the election campaign (Labour Party/FB)

## Labour's most unpopular leader... Until the next one

**Jeremy Corbyn is a historically disliked leader, but Matthew Smith argues that waiting for a replacement is naive, complacent and potentially dangerous**

**R**egardless of what you read during this election, the same idea keeps cropping up - anyone other than Jeremy Corbyn would have walked this election.

How could they not? It's straightforward. Boris Johnson is there for the taking and yet we're likely heading towards another Tory majority.

This is the box-standard take of the campaign - inoffensive and, more importantly, impossible to disprove.

But this attitude almost implies that if voters can just hold their nose for five more years of Tory rule, the sunny uplands of centrism awaits. That would be dangerous to people who are needing change now, and would be a worryingly complacent attitude in future elections.

Maybe instead of asking how Labour and Jeremy Corbyn are doing so badly, it's time to ask how the Tories are still doing so well - because despite bouncing from embarrassment to embarrassment, some polls suggest they're on for a huge haul of seats.

Jacob Rees Mogg's comments on Grenfell barely registered after a couple of days after he was hidden away by the Tories, while Johnson's comments in his past columns made even less of an impression. Their online disinformation campaign too seemed important in the moment before just fading away. Theresa May unveiling a statue of Nancy Astor, an MP who supported Hitler's 'final solution' right in the midst of this election campaign? Not even a raised eyebrow.

It's not a new phrase, but this winter has highlighted one thing if nothing else - the Tories play politics on easy mode, and when the other side is so radically trying to challenge the establishment that's never been more apparent.

How else can you explain a universally popular policy, such as a state-funded roll-out of fibre-optic broadband, only surviving depending how it's framed on the next day's front-pages.

And it might seem like clutching at straws, but a YouGov poll that asked "Would you support a policy providing free broadband internet to all UK homes and businesses?" 62% of people answered that they would support it. When it was phrased as restructuring BT and renation-

alising aspects, as Labour outlined but meaning the same thing, that number fell to 32%.

None of this is helped by Corbyn himself, of course. He is unprecedentedly disliked - mostly because of his inaction on antisemitism and indecisiveness on Brexit - but it's probably worth asking why the party's polling goes up sharply once election broadcasting rules come into force. It's also probably worth asking why nobody thinks that it's worth asking.

And if you're still not convinced, look back to the previous two leaders.

Ed Milliband was undermined for his voice, his looks and even a diary his father wrote at 17; Gordon Brown fell apart after an exasperated comment after being confronted with a half-baked opinion on immigration.

How does that compare to describing Muslim women in burkhas as letterboxes, or criticising children of single mothers as 'ill-raised, ignorant, aggressive and illegitimate', or saying "f\*\*\* the 7/7 families"?

These statements may have been made years ago, but he was still an adult writing in national newspapers, they weren't just the angry tweets of a teenager that Guido Fawkes routinely use as evidence against Labour candidates (by coincidence, often women from ethnic minorities).

Even take Owen Smith's moderate - completely empty, but moderate - call to get all parties "around the table" to end terrorism in the leadership contest was framed by the Mail as: "spark[ing] fury by suggesting we should NEGOTIATE with bloodthirsty Isis".

That's before we even start mentioning how this theory would have surely led to a boost for Jo Swinson, as it did for Nick Clegg?

Instead of taking that risk again, the establishment has shown how they respond when they feel threatened - consistently shifting and manipulating the narrative until supposed their unelectability can be presented as the national attitude.

And one day maybe another Labour leader will decide that it's worth giving into their demands, just to get a fair hearing. But I hope that won't be the case any time soon, whether it's Corbyn or his successor, we deserve a Prime Minister who is better than that.



# Where do the parties



## A play by play of what else is on the

By Nia Price

Brexit has dominated the headlines for some time, but in an ever changing world there are

other foreign policy issues to consider including defence, se-

curity, human rights with climate change also coming to the fore. So here's a look at what the main parties in the North West are promising in the general election...

**L**abour's Brexit stance has been less transparent than the Conservatives, but they aim to negotiate a new deal closely followed by a referendum.

International peace and security is the primary objective of a Labour government's foreign policy, highlighted by their desire to end the 'bomb first, talk later' approach of recent decades with a pledge to increase funding for UN peacekeeping operations to £100 million.

Like the Conservatives, Labour wants to retain the Trident nuclear deterrent, spend at least 2% GDP on defence

and 0.7% of GNI on international aid.

The main difference to the Tories is their promise to cut Britain's ties with international regimes that commit human rights abuses, become a more critical ally of the US and suspend arms sales to Saudi Arabia and Israel.

They have also committed to 'immedi-

ately recognise the state of Palestine' and advocate a two-state solution. Labour pledges less on climate diplomacy than their competitors but promises to negotiate and deliver ambitious targets to deal with the climate emergency, starting with COP 26 in Glasgow next year.

Exclusive to Labour is to introduce a War Powers Act to prevent prime ministers committing to military action by by-

passing Parliament.

They also plan to tackle the legacy of the British Empire by conducting an audit of the impact of colonial

rule and issue a formal apology for the Jallianwala Bagh massacre.

**T**he Tories want to leave the European Union and are largely focusing on forging trade relationships post-Brexit with both EU and non-EU countries.

Their goals are ambitious, with an aim to have 80% of trade covered by free trade agreements within the next three years, focusing particularly on the USA.

They pledge to spend 0.7% on foreign aid and 2% of GDP on defence and increase this budget by at least 0.5% above inflation every year of the new Parliament.

The Conservatives seek to develop an independent Magnitsky-style sanctions regime to tackle human rights abusers.

Like Labour and the Lib Dems they support a two state solution to the Arab-Israeli conflict.

Policies unique to the party are their investment in global defence programmes through building in Britain new frigates and armoured vehicles, as well as hosting the UK government's first ever international LGBT conference.

They promise to tackle climate change through delivering on their target of Net Zero greenhouse gas emissions by 2050. Once Brexit is done, the Conservatives pledge to promote British

values

more strongly through continuing to campaign on international social issues such as the right of every girl in the world to have 12 years of education, as well as eradicating human trafficking and modern slavery.



# stand on foreign policy?



## table other than Brexit this election

**U**nlike Labour, the Liberal Democrats have decisively stated from the outset they wish to remain in the EU and seek to prioritise Britain's relationship with the union.

Like the Conservatives and Labour, the Lib Dems wish to retain the Trident nuclear deterrent, spend 2% of Britain's GDP on defence and 0.7% on international aid.

Their stance on the Arab-Israeli conflict is similar to Labour as they pledge to officially

recognise the state of Palestine and commit to a negotiated peace settlement, which includes a two-state solution.

Human rights is also high on their agenda through introducing a policy of 'presumption of denial' for arms exports to certain countries and banning arms sales to Saudi Arabia.

Like the Conservatives, they plan to introduce a European Magnitsky Act and for climate change set a EU-wide net zero target of 2050.

Ambitiously, they wish to develop a

global education strategy to address the 263 million children missing out on schooling throughout the world.

A policy unique to the Lib Dems is to reopen the British National Overseas Passport offer to those in Hong Kong, extending the scheme to provide the right to abode to all holders.



Liberal Democrats

**T**he Green Party are pro-remaining in the EU and believe it offers the UK's best possible chance to tackle the climate crisis.

This involves supporting the introduction of an EU-wide carbon tariff on countries which are not reducing their emissions in line with the Paris Agreement of 2015.

Like Labour, they aim to promote peace as a key foreign policy objective, but with environmental concerns at its heart. The Greens want to create a new international 'ecocide' law to prosecute crimes against the natural environment, as well as introduce a new law on Uni-



Green Party

versal Jurisdiction to make it easier to prosecute those committing genocide, crimes against humanity and war crimes.

Like Labour and the Lib Dems they pledge to abolish government support for arms exports.

However, what makes the party different is their wish to scrap the Trident nuclear deterrent programme, replace the Ministry of Defence with a Ministry for Security and Peace, write off debts owed to the UK by the poorest countries and increase spending on foreign aid, more than the others, from 0.7% to 1%.

**F**oreign policy does not appear to be a priority within the Brexit Party's manifesto.

Like the Conservatives, the Brexit Party want of course to leave the European Union.

Similarly, they pledge to ensure that the UK maintains its commitment to NATO and spends a minimum of 2% of GDP on defence.

What separates the Brexit Party from others is Farage's 'trade not aid' stance with a desire to cut international aid by a staggering 50% as well as withdraw from the European Defence Union so the UK would no longer adhere to the EU defence procurement directive.



BREXIT PARTY





# Gender Election 2019: Record numbers of women standing

## But more needs to be done as Hillary Clinton slams the online “amplification of hatred”

By Philippa Baker

**IT IS not just the seasonal timing of the festive election that is making history. The 2019 General Election will see the highest number of female candidates standing.**

According to the latest figures from the Press Association, of the 3,322 registered candidates 1,120 of these are women – making up nearly a third of all candidates.

Despite this, figures reveal that female prospective candidates for the Tories and Lib Dems remain the minority to their male candidate counterparts – as under a third of their overall party representation are vying for seats in this year’s election.

It was revealed that a staggering four in five candidates for the Brexit Party are male. The figures only added to the continued criticism that the party has come under, fuelling the claims of misogyny that are embedded in the party.

However, it was Labour that came out on top for levelling the gender divide within their party. They boosted an impressive 53% of the total number of candidates standing for election in the December vote.

The latest statistics highlight the continued underrepresentation of women across the main political parties, with both the Conservatives and Liberal Democrats falling drastically short of Labour - with less than a third of female candidates standing.

Chief executive of The Fawcett Society - the UK’s leading charity on gender equality - Sam Smethers said: “It is vital that we increase women’s representation in Parliament, but in order to do that we need to end sexual harassment in our politics which is deterring women from getting involved and also alienating voters.”

The 2019 timely report on harassment conducted by the Society and law firm, Hogan Lovells, follows the announcement by a number of high-profile female ministers – amongst them former Tory home secretary Amber Rudd - that they would not stand in the forthcoming general election.

Former US Secretary of State, Hillary Clinton, added her voice to this issue whilst on a visit to Swansea University in November.

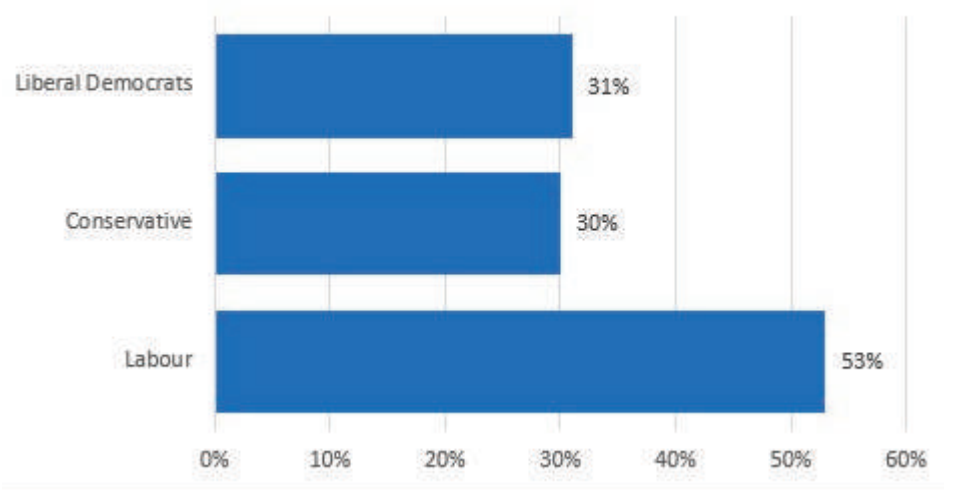
She slammed what she called the “amplification of hatred” that was generated by a growing online and social media culture of harassment and abuse targeted at women in politics.

Speaking specifically on UK politics she said: “It is a terrible loss and a loss to democracy if anybody is intimidated out of running, and disproportionately the people choosing not to run in the first instance, or for re-election, are women.”

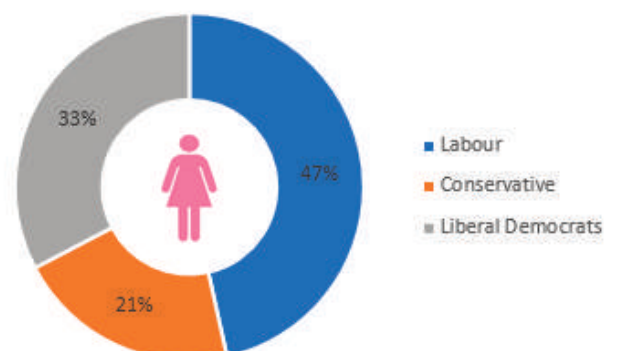
Ms Clinton went on to cite the “24/7 bullying” she endured from current US President Donald Trump, during her election fight for the White House in 2016.

When asked in a joint interview with her daughter, broadcast on BBC’s Radio 5 Live, whether she would stand in the 2020 elections, the Democratic nominee did not rule out

% of female candidates standing in 2019 by party



% of female candidates in 2017 General Election



4 in 5  
Brexit Party  
candidates are  
male







Left: The Conservatives have been criticised for their male dominated front bench in Westminster.

Below: Former Secretary of State, Hillary Clinton speaks out against a hatred of online culture in US and UK politics.



the possibility

"Are you going to run again?" asked radio host Emma Barnett.

"No," Ms Clinton replied. "Not, no. I'm -"

"That is 100 per cent?" the host continued. "So in a few days, I'm not going to open my newspaper -"

"Well, you know, I'd never say never to anything," she responded.

Despite Ms Clinton's concerns over UK democracy, the Press Association figures for 2019 are an encouraging sign that the gender politics in the UK is slowly shifting as more women fight for election.

Statistics published by the House of Commons Library on the 2017 General Election indicate that 973 out of 3,304 candidates were women.

And 105 constituencies nationally were still without a single female candidate, whilst Glasgow Central was the only constituency in the country to have all female candidates.

Of those elected MPs the numbers remained low (208 out of 973), the findings revealed.

Whilst there might be a greater number of women fighting for election on 12 December, it waits to be seen whether the 'Brexit' polls will deliver more female MPs into Westminster.

After recently speaking out on surviving domestic abuse, Bury South candidate for the Women's Equality Party (WEP) - Gemma Evans - wants more women to stand and fight against the "hostile" culture that has become commonplace in UK politics.

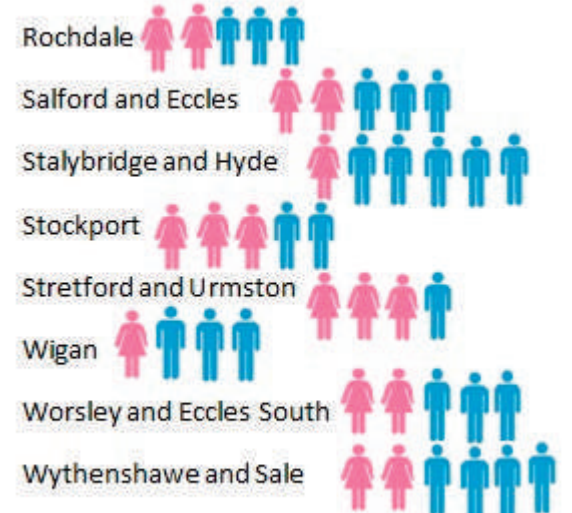
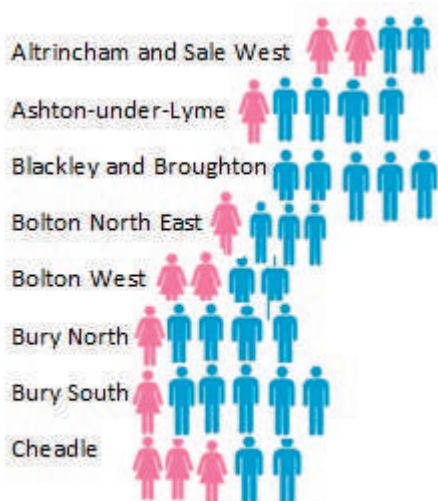
She said: "More women than ever before are standing for parliament at this general election, which is fantastic news.

"However, we've also seen dozens of sitting women MPs choosing to stand down and citing abuse as their reason for doing so", she added.

"The threat of abuse is a huge factor in preventing more women from standing, particularly women from minority backgrounds", she explains.

"Politics has become a really hostile place for women, with women MPs dealing with far more misogynistic and racist abuse than their male colleagues", Ms Evans explained.

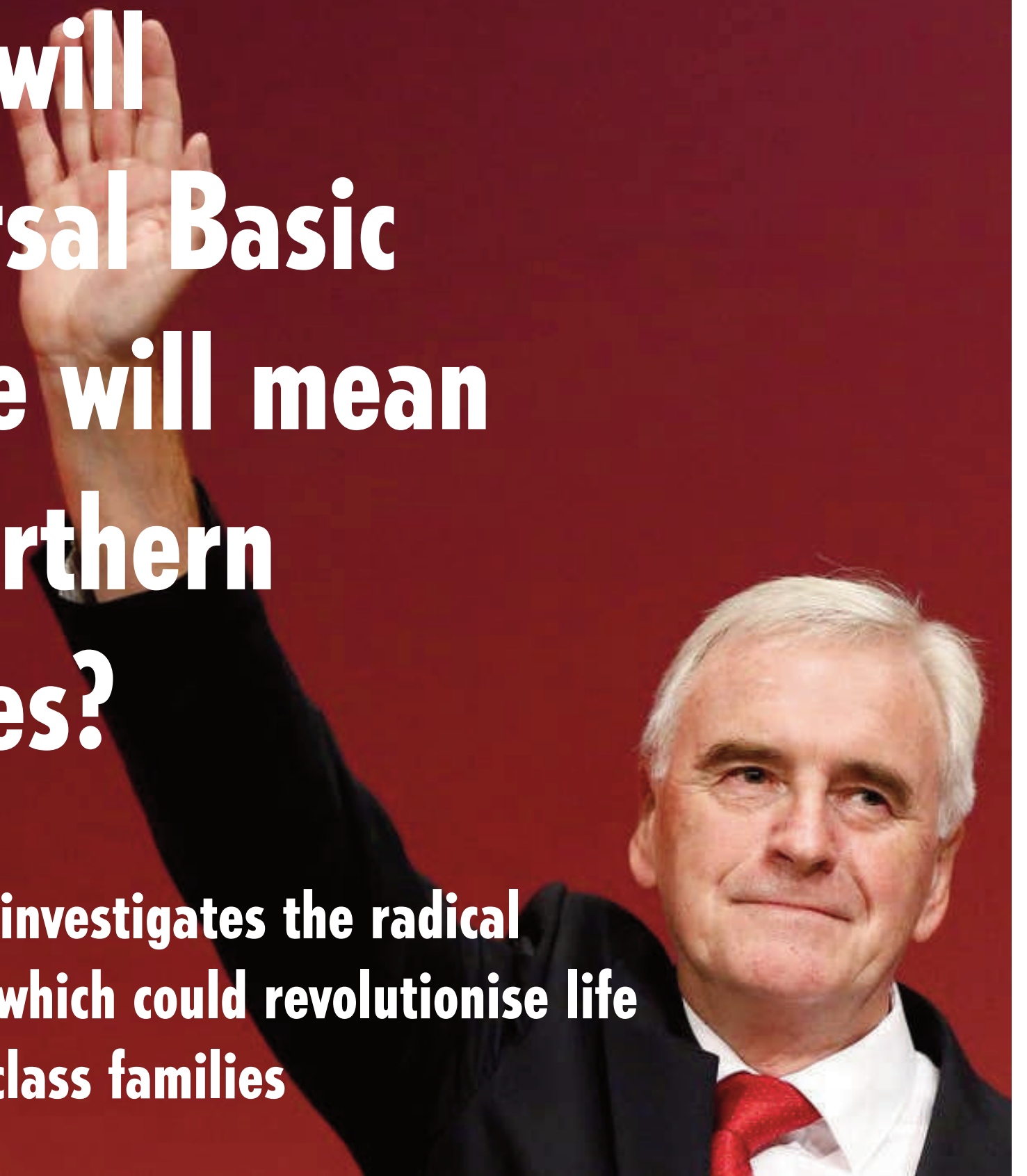
## Do YOU know how many women are standing in YOUR constituency?





# What will Universal Basic Income will mean for Northern families?

**Tom Beattie investigates the radical  
Labour plan which could revolutionise life  
for working-class families**



**A**s part of a radical reimagining of the welfare system in Britain, Labour shadow chancellor John McDonnell has announced plans to roll-out Universal Basic Income (UBI).

The scheme, which will entitle every British citizen to a monthly tax-free allowance, will likely be trialed in the North of England if Labour were to win the upcoming General Election.

UBI trials in Finland, the only advanced economy to launch such a widespread scheme, found that those who had benefited under the scheme had reported significantly higher feelings of self-worth and stability than they had before.

Curiously, it appears that the policy itself seems to have support from across the political spectrum.

Indeed, economists on both the left and the right have argued for UBI as a source of personal empowerment, providing citizens with more choice over work, education, training, leisure and caring.

For those on the left, UBI would be a modern method of cutting poverty and inequality in a way that is fitting for the 21st century and, for those on the right, it could guarantee as less bureaucratic and, therefore, more streamlined welfare system.

With jobs in many sectors looking increasingly under threat with the rise of technology and automation- which experts forecast could threaten up to a third of current jobs in the west within 20 years,- UBI could help to keep families afloat financially while earners retrain or enter full-time studies, for example.

Some critics, notably John Kay, the former director of the Institute for Fiscal Studies, fear that UBI would be too expensive.

Kay said: "If you do the numbers, either the basic income is unrealistically low or the tax rate to finance it is unacceptably high. End of story."

However, Mr McDonnell remains convinced of the benefits.

He said: "Ed Miliband is really keen we commit to a couple of pilots in the manifesto but we will have to argue that out. We want to do it in areas that have been hit hard by austerity.

"The reason we're doing it is because the social security system has collapsed. We need a radical alternative and we're going to examine that.

"We'll look at options, run the pilots and see if we can roll it out. If you look at the Finland pilot it says it didn't do much in terms of employment but did in terms of wellbeing – things like health. It was quite remarkable."

"And the other thing it did was increase trust in politicians, which can't be a bad thing."

Lansley and Reed of the think-tank Compass, said the total cost of the UBI would be as high as £300bn, however under the changes to taxation outlined in Labour's fully-costed manifesto, it is likely that this will be well covered. For them, UBI can deliver social justice in a manner that is fit-for-purpose in a modern economy.

They said: "The basic income would update the British system of social security for the 21st century. All households would enjoy greater certainty about future income, directly tackling growing economic and social insecurity."

For shadow chancellor McDonnell, the North appears to represent the perfect testing ground for the scheme.

"I'd like to see a northern and Midlands town in the pilot so we have a spread," he said.

"I would like Liverpool – of course I would, I'm a Scouser – but Sheffield have really worked hard. I've been involved in their anti-poverty campaign and they've done a lot round the real living wage.

I think those two cities would be ideal and somewhere in the Midlands."

Studies conducted by HMRC in 2017 concluded that Manchester has one of the highest rates of child poverty by local authority area in the UK, with 35.5% of children under 16 living in poverty.

Alarming, this figure is concurrent with the situations facing a





host of cities in the north of England. In Liverpool, the same report claims that 32.7% of children under 16 were living in poverty, with the figure in Sheffield around 25%.

McDonnell does concede that the idea is, undoubtedly, left-field, however he feels with the right strategy the scheme could make a real difference to families in the North.

“Of course it’s a radical idea,” McDonnell said.

“But I can remember, when I was at the trade unions – campaigning for child benefit and that’s almost like UBI – you get a universal amount of money just based on having a child.

“UBI shares that concept. It’s about winning the argument and getting the design right.”

Some have argued in the past that such a programme would effectively lead to the dismantling of the welfare state, however, these fears were quickly rebuffed by experts such as Guy Standing, the founder and co-president of the Basic Income Earth Network.

He is in favour of maintaining benefits for the most vulnerable people in society even with the introduction of McDonnell’s scheme, something he stresses is affordable.

“There is no reason why a city or country could not afford to have a basic income for everybody,” says Standing.

“In Britain, tax reliefs for the wealthy and corporations come to about £400bn a year – this by itself could be used to pay for a basic income for everybody.

“It’s not something that is unaffordable – it’s a matter of priorities.”

Although no fee has been disclosed regarding how much those involved in the pilot stand to receive per week,

it is worth noting that in March of this year, McDonnell came out in agreement with a proposal put forward by the New Economics Foundation (NEF) think-tank who posited that a figure of £48.08 a week should be paid to every adult over the age of 18 earning less than £125,000 a year.

The NEF’s proposal outlined that the cash would not replace benefits and would not depend on employment, as Guy Standing confirmed was entirely achievable.

The NEF’s blueprint, which forecasts that some 88% of all adults would see their post-tax income rise or stay the same while helping to lift 200,000 families across the country out of poverty, has

also been welcomed by the Green Party’s Caroline Lucas.

In Manchester, currently 1 in 47 children are homeless according to the housing charity Shelter. Nationwide, at least 135,000 children are expected to be homeless or in temporary accommodation across Britain on Christmas day – the highest number for 12 years.

Perhaps, UBI could offer the catalyst for turning the tide in this most appalling of situations.



A nationwide, two-year pilot scheme was launched in Finland on 1 January 2017. In total, 2,000 participants, who were randomly selected among those receiving unemployment benefits and aged 25–58, were entitled to an unconditional income of €560 per month, even if they found work during the two year period. The experiment tests whether the implementation of basic universal income could help provide welfare more in line with the changing nature of work, reduce the cost and complexity of the benefits system and provide citizens with greater incentive to find work. Addressing issues caused by automation, long-term unemployment and lower wages are part of a larger social context for the experiment.

As planned, the experiment ended at the end of 2018, and the government of Finland has decided not to continue the experiment while the results of the study are analysed.

Preliminary results were released in 2019. While levels of employment did not change, it did report that those involved showed “fewer stress symptoms, fewer difficulties concentrating and fewer health problems than the control group. They were also more confident in their future and in their ability to influence societal issues.” The full results of the study will come in 2020, after researchers have had time to analyse all the collected data.





# Why Jeremy Corbyn is no Harold Wilson...

By Chris Bradford

Jeremy Corbyn is often associated with former Labour Prime Minister Harold Wilson when it comes to Europe. Wilson astutely managed to renegotiate Britain's terms of the Community and settled the European question for a generation.

However, whilst Corbyn may try and follow Wilson's lead, he will always remain in the shadow of the former Labour premier.

Ahead of the February 1974 election, Labour pledged to renegotiate the terms of Britain's membership of the European Community. They accused Edward Heath's government of taking the UK into the Common Market without the consent of the British people. Labour was particularly critical of the 'imposition of food taxes' and 'the draconian curtailment of the British parliament'.

Likewise, the ambition to renegotiate is there. A Corbyn administration would 'rip up' Boris Johnson's agreement due to the risks to workers' rights, environmental safeguarding regulations as well as protecting just-in-time supply chains by negotiating a customs union style relationship with the EU. Ultimately, this would prevent the UK from negotiating free trading arrangements with the likes of the United States, Australia and New Zealand.

Wilson held a one-day conference in April 1975 ahead of the June vote where Labour members and delegates voted by 2:1 to leave the EEC. Following a vote at Labour party conference in September, there will be a special conference which will decide Labour's Brexit position going into the referendum.

Given that the Labour membership is staunchly pro-European, 45 years later, it is highly likely that the members and delegates would reject the deal, negotiated by Jeremy Corbyn himself. In essence, this would be a humiliating display of no confidence in the Labour leader.

The negotiating timetable is where the similarity ends. On the issue of our membership of the EU, David Cameron was closer to Harold Wilson than the current Labour leader will ever be. Both Cameron and Wilson suspended collective cabinet responsibility, demonstrating pragmatism.

Wilson's cabinet was a coalition of pro-Marketters such as Denis Healey and James Callaghan, as well as Eurosceptics' Michael Foot, Tony Benn, Peter Shore and Barbara Castle. Likewise, Cameron's consisted of the likes of Nicky Morgan, Justine Greening on the Remain side, whereas Michael Gove, Priti Patel and Theresa Villiers, for instance, opted to campaign for leave.

In 1975 the Government said: "We explain why the Government, after long, hard negotiations, are recommending to the British people that we should remain a member of the European Community."



In 2016, the Government said: "The EU referendum is a once in a generation decision. The Government believes it is in you and your family's best interests that the UK remains in the European Union."

Harold Wilson may have acted in the same 'honest broker' style that Jeremy Corbyn seeks to emulate. In Tony Benn's extracts, it was revealed that ahead of the poll, the Prime Minister was only narrowly in favour of remaining in the Common Market, but ultimately supported Labour's renegotiated terms.

Corbyn was lambasted for his lukewarm support for Remain during the referendum campaign in 2016. While he may claim the moral high ground for positioning himself above the debate, adopting a position of neutrality will only fuel the accusation labelled towards the MP for Islington North as 'present but never involved.' This argument has been used to smear the Labour leader by opponents repeatedly ever since he admitted to being at a wreath-laying ceremony which commemorated perpetrators carrying out a terrorist attack at the Munich Olympics in 1972.

Brexit is a seismic constitutional change; it is the most important decision of the day, arguably the most important decision this country has taken in peacetime; it will affect future generations – young voters more so.

As a result of the role of the media, our elections have become more presidential. The electorate has a right to know where their respective party leaders stand on all issues – from crime, health and social care, education, de-

fence and of course, Europe. Politically, not taking a side on, arguably, the salient issue of the day is not leadership. It is simply by standing.

Corbyn does not want to be defined by the same issue which proved fatal to four Conservative prime ministers who fell by the sword: Margaret Thatcher, John Major, David Cameron and Theresa May. But, not pinning your colours to the mast is cowardly and reveals that someone is desperate to stay in power regardless of the political consequences.

Rather than being an honest broker and bringing the country together, Corbyn's strategy risks dividing it even more.

The 1975 referendum settled the European question for 41 years. Naturally, this was helped that Thatcher and the Conservatives embraced the idea of the common market, who ultimately played a significant role in creating the European single market during the 1980s

A second vote may provide some immediate clarity after three-and-a-half years of paralysis, but Brexit will not be over. Nigel Farage would not retire into the sunset if Labour's soft Brexit occurred and make no mistake, the populist drivel of betrayal will be louder than ever before.



From the shadows of opposition, there is little doubt that a future Conservative government would seek to tear up Labour's arrangement and negotiate an alternative.

A remain outcome, on the other hand, would feel illegitimate and epitomise a backroom establishment stitch-up. A Corbyn government would have simply paid lip service to the prospect of leaving the EU when they did not have any intention to deliver it to a meaningful extent. So, whether we ultimately leave or remain, the genie is out of the bottle and Brexit will be a casting shadow over British politics well into the 2020s and beyond.