

TRG

The Reformer

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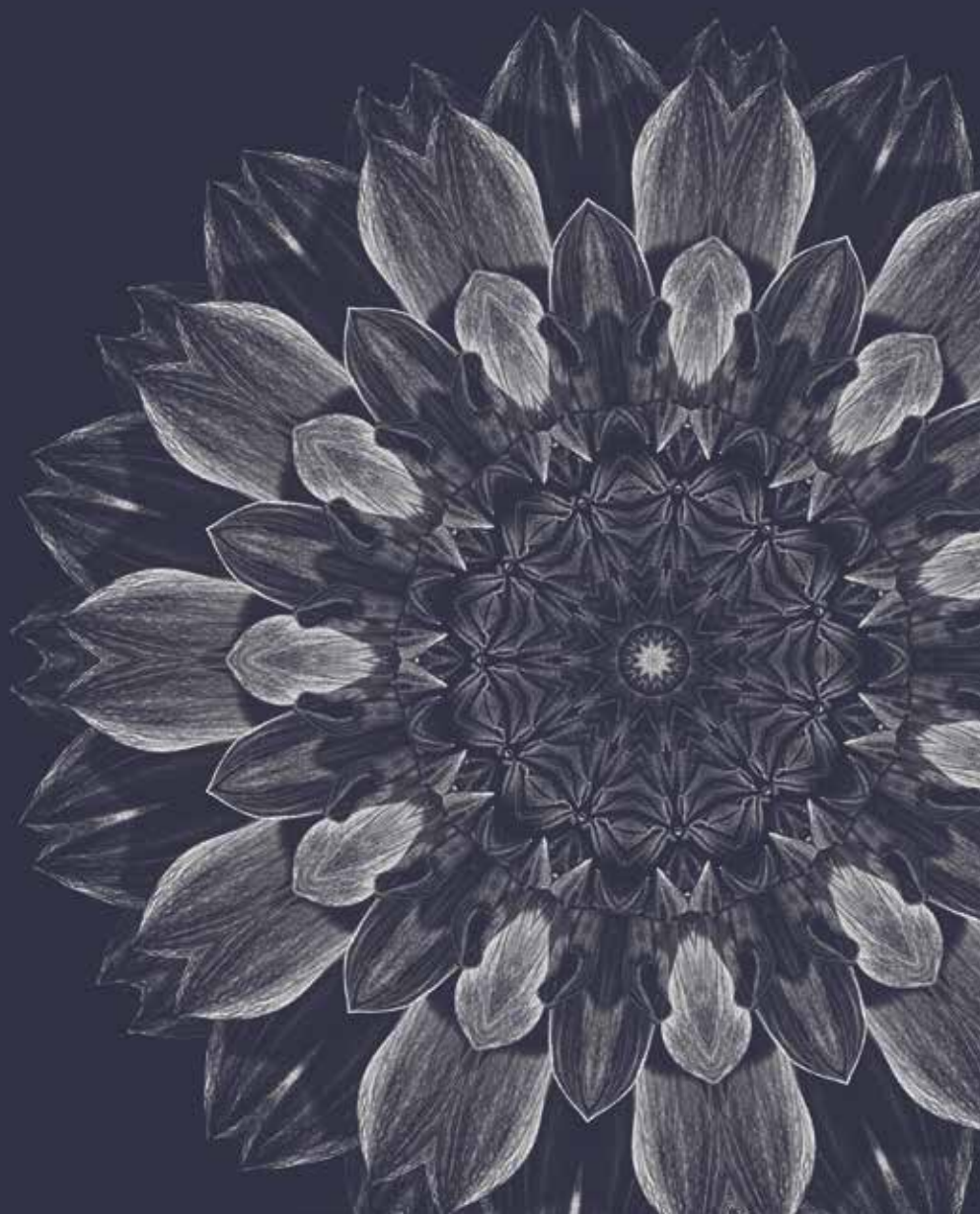


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Chairman's Foreword



Owen Meredith
National Chairman, TRG

We live in challenging times. Political identity is breaking down, the old norms of left and right are being tested, and a new populism is taking root in democracies across the western world. Added to that, the new political divide is more often generational, with younger voters switched off from a Conservative Party that has spent a decade cleaning up the mess of the financial crisis.

How should the Conservative party respond, how do we reboot capitalism and reform our party – as we have done over decades – to connect with a new generation of voters?

Across eight chapters, with contributions from parliamentarians in both houses and TRG members of all ages, this publication explores some ideas to do just that.

At a time when a single issue – the UK's relationship with the European Union – has dominated political discussion for the past four years, crowding out all other policy making, this special edition of *The Reformer* is a collection of ideas, in articles of varying length and detail to help move the domestic agenda forward.

This document is an aide to discussion, designed to inspire creative policy thinking; it is not a manifesto. The views expressed are those of the author of each article, with contributors invited to write a piece which would “start a conversation and demonstrate a range of thinking about how compassionate, pragmatic, One Nation Conservative values can provide solutions to today's social, economic and political challenges.”

From public services to global Britain, through the environment, business and the economy, to localism, these pages explore how One Nation Conservatism can work in action and how the Conservative Party can maintain its position as the oldest, most successful party in the western world; delivering a prosperous, sustainable future for all.

I want to thank everyone who has taken the time to write for *The Reformer* and I hope it gives readers some inspiration and provokes debate. I invite you to join the discussion on the forum pages at www.trg.org.uk and if you're not already a member, please join the TRG and help strengthen our network.

Owen Meredith

About Tory Reform Group

TRG is an independent group which brings together members and friends of the Conservative Party to promote the values of One Nation Conservatism. First established in 1975, TRG seeks to ensure the Conservative Party governs within the One Nation tradition.

TRG advocates the benefits of a society founded on freedom, individual responsibility and community.

It brings together members and supporters of the Conservative Party who share this approach to politics. Over the last four decades the TRG has promoted compassionate Conservative ideas founded in realistic economic policy, generous and open-minded social policy and internationalist foreign policy.

The strength of TRG lies in the breadth of its membership which is drawn from all ages, backgrounds and walks of life. Members include parliamentarians, councillors, association officers and private individuals from all parts of the United Kingdom.

TRG has a busy events calendar of round table policy discussions, drinks receptions and gala dinner events. Speakers range from leading Conservative thinkers, MPs, Peers and Cabinet Ministers. The Group also seeks to influence public debate and Government policy through a programme of campaigns and publications.

TRG is recognised as the authentic and authoritative voice of moderate, liberal Conservatism throughout the Party. It is the home of the One Nation movement in Britain.



**Public services
and society**

Reforming the Curriculum and the importance for the Arts and Music



**Lord Black
of Brentwood**

At the outset of his administration, that hero of One Nation Toryism, Disraeli, rightly said that 'upon the education of the people of this country the fate of the country depends.'

The importance of education has been at the heart of Conservative philosophy ever since. But in recent years things have gone wrong. The policies which we have been pursuing – with an ideological emphasis on accountability measures and an indefensible narrowing of the curriculum – have failed to raise standards, but at the same time have had a deeply damaging impact on the teaching of arts subjects in state schools.

The arts matter to us as Tories, and they matter to UK plc. They power the creative economy, which now makes up 5%+ of our gross national product and supports 1 in 11 of all jobs.

They matter for our national identity and place in the world – our performing arts, classical music, rock and pop, jazz, theatre, design and ballet are all international calling cards of the sort which we shall need desperately after Brexit.

And above all they matter for children. Music in particular has a huge impact on young minds, improving cognitive ability, mental health and employability.

Yet all that is in jeopardy because music and other arts subjects have been so downgraded in state schools as a result of the introduction of the English Baccalaureate, of too much emphasis on accountability measures

Biography

Lord Black of Brentwood (Guy Black) has been a Conservative Member of the House of Lords since 2009.

He has a long career in the creative industries – both as Deputy Chairman of Telegraph Media Group, where he was worked since 2005, and Chairman of the Royal College of Music since 2017.

He is also a former Trustee of the Imperial War Museum. From 2003 to 2005 he was Director of Communications for the Conservative Party.

and of the failure of regulation to protect the position of the arts. And we now have an indefensible situation where these subjects are flourishing in independent schools – producing a two tier system, where the privileged can access the arts, but not those at a state school. That's not equality of opportunity, which has been a guiding principle for our Party for more than a century.

The EBacc – which does not measure achievement in creative, artistic and technical subjects, and which therefore means not just that secondary schools have no incentive to offer these subjects at GCSE, but have a positive incentive actually to squeeze them out – is central to this. It is in need of a complete and urgent overhaul, not least because it is failing to achieve its stated objectives. The Government set a target of 75% of pupils to be taking the EBacc by 2022. Currently the number doing so is around a mere 38% in state-funded schools – a plateau on which it has sat for more than four years. And the number of students passing it is only 17%. So this policy is failing to deliver any positive outcomes – but is producing a whole host of extremely damaging ones. All pain and no gain.

We Conservatives – who understand the importance of a liberal education – should be in no doubt about how serious the situation is. Take the statistics on music, for example, although this is replicated right across all the arts.

Up to half of all primary schools do not meet their obligations to include music to Year 6. In an increasing number of

secondary schools, there is now no music provision at all, which has had a dramatic impact on the number of pupils taking GCSE music, down by 25% since we came to office. The figures for A level music are yet more shocking – down 40% in the same period. Staff levels are shrinking and peripatetic teaching is in decline.

These terrible statistics are damning evidence of the arts in mortal danger. If they die out in state schools – and that's what it looks like – the numbers going on to study them in universities and conservatoires will fall rapidly. And who will then be there to train the next generation? We Conservatives understand the need for renewal – but no profession can renew itself without a steady supply of new entrants who can teach for the future.

Our new Government must look afresh at the basic tenets of education policy. Where arts have been downgraded, reformed EBacc must value them. Regulation must be reformed to support the arts in schools, not ignore the arts. The curriculum must be remodelled to ensure proper provision of all arts subjects taught by specialist teachers. Equality of opportunity must once more be a central principle of policy – not just a slogan.

There is no time to lose. For our Party – which should believe in the musical and artistic life of the UK, value the creative economy and want the best possible start in life for all children, regardless of background – reform should be right at the top of a truly Tory agenda.

Boris's Britain should buy into a co-curricular revolution

What's in a prefix? Everything. 'Extra-curricular' implies something added from outside to the core academic learning of our pupils.

'Co-curricular', however, recognises that educating the whole child is not a bolt-on additional service offered by our best schools, but something that should be at the very heart of education policy. John Major's Government introduced the National Curriculum; Boris Johnson's should add the 'co-', benefiting our learners by preparing them for life in our open, changing, global economy.

Do the pupils at the school I have the pleasure of working in get outstanding 'academic' results because we focus on things like 'running around the sports field', 'jumping into gorges' and 'building dens'? Possibly, possibly not, but the two are deeply connected. Certainly the children that sing and perform in front of audiences, the children that learn to be graceful losers and humble winners, the children that host visiting schools and adults, that dance, debate, grow vegetables and light campfires, are happy, confident, well-rounded children. Happy children are better learners. Certainly, too, the child that has shared a wet and cold training pitch with her maths teacher or capsized their paddle board with her science teacher, will find a deeper empathy and a better working relationship back in the classroom the following morning. A well planned co-curricular programme takes years to develop and costs money and time, but it undeniably benefits our pupils.

The oft misquoted advice to Robert Redford's character in *All the President's Men*, 'follow the money', is good advice for any educational policy thinkers. Working families educating their children in both sectors are paying for 'wraparound care', after-school clubs, trips and residentials, and with good reason. Education is an emotive subject because everyone has been part of the system and has personal experiences. Ask what their 'best' experiences were and they'll recall inspirational teacher heroes and the trips and activities. (Sawley Junior School in the 1970s; trips to Eyam and France with Mr Armit; rolling the cricket square for Mr Breakwell!) Parents are spending their time and money not from wistful nostalgia, but for a complex bundle of modern-day reasons. They recognise the value of challenges and active kids. Our local cricket club, Knockin and Kimberley Knights, has over a hundred children enjoying the sport every Monday night. In Oswestry the gymnastics club has a waiting list. The Shrewsbury Schools District Swimming gala roared with talented children and passionate teacher and parent supporters. In our rapidly changing economy with rising pension ages and gender pay equality, working families are becoming logistics specialists as never before. How many of our creative, able teenagers make good 'active' use of their time between 3 and 6 p.m.? Action for Children claim 80% of Key Stage 3 children have working mothers. A longer, more flexible school day, founded on a co-curricular basis, benefits working families.

Biography

Nick Weston is Assistant Head at Packwood (Shrewsbury School). Son of a railway engineer, he graduated from Dundee University with a Masters in Economics. After spending over a decade on Wall Street, he now teaches History and coaches rugby, fencing and swimming in rural Shropshire.

A strong co-curricular foundation will benefit the country by helping equip our pupils as future leaders, entrepreneurs and inventors. Children that bounce (literally, if you have visited a GymFusion show), that have embedded resilience and perseverance, that have the growth 'anti-fragile' mindset, will be the best equipped to make an impact on the world at large. From Forest School to John Muir and Duke of Edinburgh Award schemes, from didi rugby to high five netball, the more co-curricular the better. From a Britain of rising knife crime and child obesity to something better. As the London Mayor during the 2012 Olympics knows, a passion discovered inside the school gates can be the springboard to amazing achievements beyond. It takes time, dedicated school budgets, passion and a buy-in from all three sectors and stakeholders. The nation's new CO needs to place 'co-curricular' at the heart of our education policy.



Nick Weston

The Lifetime Education Fee Allowance (LEFA)



Adam Smith

The Augar Review, published just as the Conservative leadership contest was getting started, stated that 'there is a near-total barrier to progress for people who have achieved a basic level of education at age 18, but do not progress to university or an apprenticeship'. Looking at the most recently available statistics this paints a shocking picture of the number of young people who are given almost no opportunity for educational improvement beyond the age of 18.

In the summer of 2018, 411,000 18-year olds were accepted onto a university course and around 90,000 under-19s started an apprenticeship. For the rest, around 266,000 young people, or one third of the total 18-year-old population that year, the opportunity for progression beyond their 18-year-old education levels was almost zero. It cannot be right that in twenty-first century Britain more than a quarter of a million young people leave our education system each year and simply stop learning.

This is even more troubling when you realise that the Government spends nearly four times as much money on those who go to university than it does on those who go to Further Education Colleges. And very little indeed on those who do neither.

Biography

A former Special Adviser at the Department for Culture, Media and Sport, Adam now works in policy and communications. He was in the policy team for the Jeremy Hunt leadership campaign and is on the policy committee at the Tory Reform Group.

The solution? The introduction of a new Lifetime Education Fee Allowance (LEFA) for every 18-year-old in the country. This would be worth the equivalent of four years' worth of tuition fees – between £30,000 and £36,000 per person, depending on whether the Government accepts the lower rate of tuition fees proposed by Augar or not. And it could be spent on any level 4, 5 and 6 course or module over the course of their lifetime.

This could be funded by reducing the number of university students taking courses for which they will never pay back their student loans. And it would ensure that they, and their peers, can pick and choose courses, modules, or other learning opportunities most suited to them at each stage of their careers. If everyone in the country had an allowance like this all sorts of educational options would spring up to cater for them. And it would help with the retraining and upskilling that society will inevitably need as we embrace the fourth industrial revolution.

More than that though, it will create a truly level funding playing field for young people and ensure that they all get the same opportunities, not just when they leave school, but throughout their lifetime

Citizenship in the curriculum

As I write this, Boris Johnson has been the Prime Minister for exactly a week, and the Tory leadership contest already feels like a lifetime ago. There was one candidate, however, that I'm sure none of us will be forgetting in a hurry.

Rory Stewart, the ex-Secretary of State for International Development, and former Prisons Minister, threw his hat into the ring and certainly made a name for himself, both amongst Conservative Party members and the public. Peculiar for some and a breath of fresh air for others, with his presence on social media and his walks up and down the country, there was no doubt at all that he added a new dynamic into the mix, and livened up the debate for all of us.

One policy idea, which promoted much debate both in the media and in the Conservative Party itself, was Rory's proposal for National Citizen Service, universal and compulsory for every young person at 16. It was not a military service, as has been implemented by President Macron in France, but both outdoor and community based; in Rory's own words, 'A way of us coming together, as communities and as people. Bringing together a sense of national pride.' An acquired taste, as Rory himself, it was criticised across the board, but personally, if not in its exact format, the idea itself, and the conversation on the role of citizenship in education, is one that I believe was long overdue.

Being a graduate from a post-92 university, whose journey went from studying a science degree to working

in Westminster, by being involved in student volunteering, my view on education is perhaps a slightly unique one. But whilst I was President of the Students Union at Bournemouth University, it was one that I saw time and time again. From the student journalists who ended up at the BBC to the environmental activists who walked straight into jobs out in the field, it was those who found time to take their head out of their books from time to time who appeared to go the furthest. They were the ones who found out what their passion really was and developed the confidence in themselves and the networks that they needed in order to pursue it.

Despite the controversy at Rory's announcement, this attitude and idea has been floating around Government for several years now, and the Cabinet-office run NCS has now seen over 500,000 young people take part in social action projects since it was first launched. Sending students out into their communities each summer, it aims to promote social cohesion, social mobility and social engagement, particularly in disadvantaged communities. The evidence of its impact has been overwhelming, with the organisation's own stats showing that 82% of young people who have taken part feel 'more positive about those from different backgrounds', while those who took part from disadvantaged groups increased their participation in Higher Education by a staggering 50%.

Of course, extra-curricular activities are on offer to all school pupils in varying forms, but as they are not often

Biography

Chloe Schendel-Wilson is the Deputy Chair Political of the Epsom and Ewell Conservative Association, and the Campaigns Officer for the Conservative Workers & Trade Unionists. A scientist by background, she has experience working in the Healthcare, Higher Education and Local Government sectors. Last year she was part of the team that got cannabis legalised for medicinal use in the UK, and got the subject of drug reform on the mainstream political agenda.

part of the compulsory curriculum, The Sutton Trust has found that only two in five pupils choose to take part. As expected, it is those from disadvantaged backgrounds who are disproportionately disengaged, and do more harm to both their experiences as pupils, and also their future prospects. If education is meant to prepare you for the world of work, the picture is pretty grim, with YouGov polling finding that employers surveyed believe that a staggering 68% of school leavers, and 52% of university graduates, are without the life skills necessary for today's workplace. Nearly one third of these employers, however, also believe that the life skills gained from extra-curricular activities, such as volunteering, are more important than academic qualifications themselves.

This raises serious questions in itself about the nature of our education system, and if it is really deemed to be achieving what it should. If we are not preparing our young people for employment, and we are not helping each child to realise their passions, than what are we achieving? If we are not improving their confidence and self-belief, and creating active citizens in each and every community, than how do we improve? Embedding citizenship into the curriculum of course isn't a cure all, but it is a start. And there really isn't any harm in attempting to start somewhere.

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Chloe Schendel-Wilson

Does policing need governance reform?



Josh Rendall

London, like any big city, has a problem with crime.

Over 910,000 crimes were reported in London between February 2018 and February 2019. This is an increase of 20,000 from 2017-18 and a rise of 150,000 since 2014-15, when Boris Johnson was Mayor. There were 135 homicides in 2018 – the highest since 2008. My ward of Stanley in Kensington and Chelsea is not immune. The ward had 288 reports of violent criminal activity between June 2018 and May 2019, with anti-social behaviour coming a close second with 258 reports.

Since Sadiq Khan was elected Mayor of London in 2016 he has clashed repeatedly and publicly with the Government on a wide range of issues, including fighting crime. These very public displays of playing politics with policing are a distraction. The Mayor claiming that 'Tory cuts' are the sole problem for London's crime does not help the situation. This also contradicts Philip Hammond's spring statement, where he gave £100 million extra to police forces to combat knife crime. London, for example, has seen a 52% increase in knife crime since Khan came to office. The Mayor, while accepting the money, also then blamed austerity for a rise in crime, instead of working with the Government and the resources he already has. Instead of spending extra on policing with his vast City Hall budget, he spent £3 million on PR and £400,000 on a beach party in Newham, amongst other vanity projects.

Crime is a growing problem for communities outside London, too.

Biography

Josh is Councillor for Stanley Ward in the Royal Borough of Kensington and Chelsea. He is also a member of the TRG since 2016 and sits on its Events sub-committee.

The National Crime Agency estimates there are 1,500 county lines throughout the UK, with the drugs being trafficked worth an estimated £500 million. Knife crime and violent crime are major issues as well, especially in the West Midlands, Merseyside, South Yorkshire, West Yorkshire, South Wales and Greater Manchester. It's very welcome that the Prime Minister has announced funding for an extra 20,000 police officers over the next three years, but money alone will not solve all the issues.

The problem is a fractured and fragmented policing landscape. Police and Crime Commissioners (PCCs), introduced in 2012 for England and Wales to make policing more democratic, have had their legitimacy undermined by low turnout during elections. Turnout initially in 2012 did not even bring out 10% of the electorate, with the Essex PCC elected on less than 5% of the vote. Although turnout has increased somewhat, up to 25% in 2016, it's still too woefully low to add any real legitimacy.

The devolution of policing to the Scottish Parliament in 1998 and reforming the police service in Northern Ireland in 2000 has added to the mix of policing responsibilities. Such is the fragmented nature of the 45 police forces across the UK that five former Commissioners of the Metropolitan Police plus three former senior police officers have written an open letter to The Times calling for a Royal Commission into the future of policing.

However, with London being the prime focus of media attention, the city is the epicentre for the wider policing issues

facing the nation as a whole. Does governance of policing need reform? Almost certainly. Does resourcing need evaluating? Absolutely. The PCCs have not resulted in better policing. The Mayor of London has not resulted in better police accountability or funding. Evidence for that speaks for itself. So what's the answer? Firstly, policing should not be political. Fighting to keep the streets safe should be a priority without the need for political mud slinging. There is arguably a case for policing to be outside the political sphere, but how will that work? Policing absolutely needs to be accountable to the public, but the current system has not really achieved those aims. The health reforms of 2012 took the NHS out of the political structures, for better or worse, and have seen its policies and direction set by the NHS itself. Should the same be said of the police? Whatever the outcome for a potential Royal Commission, what is needed is an end to the blame game and the culture of the politicisation of policing. There is a need to get to the root of the problem – to reduce crime and make people feel safe.

With crime in London at a high and knife crime on the rise, the police and their resources should be used where and when they are needed. To reduce the 910,000 crimes in the city, and in other parts of the UK, a serious conversation needs to be had. How do we fight crime, keep police accountable, lower the bureaucracy and end the blame game? Do the fragmented police forces need merging? There is no easy answer, but the conversation must be had sooner rather than later.

Children's Centres: The most powerful tool to get our communities back on track

As a mother of two young adults, my protective arm is around them all the time, albeit invisible. As with every parent in this country, you worry for them, and especially now, as we have a dangerous and threatening situation regarding knife crime. A friend's son was stabbed a few years ago, thankfully not fatally. So, as the reach of this threat is creeping ever closer, will it become a statistic that all of us will be affected? I hope not.

So, what is the answer? Well, there aren't actual answers to this issue, we have a myriad of ideas being proposed from every sector of society; 'bring back the Youth Clubs,' or even, 'send these young men wandering the streets with nothing better to do into the army – that'll sort them out.' Some of these notions are sane and some extreme, but thought-provoking nevertheless, and this is the conversation we should be having if we want to get closer to a solution to combat this increasing social problem. We've started on the right path by acknowledging that some low-income families need help, and I believe that Children's Centres play a vital role, because help starts locally. This is the ethos we need to project: it's all about community and the people within it.

Theresa May, along with the Joseph Rowntree Foundation, realised that the Just About Managing (JAM) families, people in poverty and the socially marginalised in our society are the very people that need support and nurture. We accept that the poverty trap of low-income families affects children's relationships with parents,

siblings and peers. The Early Help approach, an initiative run by some Children's Centres under the umbrella of their local council, helps tackle this issue by providing safeguarding, family help and core services to support a family's needs right up until a child starts school. Tackling the problem before it has even begun is where I believe we need to focus our attention.

It's the community environment that projects opportunities and a chance to get one's life back on track, a chance to be somebody again, a chance to become a part of society and enjoy life. The influence of these people in the same social, economic group is so fundamentally important; the community comes together to help each other, find the necessary resources, tap into outreach when necessary; but significantly, with the right support and direction, these people and their families can be given the chance to grow. And it doesn't have to be on a large scale. I know this from personal experience whilst being involved with a local centre in a very deprived area. The community hub currently works with just a small grant from the Town Council; there, the support focuses on practical, simple and important aspects of family life, such as employment, childcare and cooking. This actually works and gives such confidence to the families, which filters through every aspect of the community – it's infectious. When the centre was under threat of being cut, the good old Labour Party stepped in to take up the cause. The families said to me, 'I thought you cared'. 'I do,' I said, 'I'm a Conservative'.

Biography

Emma Sims is a Journalist for BBC radio. She is also the author of Children's Books and a script writer. She is also a District Councillor in Stroud.

Of course, there is, as we know, 'no money tree'. Financial governance is hugely important and priorities change, but here's the thing — it's the headlines that are a devastating read: 'Don't cut our lifeline: Parents' fears over children's centre closures' – Sky News, Jan 2019. This directly affects the public perception of the Tory Party as out of touch with communities and the marginalised of society. This is not a headline we should be reading. This is not caring conservatism. These closures are hampering social mobility and as a result thousands of children are missing out on vital services.

What I feel we should be doing is devolving to the community in these socially marginalised areas, working with local groups, Youth Clubs and Sporting Clubs. Here is where we can start to tackle the major problem we have, and it's not just about the crime aspect. We should want to give these families back their independence through education, employment and support with family life.

There is of course, a place for the larger, more formal approach, but local groups are where we should be putting our thoughts. Social cohesion is where we should be focusing our next step forward for the marginalised in our society. We must take the long view, but we need to do it now, we need to let our communities take on board their issues. In my experience these people want to aspire, they want jobs and the benefits of working. Wasn't this what the Big Society was about? A fairer society. We need to create the wealth profile, so people know that by having a job and



Emma Sims

paying rent, they can access the economic and cultural opportunities available, giving them a new hope for the future.

There is no easy quick fix or buzz words to make this happen, but I believe that by supporting the most vulnerable in society we can really start to make an impact on local communities. This is where Children's Centres play a pivotal role for families and the local perception of the Conservative Party: a party that identifies with social inequality and assists neighbourhoods at a grassroots level. According to the Joseph Rowntree Foundation, 'higher turnout and the switching between parties mean low-income voters could be key to the outcome of the next General election'.



Christopher Balfour

If some freedom is possible alongside the constraints of Society, guidance and knowledge can help inspire fruitful use of that freedom.

The Thatcher-type ethos seems to have grown from her adolescent experience. The family shop functioned through hard work and careful accounting. Why spend taxpayers' money on supplementary activity if family and school were sufficient?

In 1982 the Manpower Services Commission's training plans for 'a better equipped, better qualified, better educated workforce' were cancelled. MSC leader Richard O'Brien was dismissed by Jim Prior's successor, Norman Tebbit. Proposed full-time training was replaced by short-term 'Opportunity' and 'Community' Programmes. They helped with the job statistics but did not promote careers. Ten years later, the Careers — formerly Youth Employment — Service was privatised.

In 2002, a web-based National Careers Service was launched. A college Principal commented, 'Information online is not the same as a professional adviser exploring the motives and ideas of a student. You might as well ask why pupils come to school when they could stay at home and read books'.

Biography

Christopher is a former district councillor, author and candidate in Gloucester in the 1966 election.

These developments reversed earlier recommendations:

- INCE REPORT 1945: 'Tax revenue for Juvenile Employment Service worthwhile'. 'The pivot of life is the job'. 'Enable employment which matches capabilities'. 'No-one is likely to be happy if work beyond capacity or fails to stretch powers.'
- ALBEMARLE REPORT 1965: 80 pages including, 'Many in the exacting and competitive conditions of to-day find the transaction from school to work particularly difficult and fail to settle in employment. A job which holds interest and challenges abilities can be an important steadying influence and the Youth Employment Service has a special part to play'.
- HOUSE OF COMMONS EXPENDITURE COMMITTEE YOUTH EMPLOYMENT 1973: (on considering transfer of payments to the Department of Employment) 'If you separate the payment of benefit from the Youth Employment Service, you are going to take away one of the props which brings some youngsters back to the field of guidance who might not otherwise come in'.

Is it fair to suggest that our education-based attitude to those we were trying to help was different to current Job Centre activity? There was no judgmental sanctioning. But it is also realised that these are different times with consequent different responses. The question is whether the cost savings have been worthwhile or are they responsible or partially responsible for knife and other crimes, university suicides, talents unused, negation of creativity and some unhappiness?

The rebirth of an Advisory Service could also be valuable in explaining options if the Conservative Party were to reconsider its opposition to a partial basic income as advocated nearly 50 years ago by two Conservative MPs, Brandon Rhys Williams ('if they got an opportunity of casual work, they would take it and no-one would have to know') and David Howell, now Lord Howell, ('there would be people not in full-time work, but they would not need to have themselves labelled as unemployed').

Half of all the girls and young women in young offender facilities, and a third of all the boys and young men, were previously looked-after children. Think about that. About 1% of children are taken into care, the overwhelming majority through no fault of their own, and yet they are so over-represented in the youth justice system.

Sadly, these children are failed in other ways too.

At Key Stage 2, just over a third of looked-after children reach the expected standard compared with two thirds of the general population, and by Key Stage 4 only 17.5% achieve a pass in GCSE Maths and English compared with nearly 60% of non-looked-after children. So, the older they are, the worse their outcomes. This may be because they have spent longer in their dysfunctional families, or it may be because they have spent longer in the social care system. Either way, it's not good.

Beyond coming from families who are unable to look after them, there is little in the background of most looked-after children to suggest why their outcomes should be so poor. We must therefore look at the systems we use to raise them, and see if that's where the problem lies.

In particular, we should look at the fundamental instability in the care given to these children. It is inevitable, apparently, that if they are not adopted, looked-after children are likely to move between several foster carers or care homes during their time in care. Whilst they are statistically more likely to attend school than other children, they are more likely to change schools more often. This instability is not conducive to good outcomes.

Some years ago, working with an academy trust in Essex, I helped develop a proposal to provide a stable educational environment and social structure for looked-after children, which we pitched to the then Labour Government. They turned it down.

We proposed to build a boarding house attached to one of the schools which would have provided term-time accommodation and, more importantly, live-in house tutors and a dedicated Local Authority key worker who would be permanently present to help and guide the children, providing them with a structure to their day with set meal times, study times and free time. At the weekends, activities and sports would be provided, just like in a normal boarding school, and non-boarding children would be encouraged to participate to help reinforce friendships beyond the boarding house. In the holidays, the children would go with local foster-carers, in some cases the live-in tutors themselves, so that the school friendships could be preserved.

Biography

Jeannette was elected to the TRG Board in 2019. She is co-opted onto South East Region for policy matters and organised the first ever South East Region policy conference in May 2019. Previously she has been Deputy Chair Political for Sussex Area and Wealden Association and a District Councillor for just over one term, having won her ward in January 2015 and then again in May of the same year. In the last general election she was agent to Jeremy Quin in Horsham and campaign manager for Nusrat Ghani in Wealden. She has also managed and agented several local election campaigns. Before she became an avid campaigner Jeannette had a successful career as a strategy consultant working mostly with the public sector. The needs of a growing family terminated that and the campaigning took over as the kids grew up. She tweets as @jetowey

We didn't know if this proposal would improve outcomes but it seemed to us that it provided a few advantages over the current system, namely:

- Daily routine and structure
- Stable education
- Stable social structures and friendships
- A small number of adults with responsibility for the well-being of the children

That proposal was made around 15 years ago. Since then, outcomes for looked-after children have not improved. We now have a new Government with the energy and desire to improve the lives of the British People. Wouldn't it be great if just a little of that energy was directed at helping some of the most vulnerable?

Sources: Department for Education, 'Outcomes for children looked after by local authorities in England, 31 March 2018'; Ministry of Justice/Youth Justice Board, 'Youth Justice Statistics, 2017/18, England and Wales'



Jeannette Towey



Damian Green MP

One of the measures of a civilised society is how it treats its most vulnerable people. On this measure Britain has fallen below our usual standards with the treatment of those, particularly the frail elderly, who need social care either in their own home or in a care home. There is not enough available, and too much of the care on offer is substandard.

Social care, especially for the elderly, is too often opaque to those trying to understand it, with no apparent logic to the conditions which receive free NHS treatment, and those which do not. It is also apparently unfair in not rewarding a lifetime of prudence. Those who have saved feel that their savings will simply disappear, while those who have not saved receive the same level of care.

Less well known is the fact that funding social care out of council tax means that local authorities are reluctant to allow too many care homes to be built. An ageing population means that already more than two fifths of council spending goes on social care. This figure will only increase over the years, so councils are fearful that all their other services will be swamped by the rising demands of the social care system.

I recently published a paper for the Centre for Policy Studies, 'Fixing the Care Crisis', which dealt specifically with the problem of care for older people.

A new system will need to meet five objectives.

Biography

Damian is a former financial journalist, educated at Reading School and Balliol College, Oxford, becoming President of the Oxford Union in 1977. He worked in the Prime Minister's Policy Unit from 1992-94. Damian was first elected to Parliament 1997. From 2012-14 he was Minister of State for Policing, Criminal Justice and Victims. In 2016 he was Secretary of State for Work and Pensions. He was First Secretary of State and Minister for the Cabinet Office from June 2017-December 2017.

Damian is Chairman of the All-Party Parliamentary Group for Longevity and Vice-Chair of the All-Party Parliamentary Group for Social Care.

1. It will need to provide enough money to cope with an increasingly ageing population.
2. It will need to be fair across generations, meaning that today's working taxpayers are not asked both to pay for their own care and the care of the generation above them.
3. It needs to be fair between individuals, ensuring that no-one has to sell their own home to pay for care, and ending the 'dementia lottery' where one condition is treated on the NHS and another is not.
4. It must lead to an increase in the supply of care beds and retirement housing.
5. It should secure cross-party consensus, with an extensive consultation before the law is changed.

We should look as a model to the pension system. In recent years the basic State Pension has been increased significantly, taking many pensioners out of poverty. At the same time most people save additionally through their working years to provide comfort and security in old age.

Similarly, just as the basic State Pension has been improved in recent years, I believe we should offer a Universal Care Entitlement, offering a better level of care both for homecare and residential care. For those who need residential care this would cover the core residential costs. Needs would be assessed locally but the money would come from central Government. This would take away the pressures on local councils.

My estimate is that providing decent care in this way would involve an extra £2.5 billion extra a year immediately,

with increasing amounts as the demographics change over the years. Others put the figure higher. Any suggestions for an increase in tax or National Insurance will be controversial, but politicians need to be honest.

In addition we need to find an acceptable way to allow those with the capacity to improve their own provision to do so. This would come through a Care Supplement, a new form of insurance designed specifically to fund more extensive care costs in old age.

This is just like the private pension system, which for millions of people tops up their state pension. It would allow people to buy insurance at the level they can afford to provide peace of mind. It would not be compulsory so could not be stigmatised as a Death Tax or Dementia Tax. People could save for it over many years or make a one-off payment (possibly using equity release from a part of their house value) at a suitable time in their lives.

These ideas would take the burden of social care funding away from local authorities. No-one would have to sell their house and see their inheritance disappear. Everyone would have the chance of receiving better care. Fewer people would be left unnecessarily in hospital beds as they wait for social care to be available.

None of this is easy and it will take political courage. But it is absolutely necessary if we are to provide peace of mind and security to frail elderly people who richly deserve it.

Sport has a unique ability to bring people together and cross otherwise unpassable social divides. And it is something which we do of our own accord, whether it be going for a run at the weekend, playing football with friends or arranging a post-work game of tennis.

So, there is a question to be asked about what exactly the role of government should be in how we fund UK sport across all levels, and what a government's priorities should be.

I believe that, as things stand, government is too interested in achieving success at the elite level as opposed to what it should be doing: making it easier for people to become active on a regular basis, and as a result of doing so becoming happier, healthier citizens and easing the burden on the NHS. It is vitally important to the health of our country that sport, and exercise more broadly, is something that people have the opportunity to do.

Many Conservatives, myself included, find some of the more interventionist policies regarding sugar taxes and listing calories on menus as unhelpfully intrusive. However, we do need something to encourage people to get into a better physical state and reduce the obesity rate in this country without trying to dictate how people live their lives, or financially punishing certain lifestyle choices.

And this is where I would like to see government change its priorities. I fear that too many policy-makers' views are clouded by the embarrassment of the 1996 Atlanta Olympics, at which the UK received only one gold medal. So, at the moment, part of the incentive for sports to win Olympic medals is that they will then be likely to receive greater financial support. Amongst the UK's most successful sports are rowing, sailing and equestrian. All of which are, unsurprisingly, dominated by those from private schools. And these sports receive funding because of the greater possibilities for winning medals, while other, more widely played and accessible sports such as basketball have to fight to receive any funding from the state because of our competitive weakness.

I appreciate that this desire to shift focus away from the elite to the grassroots may read more as something that you would expect to find in *The Guardian*, as opposed to a pamphlet from the TRG. But you only need to walk down a British high street to see the health problem that we have in this country. We have issues that need to be tackled, and a Conservative government should be doing so in a way that doesn't impede on personal choice in people's lives. Thus, by taking the emphasis away from simply investing in sports where we can create elite athletes who can then ensure that we rank highly on Olympic medal tables, we should be looking at the physical state of the country, and spending money where it can do the most to create opportunities for the greatest number of people.

Biography

Ruan is an Account Director at the Corporate Communications firm Brunswick Group. He previously worked for Sir Alan Haselhurst MP as well as an agency for ex-footballers.

Seven years on from London 2012, there is still little sign that the Olympic legacy of attracting more people – and particularly young people – into sport has worked.

By placing more of an emphasis on engagement than immediate success, we can help to address the health crisis this country faces and spread the joy of sport to an increasingly wider net.



Ruan Tremayne

Men and mental health: An unspoken crisis



Andrew Baker

Suicide is the most common cause of death in men under the age of 50 in the UK. In 2017, 5,821 suicides were recorded – 75% of these were men. The male suicide rate in the UK is three times higher than that of women.

The statistics are blunt and unambiguous: despite male suicide rates in the UK falling recently, Britain is still facing an untreated and unspoken mental health crisis. There are many variables that lie behind these statistics and any possible solution to this crisis will require a multi-faceted approach.

Removing the societally constructed stigma that exists around men and their mental wellbeing is a crucial first step in addressing this public health crisis. Stigma is a barrier to the treatment of mental health illnesses and only when men feel comfortable talking about this topic will they likely engage with mental health services and seek treatment. The roots of this stigma have long been discussed but, in part, can be attributed to conformity to outdated male stereotypes and templates of masculinity – the idea of men as a source of strength, with phrases such as ‘boys don’t cry’ and ‘man up’ commonplace. Such misconceived notions of masculinity foster what is termed ‘public stigma’ and ‘self-styled stigma’. A 2014 paper defines public stigma as the perception held by others that a mentally unwell individual is socially undesirable. Stigmatised individuals may then internalise these prejudices, leading

Biography

Andrew has been a TRG Board Member since 2018 as Treasurer. He works as a finance lawyer, with a broad practice ranging from acquisitions to derivatives. In his free time, Andrew is Deputy Chairman of his local association, Chair of Bright Blue’s Europe policy forum, a school governor and law centre volunteer.

to the development of negative feelings about their own self – this is self-stigmatisation. The same paper then highlights the compounding and inhibitory effect of traditional masculine gender norms on help-seeking.

There exists a toxic and symbiotic relationship between mental health illness, masculinity, public stigma, self-stigma and attitudes to seeking help. One point of light, however, is that evidence suggests that information and education about mental health can break this cycle by helping to reduce or prevent self-stigma.

We need to ask ourselves what we are doing as individuals and as a society to tackle this stigma, raise mental health awareness and support those suffering. As individuals, there is much that we can do. Simply talking more about mental health will normalise it and help address any lingering misperceptions. Similarly, being there for someone who is suffering from mental health difficulties and making clear that you are there to provide a judgement-free and solutions-focused environment can make a huge difference. This can be the first step in helping them seek professional help.

Mental health is still a taboo subject in the workplace – 67% of employees still feel scared, embarrassed or unable to talk about mental health concerns with their employer. Employers should be playing a greater role in mental health initiatives. For example, investing in training to recognise the early signs of a

mental health condition, having a mental health board champion or organising events such as the Mental Health Foundation’s ‘Tea and Talk’ initiative designed to create conversations on mental health in workplaces.

At the root of this is a collective societal awkwardness – a tendency to shy away from discussing a problem that touches us all. What mental health needs now more than ever is a candid and shamelessly open dialogue.

2

**21st Century
Britain**

To help heal some of the deep divisions across the UK, we need to properly invest in our people

Believe it or not, there will come a time when Brexit doesn't dominate every political discussion. Until then we need to use this time to think more clearly about how we pitch our philosophy as Conservatives of small government, believing in the power of individuals and entrepreneurs, a welfare safety net, and strong economic and national security as a direct counter-offer to the Labour Party trying to be the champions of a fairer society.

One way in which we can do this is by using the Spending Review to set out how we will invest in our people going forward. After all, they are our best assets. That is as true for a country as it is for any organisation or institution.

Currently people don't feel valued and they don't feel invested in. Our Industrial Strategy talks extensively about technology and places, but not about people. And yet, how can we attract a business to a new area or expect new ideas to take root and be turned into new and often ground-breaking technologies without the people to sustain them?

We need to be clear that capitalism is about people – our human capital and their social capital – as well as financial capital. We need to invest properly in our people. Not only will this drive greater productivity, which should result in greater wage growth, but enhancing everyone's social capital, including creating a shared sense of identity, will help heal some of the deep divisions revealed across the UK in recent years.

Biography

Nicky Morgan is the Secretary of State for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport. She is a former Mergers and Acquisitions lawyer and has worked in three major City of London firms. She has been the Member of Parliament for Loughborough since 2010. She has previously served as Chair of the Treasury Select Committee, Secretary of State for Education, Minister for Women & Equalities, Financial Secretary to the Treasury, Economic Secretary to the Treasury and as a Government Whip. She is the author of 'Taught not Caught: Educating for Character in the 21st Century.'



Nicky Morgan MP



Stephanie Reeves

Wimbledon Tennis recently announced that women players would no longer be referred to by the prefix 'Miss' or 'Mrs'. In a statement, the All England Tennis Club said it wanted to 'achieve consistency' between players.

Thank goodness. A person's marital status has no bearing on their ability to play tennis, nor any other activity, job or role for that matter. And yet women in the UK are still routinely asked to clarify their marital status using compulsory prefixes.

At best it's a hangover from an assumption of formality, politeness even, or it's just tradition – it's what we know. What we are comfortable with. Sadly these are so often the reasons why discrimination clings on. At worst their continuing use is still used to discriminate against women (especially in the workplace). 'She's married/not married – is she a good cultural fit?', 'She's married – she'll be wanting to start a family soon!'. And so it goes.

The truth is that marital status continues to be seen as a primary part of a woman's identity in a way that it isn't for men. There is no place for this in the 21st century.

A light hearted example: online shopping. A woman is compelled to declare her marital status with Sainsbury's, Argos, EasyJet, South Western Railway, even The Spectator, to name just a few.

Biography

Stephanie is a member of the TRG board and chairs our policy committee.

Stephanie stood as a Conservative council candidate in 2014 and went on to serve two terms as the Vice Chair for Lewisham Deptford Conservatives. Stephanie worked for the Conservative Party in the House of Commons from 2007 to 2012.

She is the former Deputy Chair for Breast Cancer UK and serves currently as a School Governor for Haberdasher's Aske's Crayford Academy. She is studying for her MBA and works for a global beverage brand based in London focusing on sustainability and public health policy.

I cannot use these websites unless I select a prefix – it is compulsory. Why?

No, seriously: why? No-one asks my husband, Adam, if he is married when he double-clicks on a Saturday delivery of Chardonnay.

Women should not have to disclose their marital status if men don't. The double standard is obvious. Thankfully, though, it is easily fixed.

We just stop using them.

If you work for a company who routinely uses compulsory prefixes on their online forms: tell them to stop. Tell retailers to remove this from their forms. Don't use them yourself on CVs and business cards. Literally just stop.

Our Government too has a role in encouraging this, just as the French Government did by dropping 'mademoiselle' from official use... in 2012.

I fully accept that there are instances when people must disclose this information and that many women enjoy the process of ceremonially changing their name and thereby their prefix – it is magic and meaningful, but it is not necessary anymore. It is a matter of personal choice. So, let's actually make it that. No more unnecessary compulsory prefixes on forms – 'consistency for all'.

A final thought: as well as pointing to your marital status, continuing use of prefixes also identifies your gender upfront. The same point applies – why? If you are ordering a Chinese takeaway online on a Thursday night, who cares if you are an unmarried man or woman or a happily married person who is gender non-binary? Mr, Miss, Mrs, Ms, Mx: it makes no difference to anyone when all you want is Ma Po Tofu.

Big Ears, Big Mouth!

Do you need anything in between?

My answer is “yes” to this challenging question.

First let me say that the ability to listen carefully is an essential prerequisite for a successful political party in a parliamentary democracy. To secure election it is necessary to listen to and understand the aspirations of the electorate as part of the process of drawing up a manifesto. Equally it is likely to be disappointing if a promising manifesto cannot be articulated with appropriate communication skills. So, yes, big ears and big mouths!

But, alone, such attributes lack the ability to understand the complexity and inter-relationships of society.

Complex issues are not resolved by soundbites and gut reaction. The true purpose of politics is to get behind the headlines and try to understand the issues that gave rise to that headline before signing up to what is so often the over-simplification of the problem.

In 1981 there were riots on the streets of Toxteth, a poor suburb of Liverpool. The instinctive reaction was to support the police, and with this I wholly concurred. However, I was concerned that behind the rightful imperative to maintain law and order, there might be deeper issues of which the riots were a symptom, rather than the cause. So it soon proved, as I walked the streets of that great city. It was a city deeply divided and badly scarred, without effective leadership. Everyone else was to blame, never me. Fast forward nearly four decades and we are well advanced in remedying that position with directly elected mayors with the powers to co-ordinate policies relating to local circumstances and problems.

I have a simple philosophy encapsulated in a simple thought: ‘Show me the problem, show me the person in charge.’ Such a person needs to be able to listen and to articulate but, in addition, they need to be able to think through the wider context of the headlines they face.

Biography

Lord Heseltine was a Member of Parliament from 1966 to 2001. He was a Cabinet Minister in various departments between 1979 and 1986 and between 1990 and 1997. He was Deputy Prime Minister from 1995 to 1997. He is founder and Chairman of the Haymarket Group, a privately owned media company.

In 2015 Lord Heseltine was appointed by the government as an adviser to the Secretary of State for Communities and Local Government. Within this remit he was Chair of the Thames Estuary 2050 Growth Commission and Co-Chair of the Estate Regeneration Advisory Panel. He published an independent report making recommendations to further develop the Tees Valley area and was also a Commissioner for The National Infrastructure Commission. In October 2012 he published *No Stone Unturned in Pursuit of Growth*, an independent review into how the public and private sectors in the UK work together to create wealth. His work for the government came to an end in 2017. In 2018 he published his reply to the government's Industrial Strategy Green Paper – *Industrial Strategy* by Michael Heseltine – and most recently published a report on devolution, *Empowering English Cities*. In June 2019 he became President of the European Movement.

He has written books on Europe and his political autobiography, *Life in the Jungle*. His latest book, co-written with Lady Heseltine, is *Thenford: The Creation of an English Garden*, published in October 2016. Lord Heseltine is an enthusiastic gardener and a Vice President of the Royal Horticultural Society.



**The Rt Hon
Lord Heseltine CH**

Reimagining High Streets as Home Streets: giving retail landlords the “Right to Redevelop”



Hal Stevenson

Green belts and tightening belts. Debate surrounding house building in the UK continues to focus on two arguments: whether developers should be able to build on green belt land, and whether the houses they do build – regardless of what land they are built on – are affordable enough.

Ultimately it is the first argument that has led to the second. Restrictions on planning and development on urban fringes have reduced the supply of available homes to consumers, thereby increasing their price by virtue of rising demand.

The best way to prevent prices continuing to rise is to build more homes where people want to live and work. Yet despite ambitious plans set out at the 2017 Budget to build 300,000 more a year, government have sat back, expecting the industry to negotiate their way past outdated planning laws and build reasonably priced homes for all.

To successfully deliver on this ambitious target it is clear that the government needs to take a more innovative approach to house building.

In 2018, almost 2,500 shops closed their doors for good on the UK's top 500 high streets. That's 2,500 lots falling vacant across some of the UK's most attractive real estate in one year.

Biography

Hal works in public affairs and corporate communications, helping clients to leverage their industry knowledge to work with government to create genuinely better policy in the context of complex issues; from the role and responsibilities of platform businesses to plastics and public health policy.

Hal read Politics at Durham University and in his spare time enjoys playing cricket and chess.

He tweets @hjhstevenson

UK high streets are an important part of our social fabric, but the way we shop is changing, which means they need to change too. Well-meaning proposals like an online sales tax will not shift the direction of travel from bricks to clicks, merely prolonging high streets' decline – and increasing costs for consumers in the process.

Instead, we need to reimagine our high streets as 'home streets', reforming town planning laws to allow retail landlords to change the registered property use of vacant lots to residential and sell the sites on to housing developers.

This 'Right to Redevelop' would require guarantees that the sites converted would become affordable homes (not merely a percentage, as per Section 106), and that they would be ready for sale by a certain point following their purchase, thereby avoiding issues with land value capture.

Not only would this provide a useful supply of affordable homes up and down the UK, but redevelopment and the subsequent arrival of new homeowners would help rejuvenate our high streets, driving footfall to established businesses in the community, including pubs and restaurants which are currently facing tough trading conditions.

In addition to pubs and restaurants, high streets are also home to bus routes, train stations and taxi ranks. These services do not exist on undeveloped green belt and brownfield sites and require additional funding from local government to be delivered for new residents.

The 'Right to Redevelop' could also be extended to out of town retailers, which are still accessible via existing transport links. These sites have more space, allowing for whole apartment buildings to be developed, and would also provide a financially viable alternative to commercial landlords, who are increasingly being squeezed by Company Voluntary Arrangements.

Of course, these reforms won't deliver 300,000 houses a year by themselves, but whilst arguments about building on the green belt rage on, they would create a useful supply of affordable homes, incentivising industry to build more quickly and creating an exciting new market for redevelopment.

As importantly, the proposals will also help rejuvenate our high streets, safeguarding their future at a time in which the social cohesion they help to deliver is dearly needed.

Social mobility in our schools: the case for academic mentoring

Too many pupils are currently held back by their background. The Conservatives should engage with academic peer-mentoring to provide a cost-effective remedy.

Throughout its history our party has prided itself on a steadfast commitment to meritocracy; the notion that no individual's background should determine the course of their future. It's a powerful idea, yet its spirit too often seems to be lacking in our education system, where an attainment gap persists between students from low income backgrounds and their peers from higher income brackets.

In 2017, 33% of secondary school pupils on Free School Meals (FSM) obtained five or more A*-C GCSE grades, yet amongst those who were not in receipt of FSM 61% reached the same threshold.^[1] Too many young people have their early careers and life chances constrained not by a lack of ability but by their background. Despite the improvements in education which our party has delivered since 2010, it's clear there is still more work to be done. While Labour countenances destructive solutions to this issue, such as the recent proposal to abolish all of Britain's 2,500 independent schools, our party must respond with constructive remedies which can yield real results for students. Academic peer-mentoring is the clear cost-effective answer to this problem.

Whilst mentoring has long been popular in secondary education, programmes have overwhelmingly focused on social and emotional development. A report for the Children's Commissioner published last year found that only 20% of mentoring programmes surveyed were targeted towards improving academic attainment.^[2] One organisation which currently provides mentoring with an academic focus is CoachBright. Working across four areas, including Birmingham and Exeter, it facilitated the mentoring of 685 pupils during the 2017-18 academic year, and has ambitious plans to expand.^[3] Their mentors are typically drawn from local universities, and after a brief period of training they give up an hour a week to visit a local school and work one-on-one with a pupil on an area of the curriculum which they are struggling with.

Having volunteered with CoachBright during my time at Exeter University I have seen first-hand how effective the programme is. Outside of a crowded classroom pupils are able to set themselves clear, manageable goals guided by their coach. When these are achieved the independence and resilience of pupils grows significantly. The programme produces clear results. CoachBright pupils improve their grades by 4.4 times as much as their non-coached peers, and 75.1% of coached students said they felt 'confident' they had the ability to study at university^[4] at the conclusion of the programme.^[4] The benefits of the

Biography

Born and brought up in Solihull I've been a member of the Conservative Party since I was 16, and have recently been appointed as the Chairman of the Solihull Borough Young Conservatives. Last month I graduated from the University of Exeter with first-class honours in History, and I look forward to shortly commencing a training contract at the London-based law firm Slaughter and May.

system are by no means one-way. For those acting as mentors the programme offers a chance to develop critical communication and listening skills.

This Conservative Government, and our new Education Secretary, should seek to engage with companies like CoachBright to integrate academic peer mentoring into the wider curriculum. I passionately believe that the formation of a National Youth Mentoring Scheme would be the most effective way to encourage further participation in this process from both schools and universities nationwide. A programme directly backed by the Government would bring few new financial costs to the Department for Education, yet could secure a significant uptake from both pupils and mentors.

CoachBright estimates that without further intervention in the education system it will take 50 years at the current rate of progress until we reach a system where disadvantaged pupils do not fall significantly behind their peers by the age of 16.^[5] The benefits of academic peer mentoring are clear: it yields stronger GCSE results, endows young people with greater levels of confidence in their own abilities, and is therefore a prime mover of social mobility. The Government should commit itself to ensuring that every pupil who wants to take part in a mentoring scheme is able to do so.



Angus Young

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3

**One Nation
in action**

Delivering One Nation principles in local government



Cllr Jonathan Canty

Over the last decade, there has been a quiet revolution in the way that local council services are funded and delivered in England.

Less funding from Whitehall has transformed the role of councils. From being the passive recipients of central government grants, they are becoming more enterprising institutions that are more self-sufficient and ambitious in their goals for the communities they serve.

To generate the income to fund services, councils have had to become more commercial in their approach. Rather than delivering every service themselves, this often involves selling or sharing services with other local authorities.

Investment in commercial property and higher levels of business rates retention also provide the potential for councils to generate a more consistent level of income to sustainably fund services. Councils that have prioritised this approach^[i] have become more independent from central government and more sustainable financially, presenting the opportunity to reduce the Council Tax burden on all residents – particularly those on low incomes.

East Hampshire is a shining example of this, with its commercial vehicle RegenCo^[ii] generating enough income to reduce Council Tax for a second year in a row.^[iii] Their ambition is to abolish Council Tax in East Hampshire altogether.^[iv]

Biography

Jonathan is a Councillor for St John's Ward on Rushmoor Borough Council, where he is the Chair of the Policy and Projects Advisory Board and serves on the Licensing, Audit and General Purposes Committee.

He currently works as a Policy Officer at Versus Arthritis, a role that involves working with policymakers in the NHS and Parliament to improve health services for people with arthritis and musculoskeletal conditions.

There is clearly a need for councils to evaluate risk to taxpayers' money and have the right expertise to make the right investments, but the rewards can be great.

By generating more income from services and property, Conservative-led councils have more opportunities to put One Nation Conservative values into practice in local government and deliver social reform.

One of the pressing challenges for many areas is regenerating our town centres and high streets and boosting civic pride. Councils like Rushmoor have been proactive in their investments in town centre property, obtaining more control over development to restore the historical centres of Aldershot and Farnborough and increase economic growth.

A more commercial approach also allows Conservative councils to help meet demand for new and affordable housing, creating vehicles like local Housing Companies to improve the quality of private rented sector accommodation.

Finally, it allows for greater action in tackling the underlying causes of poor health outcomes. Since responsibility for public health was transferred to local government in 2013, councils (especially at a District level) have had a greater opportunity to better address the wider determinants of health.^[v]

Better health outcomes can be made a priority when designing services like planning, and in the specification in contracts for leisure facilities. Homes can be made more adaptable so that people with limited mobility and disability can be more independent.

Local Government is under pressure, particularly in upper tier authorities with the cost of adult social care, but reform is possible and is essential.

Without generating greater wealth at a local level, it will impossible to deliver the social reform in our communities that One Nation Conservatives desire.

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Modern Conservatism must redistribute opportunity

True One Nation Conservatism must represent a fairer equality of opportunity across these Isles. During the course of both the Scottish Independence Referendum, and the EU Membership Referendum, we have learned that the UK is truly a land of two nations, between whom there is no intercourse and no sympathy.

Okay, perhaps the social media age has removed the lack of social intercourse, but certainly the lack of sympathy with opposing views on the Brexit divide remains.

This divide became apparent during the recent European Elections, which should never have been: we Conservatives lost votes to The Brexit Party in the North, where Leave generally won big, and we lost votes to the Lib Dems in the South. Those who benefitted from the London/SE-centric economic policy of the last few decades vehemently wish to maintain the status quo, and those elsewhere who have seen their home towns evaporate lay the blame at the door of the EU and the need to rebalance our economy: both from service industry orientation towards more manufacturing, and from the South to the North.

The UK is unique in its dependence on the national capital for economic activity. As the Scottish Conservative leader said in 2017, despite the devolution of power across the UK over the last 20 years, among major global capitals, only Moscow accounts for a greater share of national product than London.

In Germany, Berlin's political heft is balanced by the financial hub of

Frankfurt and the industry of Munich. In the US, New York's global status doesn't diminish Washington's political clout, or LA's creativity, nor Silicon Valley's entrepreneurialism.

Truly sustainable and socially balanced economic powerhouses have multiple clusters of economic growth, rather than a singularity which economically sustains the remainder of the nation.

There is one other aspect which both Germany and the USA have in common, and which we lack: a regional Corporation Tax rate policy.

Since 2010, Conservative policy to sustainably cut the mainstream Corporation Tax rate from 28% to 19% has yielded the highest tax take ever, from £34.5 billion in 2009-10 to £53.7 billion in 2016-17. This has simultaneously yielded more funds for investment in public services, and facilitated strong economic growth and virtually zero unemployment — impressive in normal years, but exceptional following the deepest recession of modern history.

This economic boom has been concentrated too much within one region of the UK, and the EU referendum is evidence of this. The second most productive 'cluster' within the UK is the West Midlands, where each person in employment contributed only 68.2% of that of a worker in London. This disparity is far greater than the equivalent in Germany, Italy, Spain and France.

In 2004, London constituted 20.9% of the UK's population. In 2014, this grew to 21.8%. As a result, the average first-time homebuyer must pay 13 times earnings

Biography

Andrew is a Director at ACCA, a member of the FSB and a volunteer business mentor for the Princes Trust

in London, versus 5.5 times earnings in the North East of England. As a result, young people, including high earning young professionals, are alienated from our economic policy and turning to desperate measures, including Jeremy Corbyn's Labour. Meanwhile, our great cities in the North are being deserted. In a review of the UK's 62 cities, 10 show a lower population in 2014 versus their 1981 level — all in 'The North' (Newcastle, Liverpool, Glasgow, Middlesbrough, Birkenhead, Sunderland, Dundee, Hull, Burnley, Blackpool).

So, what to do?

My suggestion would be to follow the regional Corporation Tax models used in Germany, the US, and elsewhere. Indeed, we currently have plans to introduce a discounted CT rate in Northern Ireland, when power-sharing devolution recommences. I would propose that here on the mainland we introduce a 2% differential in the mainstream Corporation Tax rates (small companies with profits under £300k would remain as is) based on the location of their workforces. If a company has 70% of its employees based within the Greater London Area, then 70% of their profits would be subject to the London CT rate, and the remaining 30% of profits taxed at the Rest of UK discounted rate.

This would help encourage companies to redistribute jobs, and therefore economic activity and opportunities, out of the Greater London Area and across the rest of the UK.

Further, billions of pounds of investment are required to upgrade London's infrastructure due to this economic concentration: £3.15 billion in housing



Andrew Morrison

grants to supply 90,000 'affordable' houses by 2021, £2.2 billion in schemes to ease congestion and £2.5 billion on upgrading the Tube, most of which could be redistributed to regional economic development — in other words, truly building a One Nation United Kingdom which works for everyone.

The tax system already recognises distinction in the geographical location of workers (to facilitate the collection of recently devolved Scottish Income Tax), and likewise for the Northern Irish Corporation Tax rate when that is implemented. The mechanisms are present, all that is required is the political will.

As the home of One Nation Conservatism, we are the champions to take forward the redistribution of opportunity across these Islands, and lobbying for a tax system inspired by our worldwide peers to help make that happen.

Defining the qualities of One Nation Conservative Parliamentarians



Carl Hunter OBE

The qualities of a Parliamentarian are many. But today, in a complex political world and when One Nation Conservatism is being applied by those on both sides of the Brexit divide, it might be helpful to consider what defines a Parliamentarian.

One definition of a Parliamentarian is the ability to educate and lead.

Campaigning is a much-admired and essential skill. But 'keeping seats blue' must mean more than this outcome suggests.

The military would not place its Director of Public Relations in command of a Brigade nor a global corporation necessarily place its Head of Marketing as its CEO.

We expect much of our Parliamentary Candidates as campaigners and then become surprised when they are less sure-footed afterwards as Parliamentarians. The reality is that campaigning must be a, rather than the, skill which determines them.

Whilst we in the Tory Reform Group understand One Nation Conservatism and hopefully its origin under Disraeli in the late 19th century, how much could we rely, in a national poll, on our nation understanding it too?

Perhaps now offers an opportune time for us to remember that winning for its own sake can often perpetuate misunderstanding. And at its worst, ignorance too.

Biography

Carl Stephen Patrick Hunter OBE is a Professor-in-Practice at Durham Business School and the CEO of a high exporting manufacturer exporting 89% of its output to 110 countries, and holder of the Queen's Award for International Trade. Carl is a DIT Export Champion, a Decision-Making Panel Member of the Bank of England and the Commonwealth's 37th Business Mentor. Formerly a Greenjacket Officer in the British Army, Carl has travelled extensively for 25 years in Asia, North America and the Middle East and supports Parliamentarians and Parliamentary Candidates in the Party.

Might we not read the history of our Party to understand what has made it the oldest and most successful in the western world, identify which statespeople inspired us to become the Conservatives we might be tomorrow, and learn the virtues of educating and leading our country in the spirit of our One Nation Conservatism too?

It might help us to better understand who we intend to be as Parliamentarians if we did.

Boris Johnson claims to be a one-nation Conservative (except in one major area) and that is certainly my recollection as a colleague at The Daily Telegraph more than a quarter of a century ago. So what should his one-nation priorities be to allow this thriving part of the Party to give our new Prime Minister the enthusiastic support he deserves?

The exception of course is his proclaimed acceptance of a no-deal Brexit, which in a rare alignment threatens three one-nation priorities simultaneously: it endangers the need to diminish the economic differences between haves, have-lesses, and the genuine poor; the cohesion of our four nations; and the delicate tolerance and multiculturalism which has largely – and wonderfully – kept the peace between the different ethnic groups in Britain.

Yet to an external eye, whatever his optimism and drive, the Prime Minister appears boxed in on Brexit. There may be room for some European concessions, not lipstick on a pig but even a full facial, on the actually quite good agreement negotiated by Theresa May. But the Germans, in the driving seat, fear further major renegotiation would endanger the EU, and they will not risk that. There is no majority for a no deal in Parliament. In any case a no-deal would involve returning to Europe for a trade deal on disadvantageous terms, with the continent in an unforgiving mood, so would not be a no-deal at all, just a worse deal.

That leaves an early general election which may be tricky to get through Parliament under the Fixed-term Parliaments Act – all but the most determined ERG group members must quail at the prospect, which smacks of the cartoon character who threatens to blow his brains out unless others do his bidding, and whose sole prospect of success lies in the anachronistic Marxism of the Labour leader, Jeremy Corbyn. But remember what happened when we last wrote off Corbyn?

We are told that an election pact with The Brexit Party is seriously being contemplated. The party and its predecessor UKIP are unashamedly dog-whistle racials, who raised the prospect of a Britain bring flooded with Turks (never were the chances of Turkish entry into the EU more remote than today), asylum seekers (far fewer than in continental Europe) and Islamic jihadists, when the vast majority of Muslims are an ordered, integral part of our society.

Anti-racism is embodied at the heart of our party from Iain Macleod onwards, and although immigrant numbers should be limited, racism itself is playing with fire: anyone toying with the idea of an alliance with The Brexit Party should consider the fate of amiable, bumbling President Hindenburg in Weimar Germany, who thought he could tame Hitler by inviting him into the Government.

But Mr Johnson does have one chance of not being relegated to history as Boris the Short: that of becoming a De Gaulle (or indeed a Nixon in China) by



Robert Harvey

Biography

Robert Harvey is a former MP for Clywd South West. He is a former assistant editor of the Economist and leader writer and columnist for the Daily Telegraph, reporting across the world. He is the author of 15 major books on politics and history. He is currently President of the Monmouth Conservative Association.

securing a few significant concessions from the EU and then bravely persuading his own followers that nothing better can be achieved. Some will be unpersuadable, and it will be tough, but Mr Johnson prides himself on his toughness.

After that, Britain can return to problems largely left unattended to over the past three years: the economy where a post-deal bounce and Mr Hammond's prudent handling of the Treasury are likely to permit more money for infrastructure investment, not along the west coast, where the vastly expensive HS2 should be scrapped as two high-speed lines already exist, but, as Boris has already suggested, east-west across the Midlands and the north, and on improving commuter lines in the south.

Above all, money should be earmarked for a major programme of building social housing, which was always the intention of Michael Heseltine and Peter Walker, the ministers in charge of selling off council houses. That will provide affordable homes for young people while not endangering the house values of their parents, ultimately to be passed on to the young.

The crisis in adult social care desperately needs addressing. Oddly enough there is a window of opportunity provided by the squeeze on council spending. The councils are more likely than ever to want to be relieved of their burden of providing such care, which should be handed to a body nominated by the health service, central government and local authorities

charged with building more cottage hospitals and providing home help. The savings on NHS ambulance stacking and bed-blocking, which are vastly more expensive than cottage hospital beds and home helps, would offset much of the overall cost.

The problem of the epidemic of young knife crime needs to be tackled by a reallocation of police responsibilities away from paperwork rather than ritual cuts and recruitment drives. Another one-nation priority has to be to give greater rights to the growing army of homeworkers, part-timers and those on zero-hours contracts shamefully neglected by the big unions in the defence of full-time jobs – rights which must not endanger their often meagre livelihoods.

Finally, there is defence and foreign affairs. An irony of the Brexit obsession is that wider global affairs have been neglected to the extent that only a single significant British ship has been able to patrol the lower reaches of the Gulf, with alarming results. At a time when the United States has embarked on a period of probably unsustainable isolationism – although mercifully not embarking on hopeless desert adventures – Britain's still sane voice of reason has been barely heard. Yet she enjoys, in this area, the respect of the United States, Europe and the Commonwealth. Soft diplomacy needs a hard edge: Britain should be under no illusion that in the currently fashionable field of geo-economics other countries will drive a hard bargain.



**Daisy Powell-
Chandler**

Whether we are a nation of shopkeepers, a service economy, or a financial hub, the UK is most certainly a country full to the brim of companies: according to BEIS there were 5.7 million private sector businesses in the UK in 2018. Over the past decade, public discourse has dwelt repeatedly upon what it means to be a responsible corporate citizen but what is not often raised is that citizenship implies both protection and obligation. The state rightly expects corporate bodies to act responsibly, to strengthen society, to do their part. The other side of this pact is protection and consultation.

It has become the norm to assume that One Nation Conservatism is distinct from other strands of thought due to its emphasis on protecting individuals from the excesses of capitalism; that business is something to be restrained or insured against. Too few politicians who describe themselves as One Nation Conservatives think of these businesses when they consider the responsibilities that the state has towards its citizens.

This skew is understandable; some large businesses wield significantly more power than the individual and the state can act as an arbiter. But if the imbalance topples too far, problems develop: the compact of citizenship is broken and we break the important ties that bind companies to the society in which they operate. Any political philosophy that ignores this fact has

Biography

Daisy started her career in public policy and campaigning, working for Policy Exchange, the Centre for Social Justice, the Conservative Research Department and as Research Director at the Centre for Policy Studies before moving on to run the Conservative Policy Forum. She then built a second career at pollster Populus. Daisy is a veteran of multiple Welsh, Scottish and general elections and too many referendum campaigns. Now she runs Meyland Strategy, an agency that uses research tools to help lost, misunderstood and politicised organisations find their purpose and their audience and turn these into successful campaign and reputation strategies.

both a dangerous blind spot and fewer tools for growing a stronger country. Larry Fink (the influential American investor and chairman of BlackRock) put this most eloquently in his 2019 letter to CEOs: 'Companies cannot solve every issue of public importance, but there are many – from retirement to infrastructure to preparing workers for the jobs of the future – that cannot be solved without corporate leadership'.

Over the past decade political bodies of all sizes – from councils to the UN – have embraced the idea of participatory democracy. The stream of referenda is one sign of this, another is the increase of Citizens' Assemblies. Yet between government and business the tide is flowing in the other direction. The Conservative Party is often criticised for having an overly cosy relationship with business but the contrary is now true. The May government oversaw an almost complete cut-off of communications: strategically important businesses used to be invited in periodically to meet relevant civil servants and have a few words with a Minister – the really big ones would probably speak to the Prime Minister. Under May this changed to a series of choreographed conference calls, with questions allocated in advance and participants who did not play ball excluded from calls until further notice.

This is a worrying trend for three key reasons: first, as the Americans might teach us, 'no taxation without representation'. 10% of UK government revenue comes directly from taxing business – predominantly as corporation tax and business rates – and a

substantial proportion of the rest is collected for the government by businesses: VAT, fuel duty, alcohol duty, and so on. In return, business is entitled to have its voice heard. Second, in any relationship, reciprocity is what keeps the show on the road. I believe deeply in a more responsible corporate sector but this can only flourish as part of a broader pact between government and business. Third, a more open and regular dialogue with all businesses is far less open to cronyism or the appearance of such.

Therefore, the next development for One Nation Conservatism must be to develop a conception of citizenship that can also embrace British business.

4

The environment

Passing a legally binding net-zero carbon emissions target into law: this is a big deal



Bim Afolami MP

Everyone is talking about climate change. It is a required topic for any Conservative who is young, or trendy (they are definitely not the same thing), or if one is aspiring to be either.

This is because younger people know about it, really care about it, and older generations are now feeling rather ashamed that they are rather late to the party and wish to make amends for previous foot-dragging. A couple of months ago, amidst Brexit-induced parliamentary paralysis, the House of Commons passed a legally binding net-zero carbon emissions target for 2050 into law. This is a big deal. 2050 might sound far away, but it is in only 31 years' time. If you are under 34 and reading this, you are likely to still be working at that time. That is the length of just over 6 parliaments. If I sat in the House of Commons for as long as my predecessor Peter Lilley, I would still be an MP by the time the target became legally binding in 2050.

MPs and Government, as a whole, are woefully underprepared for the enormity of the task we have set ourselves. The complexity and political and economic challenge we face makes Brexit look simple. After the vote went through, I became concerned. I was not concerned because I didn't believe in the target; I do. Nor was I concerned because I believed that the target was too ambitious or not ambitious enough; I believe that it was sensible and in line with the expert recommendation from the Committee on Climate Change. I was concerned because I do not think that either

Biography

Bim is the eldest son of Nigerian and British parents, and was educated at Eton College, where he was an Oppidan scholar. He attended University College, Oxford, where he studied Modern History, was Vice President of the Oxford Union and played football for the University. Subsequently he spent almost a decade working in the City of London; first as a lawyer at Freshfields Bruckhaus Deringer and Simpson Thacher & Bartlett, and then working in banking as a senior executive at HSBC. Bim was elected in June 2017 as Conservative MP for Hitchin and Harpenden. Bim is married to Henrietta, and they have 3 sons.

Parliament or Government have a clear sense of how to achieve the target, and do so in a way which will strengthen our economy, improve living standards and the way of life for everyone. How we are to achieve net zero by 2050 is a subject that merits much wider discussion, and that conversation needs to take place between politicians, civil servants, academics, investors, and the main players in every area of industry. This is why I am hosting a climate change conference in September, to be held at the world renowned agricultural research centre Rothamsted Research in Harpenden in my constituency. The conference will be chaired by Chris Stark, CEO of the Committee on Climate Change, alongside Baroness Brown of Cambridge, Deputy Chair of the Committee on Climate Change.

The aim for the conference is threefold: first, to investigate more deeply the policy changes required if the UK is to meet its net-zero emissions target by 2050. I will be bringing together well-respected experts, environmental campaigners, investors and local people (both with and without specialist knowledge) to discuss what is required for the UK to be able to achieve this. Secondly, to try and develop a practical set of medium-term proposals (to be implemented over the next five to 10 years) that can be published, advocated and debated so that Parliament and the Government can consider how to act. Thirdly, to make sure the public voice is not only consulted but also an integral part of the discussion and decision making. By ensuring that members of the public are fully involved in the discussions, this

should help democratise the process and make sure the proposals can work from a 'bottom up' perspective. Academics, economists and politicians pronouncing major changes from on high is unlikely to garner sustained public support.

My background was in the City of London, first doing M&A deals, followed by working in strategy and restructuring for HSBC. I am extremely interested in how the real economy works and will adapt to the problems that climate change poses. Put bluntly, if we do not act now, the problem will exacerbate over the coming years and at some point a government will come into office who will be forced (or at least they will argue that) to take extreme measures, and those measures will ruin the economy and our standard of living. In the short term some of this might work to cut carbon emissions, but over the medium and longer term they would impoverish the country, and make it impossible to produce and invest in the sort of technology which ultimately is the way to solve the problem. Therefore, we need to start taking steps now. The new Chancellor and Government can put some lucrative incentives in place to get more investment into green technology, nudge or force companies to move away from behaviour which damages the planet, tax pollutants more and green behaviour less, and make Britain the undisputed leader in the world for green investment and technology, exporting our skills and products all over the globe. That is my vision, and I will be working with the new Government to deliver it.

Extinction Rebellion want the UK to commit to net zero emissions by 2025. This language and striking demand focuses minds – but risks being so narrow that we forget about the vulnerable in society.

Reaching net zero emissions over five years would result in massive job losses. Consider the aviation sector, which employs around half a million people in the UK. It's safe to assume almost all those jobs would have to go to meet a net zero target by 2025, and that's just one sector. We'd be at net zero but we'd be suffering horribly.

As Conservatives we can probably all agree a headlong dash into recession is a thoroughly bad idea. What, happily, most Conservatives also agree on is the need to take climate change seriously. Zac Goldsmith writes in the opening of the Conservative Environment Network's (CEN) manifesto,

'Stewardship of the natural world, responsibility towards future generations, the search for resilience, these are core tenets of conservatism.'

A Conservative Government committed our country to achieving a more realistic target of net zero emissions by 2050. Furthermore, both Jeremy Hunt and Boris Johnson as candidates for Party leader signed up to the CEN manifesto.

Bold optimism is the mood music of the current Prime Minister. If we are to be bold and optimistic, then our ambition must be for an economy, society and environment where we don't just do less harm, which is what 'net zero' means, but one in which environmental and human flourishing are entwined.

Let us imagine the same values that Zac Goldsmith outlines as they relate to our fellow countrywomen and men. Are we a Party that takes intergenerational fairness seriously? Are we sufficiently concerned for those families struggling to feed their children, for whom there is no financial resilience when the fridge breaks?

Regenerative economics is an emerging approach that advocates not merely using fewer resources but developing economic activity which helps restore the natural world whilst simultaneously seeking to promote positive social outcomes. At first glance books like Doughnut Economics, The Economics of Arrival and Regenerative Leadership can look decidedly of the left, with their radicalism, love of zero-growth agendas and suspicion of business.

But rather than dismiss these ideas as leftie utopianism, we should see in regenerative economics a serious attempt to recast the system of Government and business in a way that simultaneously encourages nature and nation to flourish.

Biography

Duncan Gray is a Founding Director of BRODIE, a business consultancy that helps companies reframe and re-orient their role in society for the age of sustainable consumption. He has previously worked in business, for leading environmental charities and as a consultant to many of the world's largest brands. He is also a self-supporting Priest in the Church of England. When not at work he's most likely to be found swimming in a loch or the sea. www.brodiepartners.com

Conservatives have always been committed to ideas like place and home. It is in these familiar notions that we will find a secure foundation for a centre-right vision of a regenerative economy. It is not only faraway Pacific islands that are under threat from climate change; British landscapes we love, from the chalk cliffs of Kent to the flow country of Caithness, are threatened by climate disruption. Homes should be places of nurture, safety and love – but unless there are homes for people, unless families are physically and mentally healthy, unless there is food on the table and people can afford to pay the bills, then homes become places of misery.

A world where we can live comfortably in the climate, and a United Kingdom where all people can live well, is not the stuff of utopian dreams but the stuff of good Government.

Channelling our Prime Minister, let's be bold and optimistic. Let's go for Green, Blue and People Too.



Duncan Cowan Gray



Bruce Buckland

Almost every positive headline for the Conservatives in the last couple of years has originated from Michael Gove in his previous role as Environment Secretary.

Gove has rightly focused on improving the quality of our environment in multiple areas. On land, wildlife protection measures and agricultural policy are due to undergo a revolution in how they operate. In the sea marine protection zones are expanding. In the air there are new measures to reduce pollution and improve air quality. If all these are implemented, our environment will be in a much healthier state thanks to him. Hopefully Theresa Villiers will continue his great work.

As part of the land and farming policy reforms, Gove mentioned how essential it is that we improve the health of our rivers. They are, after all, the life-giving networks that keep our fields producing crops and our reservoirs full. Having a healthy network of waterways is vital to improving the health of our environment as a whole.

The recent focus on plastics in the ocean has curiously failed to acknowledge the essential link with our rivers. How exactly is it that plastic waste gets into our oceans in the first place? It gets there somehow, and it does that via our waterways. In short, we don't have a plastics problem, we have a litter problem. If everyone put all plastic waste in the appropriate recycling or landfill bin then, barring microbeads and a few other exceptions, the amount of plastic entering the oceans would plummet. So if we clean up our rivers of litter, we clean up our oceans.

Biography

Bruce is an architect and BIM manager based in a small north London practice and is currently completing his professional qualifications in architecture at the University of Cambridge, as well as studying Advanced Architectural Research at The Bartlett, University College London. He also runs his own architectural practice on the side and writes on a variety of topics, including architecture, the natural environment, science & technology, philosophy, urban design, housing, and construction.

Changing the behaviour of a whole nation to make littering as socially unacceptable as smoking would be a big task. It would take years of advertising campaigns, educational integration, and much more. There is a strong argument that it is worth doing, but it would not have immediate results. To get those, physically removing litter from the waterways is the only immediate viable solution.

But there's a problem. If you want to organise a litter pick down your road for example, there are very few obstacles to doing so. The roads are public highways and as such can be freely and openly accessed at any time by whatever form of traffic is permitted on each specific type of highway, whether road, bridleway or footpath. Rivers however, are different. The level of access to our rivers is a controversial topic. For hundreds of years rivers were used extensively for transport, and not just large rivers; small rivers too provided access for heavy goods high up the river network, at a time when roads were not sufficiently well built to handle such goods. No legislation was needed as all rivers were used widely by industry and the public alike with no restrictions. They were effectively common land. This was the state of affairs right up until the twentieth century, when railways and roads came to make river transport redundant, and landowners began to just assume they had a right to restrict access to waterways crossing their land.

Nowadays the primary users of our waterways are the public. The government's official position is that 'access agreements' must be sought, and every landowner along a stretch of river must agree before these can be approved. Imagine if you had to negotiate

with every landowner whose garden abutted a football pitch before you could use it. It is a ridiculous policy. For this reason, only 4% of the waterways in England and Wales have official access agreements. Imagine if you proposed closing access to 96% of footpaths and bridleways; people would rightly be outraged. This is precisely the situation with our rivers.

So if we don't have access to our rivers, we cannot clean them up, and we cannot ensure that they are in a healthy state. More importantly though, if people cannot access them they will not care about them anywhere near as much as if they were able to enjoy them freely. When you spend time in an environment, you come to care about it deeply. Only then will people have the will to properly clean up our waterways and ensure they are in a healthy state.

This issue is often painted by the media as a canoeists versus anglers debate, but this is wrong. It is in the interests of all parties to have healthy rivers, and the cleaner they are, the more fish numbers and variety of species there will be. There is no reliable evidence that canoeing damages fish populations, and as both an angler and a canoeist myself, I can testify that passing canoeists disturb fish far less than I do when I'm wading around casting a line. With the massive recent increase in the popularity of Stand-Up Paddleboarding (SUP), wild swimming, and the focus on cleaning up plastic waste from our oceans, there has never been a better time to do as almost every other country globally does, and allow free and open access to our rivers and waterways, so we can together truly make a difference to the health of our nation's beautiful natural environment.

Why Brexit can help us build a greener Britain

The words 'take back control' are unlikely to be on the placard of your typical environmental activist. But they should be.

And they should be central to the pitch Conservatives make to younger voters in the next election. If we are going to bring these voters back to our party, we need to start inspiring them around what Brexit means for the issues they care about. And there is no better place to start than the environment.

Any conversation about how we protect the environment must inescapably include agriculture. Over 70% of the UK land mass is devoted to farming, but up until now the industry has been largely under the control of the EU's Common Agricultural Policy (CAP).

CAP is one of the least understood and most environmentally damaging parts of the EU. It is a system of subsidies paid to European farmers which is the single biggest line item in the EU budget and makes up 55% of farming income in the UK.

There are two major problems at the heart of this policy, which should anger any environmentalist or supporter of British farmers.

First, CAP subsidies are based on landholding. It is a regressive system: the larger the farm the more subsidies you receive. This has resulted in money being funnelled to large agribusinesses, and has made it almost impossible for smaller farms to compete. Across Europe, 80% of payments go to the top 20% of farms.

In the UK, the bottom 40% of farms receive just 4% of subsidies. Hectare-based payments have fuelled the expansion of the largest farms, driven up the price of land, and forced smaller landholders out of business. In the UK under this system, we are seeing the disappearance of that cornerstone of country life, the family farm.

This has significant implications for the environment and animal welfare. The system values and incentivises scale, not responsible land use. It means that one of the beneficiaries of CAP subsidies are industrial-scale factory farms. These are farms where tens of thousands of animals are crowded in confined spaces, causing significant damage to the environment, local rivers and land. In 2016 and 2017, it was estimated that factory farms received £70 million in CAP subsidies in the UK.

The direct payments to UK farmers are worth around £2.5 million every year. It could be a significant tool for good policy, but it is a tool that has been kept in the shed. We now have the power to use it to help responsible local farmers compete. Or to strengthen animal welfare standards, for example, by giving subsidies when animals have certain levels of access to the outdoors.

The second problem with CAP is that farmers have minimal incentive to protect nature. Subsidies are largely reserved for 'eligible' agricultural land, with a far smaller pot reserved for environmental protection. If woodlands, ponds, forests, or meadows can be converted into

Biography

Jamie is the founder and CEO of Creator Fund, a company that helps university students across the UK start their own businesses. He also works as director of transformation at advertising group WPP. He is a democracy activist and has run campaigns for opposition parties in countries like Cambodia and Tunisia. He is head of communications for Bermondsey and Old Southwark Conservatives. Jamie holds an MBA from Stanford Business School.

farmland, the subsidy system creates every reason for the farmer to do so, even if the free market does not. This is having a dramatic impact on biodiversity across the European countryside. Just look at the population of birds across Europe: 24 out of 39 bird species commonly found on farms are in decline. As hedgerows are removed to enlarge fields and trees disappear, skylarks and whitethroats have nowhere to nest.

We now have the ability to do things differently. We should design a subsidy system that eliminates the artificial incentive to convert 'ineligible' land into farming land. The preservation of wildlife habitats is a public benefit, and farmers should receive subsidies for protecting scrubland and ponds. Where agricultural land is no longer productive, there could be incentives to rewild it.

Taking back control of agriculture should feel empowering. If you have been protesting for the environment, you now have more power to turn words into action. If you care about animal welfare, you now have a greater ability to promote it. If you want to back local British farmers, you now have better means to do so.

As we move past October 31st, the question changes from "Will we leave?" to "What will we do with our new powers?" The Conservatives need to use issues like the environment to get young people excited about answering that question.



Jamie Macfarlane

Conserving is in our instincts and our Party name. With the right policies we can wrestle environmental issues away from the Left



Nigel Huddleston MP

The matter of climate change and how to combat it is at the top of the political agenda and does not look like it will abate any time soon. The challenge is especially acute as it is the dominant issue for many young people and drives their personal behaviour, purchasing decisions, moral outlook and voting intentions.

No MP can visit a school these days without climate change and the environment dominating a question and answer session.

The installation of a new Conservative Government presents us with an opportunity to bolster our green credentials

as we develop the details of precisely how we will deliver on our radical promise to end our contribution to climate change by 2050 – an ambitious target that we have already enshrined in law.

With the right policies we can wrestle environmental issues away from the left. Conserving is – after all – in our instincts, nature and Party name! But unlike many on the left, we Conservatives believe that it is possible to protect the environment and tackle climate change whilst enabling economic growth. This case is being made convincingly in Parliament not by the Greens or the opposition, but by long-standing Conservative environmental campaigners like Zac Goldsmith, Rebecca Pow and Claire Perry, as well as the growing number of MPs who align themselves with the Conservative Environment Network (CEN).

Whilst politics may currently be dominated by the 'B-word', and whilst there is an urgent need to focus on the domestic agenda, we must ensure the environment takes its rightful place as a top Government priority. Reassuringly, Boris Johnson has indicated that the environment and climate change will be given the attention they deserve. He has also talked enthusiastically about Britain leading the way in the development of more environmentally friendly electric

Biography

Nigel Huddleston was elected the Member of Parliament for Mid-Worcestershire at the 2015 General Election.

Since first being elected in 2015 Nigel has held several positions including Parliamentary Private Secretary to several Ministers at the Department of Digital, Culture, Media and Sport, as well as being one of the Vice Chairmen of the Conservative Party where he was responsible for managing the youth groups of the Party.

Following the creation of a new Government under Boris Johnson, Nigel was promoted to be an Assistant Government Whip. His new responsibilities include gathering support for the Prime Minister's domestic legislation and ensuring the Government gets the votes it needs in Parliament.

cars and battery technology. We are making progress and have good momentum, but we must do more. Yes, we are decarbonising faster than any other developed nation and the UK has led the world through becoming the first G7 country to set legally binding targets to reduce carbon emissions to net zero, but we could go further and set legally binding obligations to support our forests and rivers as well.

The Government's 25 Year Environment Plan contains several ambitious proposals, and 90% of the actions are already being progressed. We must be realistic that protecting and enhancing our environment cannot be achieved overnight, but by setting bold targets to reverse the loss of British wildlife and implementing robust legal duties to ensure our children breathe cleaner air, we could demonstrate our long-term commitment to these important issues.

We can also build on our successes by allowing Government investment to have a greater environmental focus, and for the Agriculture Bill to allow for public money to be spent on public goods – including measures to protect the environment. Over 70% of Britain's land is managed by farmers and farm subsidies could be repurposed to help develop and roll out innovations like carbon capture technology or to restore peatlands and hedgerows to attract the return of wildlife. Our vital food industry can only benefit from nature's

restoration, with pollinators estimated to add £600 million in value in increased yield and food quality – and yet many of our bee species are presently in decline. Linking such projects to commitments like creating and making public footpaths more accessible would result in multiple benefits, including physical and mental health benefits and a greater awareness of the environment. The Government could also incentivise so-called farm clusters, which bring together local farmers and interest groups to enable them to better plan and co-ordinate the restoration of the local environment. There are successful clusters throughout the UK, and already areas in the South East have seen a return of birdlife and grasses which had been on a steady decline for decades, including skylarks and red hooks.

Whilst our policies must of course be realistic in terms of expense and delivery, there is no reason to limit our ambitions nor our ingenuity to ensure we meet our net-zero target and enhance our environment.

In a world where politics tends to be focused on short-term policy commitments that fit neatly with election cycles, it is quite a bold ambition to focus on future generations and truly commit to leaving the environment in a better state than we found it.

Nevertheless that is our intention, that is our goal and that is our responsibility.

5

**Business and
the economy**



Rob Wilson

The Conservative leadership campaign had some positive and interesting individual policies put forward by Jeremy Hunt and Boris Johnson, but they did not quite add up to a coherent strategic theme or narrative that explains why the Conservative Party is here and what it is for. At a time when Brexit is overwhelming the political class and another General Election draws close, the Conservative Party needs at least one big new idea to emerge that will engage and convince voters that it hasn't run out of road in government, or indeed even as a political party.

Conservatives need to rediscover some of their Thatcherite roots at a time when capitalism is under relentless attack; making the case for well-managed markets, which gives people opportunities, increases their wealth and removes our Party from the statism of the May years. Today capitalism is being characterised as grubby and greedy, as the fall-out from the financial crisis continues. It is a narrative from the left, designed to undermine, but powerful and very effective in developing a belief that capitalism doesn't work and it simply makes the rich much richer. The problem is that there is an element of truth in the critique and failing to include everybody in a share of the increasing wealth of the nation has been the Conservative Party's greatest failure. The left is posing the Conservative Party a significant challenge, one that eats away at its reason for existence, and we have largely failed to meet it. Instead the Conservative Party has muddled on,

Biography

Rob Wilson is an entrepreneur and businessman, who has built successful businesses in the technology and health sectors.

He served as Conservative MP for Reading East from 2005 to 2017 and as Minister for Civil Society from 2014 to 2017, with a brief which included the charities sector, volunteering and social enterprise.

Since leaving Parliament Rob has built on his business career, taking on a number of Non-Executive Director positions in the public, private and charity arenas. He is currently chief executive of a centre-right think tank focusing on drug reform.

with little in the way of an honest re-examination, leaving it in the dreadful position of slowly narrowing its base and ebbing away to a position of being almost unable to win electoral majorities – allowing the case for the failed policies of collectivism and nationalisation to fill the space and gather widening support.

Conservatives need to take a fresh look at how capitalism is working, in the same way that Keith Joseph and Margaret Thatcher did in the late 1970s. They took on and won the big intellectual arguments because poorer people benefitted from Conservative policies – from owning your own home to owning your own business or shareholding. The party needs to show voters once again that they and the country can benefit from individualism and capitalism post Brexit. The big question is, how do you get every citizen in the UK to benefit from a free market?

The answer is 'Customer Centred Capitalism'. It puts customers at the centre of capitalism, ensuring they are the important and substantial beneficiaries of business success – the key to unlocking economic change and electoral success. Customer Centred Capitalism aims to share private sector generated wealth widely and distribute power, ensuring economic success benefits customers as well as investors and shareholders. It fits with a One Nation Tory agenda and ensures that the economy operates in a dynamic but fair way.

Labour wants to renationalise a swathe of industries, so where better to begin our own revolution and demonstrate

there is another and better way to share wealth and power than state ownership? Wouldn't it be attractive for the Conservative Party to ensure all customers of 'monopoly industries' have a say in and a share of their wealth generation? If private companies wish to run the water, electricity, gas, or rail operating companies – with little in the way of a functioning competitive market (often delivering a terrible deal to customers) – they should commit to a new contract. A minimum of 10% of their shareholder value should be held by their customers, to own and benefit from. This gives customers an interest in the success of the business and a voice in it. It also gives the companies loyal and interested customers and shareholders.

Wherever the public sector owns things (paid for by taxpayer funds), it should be ensuring its customers have a share. In the case of social housing, for example, there is already the right to buy scheme, but it currently does not attract enough purchasers to make it a property-owning revolution for poorer families. It's a good scheme that does not reach enough people to make it highly aspirational, in the way Thatcher's scheme became. But if those social housing customers who pay their rent on time and are in work automatically owned 5% of their home after five years (and 10% after 10 years), it would share wealth and give these customers a return. Good citizens earning a reward for doing the right thing and getting a stake in society in return is good politics and economics.

Continued overleaf...

A Conservative Government should encourage the financial sector to take on this customer-focused model of capitalism, with customers of banks and other financial institutions benefitting from part ownership. Huge financial profits would start to be shared with bank customers and all those feelings of anger, betrayal and unfairness towards greedy capitalism would subside.

Government could not compel this with private sector organisations, but it could encourage it by, for example, offering lower corporation tax rates for those that did so. This would prove very popular with customers and at last signify some payback for the mistakes of the industry during the financial crisis. The pensions industry is making huge and unjustified profits from investing our savings – yet no-one is asking why there are such high fees and administration charges for doing very little. Shouldn't its customers be better rewarded for their investment?

There are also individual customer centred capitalism policies that could be pursued. For example, in the energy sector a Conservative Government could agree to fund through loans an enormous extension of solar panels to every house in the UK that wants them. This would be over a 10-year period, beginning with the poorest parts of the country. The Government would partner with energy companies providing, where necessary, repayable loan capital as an investment to fit the panels. The Government and energy companies would be repaid by the income generated from electricity into the national grid over a 10-year period.

Those customers agreeing to have panels would get a discount on their electricity of 20 per cent whilst the panel fitting investment is paid off. When the panels are finally paid off over the 10-year period, the householder gains ownership and then gets all the financial benefit from solar power generated for use in the national grid — a way of reducing energy prices for customers and moving the country quickly to renewable energy and away from fossil fuels.

With a bit of creative thinking, there are so many examples where customers can make gains but cost the Government (and so the taxpayer) next to nothing. Voters will certainly be interested in getting regular financial rewards from a range of companies where they are already paying customers, but it can also give them a say in the running of the business (on size of salaries and who is on the Board, etc.) without it being decisive and stopping businesses making decisions. It makes companies more accountable to customers and brings better behaviour as well as sharing the wealth generated. Customer centred capitalism is a vision for the future that the Conservative Party should grasp and which could become the springboard for winning elections with big majorities once again – just as Margaret Thatcher did. Giving customers a bigger say and financial reward could be an economic revolution, a vote winner and, most importantly, help to revitalise the Conservative Party.

Towards a capital owning democracy

The United Kingdom is in the midst of a revolution that is changing the way in which our economy works and how it benefits our society. Since the mid 2000s we have seen that companies have begun investing more in 'intangible' assets such as branding, design and technology then they have in physical assets such as machinery, hardware and property.

It might not seem at first as if this should matter to us, but it does. The new intangible economy is driving the inequality and social divisions that we are seeing across the country, making it harder for us as a society to meet the challenges of our age. The intrinsic force of the new economic motivator provides a premium for early adopters and those that are able to create synergies across different sectors. To the companies and individuals who can meet this challenge flow great rewards, but to those who can't, the gulf between the top and the rest only widens, leading to falling productivity and wages. People are now finding it harder and harder to build up the assets that lead to a prosperous life then was the case for past generations.

To combat this social distortion, we need to transform the way in which we approach public policy to ensure our governmental institutions can meet the needs of people in this changing economic world. What we need is a capital owning democracy that can mitigate the worst effects of the market and stabilise our political institutions.

This will only be achieved if we can develop common standards and norms that coalesce into a social foundation of trust and social capital. Conservatives are well placed to deliver this, for unlike Liberals, who see the world in terms of individual transactions, and Socialists, who see people as mere vassals of the state, we understand not only the vertical interconnectivity of society but the horizontal connectivity of the generations. We instinctively understand that human beings live in communities bound together by mutual trust.

If we are to bring about a capital owning democracy we must remove the shackles that have been placed on people, which force them to operate as individual agents, to the detriment of family needs. Families and friendship groups are the basis of all human activity and they can empower us in tremendous ways. For instance, why do we not allow families to merge their pension plans into single family trusts that can be intergenerational and inheritable in the way that trust funds for the wealthy are? This would allow grandparents to receive their pensions while their children and grandchildren add to the capital sum and so increase intergenerational wealth. To help bridge the funding gap for home ownership we could allow co-operatives to be formed where several families pool their savings and act as guarantor for each other's mortgage, thus allowing people to buy homes with lower deposits. Finally, why do we

Biography

Julian is Director of Policy and External Affairs for the Association for Consultancy and Engineering (ACE)

not encourage pension funds to invest more in the nation's infrastructure assets, so that the services we use generate the profits that will support us in our old age?

In the twentieth century the political debate was between the State and the Market, but in the process we forgot about the Community or Commons. The challenge before us is now to unleash the potential of the community, just as we unleashed the markets under Margaret Thatcher, to allow us to truly become a capital owning democracy.



Dr Julian Francis



Gareth Lyon

Britain is one of the most enterprising countries in the world, its young people are overwhelmingly in favour of the free market and there is a clear desire at the top of our political system for more young entrepreneurs.

Yet despite all of this, our under-30s remain remarkably less likely to set up their own business and pursue a career with their own business than either their older contemporaries in the UK or their counterparts on the other side of the Atlantic.

As well as denying our economy the benefit of hundreds of thousands of new businesses, we also lose out on innovations, consumer benefits and increases in productivity which the US and other countries see associated with businesses started by this age group, particularly in the digital economy.

On a broader level too we lose out, as this denies younger people a first-hand experience of business, which is likely to make them more discerning consumers, more likely to be effectively engaged in politics and more likely to be in tune with Conservative Party values.

A simple policy initiative which would help to correct this, as well as helping to counter the perception and reality of inter-generational unfairness, would be the Young Entrepreneurs Tax Exemption.

Put simply, until the age of 30, all revenues and profits earned by businesses owned, run and founded by under 30s would be entirely tax exempt.

Biography

Gareth Lyon is Chairman of the Aldershot and North Hants Conservatives and a member of the Conservative Party Parliamentary Candidates List.

The benefits to the young entrepreneurs would not just be the financial savings of not having to pay these taxes, but would also include the time saved from the hassle of calculating what was owed to the taxman. There is strong evidence which suggests that this hassle factor is a particularly strong deterrent to younger people when they are considering whether or not to set up their own business.

It would also help to send a clear message to this group that the Government wanted to make it as easy as possible for them to have a go at setting up their own business and not tying them in red tape – thereby hopefully encouraging more young people to try.

With the ever-increasing rate of technological advance in recent years we are already seeing the rise of 'portfolio careers', with people holding multiple jobs or becoming sole traders at various stages of their lives. Giving young people a nudge in this direction whilst they are in, and shortly after they leave, full-time education would be very helpful exposure to something they are likely to have to do at some point in their career anyway.

Minimum wage legislation rightly allows employers to pay younger people less per hour – as they are less likely to be experienced in traditional employment. The Young Entrepreneurs Tax Exemption would give those young people who believe they can add more value to their own business an alternative in which their lack of experience or fresher way of looking at things could pay off.

Finally, the impact on the exchequer would, in the long-term, likely turn out to be either of negligible cost or even a net positive, as businesses are set up and grow which might not otherwise have existed.

Of course it is possible that some of these companies end up as the next Google, resulting in complaints about them avoiding tax entirely. But if so, it would only be the case for the first few years of the company's life – when they tend to be less profitable anyway. This would still potentially leave decades of taxable profit after they reach the age of 30. It is even possible that the Young Entrepreneurs Tax Exemption will encourage more British start-ups to remain independent for longer, and not to be bought out by larger established companies overseas.

Fundamentally, the more you tax something the less you'll get of it. Taxing young entrepreneurs means we are getting fewer of them than we would otherwise. A tax exemption aimed at helping younger people to get going with their own business would be far more politically acceptable than most other business-focused tax cuts.

The benefits to the Conservative Party of being the party of young people, the party of opportunity and the party of business to a whole generation who might not otherwise have engaged with us, would be very significant and lasting – as we help to create a generation of even more pro-business young people, enabled to live out our values and to benefit society as a whole.

Renewing the british democratic and economic compact

My proposals are simple: to boost spending on our infrastructure, return power to our local councils and create a well-regulated free market.

Infrastructure is the basis of our success as an economy. Every business is built using these foundations, and the simple process of building infrastructure boosts the economy. Both parties have been spectacularly neglectful of infrastructure as a strategic national asset and it is time that we identify it not just as an individual profit centre, but as the vital foundation of a successful enterprise economy. Connecting every premise up to fibre in the UK would take 10 years and cost £30 billion, identical to the current projected cost overrun on HS2. Surely it is right to undertake a project that is in the interest of each and every person in the United Kingdom rather than simply those with a desire to travel from Birmingham to London in less time?

Equally it is vital that we return tax and spending powers to city, county, district, local and village councils and stop amalgamation and centralisation in the name of efficiency. For too long councils have been purely an extension of, and beholden to, Whitehall and central government. If people today think that the government is out of touch and the economy doesn't work for them (and let's face it, they're right) then this is a good place to start so that we can say local democracy does matter, your vote

does make a difference and your local councillors decide on both tax and spending in your area. One proviso: there will have to be a top-up grant from central government for deprived areas. The aim is to restore the pride and ability of local government to the levels seen in Birmingham under the Chamberlains. The drive for amalgamation and centralisation has created a disconnect from the needs and wants of the local citizens. Ironically, this results in financial costs due to the inability to understand and deliver effective solutions in response to local demands.

The Chicago Business School is wrong. The market is not self-regulating, all companies want to be a monopoly, and they do their best to ensure it happens. We need competition authorities that are willing to act and create competitive markets. Governments have been too easily swayed by what is in the interest of business rather than the interest of the people who elected them. It is time to demonstrate the simple economic fact that easy profit shows lack of competition and answer the spurious argument made by companies for mergers that they 'can't afford to invest' with the reply that they had better create demand via new products to ensure they can.

We must accept and state the fact that selling more products to more people and thereby increasing profit is more important and morally right than holding down the wages of employees as a way to temporarily increase

Biography

Nick has run his own retail websites since 2004 and in 2016 became part of a team that conceived and built a community owned and financed wireless broadband network on the North West Coast of Scotland.

profits, and thereby executive pay and bonuses. Equally we need to address the many examples where a company has been taken over and subsequently loaded with debt whilst the new owner extracts their original purchase amount, leaving the organisation with such a large debt that there is only one outcome. The examples are too many to list but there is a vast difference between creative destruction and employees losing their job and company pensioners impoverished for the sake of a £1.2bn dividend.



Nick Lampen

6

Localism

Elected Mayors: The answer to unlocking Wales's potential



Craig Lawton

Directly Elected Mayors, representing various political parties and even no party at all, can be found in posts across England.

However, step into Wales and things are very different. There is not a single directly elected mayor. Despite this, the UK and Welsh Governments have partnered with local authorities in parts of Wales to set up a number of City Deals.

The Swansea Bay City Deal and the Cardiff Capital Region Deal are taking shape while there are early plans for Growth Deals in both Mid and North Wales.

The Swansea Bay City Deal is reported to be worth £1.3 billion to the regional economy while the Cardiff Capital Deal is worth £1.2 billion, could create 25,000 jobs, and could lead to an extra £4 billion of private investment.

Additionally the new Prime Minister recently announced that part of a new £300 million will go to the Mid and North Wales Deals.

With Wales's productivity 16% below the UK average, city deals have the potential to boost the Welsh economy by encouraging more investment and creating new jobs. However, this opportunity could be lost if the city deals are mismanaged.

In March 2019 a joint UK-Welsh Government review of the Swansea Bay City Deal found:

- Key parts of the Deal were not working properly and the Deal should be more open to scrutiny;
- There was a disconnect between the City Deal projects and their business cases.
- Clarity was needed about how much money the four partner local authorities needed to borrow
- Plans for the City Deal projects had not been signed off by the UK and Welsh Governments because the local authorities had not provided adequate financial plans.

Meanwhile Bridgend County Borough Council, one of ten local authorities involved in the Cardiff Capital Deal, has so far invested over £11 million of taxpayers' money in the project without seeing any return. In April 2019 councillors raised concerns that only Cardiff would benefit from the deal and that, with the majority of funding earmarked for a South Wales Metro System, Cardiff would be the first in line for new stations.

Biography

Craig Lawton is currently Chair of TRG Cymru Wales. He previously contested Swansea West at both the 2017 General Election and the 2016 Welsh Assembly Election and he was number two on the Conservative MEP list for Wales in the 2019 EU Election. He is a former elected councillor and is currently Chair of Trustees ⁹for a regional charity in Wales.

Under the present system for city deals, local authority 'partners' are left jostling for position to have their projects signed off first. Smaller local authorities could also get squeezed out in favour of the bigger, louder voices. Real leadership, as shown by elected mayors in England, is needed if Welsh city deals are to succeed.

Since Andy Burnham was elected Mayor of Greater Manchester the area has seen an extra £100 million invested to support businesses. This was followed by a further £1 billion of private sector funds. Under Andy Street, Mayor of the West Midlands, an additional 9,424 jobs were created in 2017-18; the greatest increase in jobs outside London. And they are not the only ones.

Tees Valley Mayor Ben Houchen is exploring his region becoming a free port to increase investment and job opportunities, while Sheffield Mayor Dan Jarvis has teamed up with the Local Enterprise Partnership to improve education, skills and training across the region.

Elected mayors in England have shown they can work collaboratively with governments, businesses and organisations in ways councils have not, and their big picture thinking has allowed them to draw in additional investment from the private sector.

This is the kind of leadership that the city and growth deals of Wales need if the opportunities they represent are to be fully realised.

The Swansea Bay City Deal review suggested a CEO be appointed. This is something that Cardiff Deal had already done, however Cardiff's appointment has not stopped councils arguing over investment. A CEO in Swansea may not help those businesses that are struggling to find a way into the city deal at present.

Elected mayors would provide the answers to many of the issues the city deals are currently experiencing.

An elected mayor would be a figurehead who could sit above council chamber politics. They could be a real beacon for businesses to focus on and engage with.

They could provide the real leadership for the whole region, with a mandate from residents, and they have the authority to stand up to governments in a way a CEO does not.

An elected mayor would also allow all councillors in the region to fully scrutinise the mayor, resulting in improved scrutiny and governance.

Elected mayors are showing real results in England and they are the answer to unlocking the potential of Wales too.

'Local' Government is anything but when it comes to funding

For 10 years local authorities have waited for the promises of economic devolution to be honoured. This was part of the deal whereby a necessary austerity was balanced by new freedoms for councils. But following increasingly frustrating conversations with ministers and civil servants, I decided to take the initiative in the realm of self-funding and show that new ways of funding can be realised.

Westminster's Community Contribution Scheme was born: our attempt to invite our better-off residents to make a voluntary contribution alongside their council tax, the first UK local authority to do this.

Westminster is home to many wealthy people. With neighbourhoods such as Belgravia and Knightsbridge, we have around 2,000 homes worth more than £10 million. Eye-watering, I know! We are and always have been a low-tax authority – we have the lowest band D rate in the country. Our top rate Band H taxpayers currently pay £866 on their multi-million-pound properties. For this they get weekly rubbish collections, highly rated social services and around 800 other services.

The motivation for the scheme came from conversations I and fellow councillors had been having with our more affluent constituents who appreciated how we ran the council, liked their low council tax, but were concerned about the cuts to services that may not affect them directly, but didn't sit comfortably with them.

Their altruistic argument was: we can afford to pay more to help our communities and we'd like to do so. So – put up our council tax?

Council Tax is not a progressive tax. We cannot just increase the top council tax rate without affecting everyone else – hugely unfair, falling disproportionately on our poorest households.

We launched the scheme following wide consultation with our Band H council tax payers. We sent letters inviting contributions in March 2018 to coincide with the Council Tax demands. Many critics said the scheme would never work. One Sunday national newspaper front page reported our 'guilt tax', others resurrected the 'voluntary mansion tax'. I never tire of explaining this isn't a tax, and it's voluntary!

The outcome has been remarkable. Our Community Contribution Scheme has so far raised £800,000. Our initial suggestion for a contribution was double the £833 Band H precept they paid last year. Some generous donors have given up to £10,000.

The money raised has gone into a fund overseen by the City of Westminster Charitable Trust, an independent organisation, making it tax-efficient for those contributing. The Trust invites local groups to bid for grants for schemes to help rough sleepers, the lonely, and young people. Much of the fund has now been distributed for this year.

Biography

Nickie Aiken has been Leader of Westminster City Council since January 2017.

Prior to being elected Leader of the Council, Aiken's Cabinet roles included Children and Young People, Public Protection and Licensing. Over her time as a Cabinet Member, Aiken was responsible for the introduction of the council's successful 'Your Choice' programme, which resulted in a significant decrease in serious youth and gang violence throughout Westminster, as well as the launch of 'Breaking the Silence', Westminster's acclaimed domestic abuse strategy.

She was also instrumental in overseeing the move to a Tri-borough arrangement for Children's Services, which was the first of its kind in the UK. As Leader of the Council she had begun the largest council home building programme for a generation and has put improving air quality as the council's top priority.

The Community Contribution is evolving, but it is here to stay every year alongside the council tax. Other local authorities are looking to go down a similar route; for example, Islington, and Kensington and Chelsea.

Our new Conservative Party Leader and Prime Minister has made it clear he believes in reform, and in concentrating on our neglected domestic policy once he has finally dealt with the Brexit boil. Local Government finance would be a good place to begin.



Cllr Nickie Aiken



Roger France

As I exit over crumpled commuters on the train, I wonder what has brought us to such a sad state of affluence.

A human being was crouching on the floor. Today, this commuting compatriot spends one hour forty-eight minutes travelling between King's Cross and King's Lynn. Five days of repeating returns plus connections at each end will account for some twenty-five hours of his week: wasted time in terms of loss of useful engagement and loss of time with his home life. What is amiss? On the assumption that our commuter works in an office, it is reasonable to assume that there is inadequate office employment in King's Lynn yet a surfeit in London. The overarching problem is that central government has allowed a free market policy to race away with property speculation without any governing strategy that could have operated through nationwide planning.

Again, it has been known for decades that the Liverpool-Leeds-Hull axis has been the great manufacturing region in the United Kingdom; Michael Heseltine raised awareness of its lost potential in the 80s, and identified it as the 'Northern Powerhouse'. But anyone who has travelled by rail in the north will know of the measly twin-track east-west connection served by charabancs on rails. Yet Midlanders wanting quicker access to London have lobbied their way into an HS2 which doubles up the north-south track. In the former case there has

Biography

Roger France is an Architect and Town Planning Consultant.

been no strategic planning to support and develop that manufacturing belt, whilst in the latter an ad-hoc case for saving time has resulted in a simplistic policy that will encourage residents in Birmingham to commute to London, compounding capacity. Again, there has been no strategic vision to address the imbalance between places of work (employment) and places for living (housing).

Advocating housing on its own is populist and simplistic, and doesn't reach the heart of the problem of workplace distribution and the link between the two.

An economic region that is successful, such as London and the south-east, can become physically choked because of its success. This is what we now see on our overloaded trains and clogged highways, and indeed at a time when electronic communications ought to have made much of our travel unnecessary.

Only a strategic approach to economic, social, spatial and environmental planning can begin to turn the physical chaos that we see today into a more humane environment for the twenty-first century. The implications of this are as follows:

1. Transport planning should be subservient to, and accountable to, a strategic office of Town and Country Planning so that new development can be thoughtfully guided.

2. The justification of all rail, highway and airport proposals should not be made merely on basis of cost-benefit analyses. Not only is the cost-benefit technique simplistic as a form of accounting, it derives from the outdated and philosophically discredited utilitarianism of Jeremy Bentham and John Stuart Mill.

3. Two fiascos in the public realm should shame the Conservative Party: airport expansion at Heathrow instead of a more egalitarian distribution of service provision nationally, and the development of the high-speed HS2 London-Birmingham-Heathrow instead of a Liverpool-Leeds-Birmingham triangle, where such ultra-high speed is not called for. The shame is the reliance on simplistic methods of justification rather than on the more sophisticated and proven methods by way of town and country planning. The unpopularity of the Party – and its impact on votes – in those areas that are affected by transport overcrowding and environmental blight is caused by an over-reliance on narrow methods of calculating benefits, and the Party should begin to reassess the ways in which it could create strategies to accommodate pressures for change in a more civilised manner.

In a densely populated country, the Party should be wary of announcing simplistic policies instead of creating professionally considered strategies for development and movement.

Post Brexit is a well trodden road, but if the Conservative Party wants to be re-elected with an enhanced majority, new policy ideas that will attract and capture younger voters are essential.

The availability of reasonably priced housing, both for rent and purchase, is rapidly reaching crisis point in some parts of the country, primarily London and other popular commuting cities. London has a unique problem because it attracts so many overseas investors who perceive the London housing market as a safe deposit for their millions. New property is often exclusively marketed at the wealthier end of the housing market, with luxurious fittings and the concomitant higher price tag. The percentage of social housing which is part of the planning agreement is often re-negotiated so that fewer dwellings are built, impacting on the development of socially cohesive neighbourhoods.

The Government needs to take drastic action in order to turn the lights back on in new developments, and indeed look to other sources to balance the housing stock in favour of renters and house buyers.

Legislation should be passed to ensure that all local authorities carry out a Statutory Audit to ascertain whether the named tenants are living in their social housing, and that illegal subletting is not taking place. This could take place in conjunction with canvassing for the electoral roll. The audit would also reveal the number of empty properties, which would

encourage the relevant authorities to refurbish and re-let them, or to consider the system used by the former GLC. This allowed potential buyers to rent derelict properties whilst agreeing to renovate them, which guaranteed these 'homesteaders' a percentage of the capital when they sold the property.

Another area which has often proved a challenge for those who wish to buy flats is obtaining a mortgage on properties above commercial premises, especially those that are food outlets. This needs careful negotiation to mitigate risk to the lender but also to consider how the potential mortgagee can have a beneficial effect on revitalising the high street. Those that live in an area will have more need of shops and meeting places, so it can only be a win-win solution.

The 'Right to Buy' introduced by the 1979 Thatcher Government has proved to be the biggest shift in social mobility by allowing council tenants to buy their property. This has led to left-wing councils seeking to 'punish' those who exercised this right by imposing astronomically high service charges on flats within blocks owned by a local authority, and even more hidden charges which are only revealed when the block needs to be refurbished. Legislation should be passed preventing a local authority charging private owners more than the council tenants for maintenance in mixed blocks of flats. They should also have to obtain at least three quotes before engaging any company to carry out works as this would prevent a

Biography

Elizabeth Gibson has been involved in politics for over 30 years, she is currently DC Political for Vauxhall Conservatives, has served as a school governor for 20 years and has been a candidate in two Parliamentary elections.

monopoly of 'in-house' providers being able to use this as a means of providing an income for local authorities. The legislation should also determine that a sinking fund be formed to build up capital for major repairs, e.g. lift repairs, and that councils have to donate pro rata for council tenants. This would have the immediate impact of safeguarding the rights of those who have bought property, and act as a restraint on profligate landlords.

Home owning has always been the jewel in the crown of Conservative policies: not only does it give individuals a foothold in their community but it also encourages neighbourhoods to regenerate, local businesses to thrive and the electorate to challenge councils that give lip service to those who use their services. We should start the new revolution of home owning and house building to encourage those who perceive themselves as sidelined and forgotten to have the opportunity to become the cornerstones of the future of our country.



Elizabeth Gibson

To retain power, Johnson must start giving some of it away



George Robinson

Boris Johnson's government has, in so many ways, represented a distinct change in tone from its predecessor's.

While his policy on Brexit is the clearest differentiator, shifts in his attitude towards tax cuts and infrastructure investment are just as striking. One thing which remains unknown, though, is Johnson's sentiments towards devolution. Because even though the new Prime Minister knows how successful devolution can be from his time as Mayor of London, he'll now be grappling with the dilemma of giving away power only shortly after it has been seized. To not push forward with further devolution would be a mistake, however, and lead to negative consequences for both the Conservative party and the UK. Conversely, there are clear rewards to be gained from pushing forward the agenda started by erstwhile chancellor George Osborne.

From a political perspective, many Tory votes are beginning to emerge in the North, partly because of their sentiments towards Brexit, and partly because Labour's metropolitan elite couldn't be less attuned to their day-to-day concerns. To create more political positions in these areas is no longer giving Labour a political platform for life, as many Conservatives feared. And, in a wider economic sense, evidence has shown that when you give local people greater say over how to run the areas in which they live, better and more impactful decisions are made. London is the clear case in point and has thrived through devolution.

Biography

George is a political and communications consultant, who works with various clients in the transport and infrastructure space. George was previously Head of Policy and Communications for Abellio – one of the largest providers of public transport in the UK – with a portfolio including the ScotRail, Merseyrail and Greater Anglia rail franchises.

He started his career in politics, working initially as a parliamentary assistant to a government minister and then as a policy adviser for the Conservative Party. He returned to the party on sabbatical in 2015, helping them during that year's successful general election.

It's now almost impossible to see the capital being run from Whitehall like the rest of the UK. So, in that context, why has progress been so painfully slow elsewhere?

Early signs from Johnson are promising that he wants to turn this around – at least in terms of where he wants to focus investment. This is clearest in his decision to push forward with Northern Powerhouse Rail. This project will be a major economic boost for the North and shows the Conservative Party's commitment to all the UK – not just London and the South East. He now needs to build on this and put his support firmly behind the actual process of devolution. Skills, for instance, is a notable policy area still retained by Whitehall, which leaves many Northern cities struggling to adapt their local education systems to their local economies. It seems like an easy win for Johnson to put in place a process of moving these powers to those local authorities that are desperate to take them on. The timing of all this is crucial. As many believe we're close to a general election, having a solid programme of regional investment, underpinned by a devolution agenda, will be essential in shoring up the votes outside of London that are needed to ensure another Conservative government.

The progress of devolution was lacklustre at best under May, reflected in her own desire for centralising power around Downing Street. Johnson must depart from this position and realise that, if he wants to retain power for the years to come, he needs to start giving some of it away.

7

**The future of
The Conservative
and Unionist
Party**

Reasons to Remain... Positive

Historically, the Conservative Party has flourished when it has reached out to the common ground of British politics. Harold Macmillan did it, Margaret Thatcher did it and, in 2010 and 2015, David Cameron did it. We must never forget this.

Back in May, a group of leading One Nation Conservatives published a Declaration of Values. As with everything else in British politics just now, the long shadow of Brexit was all too apparent. For many of us, British membership of the European Union has not merely been a fact of life: it has been something to be celebrated, in the best interests of our nation.

As recently as a decade ago, the idea of the United Kingdom leaving the European Union would have seemed unthinkable to most of us. Even in 2016, many people I knew expected the result of the referendum to be a reaffirmation of our EU membership, not a rejection of it.

The question of Brexit has always gone far beyond the field of international relations and trade. For millions of our fellow citizens, it touches profoundly upon the kind of country we want to be. The One Nation Declaration contains a call to 'reject narrow nationalism'. Whilst, of course, respecting the desire of those drafting such declarations to appeal to as wide an audience as possible, I believe we can and should go a little further than that.

As I reconciled myself to the referendum result and the practical and political necessity for the mandate from the people to be honoured, my thoughts turned not to upheaval and international fragmentation, but to the pressing need to re-invent our relationship with our European neighbours, by building a new and close relationship with them.

The European Union originated in the profound desire of the post-war generation to replace mutual suspicion and animosity with a new spirit of co-operation. So far as most of the EU states are concerned, this has been a success, but we should not delude ourselves: Europe is not going through a period of harmony and prosperity, with the democratic spirit infusing every land and every people. The far right is resurgent and the tense relationship between Russia and the EU states has the potential to outstrip anything that happened in the Cold War.

One Nation Conservatives have always recognised the critical need for a healthy, social market economy to flourish, creating the secure economic foundations upon which a free and democratic society can bloom. It is not only here in the United Kingdom that we want to see those values take root. If we are denied the levers of the European Union as a means of promulgating our values, then we must ensure other conduits are forged – and quickly.

Biography

David Hunt began his Parliamentary career in 1976, becoming MP for Wirral. In Government he served as a minister under Margaret Thatcher, who made him Secretary of State for Wales in 1990. From 1979 to 1995 Lord Hunt also held other Ministerial positions including Secretary of State for Employment and Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster, while also being appointed to the Privy Council in 1990. He joined the House of Lords in 1997 and was appointed to the front bench in 2008 by David Cameron. He now chairs the Association of Conservative Peers. Having been a senior partner at the national law firm DAC Beachcroft, he is now chairman of the firm's financial services division and is regarded as a major figure in the world of insurance and financial services. David is also a non-executive director of LINK, Global Risks, ICC Cricket World Cup 2019 and chairs the British Insurance Brokers' Association.

So, as we consider what life is going to be like outside the European Union, let us go back to first principles, as the One Nation Declaration of Values does – and reassert those values again and again and again. If you haven't seen the Declaration, please seek it out. It both provides welcome reassurance and also serves as a vivid reminder that we One Nation Conservatives continue to represent a vitally important strand in our party and right across our country – and we aren't going away any time soon.



Lord Hunt

Defining Communitarian Conservatism for the age of insurgency



David Hawkins

What is it to be a Conservative? What do we stand for? The political, economic, social and cultural strains that have been revealed and accelerated by Brexit need to be fundamentally addressed whilst presenting a unique opportunity for redefining our purpose.

Conservatives need to address the issue of populism and devise a new guiding principle for 'Conservatism'. For too many people freedom and opportunity are empty platitudes that reveal a bankruptcy at the heart of our thinking. For at the heart of all policy should be human association and human flourishing.

The late Tip O'Neill said 'all politics is local' – many social and economic problems are indeed local, and we need local political, business and social solutions that appreciate how positive outcomes can be maximised when the local community co-operates to create them.

Neo-liberal economics and libertarian political philosophy has given us a 'free' market which is increasingly typified by oligopoly, a collapse in meritocracy and an entire section of our society excluded from asset ownership.

Ironically for those that propose less state interference, the more the market has extended, the more government has become ever more centralised, dysfunctional in its silos and fixated with feeding existing problems rather than re-engineering solutions.

Biography

David Hawkins is the MD of Cliveden Advisory. He is a former trustee of Respublica (2011-2017), the think tank established by Phillip Blond and is a supporter of George Freeman MP's Big Ideas Foundation and Big Tent Ideas Festival.

We need a new settlement: a Communitarian or 'Community Conservatism' that puts power and responsibility within the fabric of civic society focused around the extended family, local associations affiliated through shared values and interests, trade unions, local business and local government.

Rather than focusing purely on individuals or society, as libertarians or statists would promote, these community groups can flourish via radical changes to government: increased localism, community ownership of assets through mutualism and Community Interest Companies, and personalisation of local public services using technology to increase delivery.

We must reform central government to create dynamic public-private and third-sector enterprise-led delivery, dictated by outcomes and mission, not by rules, and which works horizontally and focuses on problems rather than perpetuating problems – e.g. turning the health service into a sickness service, and the job centre into a means to pay benefits. Cartel capitalism must be ended, whilst disruptive entrepreneurship should be promoted that ends top-down government and top-down business.

This would be no reheating of the Big Society, but a fundamental re-engineering and realignment of the relationship between the government and the locality.

'I believe radical devolution to unlock much more entrepreneurial city and city-region leadership will come to be one of the defining themes of contemporary Conservatism: a central element to the long-term solution to the challenges Britain faces over the coming decades, and the key to unlocking the major economic reforms we need' – George Freeman MP.

For communitarian Conservatives, liberty means civil and personal freedom tempered by social interdependence and moral restraint, which can create an inclusive, open, progressive politics that supports individual and economic liberty without decaying our values, institutions and society.

The Conservative Party has the opportunity to adopt a new political philosophy, one that will be relevant, effective and truly conservative.



Rachel Maclean MP

Biography

Before entering Parliament, Rachel was a technology entrepreneur and also co-founded an HR software business, providing a platform for SMEs to use the latest technology tools to run their businesses more efficiently. In 2017 Rachel became the MP for Redditch County.

Will it win votes? I've often heard it argued that it's pointless for us to focus on 'women's issues' because 'our voters don't vote on "women's issues".'

Clearly, I strongly disagree with this, otherwise I wouldn't be writing this piece. I've been active in politics for over a decade now, in some of the toughest areas for our party in the country – the urban West Midlands. This is a real battleground for our party and home to many swing and marginal seats.

In the West Midlands, you don't win any election by turning up on polling day with a blue rosette on. You win only by relentlessly and tirelessly identifying the issues that resonate with voters. And it's through thousands of doorstep conversations that I've learned how important it is to have policies on the bread and butter issues that affect women's day to day lives, at home, at work, and within their families.

It's not only about having the policies, it's about how we do our politics, how we talk about our values, how we communicate, and how we open our arms to allow women to fully contribute. We are and must be a broad, diverse Conservative family, that embodies to female voters the realities of their day to day lives.

8

Why Ending FGM and other forms of violence against girls is a strong bet for unlocking better economic futures



Nimco Ali

Who runs the world? Definitely not girls. But we now have a Prime Minister and a UK Government that not only cares deeply about the well-being of girls around the world, but also understands how investing in them is the answer to so many of the world's ills.

With equal access to education, healthcare, employment and representation in political and economic decision-making, girls and women are a force to be reckoned with; a force that will build resilient societies and prosperous, sustainable economies; a force that will achieve lasting peace and end poverty.

The old way of thinking about aid – sending it to governments directly – should be scaled back by the UK. While this certainly helps some, it is not the most efficient way of investing in human capital. In years gone by it was assumed that governments could be relied upon to distribute aid to the people that needed it, but now I feel that the level of corruption is so deep-rooted that there is no guarantee that it will reach its intended audience. Some countries have also become so reliant on aid that they have not invested in building their own economies and tax systems, which are central to fuelling future growth and prosperity – without foreign aid.

Biography

Nimco Ali is co-founder of The Five Foundation, The Global Partnership To End FGM.

Aid agencies, management consultancies and other intermediaries have also become bloated by costs and overheads, meaning much of the money is eaten up along the way, with very little visibility of how it is spent or where. We place so much trust in foreign governments but so little in those individuals and groups that are actually doing most of the heavy slog to change lives and improve societies.

I believe that they will always be a need for 'direct aid' in times of extreme social and economic hardship. It can make the difference between life or death for many people. However, the UK needs to add a second dimension. Instead of sending £14 billion overseas, the Department for International Development (DfID) should work with others to see how to best invest in growing economies. DfID should not be seen as a bank account for aid agencies and governments but as a department that can and will empower and invest in those who can deliver a better and equal world.

Earlier this year I co-founded The Five Foundation, the Global Partnership to End Female Genital Mutilation (FGM). One of our big priorities is to get funding to women's groups that are working to end this extreme form of violence on the frontlines. This is not about giving aid per se, but rather investing in the futures of women and girls so that obstacles can be removed from their paths to enable them to be educated and then to contribute – without fear – to the societies they live in.

Ending FGM and other forms of violence against girls is a strong bet for unlocking better economic futures for some of the countries we often think about as 'recipients' rather than meaningful contributors to global peace and prosperity.

Empowering diaspora communities is a sustainable and progressive approach to international development

The contribution of diaspora communities residing in the United Kingdom towards the economic development of their countries of origin often remains under-appreciated.

The role of diasporas is not just limited to transfer of remittances. Diaspora communities promote trade by buying produce from their countries of origin and invest in local infrastructure such as housing, schools and clinics. In Senegal, for example, an investment fund was created for Senegalese abroad which has supported 804 projects worth 20 billion CFA francs (\$40 million) ⁽¹⁾.

Highly skilled members of diaspora communities possess learning and experiences that they can share with their countries of origin (Skillanthropy). These skills, coupled with their ability to navigate in-country bureaucracies and instability, make these communities a hidden but potent force in international development. A local example of this is the London-based billionaire Mohamed Ibrahim, who has established mobile phone networks serving 21 million subscribers in 14 African countries ⁽²⁾.

In areas such as healthcare, the UK diaspora community could emulate that of US practicing Indian cardiologist Dr Prathap Reddy, whose Apollo Hospital group in India, one of the largest healthcare groups in Asia, has 8,500 beds in 50 hospitals and is providing accessible care through telemedicine and cutting-edge robotic surgery ⁽³⁾.

Government can immediately assist diaspora communities by ensuring greater transparency in fees from remittance providers which continue to vary amongst competitors and drive donors to less secure providers. Promotion and facilitation of diaspora bonds, with added security and scrutiny from UK government, may have the potential to provide sustainable financing for development overseas. Israel has been able to raise \$25 billion through this and more recently Nigeria announced a \$300 million bond ^(1,2,3).

The Department for International Trade, DFID and the British Council could collaborate to provide fora for UK diaspora communities to engage in development opportunities. A 'diaspora first' approach would enable the UK government to harness the enthusiasm, entrepreneurship and networks of those with a long-term interest in their countries of origin. This also may go some way in reducing our dependence on external agencies to deliver development projects.

Biography

Dr Na'eem Ahmed is a Consultant Radiologist with an interest in healthcare service delivery and reform. Na'eem is a former Trustee at Macmillan Cancer support, Advisory Board member for the Mayor of London's Team London and Founder at Selfless, a NGO which has a focus on international development. Na'eem is former Clinical Fellow to the NHS Medical Director Professor Sir Bruce Keogh and former Editorial Board member of the Royal College of Physicians' Clinical Medicine and Future Healthcare Journal. He has been awarded the Prime Minister's Point of Light Award and is a Medalist of the Order of the British Empire.

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Na'eem Ahmed

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