

Just one billion more

If putting more money into the NHS solved its problems we should see much reduced difficulties now. Record amounts and large increases in cash have been provided since 2019.

The truth as Labour acknowledges is you need reform, improvement in how it is spent, as well as extra money.

In this election various parties offer a few billions here and there to solve problems in the NHS or other public services. They offer to “pay” for this with tax hikes that they hope will just hit the rich, leaving most voters unaffected. It is nonsense to suppose these modest sums in relation to the total will make much difference.

In order to properly fund the NHS we need large sums, tens of billions, to pay the big bills. In recent years there has been plenty of wasteful spending.

The government paid a large sum to provide Nightingale hospitals, then scarcely used them. If they had been used for COVID the main hospitals could have done other work, providing more timely treatment and keeping waiting lists down.

The government spent a lot on taking over the capacity of many private hospitals. The NHS then failed to use all that capacity for non COVID cases, wasting much of the spend. Worse still the private sector couldn't perform operations in its own hospitals, adding further to waiting lists.

PPE was in short supply worldwide. Taxpayers had to pay large sums to get PPE from worldwide suppliers where they could. Why didn't the NHx have bigger stockpiles? Why didn't the NHS have flexible contracts with long term suppliers that allowed bigger deliveries in a crisis?

The NHS has been underpaying some medics. As a result expensively trained staff have got medical jobs abroad where pay is higher or have left for other occupations. The NHS hires staff back as contract staff at much higher rates.

There is no easy answer to improving management. I am not proposing another expensive reorganisation, What we immediately need is to make key managers more accountable and to get to tackle the staff, property and supply problems which are still widespread.

Posting to this site

A few people are going in for more and longer contributions. I am going to start deleting some for length and multiple posting.

Some want to make comparisons with Hitler and Nazis. This is usually inappropriate. Make points using proportionate language,

One wannabe poster every day submits a variant of the same posting alleging a couple of billionaires run the world and control the governments. We have discussed this in the past. I have no intention of posting these. Go elsewhere to pursue.

War and defence

Those who think about the war in Ukraine see four possible out turns. The most likely is the current brutal war marches on with little change of territory, with Western cash and weapons supplied sufficiently to sustain brave Ukrainian resistance. In the last week the West has produced another \$50 bn loan. The USA has signed a 10 year defence partnership and has relaxed its rules on use of Western weapons.

Some think both sides will be brought to see the need to compromise. If neither side can deliver a knock out blow it is possible they could agree a new border for Ukraine. To date Ukraine has been firmly against this. There is the option of NATO offering membership to the new Ukraine to emerge from such an Agreement, along with full security guarantees. One of Ukraine's reasons for not wanting such a peace would be the threat that Russia could come back strengthened to try another invasion. Many Ukrainians and allies do not like the idea of ceding land to Russia as reward for an invasion.

Some think NATO should intensify its financial and military aid to increase the chances of a Ukrainian victory. Given the Russian war time economy and willingness to accept large losses of troops this would come at a price but offers the best deterrence against future Russian aggression.

The fourth outcome is Russia taking more territory and forcing an even more favourable peace for itself.

Some military experts think going all out for victory by Ukraine would be best. It would avoid the costs of early future conflict and reduces the security need. The more that is ceded to Ukraine the more aggressive Russia might become.

The Ukraine war has made clear the inadequacy of NATO weapon stocks and the

need for much more western weapons and ammunition manufacture. When will this be put in?

The West is considering using Russian money held in Western banks to help Ukraine. This poses legal issues which still have not been resolved.

What should NATO do now about Ukraine? Which outcome do you expect?

[Look at Labour and Lib Dem Councils to see what they believe](#)

It is often best to judge people by what they do rather than relying on what they say. This is certainly true of political parties, who often change their minds in office from their election promises.

I see at first hand what Lib Dem led Wokingham and Labour led Reading do. Both pursue a relentless vendetta against motorists, closing roads, narrowing roads, restricting junctions, imposing more rules and speed limits. Both are spendthrift, claiming they do not have enough government money. Both allow the growth of potholes.

Both put up parking charges and make access to their towns difficult for those coming by car. Both claim a shortage of money despite receiving substantial national grants.

Both put up Council tax by the maximum.

Devolved government in Wales and Scotland sends the same message. Labour in Wales and the SNP in Scotland preside over a slower growth rate than England. They concentrate on getting more national tax per head to spend than England, yet their public services are often worse and their economic performance poorer.

[There is some good Brexit news](#)

We are just past the half way point in this election. The two main parties, Labour and Conservative have both seen at times modest declines in polling support as they have unveiled their plans. The average poll rating is now 22% for the Conservatives and 42% for Labour. Some polls have put Labour below 40% and Conservative below 20%.

The polls usually exclude the large numbers of Don't Knows and Won't says. The polls will be right if they stay at home or vote in the same proportions as those who have said what they will do. If there is a disproportionately large number of former Conservatives amongst that group then they could decide in the end to vote Conservative because they do not want a Labour government, changing the outlook. Some could decide to vote Reform, helping confirm the poll predictions for Labour to do well.

Higher taxes, high migration levels, a failure to use Brexit freedoms sufficiently, an acceptance of bad Treasury and Bank economic policy would all get worse under Labour. It would be a perverse outcome if former Conservative voters ended up voting or not voting in a way which gave Labour a large majority with under 40 % of the vote. Usually a party needs around 43% to secure a decent majority. Only if the Opposition is badly split do you get big majorities at lower levels of vote. Most of those undecided or angry voters do not want a Labour government. The more we hear and see the Labour Opposition the clearer it becomes they will not tackle the tax, growth, and migration issues successfully.

The Conservatives need to explain some of things that have gone right. Brexit has protected us from a big or any share of the 800 billion Euros of new debt the EU is borrowing, We have quite enough debt of our own without needing loads more from the EU. At last after too dear a transition we are now saving billions a year on contributions to the EU and have increased NHS spending by far more than the promise on the bus. Our trade with the EU has expanded since we left against so many gloomy forecasts, Trade with the rest of the world has expanded even faster as we have expanded old trade agreements and added new ones thanks to Brexit freedom.

Educational standards have risen well in England with big improvements in reading and maths. This augurs well for more young people to better paid jobs. Unemployment has come well down since 2010.