

## Lib Dems would let Corbyn in

Jo Swinson this morning on Radio 4 confirmed her preference to just cancel Brexit by a vote in Parliament, but conceded she did not think there would be enough MPs in the next Parliament who would do that. She no longer believes there will be a Lib Dem majority government by Friday.

This is an interesting development. Every time I see her on tv in various constituencies around the country she is flanked by Lib Dem posters setting out their catch phrase, "Winning here". It's an odd and self serving slogan. Normally parties and candidates have slogans about what they want to do for the voters.

This Lib Dem slogan asserts that they uniquely know what voters are going to do in each place as if they have some special prescience the rest of us do not share about how people will vote. It now appears that in many of these places the Lib Dem leader thinks they are not winning after all. The slogan was apparently misleading or simply a lie. It would have been more modest and sensible if their posters said "Trying to win here" or "Keen to win here". "Unlikely to win here" would be a bit of a turn off even where it was an honest assessment.

What was more bizarre was what she said about their fall back position, the wish to hold a second referendum on the EU issue. She vacillated about supporting a Labour government offering one and appeared to want to move straight to a second General election.

She would be under great pressure to accept a Labour minority government offering a second referendum. Her message of vote Lib Dem to get a hung Parliament, so we can then have a second General election to try for a different Parliament again is absurd. Why would anyone vote for a result which required another election immediately? It also looks like an attempt to cover up a likely deal with Labour were they to get their hung Parliament.

No wonder her slogan is not "Vote for a hung Parliament so you can have a second General election"

She has consistently said there are no circumstances in which she would support a Conservative government seeking to implement the result of the referendum, so that only leaves one realistic option in a hung Parliament, a Labour led government.

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## Getting Brexit done

I do want the next Parliament to complete our exit from the EU so we can move on. The uncertainty deliberately generated by the Remain majority in the

last Parliament was harmful . Too many MPs pushed out negative views about the result of simply taking back control of our laws, our money and our borders. Too many MPs elected on a ticket of supporting Brexit spent the whole of the last Parliament trying to delay or stop it altogether.

Let us be clear about the Conservative Manifesto and my views on Brexit. I have not signed any secret deal as some here suggest. I do support the national Conservative Manifesto as it states

1. There will be no extension to the Implementation period
2. We will take back control of our laws and our money
3. We will be out of the single market and customs union, with our own trade policy
4. We will have full control of our fishing waters
5. We will introduce a UK immigration policy

The public now have the opportunity to elect a new Parliament that will carry out their wish to leave the EU. Nigel Farage made a difficult decision for him not to stand in seats which the Conservatives won the last time. The revised Political Declaration sets out how we will leave and base our future relationship on a Free Trade Agreement, not a customs partnership or surrogate single market membership.

The Conservative MPs who last time broke their promises on Brexit have now joined the Lib Dems, or retired, or are standing as Independents in favour of overturning Brexit or pressing for a much closer relationship with the EU than Leavers want.

The Conservative party would have liked the Brexit party to also stand down in all those seats which the Conservatives have the best chance of winning from other parties. Just winning the 317 seats Conservatives won last time is not sufficient to form a majority government. The Conservatives did not feel as a national party with a realistic chance of winning a majority they could stand down candidates in various parts of the country. As a result the Brexit party felt there was no reciprocation, whilst the Conservatives are keen to avoid the Brexit party splitting the Leave vote in some important cases.

All this is made much more complicated by the fact that this is a General election and Jeremy Corbyn is widely assumed to be the alternative Prime Minister to Boris Johnson as the polls indicate. The General election is not a re run of the EU referendum though some people will cast their vote on the basis of their views of Brexit. The Conservatives are the only party which can prevent a Labour government led by Mr Corbyn from winning and taking over. The Greens, Lib Dem's, SNP and Plaid are all in favour of stopping or delaying Brexit so only a Conservative Government with a Commons majority can deliver taking back control of our laws, our money and our borders. The Lib Dems and SNP have stated that in a hung Parliament they would not allow Conservatives to form a government.

That is why many Brexit party members decided it was best to settle for Mr Johnson's approach to Brexit and to back him. To lose Brexit and end up with

Mr Corbyn as PM would be a double blow which many are not prepared to risk. That is why Nigel Farage decided it best not to stand in 317 seats. In these seats it would have been very difficult for Brexit to win, but in some marginal seats easy to allow a pro Remain candidate to win from another party by splitting the Brexit vote.

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## **The choice in this election is simple – Corbyn or Conservatives in government?**

Elections are said to be about many things. At election time lobby groups abound each with their own Manifesto trying to get prominence for their cause. A range of parties offer competing visions of what government could be like if they were allowed to change it. The public becomes engaged, with many voters seeing it as a chance to get more political attention to their worries.

This election has debated the NHS, the economy, taxes, spending plans, Brexit, trade policy, green issues, homes, planning and many other concerns. A lot of old soundbites and a few new ideas have come to greater public attention.

In the end, however, it comes down a simple choice. Do you want a Conservative government, or do you want a government led by Mr Corbyn and Labour? The polls all indicate by a large margin that these are the two most likely outcomes. The media and commentariat agree. It was right that we had two debates between the two men who could be Prime Minister this Friday.

No-one can deny that is a genuine and big choice. The Conservatives offer affordable increases in spending on priorities in education, healthcare and law and order, and sustainable tax cuts for the many. Labour offer large increases in public spending on most things, along with a very expensive nationalisation programme. They say they will merely tax the rich to pay for it, but confirm they will take away the married allowance. They would end up having to tax the many to pay for some of the long list of items of increased spending. Last time Labour tried taxing the rich hard we had a brain drain so many of them paid less or nothing at all.

The Labour government of the 1960s ended with a devaluation crisis and its aftermath. The Labour government of the 1970s effectively bankrupted us, forcing us to borrow from the IMF to pay the bills they ran up. The Labour government 1997-2010 created a nasty great recession and left us with no money. Each Labour government put up unemployment.

The difference with the Corbyn plans is they are so extreme we would get to

the economic crisis more quickly were his programme to be attempted.

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## The election in Wokingham

Over the last few weeks I have re-visited every town, village and small settlement in the constituency. I have talked to people, canvassed and delivered leaflets as a candidate does. From Parkers Corner to Norreys, from Riseley to Winnersh, from Aldermaston Wharf to Evendons I have walked and driven round the area. I have just thrown away a pair of shoes which fell to bits under the effort.

I have sent out two different leaflets by free post to every two person household, and with my team hand delivered a longer four sided leaflet setting out what I and the Conservatives would like to do if elected with a majority.

It has been a frustrating election as half the other candidates refuse to join debates. One of them has sent out a leaflet attacking me with lies about my views, with no content about what she would do if elected.

I have decided to continue with my positive campaign, explaining what I have been doing and what I want to see through and do next to make the Wokingham constituency an even better place to live in. I am also stressing how we can have a more prosperous country if we get that Conservative majority with the public service boosting and tax cutting budget we now need.

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## Second referendums are not a good idea

When the UK Parliament rightly granted Scotland a referendum on whether to stay or leave the UK I asked the SNP to tell me if they agreed the result should be binding and would settle the matter for at least a generation., They said they did. I agreed.

Had my side of the referendum lost, I would have kept my word. I would not have demanded a second vote, but would have helped get on with the task of organising Scotland's departure. That was the deal. I have always said we only want volunteers in the UK Union, and if a significant bloc of voters in one part or country demand a referendum on exit it is right to arrange that. It is not right to question the verdict of a referendum, or to create a neverendum, with successive votes on the same thing until the losing side get a win. These constitutional referendums do create uncertainty and divert attention from the important day to day management of the public sector and

economic policy.

The SNP seem to love referendums but they keep losing them. They lost both the Independence referendum and the EU referendum. They now want re runs of both. The Lib Dems helped win the Independence referendum but lost the EU referendum. Surprise , surprise, they just want a re run of the one they lost. They want that so much, however, they would doubtless do a deal to put Corbyn into power with SNP support to get a second EU referendum. That could include having to accept a second Scottish Independence referendum.

Such a development would make a laughing stock of our democracy, create substantial business uncertainty and weaken our position in foreign negotiations. Jo Swinson did let slip that she would not accept another Leave vote anyway, so she only wants a second EU referendum if it gives her the result she wants. Ironic they still have the word Democrat in their title.

The main reason second referendums do not work is they undermine the point of the first one and so undermine the whole idea of a referendum. If Parliament will not implement the decision once taken despite promises that the people will decide, what is the point of them? If we had a second Indy or EU referendum and it came to the same answer the losers would still complain. If either came to a different answer the new losers would have every right to ask for a third to have the best of three.

I just hope the public want there to be an end to all this in this General election. A majority for a government that will implement the wishes of the first EU referendum and resist a second Scottish referendum is what is needed. More referendums on the same subject would undermine our democracy and good government at home and abroad.