

## Trade wars



John Redwood won a free place at Kent College, Canterbury, He graduated from Magdalen College Oxford, has a DPhil and is a fellow of All Souls College. A businessman by background, he has been a director of NM Rothschild merchant bank and chairman of a quoted industrial PLC.

- [Read more about John Redwood](#)

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## Your favourite spending cuts

In response to my ideas on spending there were various other suggestions from readers. The most popular with readers were :

1. Costs of government. There was strong support for fewer peers and fewer expenses and allowances for peers. Some wanted fewer MPs and less generous expenses for MPs. There was widespread enthusiasm for a cull of quangos, especially those supporting politically correct causes.
2. Cut public money to charities and arts where this can be raised by voluntary donation and from admission charges
3. Remove subsidies for alternative energy
4. Charge all overseas visitors who use the NHS
5. Reduce numbers of migrants needing financial support
6. Make the BBC a subscription service

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## Council secures government money for Arborfield by pass

Councillor Pauline Jorgensen, the Executive member for transport and highways said " We are delighted that the government has given us £24 m of funding to help reduce congestion in Arborfield and Arborfield Cross by funding the infrastructure we so badly need"

Construction is starting this summer with an estimated completion date for

the by pass next summer. The village needs relief from too much traffic through it at the moment, and growing traffic volumes require extra roadspace to cut congestion and delays.

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## Commemoration of Brexit?

I asked the Business Secretary what plans there are to issue commemorative coins and stamps to mark the UK departure from the EU. I have at last received this answer:

“Matters relating to postage stamps, including commemorative stamps, are the responsibility of Royal Mail. The commemorative 50p to mark the UK leaving the European Union will be made available following the UK’s departure”

This is a curious reply as the Business Department is responsible for postal policy but not responsible for the Royal Mint.

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## What wasteful public expenditures would you like to see reduced?

One of the strange features of the much discussed age of austerity has been the barrage of demands for lower public spending that have gone unheeded by Ministers claiming they want to reduce public spending.

Foremost has been the £10 to £15 bn a year sent to the EU. A majority of the public voted to end this in 2016, only to find three years later some Ministers and MPs are insisting on still giving it away, with many wanting to lock us into more of the same for years to come.

Then there is the case of the world’s dearest new railway, HS2. Many have made proposals for much cheaper and quicker ways of increasing north south train capacity. Many of us want more spent on northern commuter rail improvements into the main cities as a priority. This could be done much more quickly than HS2 and at a fraction of the total cost of the large project. Latest estimates of a total cost in excess of £70bn imply more than £5bn a year could be saved by cancellation, prior to allocating decent capital sums to faster introduction of digital signals and by pass sections of track on existing main lines to boost capacity , and similar improvements on commuter routes into the main northern cities.

There is the pledge to spend 0.7% of GDP on overseas aid. This Parliament is

unlikely to want to cut that, but we should spend more wisely within that budget. The set up costs for the first year of a refugee or an economic migrant from a poor country are allowable expenses to qualify. Given the continuing large numbers entering the UK, we should allocate substantial sums to the housing budget from the overseas aid budget to cover more of the costs of provision of additional homes for new arrivals. There should also be larger transfers to the education budget to allow for the extra school places needed and the additional language skills to teach new pupils who have little or no English on arrival. This would increase those budgets whilst reducing total spending.

The new government should implement the agreed policy that any visitor to the UK needing non emergency treatment should have to pay the NHS. Visitors should be advised to come with health insurance or the cash. Migrant workers coming to the UK should not qualify for all the benefits for a specified period, as Mr Cameron wished to do but was unable to get EU agreement.