

Money for local schools

Last week I reminded the Secretary of State for Education of the need for more cash for Wokingham and West Berkshire schools, and argued again the case for more money overall for English education, and for a fairer split of the funding. This was an informal exchange, so I am also pressing for a further meeting to repeat my message from before the election going into more detail again of the needs of our local schools.

Let's try negotiating with the EU rather than ourselves!

At last today the UK will start negotiating with the rest of the EU. Some in politics and the media have been making our country look stupid by persisting in having a negotiation amongst ourselves over how weak a negotiating stance we should adopt in Brussels. Some do this because they do want to wreck our negotiation proper. Others do so because they do not understand how a serious negotiation is best handled, and doubt the underlying strength and fairness of the UK position.

We have heard siren voices tell us we need to pay large and maybe continuing sums of money into the EU. Of course not. There is no legal requirement to do so. The rest of the world trades happily with the EU without paying budget contributions or one off payments.

Some say we have to stay in the single market and or Customs Union. Of course not. Most countries that trade with the EU are in neither. We do need to leave both bodies, as the Manifesto of both Labour and Conservative made clear in the recent election, in order to negotiate better trade deals with the rest of the world. The rest of the EU stated categorically we cannot stay in the single market without accepting the laws, freedom of movement and budget contributions that go with it. In other words to be in the single market we would need to be in the EU.

Some say the UK cannot expect to get a free trade deal with the rest of the EU when we walk out. Why not? We have a comprehensive free trade deal with them at the moment, and the UK is happy to offer continued easy access to our market. The rest of the EU sells us so much more than we sell them. Why would they want to lose some of that?

Some say you cannot negotiate a free trade deal in 20 months. That is probably true, but we don't need to negotiate one. We merely need to renew one that exists already.

Of course it is possible the rest of the EU will want to harm their trade with us. In that case the negotiations will take the form of the EU proposing barriers to their trade with us and ours with them, whilst we urge them not to. We will also of course be pointing out they cannot do so against WTO rules, which will greatly limit their scope to do damage. It will mainly come down to them imposing large tariffs on agriculture where WTO does allow such practises, and us retaliating. The UK can once out also remove tariffs on agricultural products from the rest of the world that we cannot produce for ourselves.

Tomorrow I will talk about a new range of stories the media could pursue on this topic, to get us away from the boring and repetitious "Lets water down and undermine the UK position" pieces that they all have been running for a year.

[Wokingham Choral Society at All Saints](#)

Yesterday I enjoyed the concert put on by Wokingham Choral Society in All Saints Church. Patrick Allies conducted the choir well as they sang a number of pieces about evening. The music included soothing lullabies and Evening service music, with works by Rachmaninov, Benjamin Britten, Herbert Howells , Elgar, Holst and others.

I would like to thank all involved in organising the evening and in performing. The singing was great, and the organ pieces were well played by Benedict Lewis-Smith.

[Chancellor agrees with government policy on Brexit](#)

As forecast here, the Chancellor does support the Lancaster House Speech and White Paper, approved by Parliament, which he helped compose.

The BBC, of course, cannot bring themselves to make that the headline, having forecast the opposite. So they are now trying to suggest the Chancellor disagrees that No deal is better than a bad deal. Yet he clearly stated that a punishment deal would be unacceptable and worse than no deal!

Come on BBC, accept you lost on this one.

Blog postings

I am extremely busy this week-end as there is a lot going on that matters to Wokingham and the wider nation. If people persist in offering multiple postings and long postings it may take time to moderate them. I am not slowing them down to censor them but slowing them down because I do not have the time to moderate them. The dreadful inferno at the flats needs proper attention. The Brexit talks tomorrow are an important and fast moving story.