

The election reduces uncertainty about the future of the UK

This election has seen most voters decide to support parties that accept Brexit. It looks likely that the Lib Dems who advocated a second referendum on EU membership will poll badly. Most people have seen that any such suggestion would undermine the UK's negotiating position with the EU over our future relationship and leave us much weakened and diminished as a country. There is no reason why the EU should offer us better terms if we had the chance to vote down the terms agreed, and every reason why they should offer us worse terms if they think there is a chance to retain our full contributions and other obligations upon us.

It also looks as if the SNP will poll less well than in 2015 because they back a second referendum on independence for Scotland. Just four months after they proposed a second poll, they spent much of the campaign playing it down and trying to talk about something else, as they came to see it was making them less popular.

The UK has enjoyed plenty of democratic votes recently, with 2 General Elections and two major constitutional referendums. This election is sending a clear message to the next government. It's now time for the elected politicians to deliver the wishes of the people as expressed in those referendums, and to get on and govern.

Published and promoted by Fraser Mc Farland on behalf of John Redwood, both at 30 Rose Street Wokingham RG 40 1XU

Election Day

Now it's your turn. Today voters decide who should represent us in the next Parliament.

I have had my say, so I will write about something unconnected to the UK election this morning.

Last week Mr Trump announced he was pulling the USA out of the Paris climate Agreement of 2015. This met with substantial protest from governments around the world. Mrs Merkel and the EU were especially vocal in condemning his action.

The Paris Agreement laid down two things. It set out voluntary targets for reductions of CO2 by the advanced country signatories, and allowed developing countries more latitude on their targets as growth often comes with more

energy consumption. It established a Green Climate Fund for the advanced nations to make substantial payments to the developing world to help fund their investments in renewable energy and energy efficiency. Mr Obama was particularly proud of the decision, and is very critical of his successor.

Mr Trump argued that the USA is expected to pay too much, and the others have not done enough. He argued that far from limiting coal and carbon dioxide it would shift coal production from the USA to China. He argued that the costs were severe on the USA, with large losses in prospect for coal and wider industry, whilst the gain in total carbon dioxide reduced worldwide would be small.

I am giving you the chance to write about Mr Trump and his critics on this important subject, knowing you will write about what you want to.

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[This election is about Brexit](#)

The Liberal Democrats could not be clearer. They dislike Brexit. They are not reconciled to the decision of UK voters, and are offering a second referendum on Brexit were they to be able to influence government. They have said they will likely campaign for Remain again in such a referendum.

The Lib Dems have issued leaflets with "Want to stop a disastrous Hard Brexit?" on the front, and a message from their Leader "demanding" a second referendum on the second page. They have campaigned to turn this General Election into a second referendum on Brexit by urging all who want to try to reverse the referendum decision to vote for them to secure another vote. They are wrong to suggest their opponents want a disastrous Brexit. No party wants a disastrous Brexit. Realists accept membership of the single market is not on offer for a non EU state. The issue is mutual access, not membership.

If the polls are right and they come well behind the two leading parties we will be able to conclude that most voters now accept the verdict of the referendum and wish a new government to get on and implement it in the best way possible. Many people think the UK would look silly and place itself in a very weak position if two years after telling our partners we were leaving we wanted to change our mind and tried to get old terms of membership back.

One of my few cherished memorabilia of past Liberal Democrat campaigns is their leaflet saying "It's time for a real referendum on Europe". Issued when Conservatives were trying to stop the Lisbon Treaty, Lib Dems then declined to help us get a vote on that but recommended an In/Out vote. Conservatives offered just such a vote after Lisbon had gone through, when the Lib Dems changed their mind again and did not support. They stated quite clearly in

that original leaflet “Only a real referendum on Britain’s membership of the EU will let the people decide our country’s future. ”

Brave words. What a pity that when we gave the people that decision and they made it, Lib Dems then decided they knew better than the voters and demand we do it all over again. Funny idea of democracy.

They now claim that the referendum was advisory – though the government wrote to every household saying voters would decide. They go on to claim Leave voters were conned by arguments over the money. That cannot be true, given the endless complaints they made about the figures throughout the referendum campaign, seeking to put across their view of the amounts in dispute.

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[The choice in this election](#)

The polls and the debate show the election has come down to a simple choice. Do you want a Conservative government, or a coalition led by Jeremy Corbyn seeking to implement much of the Labour Manifesto with help from the Greens, Liberal Democrats, SNP, Welsh Nationalists and other parties who share some of Labour’s policy agenda? Polls may be wrong, and people may change their minds in the last couple of days, but any other outcome in terms of likely government looks remote.

Both front running parties accept the verdict of the people in the referendum and will get on with implementing Brexit. Both accept we cannot belong to the single market and customs union given the stance of the rest of the EU and the need for the UK to open up many positive new trade relationships with countries outside the EU. Both parties want the best possible access to the EU market and accept we need to offer similar privileged access to our market to secure it. Both parties want to reassure all EU citizens living in the UK and all UK citizens living in the EU that they are free to stay. Both accept that there are various collaborations, joint policies and working arrangements that we wish to continue with the EU.

The difference between the two is over how to secure these shared objectives. The Conservatives will not offer a legally binding guarantee to all EU citizens here until we have the same for our citizens in the EU. Labour favours the unilateral approach. The Conservatives say a bad deal is worse than no deal, and are prepared to walk away if only a bad deal is on offer. Labour is insistent on wanting a deal and has not been prepared to say it would walk away. The question is therefore a simple one. Which is the negotiating strategy more likely to succeed in securing a good deal for both the UK and the EU? Anyone with any experience of negotiating is likely to agree that the Conservative strategy gives the UK a strong hand. The Labour

position gives us a weak hand. Why wouldn't the rest of the EU decline to offer a sensible deal, expecting the UK under Mr Corbyn to pay almost any price to secure our very limited negotiating objectives about access to the market and security of people. These are things that they need to offer to secure the same for themselves, but they would of course try to extract a higher price from a weak negotiator.

Both major parties say they wish to keep the UK secure. Mr Corbyn has been required for the time being to accept the purchase of replacement submarines to keep the nuclear deterrent at sea as the Conservative government is doing. He however has undermined the whole point of the deterrent by refusing to state that he would ever use it in extreme circumstances. If dangerous enemies in the future think the deterrent would never be used we have no deterrent and we are wasting a lot of money on the weapons and subs. Mr Corbyn has a history of voting against measures designed to deal with terrorist attacks on the UK. The Prime Minister has made clear her wish to strengthen the UK's defences against extremists who commit mass murder on our streets.

Mr Corbyn has a hugely expensive programme which he wishes to pay for by taxing companies and the rich more, and by borrowing a bit more. It is unlikely he would be able to collect the extra revenue he seeks from companies. The present government has been able to collect a lot more from companies by lowering the rate and making the UK a more attractive place for business to invest and employ people. A big rise in the tax rate might have the opposite effect. In the 1970s when Labour last tried high taxes on the rich and companies we had a brain drain and severe economic problems. Later Labour governments kept individual tax rates down below today's level, whilst they faced less aggressive corporate tax competition than today from other countries.

So my conclusion is simple. If like me you want a Conservative government then you have to vote for one. A vote for any other party is a vote for a coalition led by Mr Corbyn. Such a coalition would do economic damage and be a weak negotiator with the EU.

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[Wokingham Borough planning and local roads](#)

I welcome the appointment of Councillor David Lee to the important role of setting out plans for future development in Wokingham Borough and for the highways and other transport links this will require. Many people are concerned about the current pace of growth, and wish to see sufficient

investment in schools, health facilities, transport links and green spaces as the new housing takes shape.

I accept that Wokingham is an attractive place to many, with plenty of demand for new homes when they are built. We will need to make further space available for development over the years ahead. I am also very conscious that if we allow too much, or do not put in place the right facilities and preserve enough green space we could damage the environment we currently enjoy and the community we value. I look forward to working with David if elected as your MP to persuade government of a sustainable and sensible pace of growth for the next planning period, which must take into account the substantial development already underway under present agreed plans.

I hope the Council will have a green strategy that recognises and protects green gaps between settlements, prime farmland, woods and other important green areas. When planning new housing there needs to be a substantial investment in additional facilities, put in in good time for the new development. This will include needing to manage water run off to avoid flooding, providing capacity for cars to avoid more congestion, and recruiting and retaining the additional teachers and health staff we will need for the new facilities. There also needs to be some catch up, as we are currently short of some capacity.

The local road network requires improvements on the two main local A roads , the A 329 and the A 327. The Council has begun work on a series of bypasses for Shinfield, Arborfield and Winnersh and will need to do more to improve capacity on these routes. It needs the completion of the northern and southern relief roads in Wokingham with a good bridge link across the railway line, the main cause of current town congestion thanks to reliance on a level crossing. The A 329M is also a local road and will need additional capacity, ideally with an extension to include a new Thames bridge. Congestion into Reading and Henley is great owing to reliance on the single carriageway Sonning bridge and the narrow two carriageway Henley Bridge with traffic lights at one end. So far Oxfordshire has been unwilling to allow a new Thames crossing and this may not be any more easy to change than it has proved in the past.

Reducing road congestion requires generous parking allocations at home and work so parked cars are not occupying highway, and needs better public transport alternatives for regular journeys. It needs improved handling of parents cars dropping off and picking up at schools. It also requires work to improve flows at main junctions, which can also improve their safety. Roundabouts are often better than traffic light sets. Segregating right turning traffic from traffic going straight on can usually improve flows and safety.

The Council is considering whether Grazeley would be the best place for additional housing. If they do decide to favour this approach it will be the subject of a major consultation to assess the public reaction and to take on board suggestions for a good scheme. It will also be important to get some assurances from government that if Wokingham promotes a substantial development there it will not be required to undertake much building

elsewhere as well. Such a settlement would need a major investment in transport links for rail and road, east-west, as well as north-south.

Yours thoughts would be welcome, as the Council comes to a view on these important matters. I want the best settlement for Wokingham we can achieve, which needs more work before the Council can conclude on what will be the best way to handle new growth and where to direct it.

Published and promoted by Fraser McFarland on behalf of John Redwood, both at 30 Rose Street, Wokingham, Berkshire RG40 1XU.

John Redwood