

Statements from Jeremy Corbyn, Carwyn Jones and Tom Watson on the death of Rhodri Morgan

Jeremy

Corbyn, Leader of the Labour Party,

commenting on the death of Rhodri Morgan, the former First Minister for Wales, said:

“Tonight

we’ve lost a good friend, a great man and, above all, a giant of the Welsh Labour movement.

“I saw

Rhodri just last month, campaigning in Cardiff North with Carwyn Jones.

“Rhodri

was an incredibly effective First Minister for Wales. He stood up for Wales, its

people’s future and its public services. So much was achieved in his nearly ten

years in the post, making a real success of devolution and laying the foundations for what the Welsh Government is accomplishing today.

“I first

met Rhodri in 1987 on his election to Parliament and we became good friends. Our thoughts are with his wife Julie and the rest of the family. They can be truly proud of Rhodri’s enormous achievements.”

Carwyn

Jones Labour’s First Minister of Wales, said:

“Wales

hasn’t just lost a great politician, we’ve lost a real father figure. In very many ways Rhodri wasn’t like other politicians, and that is why people warmed to him, trusted him and felt like they knew him so well. He was funny, clever, engaging on almost any topic and absolutely passionate about all things Welsh.

“I owe him a great deal, just as we all do in Welsh Labour. He did so much to fight for, and then establish devolution in the hearts and minds of the public

in our country. His bright confidence was infectious, and we can see so much of

Rhodri’s can-do attitude in our modern Wales. That first decade of self-governance, and making distinct choices for Wales will forever be

associated with his leadership.

“He will be hugely missed, and my thoughts are with Julie and all the family at this sad time.”

Tom Watson, Deputy Leader of the Labour Party, said:

“Rhodri was one of the greats and I’m very sad to learn of his death.

“I was with Rhodri and Julie on Thursday at a dinner in Cardiff for Labour MPs and he was as irrepressible as ever, laughing and joking with friends and guests.

“He will be remembered for his fierce intellect and his passion for the Welsh people, whom he served with distinction.

“He was a gifted First Minister of Wales, a respected Labour leader and a fine man.

“The Labour movement will miss him. My thoughts and prayers are with Julie and the family.”

[McDonnell challenges Hammond to a live TV debate on the economy](#)

The Shadow Chancellor today has challenged the Chancellor to a live TV debate on the economy before 8th June. In a video released online after Labour published their manifesto and full costings, **John McDonnell, said:**

“The Labour Party published its manifesto and we published the detailed costings of all our policy proposals and where the funding would come from to pay for those policies.

“We

set the framework for the management of our economy for the future, managing the economy for the many not the few.

“Now

we want to have a democratic debate in this election. Theresa May is hiding from a debate with Jeremy Corbyn on television, but you know in France they had that debate between the two main contenders for the presidency and it’s part of our democratic system.

“So

come on Mr Hammond, come and have a debate with me because I believe once we’ve had that debate people will realise just what your government is all about.

“More

austerity stifling our economy, failing to ensure that people in work are properly paid and undermining those people who can’t work as a result of your benefit cuts.

“I’m

challenging Philip Hammond to a debate on Tory cuts and on the economic strategy that Labour has set out for strong economy that benefits the many and not few.

[Hammond cannot get his sums right on HS2 – Peter Dowd](#)

This

morning the Chancellor, Phillip Hammond, further proved that he and the Conservatives have no grip on the public finances. After seven years of Tory economic failure, which has seen £700 billion added to the national debt despite massive spending cuts, every household in Britain should fear more years of Tory failure and incompetence.

In

the course of only five minutes of a car-crash interview, Philip Hammond showed that he:

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Doesn’t

know the cost of his government’s biggest single investment, the HS2 high-

speed
line, getting the cost wrong by more than a staggering £20 billion;

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Doesn't
know how his own fiscal rule for spending works as he confused day-to-day
spending and investment spending;

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Doesn't
have any clear plan in place to balance the public finances, including
filling
the £2 billion black hole that his National Insurance u-turn created.

Just
a day after Labour published its comprehensive and fully-costed plans for the
economy, the Tories' plans are in total disarray. The Chancellor couldn't
even
rule out further tax hikes for low and middle earners, unlike Labour who have
guaranteed no rises in employee National Insurance, no rises in VAT, and no
rises in income tax for 95 per cent of taxpayers.

And
Phillip Hammond confirmed that relations between him and Number 10 are so bad
that they are reduced to expletive-laden phone calls.

Even
Theresa May doesn't trust Philip Hammond any more, refusing to confirm today
that he will stay on as Chancellor after the election. If the Prime Minister
can't trust her own Chancellor, why should the British people?

**Labour's
Shadow Chief Secretary to the Treasury, Peter Dowd, said**

"This
morning Philip Hammond has shown the Conservatives have no grip of the public
finances. It is worrying that the Chancellor clearly doesn't know how much a
massive infrastructure project currently underway will cost, or the
difference
between revenue and capital spending. The fact he doesn't know how much money
he needs to put aside for major capital infrastructure projects and has no
plan to balance the public finances beggars belief.

"We
should not forget that there is already a £2 billion black hole in his first
Budget following his u-turn on increasing National Insurance. Nor should we
forget he has been part of a Tory government that has added £700 billion to
the
national debt – more than all Labour governments in history."

"Labour
is the only party with a fully costed plan to revive Britain's economy and

close the Conservatives' never ending budget deficit, while protecting everyone from tax increases on VAT and NICs, as well as guaranteeing 95 per cent of income taxpayers won't face income tax rises."

[These figures bring home the Tories' total failure to improve the living standards of working families – John McDonnell](#)

John

McDonnell, Labour's Shadow Chancellor, commenting on today's ONS labour market statistics, said:

"These figures bring home the Tories' total failure to improve the living standards of working families.

"Real wages are lower than they were in 2010 and, after seven years of the Tories, they are now falling again.

"The choice at this election couldn't be clearer: either a Tory party presiding over a crisis in living standards or a Labour government that will build a Britain for the many, not the few."

[Launch of the Labour Party Manifesto 2017](#)

Jeremy Corbyn, Leader of the Labour Party, speaking at the launch of The Labour Party Manifesto 2017 in Bradford, said:

*****CHECK AGAINST DELIVERY*****

It's a pleasure to be in Bradford today to launch Labour's manifesto, "For the many not the few".

I'm pleased to be here in Bradford University where that great Labour Prime Minister Harold Wilson was the first

Chancellor. Harold Wilson had a vision for Britain and created the institutions to match, like the Open University.

Today we set out vision to transform Britain for the 21st century.

This manifesto is the first draft of a better future for the people of our country. A blueprint of what Britain could be and a pledge of the difference a Labour government can make.

Like thousands of other Labour party members, I've been making that case to people across the country over the last few weeks. As this campaign has continued, for an election called by a Prime Minister with scant regard for her own solemn pledges, opinion has started to move towards Labour.

There is no great secret as to the reason.

People want a country run for the many not the few.

That is because for the last seven years our people have lived through the opposite; a Britain run for the rich, the elite and the vested interest

They have benefitted from tax cuts and bumper salaries while millions have struggled.

Whatever your age or situation, people are under pressure, struggling to make ends meet.

Our manifesto is for you.

Parents worrying about the prospects for their children and anxious about the growing needs of their own elderly parents.

Young people struggling to find a secure job and despairing of ever getting a home of their own.

Children growing up in poverty.

Students leaving college burdened with debt.

Workers who have gone years without a real pay rise coping with stretched family budgets.

Labour's mission, over the next five

years, is to change all that.

Our manifesto spells out how. With a programme that is radical and responsible.

A programme that will reverse our national priorities to put the interests of the many first.

Will change our country while managing within our means.

And will lead us through Brexit while putting the preservation of jobs first.

Let me highlight just a few of our key pledges, and believe it or not, you haven't read them all already.

We are ruling out rises on VAT and National Insurance and on income tax for all but the richest 5% of high earners.

Labour will boost the wages of 5.7 million people earning less than the living wage to £10 an hour by 2020.

Labour will end the cuts in the National Health Service to deliver safe staffing levels and reduce waiting lists.

Labour will scrap tuition fees, lifting the debt cloud from hundreds of thousands of young people.

Labour will move towards universal childcare expanding free provision for 2, 3 and 4 year olds in the next Parliament.

Labour is guaranteeing the triple lock to protect pensioners' incomes.

And we will build over a million new homes, at least half for social rent.

Labour makes no apology for offering new protections to people at work, including ending the scandal of zero-hour contracts.

Or for finding the resources to hire 10,000 new police officers and 3,000 new firefighters.

And we will do the smaller things that still make a real difference – like ending hospital car parking charges or introducing four extra bank holidays a year.

But we in Labour recognise that solving these problems requires a thriving economy. One

that gets our economy working again, and rises to the challenges of Brexit for jobs and investment.

For seven years the Conservatives have been holding Britain back.

Low investment, low wages, low growth.

Labour will move Britain forward with ambitious plans to unlock the country's potential.

Labour will set up a National Investment Bank and regional development banks to finance growth and good jobs in all parts of the UK through major capital projects.

Labour will invest in our young people through a National Education Service focussed on childcare, schools and skills, giving them the capacity to make a productive contribution to tomorrow's economy.

Labour will take our railways back into public ownership, to put the passenger first.

We will take back control of our country's water by bringing it into regional public ownership.

And we will take a public stake in the energy sector to help keep fuel prices down and ensure a balanced and green energy policy for the future.

The Tories now want to scare us into accepting more of the same.

Only Labour has a plan ambitious enough to unleash the country's potential.

And only Labour has a plan to make Brexit work for ordinary people. We are clear: The choice is now a Labour Brexit that puts jobs first, or a Tory Brexit that will be geared to the interests of the City, and will risk making Britain a low-wage tax haven.

As we leave the European Union, because that is what the people have voted for, only Labour will negotiate a deal that preserves jobs and access to the single market, preserves rights and does not plunge our country into a race to the bottom.

All this is costed, as the documents accompanying our manifesto make clear. Our revenue-raising plans ensure

we can embark on this ambitious programme without jeopardising our national finances.

We are asking the better-off and the big corporations to pay a little bit more – and, of course, to stop dodging their tax obligations in the first place.

And in the longer term we look to a faster rate of growth, driven by increased private and public investment, to keep our accounts in shape.

This is a programme of hope.

The Tory campaign, by contrast, is built on one word: Fear

What would another 5 years of Conservative government mean for Britain?

Just look back at the last seven:

More children in poverty.

Fewer young couples able to buy their first home.

More people queuing at food banks.

Fewer police on the beat ... fewer firefighters too.

More people are in work but they're not getting the pay or the hours to make ends meet.

More young people are in debt.

Will the Tories change their spots?
Don't bank on it.

Their record says they wont.

Theresa May will disagree of course.

So I say to her today: Prime Minister, come out of hiding and let's have that debate on television so millions can make up their minds.

What are you afraid of? It's not too late

Let's debate our two manifestos

Have the argument

I am confident that once the British people get the chance to study the issues

Look at the promises

They will decide that Britain has been held back by the Tories.

That the few have prevailed over the many for too long.

And that they will decide it is now time for Labour.

Our country will only work for the many not the few if opportunity is in the hands of the many. So our manifesto is a plan for everyone to have a fair chance to get on in life, because our country will only succeed when everyone succeeds.

Thank you.

[View the Labour Party manifesto here>](#)

[Download Funding Britain's Future here>](#)