

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.

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.

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.

[A Wokingham debate?](#)

Near the start of the election I was asked if I would join a five candidates debate to be organised by the Churches Together. I responded swiftly and positively, and offered a choice of dates. The organisers tried to get the other four candidates to agree, but half of them refused to attend.

I said I was still happy to do an all candidates debate and was willing to find a different date or time if that helped. I was told recently that half the other candidates are still refusing to undertake such a debate. I therefore will not be attending a joint platform meeting with just half the other candidates.

The main sensible purpose of any such meeting is to provide undecided voters with the opportunity to hear exchanges between all candidates before deciding how to vote. How can we have a sensible debate for example about the range of options on offer on the very important topic of green policy without the Green party representative present?

Having meetings with a few candidates largely attended by their own supporters is unlikely to help an election. I also would like to know why I am being denied the opportunity to answer the false allegations made about

me by the Advance candidate.

Radio Berkshire have said they want to hold an all candidates debate. I would urge the other four to accept this offer as I have done. I have not heard back from Radio Berkshire about where it is happening, though I was told it would be on December 11th.

Trade deals – again

Labour, Lib Dems and Greens continue with their mantra – EU trade deal good, US trade deal bad. It is so silly.

We trade successfully with the USA, China and others today without the benefit of a specific Free Trade deal. Were we to be able to negotiate a Free Trade Deal with countries like them we would be able to improve a bit on the current strong trade flows by cutting tariffs and removing some other barriers.

There would be no need to sign a deal with any third country that did damage to the UK. We trade perfectly well now, so we should only sign a deal which improved on current trading. It is absurd to say we would have to privatise the NHS to have a FTA with the USA. No UK government or Parliament would accept such a proposition, and the President of the USA has already said he understands that.

This silly attack has now transmuted into some convoluted argument about the terms for importing and exporting drugs. Again, no UK government would sign a deal which harmed our exports of drugs to the USA, or which forced up the prices of imports from the USA. An FTA is only worth doing if things are better afterwards. The idea is to bring prices down by scrapping tariffs where goods currently attract these and where the tariff can be removed with no countervailing negative.

Meanwhile they also say we could not trade successfully or even at all if we do not have a specific agreement with the EU. This is another lie, ignoring the Political declaration signed by the EU which states our future relationship will be based around a Free Trade Agreement. The EU and all its members are also members of the WTO as we are. Our trade will continue to be primarily regulated by WTO controls against trade friction under the Facilitation of Trade Agreement and the tariff agreement that is central to the WTO with its most favoured nation basis. The EU signed the Political declaration for an FTA because it wants one. It is not some gift to the UK that we have to pay more for.