

## [Honda VP Europe confirms “This is not a Brexit related issue”](#)

I am deleting contributions to the site that wrongly ascribe the planned closure of Honda Swindon to Brexit given the very clear statements made by Honda that is about other matters. I will comment in more detail tomorrow.

The workforce at Swindon is skilled and capable, and I wish to see the government and Council offer all the help they can to ensure that in the run up to closure good jobs are found to replace the lost Honda jobs.

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## [An Independent group](#)

Seven Labour MPs resigned from their party in protest over its anti-Semitism and general attitudes. Several of them might not have been re-selected as Labour candidates, such is the gap between their thinking and that of their former party's leadership. None of them intend to put their new attitudes and affiliations to the test of the electorate in a by-election. So far they are not saying they are forming a new party, and there are no current plans to put up Council candidates in May or put up a candidate to fight a Parliamentary by-election when there is a vacancy.

Their policy platform is also so far unclear. They come from the Blairite pro-EU wing of the Labour party, but did not wish to play up support for a second referendum. Perhaps they grasped that that is not a very popular idea, and does not look very democratic. They were wishing to annex the idea of democracy to themselves, but would have some problem in explaining why they reject the biggest vote in our history when the people answered the question Leave or Remain on promise of Parliament implementing the decision. They said they did not wish to join the Liberal Democrats who showed that having as your main distinctive policy overturning the referendum on the EU commanded only 10% support in the last general Election.

UK politics has been substantially changed by the Brexit vote. It led to the two main parties defying the trend in the UK from 2010, and the trend on the continent, of declining vote shares for the two traditional left-of-centre and right-of-centre parties. Labour and Conservative together leapt up to 82% of the vote at a time when on the continent the two traditional parties in most countries is now well below 50% together and in some cases as in France down to under 20%. Labour gained votes by moving leftwards whilst saying they would implement Brexit, Conservatives gained votes by pledging we will leave the EU. The election did not show a large demand for a new party pro the EU along Lib Dem or Blairite lines.

UK politics this year will be about Brexit. Both main parties have to assist it or suffer electorally if they do not. Both promised voters they would implement the referendum, and both said they wanted an independent trade policy for the UK which means leaving the customs union. The Independent Group wisely avoided making Brexit the main point of their break from Labour, as they would be putting themselves in a difficult and unpopular position if that is their main grudge. They were after all willing to stand for election on a pro Brexit ticket in 2017. They also need differences that will last longer than the time to our departing the EU. So far they struggle to define them, but doubtless will do more to set them out in the weeks ahead. The biggest point of difference they highlighted is one of tone and approach to people, with their plea for a kinder more inclusive type of politics than they find in the modern Labour party.

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## [The Minister's response to my contribution to the consultation on the Aviation Strategy Green Paper and my comments on aircraft noise.](#)



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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## [Proposed move of Wokingham Post Office](#)

Last week I was made aware that WHSmith was advertising for jobs for the proposed move of Wokingham Post Office to their premises. This was despite the fact that the consultation is still underway and that I, along with three Wokingham Borough councillors are meeting with the Post Office Network and Sale Director on 22 February to discuss our concerns. I immediately raised

this with the Post Office and I have received the reply below.

Thank you for drawing this to our attention.

It is normal practice for WHSmith and other potential new operators of Post Offices to advertise for possible new roles in potential replacement Post Offices, and it is not the case that this pre-empts any final decisions about moving a branch.

Once a branch goes into consultation, both Post Office and the potential new operator begin all the detailed planning for the move. Any recruitment is conditional upon the proposal being approved. The reason this detail planning is done at an early stage, ahead of a final decision, is that we know, should the decision to move the branch be made, it is much better for our staff and the community that the transfer proceeds without any unnecessary delays.

We can see that only one of the three adverts for roles at the potential new Wokingham Post Office makes this clear. We have contacted WHSmith and asked them to correct this ASAP.

Kind regards,

Ken

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## [The shackles of the single market and customs union](#)

Being the UK's Single Market Minister during an intense period of EU legislating when they said they were "completing" the single market turned me from a mild sceptic to a strong critic of the undemocratic approach of the EU. It was quite clear watching and listening to the EU officials during that period that their aim was to take more and more powers of self determination away from member states in the name of the single market. All you needed for a single market was the rule that a product of merchandisable quality in one country could be offered for sale in another with suitable labels.

They had a doctrine of the occupied field. Everytime they put forward a regulation or Directive in a new area it meant they established competence or power over that area. Quite often the first piece of legislation did little and was unexceptional. The reason was they merely wanted to capture the jurisdiction without at first using the power in ways that alarmed or upset.

That came later, once competence was established.

My job was often a negative one. The UK government wanted the single market, but also often wanted to resist bad or needless legislation in its name. It was also the case that often the draft regulation was based on a Franco German way of conducting business, and not on a UK way where that was different. I then had to argue for a change of draft to stop UK businesses being made to change their model or being declared illegal.

All this should worry the present government about the Withdrawal agreement. If the UK signed that as currently drafted there would be no UK vote, voice or veto on any law the EU wanted to pass in all the areas of its competence. That means that every business sector and company in the UK would face a prolonged period when the EU might deliberately or inadvertently legislate in ways that damaged their business models with us being unable to stop them.

Why don't the UK business bodies raise this issue? Why don't they raise the problems for our car industry created by the attack on diesels, car loans and the costs of purchase? UK industry has suffered from past EU regulations and taxes, and could be made to suffer more.