

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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