

# Windrush Day

*Please be advised that this article contains language that some may find offensive*

**As a child of the Windrush generation, Windrush Day is hugely important to me.** I'm so glad that we, as a society, are marking it.

The term 'the Windrush Generation' stems from the arrival, on June 22, 1948, of the ship The Empire Windrush at Tilbury Docks, just east of London, bringing with it the first immigrants from the Caribbean.

**It denotes the large-scale influx of Caribbean immigrants during the years that followed.**

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There's also much discussion about the poor treatment of those Caribbean immigrants upon their arrival in the UK to date.

**But there are also some positive stories and memories mixed in with those experiences.**

I've recorded an 8-minute audio interview with someone who came to this country in 1962. She shared with me some of her memories and they were both good and bad.

**The memories they shared included these:**

*'I came to the UK after a one month journey from Trinidad by ship with my young stepson and my new baby boy. When we arrived it was the coldest winter they'd had in a long time and we only had summer clothes.'*

*'I remember having no furniture, no heating, no washing machine, no fridge, no winter clothes. We had to try to stay warm in one room using a paraffin burner. Then, on Christmas Day, someone gave us a bed for my stepson. I was so happy!'*

Since 2018, we've celebrated Windrush Day to honour the British Caribbean community.

*'It was hard to find a job because no black people were allowed. The British people didn't want immigrants – "...no black people", they said.'*

*'I remember a bus driver saying to the passengers that '...all these Pakis had come over here to go on the dole. I pointed out to him that not everyone with Asian skin was from Pakistan and that we were all desperate to work.'*

*'We had so little money for food that I had to work at a sweet factory in the evenings just so we could eat. I know it was illegal, but I left my young stepson in charge of my toddler and my baby and, one day, I came home to find the baby under the kitchen table. But I had no choice.'*

*'Eventually, I got a job in local Government. I was the only black woman working in my department for the Council. They treated me well and helped me to get promotions.'*

**And so, the stories continue.**

Since 2018, we've celebrated Windrush Day to honour the British Caribbean community.

Listening to the person I interviewed who spoke about how hard it was to find work, it's ironic to note that, following the losses of World War II, Britain was in dire need of labourers. This prompted a campaign to entice people from the countries of the British Empire and Commonwealth to immigrate to the UK.

**Yet, when they arrived, it seems that they weren't exactly welcomed.**

I've read the 'official lines' that state, for posterity that '...the Windrush Generation and their descendants are honoured for their immense contributions to British society following the trauma of the Second World War'. However, this does not entirely reflect the British Caribbean community's experience – certainly not those with whom I've come into contact.

**When Caribbean immigrants first arrived, there were met with extreme intolerance from large parts of the white population.**

Having initially been encouraged to settle in the UK and take up employment to revive the labour market, many early immigrants were denied access to private employment and accommodation on account of their skin colour. Afro-Caribbean and Indo-Caribbean people were also banished from many pubs, clubs, and even churches.

From today's perspective, the arrival of The Empire Windrush is considered a major landmark not only for the country's recovery from the turmoil of war but also for the establishment of modern British multicultural society.

As Liberal Democrats, we must continue to fight for justice for those members of the Windrush Generation whose paperwork – destroyed by The Home Office – means that they have to face a costly, lengthy and sometimes unwinnable battle to establish their right to remain in the UK

**Windrush Day is a way of encouraging communities across the country to celebrate the contribution of the Windrush Generation and their descendants – I guess that would include me!**

But, it also serves as a reminder that, as Liberal Democrats, we must continue to fight for justice for those members of the the Windrush Generation whose paperwork – destroyed by The Home Office – means that they have to face a costly, lengthy and sometimes unwinnable battle to establish their right to remain in the UK, even if this is the only home they've ever known.

**So, join me on Tuesday 25th June 2019** at an event organised by 'The Hackney Heroine', Pauline Pearce, the driving force behind Motion F5 from last Autumn's Conference 'Righting Wrongs: Restoring the Rights of the Windrush Generation'.

Alongside former Legal Aid Lawyer of the Year, Kaweh Beheshtizadeh and Professor Paul Reynolds (both key figures within the Liberal Democrats), I will be discussing the issues surrounding the Windrush Scandal and what we, as Liberal Democrats, can do about it.

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## **[Ed Davey: our leadership contest could not be more significant](#)**

**Brexit is the most serious threat to our country in my lifetime.**

Yet the Conservative Party leadership contest shows they still haven't got it – and are even willing to make things worse. Enthusiastic talk of a No Deal Brexit? Of sending MPs home – proroguing Parliament – so MPs can't stop a No Deal? By people who want to be our country's Prime Minister? Whoever wins that leadership contest has to be stopped.

Yet we know Labour won't do it. Labour have aided and abetted the Tories every step of the way. Jeremy Corbyn demanded after the referendum that the Government should invoke Article 50 immediately and leave as soon as possible. Last week some Labour MPs even voted against a cross-party motion that could have enabled MPs to block a disastrous No Deal Brexit.

The Liberal Democrats are now the leaders of Remain.

**Neither Labour nor the Conservatives can be trusted on Brexit.**

Fortunately, the European Elections have heralded a dramatic realignment in British politics. Away from the Labour-Tory battles of the past, towards today's Remain-Leave battle. **And the Liberal Democrats are now the leaders of Remain.**

**So our leadership contest – who is the Leader of the lead Remain Party – could not be more significant.**

We need a Leader who understands the EU, who knows how to win and above all who is ready now to take on Boris Johnson, Nigel Farage and Jeremy Corbyn – and ready to become Prime Minister.

**I have the CV for that task. And I'm ready for that task.**

**I have successfully negotiated in Government – indeed, across Europe, twice – on economic reform and on climate change.** In fact, I've attended more EU Ministerial Councils in Brussels than any Liberal Democrat in history, during my 5 years as a Business Minister and Cabinet Minister.

**My campaigning record over 20 years shows I know how to win** – from winning my constituency when I wasn't even a target seat to my leading role in developing simple messages that connect with voters – from "Stop Brexit" to "a penny on income tax for education" [1991-2001] to "scrap council tax" [2003-05].

I have the ideas and vision to be a Prime Minister who doesn't just stop Brexit, but stops the causes of Brexit.

**And I have the ideas and vision to be a Prime Minister who doesn't just stop Brexit, but stops the causes of Brexit.** From my detailed economic plan to invest in the communities left behind in the past – including massive investment in the regions and nations – to my proposals to tackle the Climate Emergency, we can have a substantial programme for Government.

**The leadership to stop Brexit and renew our country is now down to the Liberal Democrats. I'm the Leader who can campaign so we win the right to perform that duty – and the person who is best placed to lead us in carrying out that historic task.**

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**[Jo Swinson: a positive future for](#)**

# Britain

**My number one priority as leader would be stopping Brexit.** It should be the number one goal of everyone in our party.

**It's why I've worked so hard as the leading Liberal Democrat in the People's Vote campaign** to bring together a group of like-minded MPs who want to give the British people the final say.

**It's why I work cross-party with MPs from all parties,** and indeed none, to discuss how we can get the numbers in Parliament over the line.

**It's why I campaigned up and down the country for local councillors and European candidates on a clear message to stop Brexit** and was so proud of the excellent election results that you all worked so hard to deliver.

We have to give the people who have voted for us, many for the first time, because of our honest and principled Brexit stance, a reason to stick with us in the long-term.

But the question I also think the next leader of this party needs to answer is **when we've stopped Brexit, what next?** How do we take the energy, enthusiasm and support our Brexit stance has brought us and use it as a springboard to take us forward?

The cynics in the media constantly ask what will happen to our support when Brexit is done. Will it simply evaporate and leave us back down at single digits in the polls? My answer is always the same. **We have to give the people who have voted for us, many for the first time, because of our honest and principled Brexit stance, a reason to stick with us in the long-term.**

And there are plenty of good reasons. **We only need to look at the other parties to see why a strong Liberal Democrat party is so vital.**

The man who is the favourite to be the next Prime Minister is the same man who compares Muslim women to letterboxes, and the leader of the opposition refuses to tackle vile, anti-semitic abuse in his own party. **There are millions of people who find those views abhorrent and are looking to us as the liberal voice in illiberal times.**

We only need to look at the other parties to see why a strong Liberal Democrat party is so vital.

I believe that our party can be the heart of a movement that says no to Brexit, but also paints a positive vision of the future beyond that fight.

**A future where we take urgent action on the climate emergency,** for example by

investing much more in renewable energy and building zero-carbon homes; a future where we harness the technological revolution to make it work for us; and a future where we reshape our economic system so that it values wellbeing alongside GDP.

**I want to lead the Liberal Democrats to stop Brexit.** But movements are built not simply on being against something, but being for something as well. There is a huge opportunity at our fingertips to transform our society and our economy, and if we work together we can grasp it and take the party, and the country, forward. I hope you'll support me.

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## [Jo Swinson: we are the party best placed to take on the Brexit Party](#)

**Over the past three years, I have been proud to help lead the calls for a People's Vote** in the belief that the challenge of Brexit required not only the strong leadership provided by the Liberal Democrats but also for us to work together with people of all parties and none.

I never imagined that I would be able to say that Michael Heseltine and Alastair Campbell voted the same way as me, but **our message to stop Brexit brought together voters from all corners of our politics.**

I think this movement of people giving us a fresh look is reflective of the fact that our two-party politics is fracturing. The hard-right Conservatives are running off courting voters they've lost to the Brexit Party, and hard-left Labour has departed the field entirely, unable to bring themselves to pick a side at all. **But there are good people in the abandoned wings of each party with whom we can, and must, work.**

Our two-party politics is fracturing.

**Over recent days, this has included speculation that some of the former Change UK MPs may join the Liberal Democrats.** I have worked with a number of these MPs and greatly respect them and admire their bravery in leaving their broken parties behind. I also believe passionately that to advance our causes in politics, we have to be willing to reach beyond our current membership and bring on board people who are liberal, but not yet Liberal Democrats.

Over the next few months, there will no doubt continue to be speculation about whether MPs, whether sitting as Independents or not, will seek to join

the Liberal Democrats. **I have been clear that if those people share our vision for the country, then they would be welcome.** If they can read that famous pre-amble of our constitution and find themselves nodding along, then they are welcome. If they believe that we need to fight for our place in the EU, if they believe immigration is a good thing and they want to transform our economy so that it promotes well-being alongside profit, then they are welcome.

But, under my leadership, this will not be a decision taken solely by the Leader, the parliamentary party, or Federal Board. **Our members and local parties will play a vital role in any decision to accept new MPs.**

**Ask any elected Liberal Democrat and they'll tell you that our members aren't just a part of our party, they ARE our party,** so I want them involved in that process too.

We have to be willing to reach beyond our current membership and bring on board people who are liberal, but not yet Liberal Democrats.

They have welcomed thousands of people into our party in the last three years, and more than 20,000 in the last few days alone, and **many of these 'newbies' have now gone on to become hard-working local Councillors, Parliamentary candidates and even new MEPs.**

**We are the party of Remain, and we are also the party best placed to take on the division and populism of the Brexit Party.** To do this, we need to build a liberal movement that can build a better society. And as the thousands of new members will attest, our party is a welcoming place for those who want to build a liberal movement to take on the growing forces of nationalism and populism.

**Under my leadership, the Liberal Democrats will be the rallying point for the movement that this country desperately needs.** I am ambitious for our party and want to see us continue to grow with our members, old and new, integral to our success.

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**[Ed Davey: we have a serious](#)**

# opportunity to cement our place as the leading force of Remain

**I'm running to be Leader of the Liberal Democrats – but your choice could be about far more than simply who leads our Party.**

The tectonic plates of British Politics are shifting, and its the most volatile I have seen it in my lifetime. With the Liberal Democrats on 20% in the polls, two main Parties crumbling from the inside, and a re-alignment of political allegiances across the country, **we have a golden opportunity to cement our place as the leading force of Remain.**

The impending reign of chaos by these Brexiteers also brings the shadow of a possible General Election – and looking at our recent polls I can see us making some serious gains

There is also serious talk of a Government of National Unity. Its purpose would simply be to make revoking Article 50 the default, rather than crashing out without a deal. This option is looking increasingly appealing to anti-No Deal MPs of all parties who are terrified by the thought of Boris Johnson or Dominic Raab in Number 10. I'm clear that as Leader I would support this. **Liberal Democrats should be leading the way, working with other parties, in avoiding no-deal like we are in stopping Brexit.**

The impending reign of chaos by these Brexiteers also brings the shadow of a possible General Election – and looking at our recent polls I can see us making some serious gains, with both the Tories and Labour potentially failing to gain a majority.

For these reasons, its therefore quite possible that members like you are not just picking the next Leader of our Party, **but also a future Prime Minister.**

We've had a tough few years. Too many hard-working Liberal Democrats have lost their seats since 2010 despite making such a huge contribution to their local community. But our members have embodied the sort of spirit that has meant we have survived for so long in a brutal First-Past-The-Post system – **they have never given up.** Now, look at what we have achieved.

I've got the relationships with MPs from other Parties needed to get a block to No-Deal through the House of Commons.

**Over 700 new Councillors. 15 new MEPs.** That is down to every member who has knocked on doors, delivered leaflets, or supported us on social media. That hard work has now put us in the position we could decide the future of our country.



**It's a huge opportunity. I know that as Leader I would make the most of it.**

My negotiating skills have been honed over 20 years in Parliament, in Cabinet and at climate change talks at the EU and UN. I'm a proven media performer who has been making the case across print and broadcast media that the Liberal Democrats are the strongest pro-remain Party. I've got the relationships with MPs from other Parties needed to get a block to No-Deal through the House of Commons.

**I know I am the right person to lead our Party – but I need your support to do so.** If we get this right we can save our Country from a ruinous No-Deal, stop Brexit, and transform our country for the better.

**That's why I'm asking you to support me in my bid to become Leader of the Liberal Democrats.**

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