

Tim Farron's 2017 General Election manifesto speech

A couple of weeks ago, in Kidlington near Oxford, I met a guy called Malcolm. I say met...he came up to me in the street and started shouting at me.

You might have seen it on the news. Or the internet.

In the end we actually got along. But he was angry with me for not getting behind Theresa May and backing Brexit. I think I calmed him down a bit when we spoke, but I don't think I changed his mind.

And that's fine. You see, when last year's referendum took place I campaigned harder than anyone else to remain. I believed passionately that our children would have a brighter future if Britain remained in the European Union.

[View our manifesto](#)

But we lost – and I accept that.

But that doesn't mean I have changed what I believe.

I believe that our children will have a brighter future if we are inside the European Union. That they will be safer and better off. That our economy will be stronger and our country will have more influence in the world.



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**I want you to have your
choice over your future.**

Hope versus fear.

**A brighter future versus
a cold, mean-spirited one.**



TIM FARRON

But just because I believe that doesn't mean I think people who voted to leave are bad people. Of course they're not. We just disagree.

You see, I grew up in Preston in Lancashire. And most of the people in Preston voted to leave. There are parts of Lancashire where two-thirds of people voted to leave.

Friends of mine did. Members of my family did. They don't all admit that to my face, but I know they did.

Those people, they're my people. I like them. They're good people. Decent people.

And, as it happens, I liked Malcolm too. Once he stopped shouting at me.

But here's the difference between me and Theresa May – I want Malcolm, and

everyone in Preston, and every single one of you, to have your say over what comes next.

Nobody knows what Brexit will look like.

The choices Theresa May will make will affect your life and our country for decades – your job, your weekly shop, your environment, your safety, where you can travel to and where you can live.

And she's already making choices that will affect those things, including the most profound choice she could make – taking Britain out of the Single Market.

That decision alone is a time bomb under our economy. And when it blows up it is going to take our NHS and our schools down with it.

It is going to wreck our children's future for decades to come.

And it is a choice. Plain and simple. It wasn't inevitable.



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**The more Liberal Democrat
MPs you elect, the brighter
the future for our children.**

TIM FARRON

There was nothing on the ballot paper last June that said we were choosing to pull out of the Single Market. There are other countries that are outside the EU but inside the Single Market – just look at Norway or Switzerland.

There was nothing on the ballot paper that said that people and families from Europe who have made this country their home would be left in limbo, not knowing if they can stay in the country they raise their kids in.

And there was definitely nothing on the ballot paper that said we would turn our allies into enemies. Yet here we are, with our government making accusations of our neighbours and even threatening war with Spain.

The choices Theresa May makes – and the compromises she negotiates with bureaucrats in Brussels – will affect our children’s future for decades to come.

My children, your children, Malcolm's grandchildren.

In June last year we voted for a departure, but we didn't vote for a destination.

So I want you to have your choice over your future.

Someone is going to have the final say over the Brexit deal.

It could be the politicians or it could be the people.

I believe it should be the people.

You should have the final say on whether Theresa May's Brexit deal is right for you and your family in a referendum.

And if you don't like that deal, you should have the choice to remain in the European Union.

Giving you the choice over your future is exactly what our manifesto is about.

I want you to imagine a brighter future.

Imagine a future where our children can grow up in a country where people are decent to each other.

Where we have good schools and hospitals.

Where we take the challenge of climate change seriously.

Where we give our teachers and nurses and soldiers the pay rise they deserve for the service they give our country.

Where we have an open, innovative economy.



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Theresa May and
Nigel Farage's **cold,
mean-spirited Britain**
is not the Britain I love.

TIM FARRON

Where we treat the poorest and the most vulnerable with compassion.

Where we don't turn our back on desperate refugees.

That's the Britain I love. That's the Britain I want to lead.

But that's not the future Theresa May is offering you. If you want to know the most revealing thing that has been said during this election, look at Nigel Farage's Twitter.

He wrote: "Theresa May is using the exact words and phrases I've been using for twenty years."

Think about that for a minute. The 'exact words and phrases'.

The Prime Minister of our great country saying the same things that Nigel

Farage has been saying for twenty years.

And not just the words and phrases. The policies too, that's what UKIP MEP Patrick O'Flynn said this week.

Brexit never did just mean Brexit. For Nigel Farage, Brexit was always part of a package, a world view.

It's a world view that includes shunning climate change...

...that includes shrinking the state by starving our schools and our NHS of the funding they need.

...that includes turning our backs on some of the poorest and most vulnerable people in the world, as Theresa May did when she shamefully closed the door to desperate child refugees.

That's Nigel Farage's world view. The same one that leads to Donald Trump banning Muslims and building a wall. The same one that Marine Le Pen tried to impose on the decent people of France.

Nigel Farage's vision for Britain is now Theresa May's. He has taken over the Conservative Party.

Anti-Europe. Anti-refugees. Slashing funding to schools and hospitals.

No wonder UKIP is standing down candidates and backing the Tories.

After all, who needs UKIP if the Government is doing what they want anyway.

Somebody has to stand up to them. Someone has to fight for the decent, compassionate Britain we love.

But it won't be Jeremy Corbyn.

On the biggest issue facing us all in a generation, when all this is at stake, Jeremy Corbyn's Labour hasn't shown up.

Jeremy Corbyn even ordered his MPs and Peers to vote with the Tories and UKIP.

Not against them. With them.

Before the vote on Article 50, he said he would order his party to vote in favour even if the Government made no concessions to them whatsoever.

So, surprise surprise, they didn't.

Jeremy Corbyn didn't have to do that. He could have voted with us to stay in the Single Market, or to give European citizens living here the right to stay. He chose not to.

Jeremy Corbyn has always been pro-Brexit – he campaigned against Europe for years – so we shouldn't be surprised. But we should be disappointed.

Labour are supposed to be the opposition, but they haven't opposed anything.

They are supposed to stand up for working people, but they haven't stood up for anyone.

They are supposed to care about our children's future, but they are letting the Conservatives wreck it.

They have lost the right to call themselves the opposition.

Labour has lost its purpose but we have found ours.



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The Britain I love is
**generous and
compassionate,**
where we are decent
to each other.

TIM FARRON

The brighter future we want for all our children is at stake. Our economy is at stake. Our schools and hospitals are at stake.

This is about the future of the open, tolerant, united country we love.

I am here tonight to tell you that we won't roll over.

A few weeks ago in France, the two parties that had run the country for decades came third and fifth in the election.

Third and fifth.

The decent people of France decided that they did not want to just simply accept one of the two tired old parties. So they rejected them.

And when the two old parties had been eliminated, the decent people of France faced a stark choice: a liberal, pro-European candidate who believes in an open, tolerant and united France, and the leader of the National Front.

Hope versus fear. A brighter future versus a cold, mean-spirited one.

Nigel Farage pinned his colours to the mast. Just like when he backed Donald Trump in America, he backed the candidate who represented his world view – anti-Europe, anti-refugees.

He backed the National Front.

Well, the decent people of France chose hope over fear. And the National Front lost.

Don't let anyone tell you the only choice you have in this election is between Theresa May and Jeremy Corbyn.

This election is about your choice and your future.

You can choose a brighter future where our children grow up in a country where people are decent to each other...

...where we have good schools and hospitals so that our children have a fair chance in life and our elderly are treated with dignity...

...where we have a clean environment and an innovative economy.

The more Liberal Democrat MPs you elect, the better the deal we will get on Europe.

The more Liberal Democrat MPs you elect, the more jobs and more money for the NHS and schools.

The more Liberal Democrat MPs you elect, the brighter the future for our children.

Theresa May and Nigel Farage's cold, mean-spirited Britain is not the Britain I love.

The Britain I love is generous and compassionate.

The Britain I love is one where we are decent to each other.

The Britain I love is open, tolerant and united.

If that is the Britain you love too then this is the moment to stand up.

This is your chance to change Britain's future.

I am here tonight because when my children are my age I want to be able to look them in the eye and tell them honestly that when the moment came to stand up for their future, I stood up.

I am determined that our children will grow up in a country where people are decent to each other.

I am here tonight because the Britain I love is not lost yet.

That's the country I want to lead.

[Liberal Democrats launch manifesto to change Britain's future](#)

The Liberal Democrats will launch their manifesto for a brighter future on Wednesday. Change Britain's Future is a plan for a fairer Britain where people are decent to each other, with good schools and hospitals, a clean environment and an innovative economy.

Nothing is more important to our children's future than Brexit. A bad Brexit deal, with Britain outside the single market, will wreck the future for our children, our economy and our schools and hospitals. That's why at the heart of the manifesto is a commitment to give the people the final say on the Brexit deal in a referendum.

In advance of the publication of their manifesto, the Liberal Democrats are unveiling a raft of policies to give our children and young people a brighter future. These include:

- Helping people buy their first home for the same cost as renting, with a new model of 'Rent to Own' homes
- Restoring housing benefit for young people
- Creating a discounted bus pass for 16-21 year olds, giving a 66% discount
- Introducing votes at 16 for elections and referendums across the UK

As well as:

- Investing almost £7bn in our schools and colleges
- Doubling the number of businesses that take apprenticeships
- Tripling the early years pupil premium
- Extending free school meals to all primary school students

Liberal Democrat leader Tim Farron said: "Imagine a brighter future. You

don't have to accept Theresa May and Nigel Farage's extreme version of Brexit that will wreck the future for you, your family, your schools and hospitals.

"In the biggest fight for the future of our country in a generation, Jeremy Corbyn's Labour has let you down by voting with Theresa May on Brexit – not against her.

"The Liberal Democrats want you to have a choice over your future. You should have your say on the Brexit deal in a referendum. And if you don't like the deal you should be able to reject it and choose to remain in Europe.

"We want to give all our children a brighter future in a fairer Britain where people are decent to each other, with good schools and hospitals, a clean environment and an innovative economy. Not Theresa May's cold, mean-spirited Britain.

"A vote for the Liberal Democrats can change Britain's future."

[Labour's NHS pledge is pie in the sky.](#)

This week Labour pledged an additional £37 billion of NHS funding, which sounds to me, as Shadow Health Secretary, like poorly-thought-out, pie in the sky policy.

You can't solve the crisis in our NHS and social care services by simply imposing more top-down targets on staff and plucking numbers out of thin air.

The Liberal Democrats are the only party with a fully costed plan to deliver £6bn more per year for the NHS and social care by putting a penny on income tax.

We are the only party that are prepared to be honest with the public that giving the NHS and social care the funding they need will mean us all chipping in a little more.

A group of 26 leading health experts, including the former chief executive of the NHS David Nicholson, have all backed our plans on the NHS in a letter to the Observer today.

To add your voice to theirs and back our plan to save the NHS and social care:

We will honour Britain's commitment to international development

As part of the coalition, the Lib Dems managed to secure 0.7% of Britain's gross national income for international development. It was one of our final acts in government, and it's one we're most proud of.

Since then, 0.7% has been a legal requirement, which has prevented the Conservatives and UKIP from stopping these vital funds getting to the world's most vulnerable people.

Now, in the face of yet more callous opposition from the government, who are attempting to reduce the funding – the Lib Dems are making a stand.

The British people don't have to settle for Theresa May's cold, mean-spirited Britain.

Today, we have vowed to protect our 0.7% legacy and ensure that the UK continues to alleviate poverty across the world, helping to build a more secure and stable international community.

Why? Because UK aid prevents unimaginable suffering. It allows girls to stay in school, stops babies from dying from preventable illnesses, and ensures that farmers can sell their crops at a fair price.

And because a healthier, safer and more stable world is better for Britain. We should all be proud of our outward-looking, modern, progressive record as a global leader in international development.

If you want to fight for Britain's legacy and protect the 0.7% pledge, support us today:

I've told Britain's property developers: if you won't build houses, the Lib Dems will

The Conservative government has given developers a carte blanche to play the property market at the expense of our citizens. And now the country's in crisis.

Not enough homes. Properties sitting empty. Exorbitant prices. The market is closed and exclusive: a fat cats' game. That's not good for people and it's

not good for business.

Today the Lib Dems are laying down the law to developers: **unless you build the homes that Britain needs, we will.**

We're tired of the commercially unsound and short-sighted greed of developers, who buy up local authority land and sit on it until it appreciates. We're tired of absent foreign investors, who's attractive up-front cash is a false economy – contributing nothing to the improvement of the surrounding public realm.

The Lib Dems are taking decisive action on the housing crisis.

As a modern, pro-business party, we think commercial sense and social justice go hand in hand. That's why we've put a progressive housing package at the heart of our new manifesto. It will include: building 300,000 homes a year by the end of the next parliament and giving local councils the power the charge absentee landlords up to 200% council tax on empty homes.

Why prioritise housing?

Making sure that the housing market is both profitable and socially beneficial is just pure good sense. But I also have personal reasons for standing behind this issue. As a teenager, I was inspired to get into politics by watching Cathy Come Home – a heartbreaking film about a couple who were made homeless – and I joined the housing charity Shelter as a result.

As an MP, I've seen first-hand the misery caused not having a proper home. For many people in the next generation, it is virtually impossible to get on the housing ladder. I think they deserve a helping hand.

If you want a government who will fight for everyone's basic human need for shelter, who has the commercial clout to unpack the property monopolies which hold the market in a vice, then add your name here and say you're voting to change Britain's future on Thursday 8th June: