

When the establishment gets it wrong

One of the most frustrating features of an MP's life is when you know something is wrong, you highlight it, and you cannot get the necessary changes. When I first discovered years ago that my knowledge of a local post office damaged by allegations of shortfalls was not alone but other MPs had similar cases I thought that it was very unlikely there had been mass outbreak of fraud around the same time as the introduction of new computer system. My concerns were strengthened as those affected had often alerted the Post Office to the accounting troubles which no fraudster would have done, and they did not themselves appear to have the money they were said to have embezzled. I supported James Arbuthnot who led the originally small group of MPs who wanted to help sort this out.

In the end the good work of some of the sub postmasters themselves and important reversals for the Post Office in court led to government instituting a proper review and compensation. Today there may be faster progress as the tv programme has pricked the conscience of the nation and revealed the big scope of the disaster.

The truth is that whilst this is a very bad and current example of poor work and worse treatment of people by a nationalised industry or branch of government, it is not unique. There are too many cases of wrong decisions, bad outcomes, poor treatment of users, businesses and taxpayers. One of the reasons there is a feeling of frustration in large sections of the electorate with many saying they do not like what is on offer from the main parties is this feeling of helplessness exemplified by the sub postmasters against the mighty power of a state determined to get it wrong.

I have been battling against a Bank of England determined to give us high inflation whilst blaming something else. It is now determined to lose taxpayers a fortune by selling bonds at big losses and to drive us into recession. Why?

I have been arguing with an OBR that cannot get its deficit forecasts right and refuses to accept cutting some tax rates can boost growth and revenues. They have this mad idea that we tax cuts are unaffordable but lots of spending increases are unavoidable.

I have been explaining to the vast empire of net zero officials and Ministers that importing LNG gives us more CO₂ than drilling for our own gas, that switching people to electric vehicles before there is sufficient renewable electricity does not help and that heat pumps are far too dear and unsatisfactory to be something most people will want to buy. I have been saying you cannot have a green revolution until consumers think the products that make us greener do genuinely do that, are affordable and are popular.

There are many other examples of wrong theory doing damage to people's lives and livelihoods. Too many policies lead to more burdens on the small businesses and self employed on whom we rely for so many services. Many of

these people now see the state as the enemy, fearing unreasonable conduct by those in authority as they are made to pay more tax, comply with more regulations and sometimes falsely accused of misconduct.