

Brexit or Remain

In 1997 Tony Blair campaigned for a "middle way" between capitalism and socialism which was very successful. But now the "middle" ground has shifted position.

At the one extreme we have the Brexit Party determined to leave the EU without a deal - whatever the cost. At the other extreme we have the Lib Dems who wish to ignore the largest plebiscite in our history so that they can surrender more and more control of our destiny to Brussels, Paris and Berlin.

Do the candidates agree that the deal that Boris Johnson has negotiated with the EU represents the current "middle way" which should be supported as a viable compromise? **[Dr. Ian Reay]**

Boris Johnson's deal does not represent a 'middle way' and the only compromise he has achieved is with the ERG and the Brexit Party by taking his deal closer to No Deal. Johnson's deal puts a border in the Irish Sea, takes the UK out of the Single Market and Customs Union and carries a high risk that the UK will crash out of the EU on World Trade Organisation terms as the Trade Deals he promises will take years to complete rather than eleven months.

Should we be voting tactically? If so, how do we vote if we are Remain supporters or Leave supporters in SW Herts? **[Tiana Wilson]**

Remain supporters should vote for the Liberal Democrats who have consistently supported Remain and campaigned for a People's Vote or confirmatory referendum for the last 3.5 years.

Please can candidates explain, in event of winning overall majority, whether they would revoke Article 50 without a people's vote? **[anonymous]**

As a Liberal Democrat, I will continue to fight for a people's vote with the option to stay in the EU, and in that vote we would passionately campaign to keep the UK in the EU.

For candidates whose policies include the possibility of leaving the EU, what negotiating leverage will they use to conclude subsequent trade deals with the EU, the US and elsewhere, and how long will it take? **[David Lidington] N/A**

For candidates whose policies are for remaining in the EU, what negotiating leverage will they use to convince Leave voters to forget their Referendum vote result? **[David Lidington]**

The referendum offered a binary choice to voters which has proved hugely divisive. A compromise between Remain and Leave in the form of Theresa May's deal was rejected by parliament 3 times. The fourth deal was rejected on the basis of inadequate time for parliamentary scrutiny. As the best deal with the EU is the deal we already have, to move forward we need to address the underlying issues of inequality and divisions in our society.

- **Give local authorities and regions the power to make decisions about their areas.**
- **Introduce a capital £50 billion Regional Rebalancing Programme for infrastructure spend across the nations and regions of the UK, with local and devolved authorities given a say in how it is used, reinforced by a Just Transition Fund to support communities negatively affected by policies to tackle the climate emergency.**
- **Continue to champion investment in the Northern Powerhouse and the Midlands Engine, putting significant capital resources into infrastructure projects across these regions.**
- **Set an ambitious National Industrial Strategy to transform the economy and develop Local Industrial Strategies within it that incentivise clustering by businesses and universities with particular specialisations.**
- **Work with the major banks to fund the creation of a local banking sector dedicated to meeting the needs of local small and medium-sized businesses.**
- **Expand the British Business Bank to perform a more central role in the economy, to ensure that viable small and medium-sized businesses have access to capital, even when the rest of the commercial banking system can't provide it.**
- **Support the tourist industry which is vital for many local economies.**

How is it possible to reconcile the country split by attitudes to Brexit? **[Mark Granger]**

By addressing the inequalities in our society as above.

I voted to join the EU in 1973 and to leave in the referendum. If you are selected as the MP for South West Herts can I expect you to resign immediately and call a by-election on the grounds that the people who voted for you did not understand what they were voting for? **[Malcolm Allen]** **If I am elected as the MP for SW Herts I will work and campaign in line with the Liberal Democrat manifesto as set out in our Manifesto**

Environment

In common with literally hundreds of councils up and down the country, Berkhamsted Town and Dacorum Borough Councils have declared climate emergencies with an intent to reach net zero carbon emissions by 2030. What would your Government do to support local authorities achieve this aim? **[Paul de Hoest]**

As your MP I would support the Liberal Democrat's pledge to put power back into local governments. On the environment this would mean we could support promises to such as to accelerate the rapid take-up of electric vehicles – local councils will be vital in implementing e.g. on-street charging points. Nationally, we will ensure that, by 2030, every new car and small van sold is electric.

Weneedstostopburningfossilfuelstosavetheplanet.Doyouagree?Andifyou do, how can you make sure the government makes this happen. **[Tilly Plenderleith aged 10]**

This is one of my greatest concerns Tilly, the Liberal Democrats have a practical plan to tackle the fossil fuel crisis. We aim to decarbonise the power sector completely, supporting renewables and household and community energy to create jobs and cut fossil fuel imports; our interim goal is to reach at least 80 per cent renewable electricity by 2030.

What are the candidates' attitude to Green Belt development to meet the housing targets likely to be imposed locally? **[Hugh Siegle]**

Our manifesto pledges to put greater powers back into the hands of local governments, such as to devolve housing powers such as Right to Buy to local councils. This is crucial to protect local interests, while trying to tackle national problems such as the housing crisis. The Liberal Democrats hold 60% of council seats across Dacorum and Three Rivers, we want to connect our local voice with a representative in Parliament. In Three Rivers we have challenged the level of housing targets set by the Secretary of State and the Liberal Democrats in Dacorum will be looking to do the same.

At the moment, recycling in this country is a post code lottery. Will you commit to setting up a nationwide recycling industry, and ban the export of our rubbish? **[Molly Berry]**

Questions from the electorate to SW Herts Parliamentary Candidates

The Liberal Democrats plan to establish a statutory waste recycling target of 70 per cent in England, extend separate food waste collections to at least 90 per cent of homes by 2024, and strengthen incentives to reduce packaging and reduce waste sent to landfill and incineration.

Given that Parliament has declared a Climate Emergency, and all the science is pointing to climate and ecological breakdown, do you believe that the extraction & burning of fossil fuels is something which should now become too expensive, or illegal, or both? **[Rebecca Mackenzie]**

I believe we need rapid and radical action to tackle the climate emergency. Britain *must* move away from Fossil Fuels we aim to decarbonise the power sector completely, supporting renewables and household and community energy to create jobs and cut fossil fuel imports; our interim goal is to reach at least 80 per cent renewable electricity by 2030.

"This election is probably the last chance to stop climate change getting out of our control. The government's climate change committee warns that the UK is not even meeting its commitment to the 2015 Paris agreement. Why can you be trusted on this issue?". **[Marc Savitsky]**

The Liberal Democrats have long supported coordinated action to tackle the Climate Emergency. Our commitment to devolve powers to local governments is an important step in delivering this. The climate emergency can only be tackled effectively by ensuring that every relevant decision taken by national government, local councils, businesses, investors, communities and households makes progress towards the net zero objective. We will set a new legally binding target to reduce net greenhouse gas emissions to zero by 2045 at the latest, and implement a comprehensive climate action plan, cutting emissions across all sectors.

Do you support HS2 and is it the best use of the £100 billion latest cost estimate. If not, what would you prioritise in its place. **[Robert Gill]**

My position on HS2 is one which tried to balance the need for rail reform with our environmental priorities. We can deliver on HS2 by ensuring far tighter financial controls and increased accountability to make sure that these projects are value for money. The Liberal Democrats will address problems with implementation to ensure that HS2 opens as early as possible to meet our decarbonisation goals while minimising the destruction of precious UK habitats and woodland.

Health and nuclear energy

In the UK's notification of intention to leave the EU (the "Article 50" process) the UK Government added its additional intention, which had not featured in the 2016 referendum, to withdraw from the Euratom Treaty.

The implications of this decision were studied by the House of Commons Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy Select Committee which produced a report later in 2017, the summary of which stated: -

"The government has failed to consider the potentially disastrous ramifications of its Brexit objectives for the nuclear industry. The repercussions of failing to do so are huge. The continued operations of the UK nuclear industry are at risk" **[John Guffey]**

The ramifications include problems with refuelling nuclear reactors, supply problems for radioactive isotopes of all kinds, in particular short-life products which the UK can no longer produce, are sourced from the near-Continent, and are essential to the NHS for some cancer treatments. The UK also risks losing its prominent position in fusion research which up to now has been funded jointly by all members of the Euratom organisation.

My question is: Why are we leaving the Euratom organisation, to our own obvious detriment, when it is legally distinct from the European Union and would not have been covered by the Article 50 process, and what would the candidates, or the parties they represent if elected, do to mitigate the "disastrous ramifications" identified by the Select Committee. **[John Guffey]**

The best outcome for Britain is to secure a route for remained membership of the EU, through a People's Vote with an option to remain. I commit myself as a candidate who will fight to remain in the EU.

Hospital provision

Berkhamsted, Hemel and St Albans residents all currently have to rely upon Watford general hospital which fails to meet clinical targets, has decrepit fabric and is blocked from access on match days. Will you campaign for the building of a new state of the art hospital on a new accessible site or will you support the current West Herts Hospital Trust proposal for a complex and inefficient refurbishment on the existing site that will create untold disruption over the ten years it would take to implement? **[Paul de Hoest]**

Questions from the electorate to SW Herts Parliamentary Candidates

Yes

To all candidates concerns hospital provision in the area; " Do you support the campaign for a new Hospital to serve Watford, St Albans and Dacorum rather than refurbishing Watford General Hospital?" **[Hugh Siegle]**

Yes. Additionally, Watford Hospital needs refurbishing.

International cooperation

The biggest challenges facing our futures are all global in nature: climate change; rise of China as a global economic force; Russian political interference; impact of AI on the role of jobs in society; terrorism; plastic waste; water shortages; global migration; cyber security; and so on. What would your party do to ensure that the UK remains an influential voice on the global scene to address these issues and ensure stability in the world? **[Paul de Hoest]**

I would campaign to remain in the EU, a body which facilitates our coordinated response to global issues. Additionally, the Liberal Democrat manifesto makes important commitments to tackling these global challenges, for example, to work through international bodies for better regulation and scrutiny of international trade and investment treaties to ensure they do not worsen inequalities or undermine human rights or developing countries' ability to regulate the environmental and social impacts of businesses.

Priti Patel, Sajid Javid and Ben Wallace have blocked British orphans trapped in ISIS camps from being repatriated. Given the fate of Shamina Begum's baby, do the candidates agree that this is a morally indefensible abrogation of the State's duty to protect vulnerable British children? **[Lara Pringle]**

Yes.

What specific tax policies will you promote to reduce inequality between nations? **[Justice and Peace Group – Tring]**

Global inequality is an issue extending far beyond tax policies. The Liberal Democrats would remain firmly committed to spending 0.7 per cent of Gross National Income on aid, prioritising development that both helps the poorest and ties in with our strategic international objectives. We would increase the proportion of the aid budget committed to tackling climate change and environmental degradation: helping countries mitigate the impact of climate change and other environmental crises and support climate refugees.

Equality

Britain is now the most unequal country in Europe: do you agree that this is a bad thing and if so, what would your party do to change this? **[Paul de Hoest]**

Yes, Britain is failing. 10 years of Tory-led austerity has created a society that does not work. Life has become unaffordable. While the UK is one of the world's richest countries, the benefits and opportunities that should follow from that are felt increasingly unevenly across our communities. For example, two of our keystone policies promise to: invest £6 billion per year to make the benefits system work for people who need it; and to introduce a principle of universal access to basic services starting by building 100,000 social homes a year.

Human rights

“You are no doubt aware of the work of the action group Woman’s Place UK, and the pressure they have been put under by so called Trans Rights activists, including actual violence and intimidation. **[Sue Gill]** Do you commit to upholding women’s sex-based rights as outlined in the Equality Act and, if necessary, strengthening them?” **[Sue Gill]**

I am a feminist and across my career have promoted women’s rights. However, I do not endorse the debate which places women’s rights in opposition to Trans rights. The Liberal Democrats are a party working for an open, fair society. This wish extends to the transgender community and in office I would support the manifesto pledge to reform the Gender Recognition Act.

As a citizen of the planet I am extremely concerned about the effects, both present and future, of the climate crisis. This man-made crisis cannot be solved by denying its existence. Brexit, the NHS, housing, immigration may all feel immensely important, but without addressing the climate crisis as a priority, focusing on them is little more than “fiddling while Rome burns.” In broad terms, do the candidates agree that without placing this at the top of the agenda, all other matters become obsolete? **[Wendy Halford]**

I agree with this statement; the Liberal Democrats have put tackling the Climate Emergency at the heart of our manifesto.

Questions from the electorate to SW Herts Parliamentary Candidates

What will you do to support persecuted Peoples? **[Justice and Peace Group – Tring]**

Campaign for a fairer and just society.

What will you do to progress the fight to end modern day slavery? **[Justice and Peace Group – Tring]**

The Liberal Democrats want to take a public health approach to violence: identifying risk factors and treating them. For example, a key promise is to properly resource the National Crime Agency to combat serious and organised crime, and tackle modern slavery and human trafficking through proactive, intelligence-led enforcement of labour market standards.

What will you do to make sure that the UK's trade policy is fair for farmers and workers in developing countries? Will you make sure that trade policies support poverty reduction, climate emergency action and human rights? **[Justice and Peace Group – Tring]**

The Liberal Democrats want to work through international bodies for better regulation and scrutiny of international trade and investment treaties to ensure they do not worsen inequalities or undermine human rights or developing countries' ability to regulate the environmental and social impacts of businesses.

Democracy

If you are elected (or even if you aren't) what can you point to from your own direct experience to enable us, the electorate, to trust that the manifesto on which we elect you is the one that you honour for the length of the next parliament? **[Kate Brightwell]**

Is Britain still one of the best Countries to live in? **[Robert Gill]**

Why would a Government led by your Party leader be good for the Country? **[Robert Gill]**

In an age when elected representatives are no better informed, no more intelligent, have no better access to information and are often less educated or experienced than those who elect them, do you the candidates, think you are there to represent the broad views of your constituents or do you think you should decide for them? Will you represent OUR views or yours?" **[Tony Halker]**

Questions from the electorate to SW Herts Parliamentary Candidates

I would like to ask the candidates: if they can't win the seat themselves, who would be their second favourite candidate? And who would they least like to see win?

[Rik Edwards]

Should there be a ban on foreign money being accepted by political parties?

[Mark Granger]

Finance

All parties appear to intend to invest hundred even thousands of billions more into our country.

1. From where do you intend to find the money?
2. Will taxes increase, or privatisation?
3. Is the national debt a priority still?

State schools and hospitals pay business rates, but private schools don't. Do you think that's fair? **[Mark Granger]**

My child will be going to university, hopefully next year, will they leave that university with a millstone of debt around their neck? **[Mark Granger]**

Rail travel

The rail commuter service from London Northwestern Railway has been dire with routine cancellations and delays. What would you do to improve the experience of rail passengers in this country? **[Paul de Hoest]**

Changing train contracts has resulted in a poor service. How will your party improve this? **[Mark Granger]**

HS2 is a local issue - with it being currently under review, do you think that the projected £100 billion costs would be better invested in renewable energy development, and funding the NHS and social care for the elderly. **[Bex Plenderleith]**

General

If you are elected (or even if you aren't) what can you point to from your own direct experience to enable us, the electorate, to trust that the manifesto on which we elect you is the one that you honour for the length of the next parliament? **[Kate Brightwell]**

PREP

How do you plan to solve the shameful problem of rough sleeping? **[Mark Granger]**

Nobody should have to spend a night sleeping on the streets. However rough sleeping has been increasing since the 2008 recession and is one of the most visible signs of increasing poverty and inequality. The Liberal Democrats will end rough sleeping within five years. Two key policies that will tackle this issue are to ensure sufficient financial resources for local authorities to deliver the Homelessness Reduction Act and to Legislate for longer term tenancies and limits on annual rent increases.

Whatever goes on in Westminster, you will be our local representative. What do you know about Berkhamsted and what do you see as the major issues facing the town? **[Ann Foster]**

I have lived in Berkhamsted for 22 years. As a commuter, mother, trustee of a local charity and now a town councilor, I have intimate knowledge of both the issues facing the town and of the values of my co-residents. I wish to represent the local issues and community values I encounter every day in Parliament.

Will you back the UK's 0.7% international development spending, and ensure that UK aid supports smallholder farmers and improves workers' rights rather than benefitting UK-based contractors? Will you ensure that DFID maintains its independence? **[Justice and Peace Group – Tring]**

The liberal democrats remain firmly committed to spending 0.7 per cent of Gross National Income on aid, prioritising development that both helps the poorest and ties in with our strategic international objectives on gender equality, climate change and the environment, human rights, conflict prevention and tackling inequality.

How would you address the shameful problems of homelessness and reliance on food banks which are increasing across the country? What measures do you believe should be put in place to mitigate the poverty caused by austerity? **[Justice and Peace Group – Tring]**

Questions from the electorate to SW Herts Parliamentary Candidates

The Liberal Democrats are the only party with a plan to tackle poverty and inequality that makes sense in the modern world. Our policies include: Investing £6 billion per year to make the benefits system work for people who need; reducing the wait for the first benefits payment from 5 weeks to 5 days (a major contributor to increased foodbank use); and Creating a £50 billion Regional Rebalancing Programme to address the historic investment disparities between our nations and regions.

There are at least 1.2 million illegal immigrants in the UK - a quarter of the entire total in Europe. What do you believe we should do to accommodate these huge numbers as our own infrastructure is creaking at the seams? **[Alison Wall]**

For me, the main priority is to reverse the detrimental effects of the Hostile Environment. Not only has this policy inflicted unforgivable damage on migrants, it also has contributed to the rise in illegal immigration and the resultant deaths by human beings seeking a better life. We will pursue a fair migration system and invest in officers, training and technology to prevent the tragedies borne from illegal entry at Britain's borders.