



5 Pages for a New Britain

A manifesto for the democratic reform of post-Brexit Britain

The need for reform

The political class, to the extent they accept that the Brexit vote occurred, perceives it as a blip that must be navigated before the nation can return to business as usual – the liberal, centralised status quo that works perfectly for them and powerful lobby forces.

Intentionally or not, the Conservative Party election slogan “Get Brexit Done” speaks to this perception. People that believe in Brexit see it as a modern day glorious revolution, they do not want to move on from it, they wish to fix it as the starting point for radical reform. It is also a great error to read the Brexit vote as a “vote of confidence in the British Parliament”, it was the opposite.

The slogan ‘take back control’ resonated deeply for a reason. For 17.4 million people, the EU represented their isolation and powerlessness, as national direction was steered exclusively by cultural and political elites, in Westminster as well as Brussels. For many remain supporters that same frustration is now felt.

Building on Brexit – Truly ‘taking back control’

Brexit is neither an issue of the left or right, but the product of decades of suppression of democracy by a system centuries out of date, set against the explosion of the information age.

That system must be cast aside, and a new one that works for every citizen put in its place. Brexit offers the greatest opportunity in living memory to remake Britain fit for the 21st century and deserving of the title of mother of democracies.

By offering people a meaningful new settlement the country can be lifted to a distinctly different post-Brexit Britain. What comes after Brexit? Will it be business as usual? or do we have something radical to say. A new course to plot.

The ideas of democracy and subsidiarity transcend ‘left’ and ‘right’ or Brexit and Remain. They offer the ideal of citizens shaping the direction of their communities and nation each and every day.

3 Key areas for reform to return Britain to its people

1) Democratic Reform - Only the people can unite Britain

Rhetoric about 'strong leadership' and hollow repetition of the word unity cannot bring this country together. The only way to unite the people of Liverpool and Lincolnshire, London and Leicester, is to trust them – devolving power to towns and cities, streets and neighbourhoods.

Devolution will save money, allowing also for national programmes – tax cuts and investment in infrastructure.

Parliamentary Reform

The British people now have as little faith in Westminster as they do in Brussels.

More, the Union in its current form is unsustainable. Only a federal UK can endure. There is a reason why the SNP are so resolutely opposed to the devolution of further decision-making powers. It would permanently destroy their narrative. If the Union is to be preserved it must reform.

An English Parliament

As much power as possible should be devolved to Ulster, Wales and Scotland, with the creation of an English Parliament outside of London.

The Palace of Westminster should be reserved only for larger issues of national and constitutional importance.

The House of Lords

The House of Lords now serves no purpose. It is deeply unpopular and a constitutional fudge. One option is its abolition. Alternatively, the appointment of Lords should be taken out of the hands of party political cronies and into a new and independent honours body. Only those in receipt of the highest national honours in recognition of exemplary achievement would be given a seat in the new House of Lords.

Electoral Reform

The first past the post electoral system has ceased to be an appropriate method of determining the will of the nation in national elections. It produces disproportionate results that change the political course of the nation unfairly, causing resentment and frustration among the citizenry.

In the 2015 General Election the SNP were able to return 56 MPs with 4.7% of the national vote but UKIP returned just 1 MP despite having a much larger 12.6% of the vote.

Under a national system that devolves powers to national assemblies and councils a system of proportional representation as already used by many devolved Parliaments themselves would be appropriate nationally, to appoint MPs to a House of Commons charged only with considering national and constitutional issues and holding the government to account.

The Election of a Prime Minister

No British citizen has ever had the opportunity to elect a Prime Minister, rather they have been charged with the election of their local MP but also asked to consider the national picture in doing so. It is a system that makes little sense and often leads to Prime Ministers rising to power without adequate public scrutiny.

It should only ever be in the gift of the British public to elect a Prime Minister, not Parliament nor any political party.

The election of Prime Minister should therefore be an entirely separate election than that for an MP or any other representative. A system similar to the US Electoral College would be applicable.

Localism

The notion of subsidiarity dictates that *'matters ought to be handled by the smallest, lowest or least centralised competent authority'*.

All the good, centralised intentions in the world cannot address regional disparities.

Only by transforming the UK into a federation of counties can markets find a level and grow from there.

Similarly, allowing local people to determine serious policy will enable them to tailor direction in accordance with the particularities, needs and desires of specific areas, liberating them from the stiflingly ineffective one size fits all, London-centric cultural direction all the resentment that came with it.

The vast majority of decision making on taxation, environmental regulation, education, health and policing should be devolved to county level.

Local referenda, petitions and initiatives should also be supported by an accessible system for online voting.

By utilising modern technology to track and implement the will of the people the current cluttered and confusing strata of Local Councillors, Town Councillors, Assembly Members, Borough Councillors, District Councillors and County Councillors can be significantly reduced.

A simpler two tier system of District and County councillors with more powers and pay commensurate with full time employment would lead to significant devolved powers at a local level.

Political Party Reform

We need radical action to re-engage those who feel they have no place in politics. Many of our leading political parties have very limited systems of democracy, which has birthed the current establishment so loathed by the public.

The system of candidate selection in Britain is a gaping flaw in our democracy. The Conservative Party, who should be a leading agent in changing that system is actually the worst example of it, and amongst the least democratic institutions in Britain. This has decimated the activist base and forced many former supporters into direct opposition to the Party.

Each party should offer a transparent system for the selection and election of candidates and party officials.

2) Government Reform

The current form of the British government is structured to reward lickspittles to the Prime Minister of the day, placing hugely complex issues and powers in the hands of MPs who happen to have the immediate favour of Downing Street.

The elected representatives to Parliament should be able to focus on the crucial job of holding the government to account, dealing with the legislation it brings forward, and ensuring it meets the needs of their constituents.

Reform of Cabinet Government

With a Prime Minister elected by the people and a House of Commons elected in a separate but parallel election, the opportunity arises for prospective Prime Ministers to stand for election alongside a slate of proposed ministers from which they can form a government. The increase in power this bestows upon a Prime Minister must be tempered by greater powers of parliament and the judiciary to hold any government to rigorous account, and to remove it where necessary.

The Role of the Monarch

The Monarch's role in modern British politics has fallen to the point of irrelevance at best and encumbrance at worst.

The idea of the Monarch being the decision maker may be comforting, but it is entirely illusory.

The Monarch is at the will and whim of the government and parliament of the day, as therefore is the fragile reputation of the Monarchy.

The Monarch's power in origin derives from the notion of the "divine right of Kings", the power to rule bestowed by God. Such a notion has been eroded by successive reforms to the point of now being inarguable. It is no longer possible to successfully elucidate to citizens what the significance of Monarch's role is in modern British government, and from where such notional power derives.

The Monarchy is an institution of great independent power, and the head of the Church of England. It's role in government has however ceased to be defensible or practical, and should be removed.

3) National Media Reform

Broadcast Media Regulation & Government Subsidy

The majority of Britons now know their nation not from their communities or leaders, but from the media.

Arcane rules which govern only broadcast media, but do not apply to print, online or social media have been the strongest force in forming the ugly characterisation of the establishment that is now held by the public.

The broadcast media is horrendously biased - overwhelmingly dominated by metropolitan social and economic liberals educated on the same courses at the same, elite universities. The notion of diversity is presented as being championed, but it invariably takes the form of diversity of appearance and very rarely translates to diversity of opinion.

As a result, the media are totally and visibly unrepresentative of the national population, reacting with the same bewilderment and horror to the Brexit result as the political establishment.

Some networks make no attempt to hide their ideological agenda and operate as an openly liberal agent under the guise of fairness and balance. While this may satisfy regulators, whether left or right, Brexit or Remain, the public are under no illusion and are furious they have to pay for it whilst being deprived of a genuine choice.

Britain's arcane media regulations are not fit for purpose. Deregulation of the media would not only be extremely popular with the public, but with most of the media itself, allowing broadcast media to act as all other media in making programming for a target audience which can succeed or fail in a market environment without government interference.

Any former merits found in the licence fee and regulations on political bias have been outmoded and overtaken by the internet, podcasts and social media. The licence fee is unlikely to survive the millennial approach to media digest.

Fox News did not become America's most popular news channel by force, but from a grassroots desire for a genuinely conservative perspective. In the information age, such desires cannot be suppressed, however powerful any media group or government is. Change is inevitable, it is merely a question of whether media groups, the government (and therefore taxpayers) wish to be an agent or victim of that change.

We call for the abolition of the licence fee and all media subsidies in a staged privatisation of the national broadcast media companies alongside the removal of all regulation requiring broadcast media to present political neutrality.



Radical Reform. Real Renewal

