
HANDING BACK CONTROL TO YOU

The Manifesto

Addressing the concerns of the silent
majority

April 2023



Reclaiming your Country

Giving back control to the most important people in the country — you the British public.

Our vision for a Britain that is freer, fairer, and a more prosperous place for you & your family.

Changes that will improve your everyday life.

“For in reason, all government without the consent of the governed is the very definition of slavery.”

Jonathan Swift

“Necessity is the plea for every infringement of human freedom. It is the argument of tyrants; it is the creed of slaves.”

William Pitt the Younger

Introduction

The country has been through many years of political upheaval stretching back for decades. From the collapse of the economy in the 1970s and our ignominious IMF bail-out, through the divisive boom years of Thatcher, and the 'modern liberalism' of Blair. The 2008 crash brought us Austerity, shortly followed by Brexit, which stretching on for four and a half years has left businesses in a state of perpetual uncertainty.

Since the New Labour Government in 1997, the country has seen a steady increase in legislation and a growing complexity of its Tax Code; meaning the wealthy are still able to exploit loopholes while the less well off are disadvantaged. Although beneficial in many ways, PAYE has caused a separation between the tax payers and tax takers. The cost of Government has become less tangible and there is no inducement for Government to reverse this trend. Honesty and an understanding of the amount of money people hand-over in taxes is long overdue.

A society is most free when the levers of power are confounded and made more difficult to wield. Likewise a country is most free when the Government's agencies are restricted in their ability to pry into our private life.

The very nature of Government in the United Kingdom is that the Executive governs by privilege and not by right. The right of Kings being constrained by the Magna Carta in 1215.

The Overriding principal of Politics Aired is to allow all proud Britons to reclaim their freedom, prosperity and opportunity.

Parliamentary reform

MPs WHO CHANGE PARTY

When a Member of Parliament moves party it demonstrates a change in the values, principals, and intentions that were expressed when the MP stood for election. As such, we feel that this breaks the implicit contract between the voter and the Member of Parliament, so we make this simple promise:

We will amend Parliamentary practice such that any MP who changes party triggers a by-election.

THE SPEAKER OF THE HOUSE

Regardless of how one voted in 2016, the debacle that surrounded Parliament in 2018/19 must never be repeated. Over his tenure in office, John Burcow changed and debased the role of Speaker of the House. This essential role is critical for the fair, unpartisan and efficient running of the Parliament.

Since the 19th Century, the Speaker has been an elected Member of Parliament who has rescinded all party affiliations. A result of this is, the Speaker is unable to fairly represent his/her constituency. The Speaker is supported by three Deputy Speakers, who while being allowed to participate in constituency matters are not allowed to vote in the House.

This means that approximately 210,000 Britons go unrepresented in Parliament every year.

Politics Aired is committed to reforming the role of Speaker of the House and will implement an Independent Commission to review the role, presenting functional alternatives. While open to all suggestions, Politics Aired is inclined to make the role an independent, apolitical appointment; offered to those who have excelled in public life. Principally we would look to senior members of the Armed Forces, Police, NHS, and Civil Service.

This would remove the undemocratic system by which hundreds of thousands of Britons go unrepresented in Parliament every day.

THE LORDS

It is remarkable that in 2020 the United Kingdom still has a Parliamentary Chamber without any democratic accountability. Recent reforms of the Lords, began in 1999 under the Blair government, which removed all but 92 of the hereditary peers but left-in over 800 Life Peers (political appointees). We will go further and will ensure that the public's voice is heard throughout all levels of Government.

The age and experience of the Lords is unmatched and is a key element in offering review, guidance, counsel and oversight. A commission will be established to consider alternatives to the current system. While all options will be open for debate, we believe that the following is a sound and democratic basis for change.

- Limit the Lords to 500 members.
- Make the Lords fully elected, using a version of Proportional Representation.
- Maintain the expertise and experience that has served the country so well by using party lists, from which members would be selected.
- Respect the history of the House: all members would retain and continue to be addressed as 'Lord/Lady'.
- Use 15-year electoral terms to ensure that the members think about long-term effects and not short term politics.
- Mitigate the swaying of political fortunes by holding elections for the Lords every 5 years, with 1/3 of the seats being placed up for election each time.
- Constitutionally limit the role and powers of the Lords; focussing on 'review and guidance'; ensuring that the Lords does not supersede the Commons in terms of authority.

REVIEW OF DEVOLUTION

Devolution in the Union has been both good and bad. It is hard to deny that has both strengths and weaknesses; however, one thing that none could honestly state is that it is fair. The powers held by Scotland, Wales, and Northern Ireland all differ, while England has no specific national parliament at all.

While the differences in population and GDP make a purely federal system difficult, or even impossible to implement, greater fairness is achievable. We will consult on how to harmonise the devolved administrations' powers, while being sympathetic to the different histories and legal systems across the Union.

While a full consultation and review will be established, considerations such as the following will be foremost:

- The formal establishment of Westminster as the Union's Mother Parliament
- Maintaining in Westminster the national responsibilities such as Foreign Policy, Defence policy, Foreign Aid, trade negotiations, and most powers of taxation.
- Devolving certain powers more evenly across devolved parliaments.
- The possibility of establishing an English parliament, or English regional parliaments.

MPs EXPENSES AND GRANTS

The Expenses Scandal of 2009 highlighted the ease with which MPs can play the system to their advantage. As your servants and representatives, MPs should not be abusing the grants and expenses to which they are entitled. One of the most egregious privileges is the public subsidy of second homes in London.

The Houses of Parliament does not operate 'normal working hours' and as such the request to be accommodated close to the Palace is reasonable. We will purchase or build a specific tenement to accommodate PMs. As the building will be owned and maintained by the State, this will remove the cost of covering the rental expenses of 650 MPs, while removing the complexity and opportunity for abuse that the current system encourages.

We will also conduct a full review of all grants and expenses that MPs are entitled to, including subsidies and benefits, with a view to reducing the opportunity for misuse of public funds.

Taxation

SIMPLIFY, CLARIFY AND CONSOLIDATE

It is critical to public trust in the Government that the population has a full understanding of how much it pays in taxes. While PAYE is generally a good system that saves millions of Britons the trouble of submitting annual tax returns, it dislocates the public from the true cost of democracy and our public services.

We intend to introduce a Tax Report that will be sent to every tax payer yearly, explaining how much they have paid that year. It will be bold in its honesty and will intentionally encourage pushback and challenge on Government spending by the public and media alike.

A PROGRESSIVE TAX SYSTEM

For a long time the words 'Progressive Tax Policy' have meant tax rises and not a tax system that is fair for all Britons. Since its implementation in 1911 National Insurance has been used to 'pay for the State Pension'; however, like all taxes, it doesn't actually go into any personal pension pot but is instead used for general expenditure.

We will scrap the personal component of National Insurance and merge it with Income Tax, while reviewing its applicability at the corporate level. As with all tax changes that will be implemented, the aim will be to simplify, clarify and consolidate; making taxation easier to understand, easier to calculate, and less easy to evade.

Infrastructure

DIGITAL

The world is moving towards a more digital future and for Britain to succeed we must ensure that sufficient focus and investment is put towards our critical digital infrastructure.

Super-fast Broadband is key to ensuring that Britain remains a world superpower in business, finance, technology, and services. We will invest in national broadband infrastructure while encouraging and ensuring fair access for all.

RAIL NETWORK DIGITISATION

Rail franchises have failed commuters and rail passenger for years. While digital communications grow in importance, the need to transport people and cargo will remain. Relationships in both our personal lives and business are stronger when we meet face to face and we will support the rail network going forward.

It is clear that neither Nationalisation nor Privatisation have worked, this is because in both cases the customer has no choice and the operators (having won their contracts) have no incentive to offer a good service. We intend to radically shake-up the rail network by investing in a digital rail infrastructure. Trains will be tracked and controlled using digital track monitoring and GPS, allowing more trains to run on existing tracks and more safely.

This change will allow operators to directly compete on the same tracks. Commuters will be able to choose between the 0725 by *NewCo Railways*, or the 0731 by *FastCo Trains*. This direct competition will ensure that consumers have a real choice and that operators are continually pushed to provide the best service possible.

RAIL PRICING

For years the pricing of the network has seemed to outsiders as an opaque exercise in random number generation. There seems no logic, with Apps such as 'Tickety Split' (the ability to purchase a journey cheaper if bought in two parts) demonstrating the lunacy of the system.

Politics Aired will consult on a complete overhaul of the pricing system and will focus on a fair and transparent system, modelled on options such as:

- Standard fares being capped at a pence per mile rate.
- Peak fares being capped on the Standard Rate but at an increased and published multiplier, eg 1.5x Standard Rate.
- Trains running through urban areas may be allowed to charge an urban fee, eg 1.2x Standard Rate for miles traveled in certain published regions, eg Greater London.

The system will be designed to be fully transparent and published, with no opportunity for operators to twist the system to their benefit while baffling the traveller.

Part-time Season Tickets will also be provided to encourage and support those working part of the week from home.

Public Services

NATIONAL HEALTH SERVICE

The National Health Service is an institution, and one which we are rightfully proud and defensive of, but what are the tenets that make it the valued service that it is? We believe the NHS's key elements are:

- Best healthcare possible
- Free at point of delivery
- At the lowest cost to the taxpayer

This does then beg the question: can we improve the NHS? We think we can. In light of Covid, we have been able to not only see how other countries offer their services but also how they manage under extreme pressure.

A key failing of the British system was its centralised bureaucratic and slow decision making. This was never more evident than with our slow increase in testing. Whereas Germany had a distributed health system and numerous testing sites, Britain didn't and suffered for it.

We want to support and improve the NHS by freeing it from the leg-irons of central Government. We will look at giving much more power to the NHS trusts, giving them the authority and funding to challenge and develop in ways a centralised system cannot — while always maintaining a high quality, robust and free at point of delivery health service.

NHS hospitals will be empowered to earn money from non-NHS services, with all income staying within the Trusts to improve the NHS services with a guarantee that no 'for profit' services will be allowed, or excess salaries paid.

Licences to offer NHS services will be granted to charity hospitals and non-for-profit organisations that wish to offer both private and public health services. All public services will be free at point of delivery, while offering improved patient choice. Legal protections will be put in place to ensure that NHS patients are never disadvantaged by a mixed healthcare offering, or in any way sidelined by a Hospital/Trust.

We will invest heavily on updating the NHS's ailing technology systems. GPs will be supported to deliver better, quicker, and more modern bookings and prescriptions services, bringing their Surgeries into the 21st century.

BRITISH UNION CARDS

Our on-line life is filled with an increasing number of apps, log-ons, passwords, and registrations. The Government services are some of the worst offenders in adding unnecessary complexity to this digital maze. There are different systems for HMRC, DVLA, local councils, and the NHS. This, combined with voter fraud, suggests that now is the time to bring these diffuse requirements together into a single system: the British Union Card.

Privacy and security are essential to all Britons and we will maintain this while condensing the plethora of Government 'log-ons' and 'proofs of person' into a simple card. The card

will only be issued on request, it will **never have to be carried** unless you wish to, it **will hold no health data**, and as it will be a voluntary card, **the police will not be able to request to see it**. It will, however, be acceptable as an identity document, proof of age, voter registration, right to work document and used to receive social security.

As it will be used for voting, it will of course be issued free of charge.

With a single reference number (not unlike the current National Insurance number) you will be able to identify yourself to all Government services. As the card will be issued by the State, it will be accepted as proof-of-person by all banks, estate agents, healthcare providers and anyone else obliged to verify your identity. This will reduce the complexity of services, such as opening a bank account.

Concerns over privacy requires addressing. The fears over Covid/Vaccine Passports are heeded and every protection will be put in place to ensure that the benefits are only to you and not the Government. For your privacy, we will ensure firewalls are legally established and enforced between all Departments (DVLA, NHS, etc) to ensure that Government, agencies **cannot** misuse the new system to abuse your rights and freedoms.

DEFENCE OF THE REALM

The British Armed forces has been widely hailed by previous Governments as 'the best in the world' while being consistently cut back and often seen as 'easy-pickings' by the Treasury. We see Her Majesty's Armed Forces

as one of our finest institutions and world beating in its people and equipment.

In a world where trade routes and commodities are being challenged by aggressive regimes, we will invest in defence, ensuring that Britain is able to fulfil its NATO and UN commitments, as well as promote freedom, peace and free trade on a global level. We commit to:

British Army / ground forces

- 100,000 troops minimum
 - 2 divisions (1 armoured, 1 light)
 - 8 fighting brigades (6 regular, 1 Commando, 1 Airborne)
 - Improved special forces capability

Royal Navy

- 2 carrier strike groups
- 4 Independent Nuclear Deterrent submarines
 - Coastal protection fleet
 - Fleet Air Arm
 - Commando Bde

Royal Air Force

- Three strike platforms:
 - Typhoon
 - F-35 Lightning
 - Tempest (Gen 6 aircraft)
- Remote Piloted Air Systems
- Troop transport
 - Fixed wing
 - Rotary
- Logistic support

Culture, Society and Science

SCIENCE & TECHNOLOGY

Britain is an established player in the engineering and technology sector. We are leaders in Formula 1, battery technology, nuclear fusion, and biotech. As Britain once more stretches out on a global playing field we will invest more in STEM subjects, apprenticeships, and research — both applied and pure.

The problems of tomorrow will not be solved by the science of today but by technologies and capabilities not yet conceived. To ensure Britain maintains its standing as a leading technology, engineering and scientific player, we will promote and support these subjects.

THE BBC

The BBC has been an established part of the United Kingdom since 1922 and offers a wide variety of educational content and entertainment. We support it in its mission to ‘inform, educate and entertain’.

Sadly, Aunty is no longer a lithe and nimble as she once was and we believe that bringing the BBC into the 21st century will strengthen her while improving the balance and range of programming.

We will scrap the licence fee.

Key BBC services, such as the World Service, BBC Radio 4, BBC News and some educational and sporting programming will be centrally funded the Government. While the remainder of the BBC will be given a new freedom to raise commercial revenue to pay for a wider range of programming.

With its global reach, the BBC will be able to offer much of the same services that it does today for a similar if not smaller fee than competitors such as Netflix and Amazon Prime. We will consider options around:

- Selling off local & 'specialist' radio stations.
- Giving the BBC the commercial freedom to sell streaming access (iPlayer) globally to subsidise its operating costs.
- Encourage the BBC to offer its products to all British residents at a significantly reduced rate.

Privacy & Human Rights

PRIVACY

The revelations by individuals such as Katherine Gun and Edward Snowden have highlighted the extent of government surveillance in the modern world. In the aftermath of these revelations, the United States spent years reducing its internal monitoring. Unfortunately the British Government, under Theresa May, increased the State's ability to conduct surveillance on its own people with additional measures brought in through the Investigatory Powers Act.

We think that in a free country you have the right to a private life and that the Government should **only** be able to review your online activity after having demonstrated 'probable cause' and that no bulk collection or retention should ever be allowed.

We will repeal the Investigatory Powers Act and replace it with a much reduced, less intrusive, act that protects not only your freedoms and privacy but is also sufficiently robust to defeat hostile actors plotting against the United Kingdom and our allies.

FREE SPEECH

For many years the UK has become steadily less free as a country. Acts such as the Public Order Act 1986 (Section 4-5), the Communications Act 2003 (Section 127), and hate speech laws encourage intolerance by making speech that is subjectively considered offensive criminal.

We believe that a strong society is one that can accept offensive language and move beyond it to address underlying issues. While harassment and incitement to commit certain specific violent crimes are still a justifiable restrictions of free speech, we feel that the tide needs to turn and a greater emphasis on free speech needs to be established.

We commit to enshrining in law a 'First Amendment' that will ensure the inalienable right of Britons and the press to speak freely. We will also protect the right to peaceful protest, so that never again are critics of the Government silenced by illiberal and disproportionate laws as we saw in 2020.

We commit to five Free Speech improvements:

- Removing the words 'abusive', 'offensive' and 'insulting' from the Public Order Act 1986.
- Limiting the scope of Section 127 of the Communications Act 2003 to 'threatening language' only.
- Replacing the 'harassment' component of Section 127 of the Communications Act 2003 and the Malicious Communications Act with a harassment/cyberstalking statute similar to 18 US Code § 2261A, with its higher thresholds for criminal conduct.
- Repealing the Malicious Communications Act 1988.
- Enact a UK Free Speech Act (Annex 1)

Free Speech will be protected up to the point at which Direct Incitement of a violent crime against a person occurs. This will maximise free speech without risking the endangerment of a person.

The Environment

RECYCLING

The British are not a bad people, we love our families and want our children to grow-up in a better country than we did. We are also a busy people and confusion around recycling is causing damage to the country as different councils operate different and frequently changing recycling strategies.

We will work with all councils with an aim of harmonising recycling across the country. A standardised strategy will ensure that compliance is simplified; massively increasing the volumes recycled and reducing contamination, carbon dioxide and costs.

ELECTRIC VEHICLES

While the plugs used for electric vehicles are standardised, the process for purchasing 'charge' at a plug-in point is not. Membership cards and different billing structures make EV ownership less attractive to motorists and so increases pollution. The current system is akin to petrol stations demanding different membership cards and payment structures before allowing motorists to fill-up with fuel.

We will work with EV charging companies to ensure that all chargers can be used with all cars, and that immediate payment with a credit/debit card is accepted at all stations. We will remove the plethora of confusing and unnecessary

schemes that are in place and that discourage the switch to Electric Vehicles.

While EVs are excellent for road transport, and the UK is a world leader in battery technology, batteries do not have the energy density for air-travel. We will invest in Hydrogen technology, with the aim of eliminating petrochemicals from the aircraft industry as soon as possible.

POWER GENERATION

The United Kingdom must move away from CO₂ heavy power generation but extraordinary as wind, solar, and tide power are, they cannot provide the baseline power that the UK needs. The increasing demand that electric vehicles will place on the National Grid is unsustainable with current power generation plans. Politics Aired will commit to replacing all seven of the UK's right Nuclear Power Stations that are due to be retired before 2030. Their replacements will be more efficient and off higher capacity, ensuring that the UK moves to a Greener and more secure energy generation strategy.

Investment will be made into modular nuclear power; an exciting new technology that reduces both the cost of nuclear power stations as well as the amount of waste produced. This next generation power, being developed by such world leading companies as Rolls Royce, will be supported by a Politics Aired government.

“No one pretends that democracy is perfect or all-wise. Indeed, it has been said that democracy is the worst form of government except all those other forms that have been tried from time to time.”

Sir Winston Churchill

ANNEX 1

A Draft UK Free Speech Act (2021)

An Act to secure the free and open flow of information and ideas for the people of the United Kingdom.

Be it enacted by the Queen's most Excellent Majesty, by and with the advice and consent of the Lords Spiritual and Temporal, and Commons, in this present Parliament assembled, and by the authority of the same, as follows:

Section 1. Freedom of Speech

1. The right of any person, and of the people, to freedom of speech shall not be violated by the state.
2. Freedom of speech encompasses but is not limited to the right to engage in spoken or written expression of any idea pertaining to any matter of public interest, morality, philosophy, or politics, which is not a threat or direct incitement.
3. 'Direct incitement' means speech or writing which is directed towards inciting or producing imminent lawless action and is likely to incite or produce such action.
4. Schedule 1, Part I, Article 10 of the Human Rights Act 1998 is hereby repealed.

(Courtesy of Preston J Byrne, <https://www.adamsmith.org/blog/draft-text-of-the-the-united-kingdom-free-speech-act>)

About the Author



I tweet a bit and generally voice my views on the topics of the day. This is my latest amalgamation of thoughts. It's an interesting way of promoting a few of my political ideas that might improve the United Kingdom. In short, it's...

...Politics Aired

© Politics Aired, 2023

I wrote this, I own all the intellectual copyright, so don't bloody nick it or there'll be big trouble, you hear! Unless you want to implement these policies, in which case, crack on.

Politics Aired
@Politics Aired
www.PoliticsAired.wordpress.com