

# The Conservative leadership election

I have not yet decided who to back in the leadership election. I want to see who does put in Nomination papers, and want to hear their answers to two simple questions. I would also like to hear from Conservative members in Wokingham which two candidates they would most like to see on the final ballot paper at the end of the MP phase of the race.

The questions to candidates are

1. How will you get us out of the EU by or before October 31?
2. How will you develop a programme to expand our economy, raise living standards, raise our reputation in the world and restore our self confidence as a nation, using all the new freedoms we will have once out of the EU?

I will also write a few blogs on progress in the race. Today I will assess Rory Stewart's offer.

Mr Stewart has provided the most persistent advocacy of the May deal which has just gone down to the most crushing defeat in the history of the party. The only Conservative plank for the Euro election was that Withdrawal Agreement and it was opposed by more than 90% of the voters.

Mr Stewart thinks 17.4 million people were wrong to vote to just leave. He spent time in recent weeks telling me I was wrong not to understand the brilliance of the Withdrawal Agreement. He being a very intelligent man and an important part of the establishment exudes confidence in the Remain view and seems to think those of us who disagree lack understanding. He has an old fashioned last century view of UK politics, defining pro EU Libdem voters as centrists Conservative need to attract, whilst ignoring the 17.4 m Leave voters. He says he wants to unite the Conservative party yet he also says he could not serve in a Boris Johnson led government.

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## Euro elections in Wokingham constituency

A number of people are trying to place on my website claims about the result in Wokingham in the Euro elections. I will not be posting these claims as they are based on the false assumption that the result for Wokingham Borough Council which was declared was the same as for Wokingham constituency which was not calculated or declared.

For the record, my constituency contains some wards from West Berkshire and some from Wokingham. In West Berkshire the Brexit party topped the poll, and in Wokingham Borough (which includes wards in Maidenhead, Bracknell and

Reading East Parliamentary constituency) the Lib Dems topped the poll. In each case the top performing party only got 34% of the vote. This compares with the General election when the Conservatives got almost 57% of the vote in the actual Parliamentary constituency of Wokingham.

My job is to keep to the promises I made to electors in the 2017 election, and to seek to deliver on the mandate I received with a majority of the vote in that election.

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## **Brexit won. MPs must now just get us out.**

If The Lib Dems had won most seats in the Euro election would the BBC have spent the evening saying how well the Brexit party had done by coming second?

I congratulate the Brexit party on their win. I of course agreed with their central proposition that we should leave now without signing the Withdrawal Treaty.

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## **Euro elections confirm Brexit view**

The derisory vote of under 10% for the Conservatives is a fitting epitaph for the Withdrawal Agreement. Only the Conservatives offered the Withdrawal Agreement. Anyone who wanted it would have voted Conservative. Some who didn't want it voted Conservative out of loyalty or for other reasons.

Whenever I have said in media interviews that the public have rejected the Agreement by a large majority this has been queried. This election provides more proof of the obvious. Mrs May united the country against the draft Treaty she wrongly proposed.

The Brexit party on the majority of results so far announced as I expected won more seats than the three Remain parties, the Lib Dems, Greens and Change UK combined. These new MEPs need to come to Westminster to tell MPs there how to be popular, by just getting us out of the EU with no lock back in Treaty.

The BBC seemed to think the main news of the night was the Lib Dems coming second! Once again they missed the obvious and made little of the winning view.

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## The Euro elections should deliver a major message to Westminster

I am expecting a surge of support for the Brexit party in the results of the Euro elections. Now the polls have closed after 10 pm our time all across the EU we can look forward to some results.

I expect the Brexit vote and the residual UKIP vote both in favour of a so called No deal exit to be ahead of the combined Lib Dem, Green and Change UK Remain vote, parties disliking Brexit and pledged to try to reverse it in a second referendum. I expect the Conservative and Labour votes to be greatly squeezed. Whilst both these parties said they wanted to honour the referendum result Labour was still flirting with Remain, saying it backed both sides, whilst Mrs May dominated the underwhelming and brief Conservative campaign with her Withdrawal Agreement.

Assuming this is what happens we can conclude

1 The UK meant its decision in the referendum and wants us to leave. We need to do so by October 31 at the latest. It would be good if a new PM agreed an earlier departure with the EU.

2. Mrs May's Withdrawal Agreement has tiny support and needs to be binned immediately. The fact that she made the WA central to her leaflet and speech put off millions of former Conservative voters. It lets us say the Conservative vote in this election is the limit of support for the Withdrawal Treaty. Anyone who wanted a negotiated way to a so called comprehensive partnership with the EU on these terms would have voted Conservative.

3 Both main parties have a big task to get back into favour with a majority of the voters. Only a clean and early Brexit will buy them that right.

4. The current Westminster Parliament by delaying and seeking to dilute or reverse Brexit has gravely misjudged the public mood. It can only start to redeem itself by getting on with the earliest possible WTO Brexit. The UK should offer free trade talks and no new tariffs and barriers which the EU might well want, but we should just leave anyway. There are already important agreements reached to ease our early departure without signing the draft Treaty.