

What do you think of Michael Gove's candidature?



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Michael Gove is an intelligent man who has always had an impact on any department he has been given as a Minister. Some rate his reforms of education highly, tackling the educational "blob". Others think he fell out with the teaching profession in a damaging way which did not help motivate them to reform exams and raise standards. He was not given time to see through his prison reform programme which looked interesting. At Environment he has become an energetic green, keen to tax and regulate to achieve green aims. His wish to curb plastic waste is generally popular.

He played an important role in the last leadership election by changing his mind on the suitability of his preferred candidate, Boris Johnson, on the eve of nominations. His decision to withdraw support from Boris Johnson whilst acting as his Campaign Manager led to Boris Johnson's withdrawal from the race and to the election of Mrs May. At the time Mr Gove told us he was not capable of being leader, followed by comments that he had changed his mind about his suitability.

Mr Gove previously joined the Vote Leave campaign and made some important media contributions to its success. When he rejoined the government he became a very strong proponent of Mrs May's Withdrawal Treaty, brushing aside criticisms that it is not Brexit, that it would delay our exit and undermine our negotiating position to eventually get out. Now that Mrs May's Agreement has gone down to a spectacular defeat, attracting just 9.1% support in a UK wide election, he needs to tell us why he thought it such a good idea and why we should still be considering it as part of the answer to our Brexit needs. It is difficult to believe even Mr Gove could sell it to the public, even if he as capable of the unlikely skill of selling it to a shocked Labour party and driving it through the Commons against the wishes of Eurosceptic Conservative MPs.

I would be interested to hear the case for Mr Gove from those who do want him to be Prime Minister.

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.

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.

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.

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.