

Boris Johnson's first year as Prime Minister has been a year of attacks on our liberal democracy.

In our Democracy the Prime Minister and Government are accountable to Parliament, not the other way round, and yet Boris Johnson has been systematically unpicking the vital checks and balances which moderate his powers. Without these, it is a slippery slope towards an elective dictatorship.

Boris Johnson's attempt to prorogue Parliament was ruled 'unlawful'.

In just a year he has:

- 1. Illegally prorogued Parliament:** The Supreme Court ruled unanimously that Boris Johnson's attempt to prorogue Parliament at the height of the Brexit crisis was unlawful and "had the effect of frustrating or preventing the ability of parliament to carry out its constitutional functions."
- 2. Attacked the Supreme Court:** After they ruled his decision to prorogue Parliament was unlawful, Boris Johnson attacked the Supreme Court and said they were wrong to have challenged his decision.
- 3. Giving Dominic Cummings direct oversight of all senior Government advisers:** Johnson has even undermined members of his own Government – by requiring special advisers who traditionally are appointed by, and work for, individual cabinet ministers – to sign new contracts which give Dominic Cummings responsibility for their conduct and discipline.
- 4. Attempted to silence dissenting voices within his own Party:** When Dr Julian Lewis MP won an election to become Chair of Parliament's Intelligence and Security committee, beating Johnson's preferred candidate, Lewis immediately had the Conservative Whip withdrawn.
- 5. Allowed his Ministers and Advisers to continue to hold senior public office, despite evidence of serious misconduct:** Boris Johnson refused to hold Dominic Cummings to account after he breached the Government's lockdown rules. Housing Secretary Robert Jenrick was shown to have approved a housing development by a billionaire Tory donor, against the advice of the planning inspector, but has kept his job.

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6. [Attempted to suppress Russia report:](#) Boris Johnson made repeated attempts to stop the publication of a report from Parliament's Intelligence and Security Committee, into Russian interference in British politics.
7. [Routinely makes Government announcements at press conferences, rather than at the dispatch box:](#) reducing the opportunity for proper Parliamentary scrutiny through questions from opposition MPs.
8. [Forcing out independent senior civil servants:](#) Since Johnson came into office, there have been multiple allegations that senior civil servants are being sidelined or stepping down altogether, after disagreements between them and Johnson's team.
9. [Making political appointments to independent advisory roles:](#) David Frost, a long-time adviser to the PM has been nominated as the new National Security Adviser – this has not historically been a politically appointed role, and Mr Frost does not have any background in security and intelligence.
10. [Attempts to weaken the BBC as an independent public service broadcaster:](#) Johnson's Government have refused to step in to protect the BBC, which is being undermined by budget cuts which will see reductions in its political programming and news coverage.

No one should be allowed to hold so much power, without proper scrutiny.

There are already more worrying proposals on the table for the coming year, which could see more powers consolidated with Johnson and Cummings; and further erosion of the vital mechanisms which hold the Prime Minister to account.

No one should be allowed to hold so much power, without proper scrutiny.

The Liberal Democrats will always stand up against attempts to undermine our democracy – having a strong liberal voice in British politics is more important than ever.

We must fight these attempts by Boris Johnson to try and seize unchecked power for himself. **Will you join us?**

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Author:

[Returning Officer's Ruling 23rd July 2020](#)

A complaint has been made by an individual about Ed Davey's 2020 campaign's use of data gathered in his 2019 leadership campaign for direct marketing.

The party has taken legal advice and received representations from the campaign.

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Author:

[Resisting the Tories' latest assault on civil liberties](#)

The UK has suffered a number of tragic terrorist attacks in recent weeks and months. The first duty of government is to protect people from this kind of violence, and Liberal Democrats will always work to ensure that our security services have the tools and resources they need to do their jobs.

This Bill would massively expand the Home Secretary's power to impose Terrorism Prevention and Investigation Measures.

But we must also ensure that any new powers and legislation will be necessary, effective and proportionate to the threats we face.

That's not the case when it comes to the Government's new Counter-Terrorism and Sentencing Bill.

It would massively expand the Home Secretary's power to impose Terrorism Prevention and Investigation Measures, or 'TPIMs', which can include curfews and electronic tagging.

Under existing powers, TPIMs can be imposed if the Home Secretary "is satisfied, on the balance of probabilities, that the individual is, or has been, involved in terrorism-related activity".

However, the Government's Bill would lower the standard of proof so she only needs to have "reasonable grounds for suspecting" such involvement.

Currently, a TPIM is imposed for one year and can only be extended once, so

there is a two-year limit. But this Bill would allow the Home Secretary to extend TPIMs indefinitely, without any judicial oversight.

These changes would essentially mean a return to Control Orders, which were heavily criticised for getting the balance wrong between national security and civil liberties, and were replaced with TPIMs by the Coalition Government in 2011.

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Putting power in the hands of a single Minister to impose curfews and tagging with minimal evidence will do nothing to keep people safe, but will put the rights and freedoms of innocent people at risk.

That's why the Liberal Democrats are opposing these changes when the Bill comes before the House of Commons today. We have tabled amendments to remove them from the Bill and keep the existing safeguards in place.

Liberal Democrats will always oppose unnecessary, authoritarian power-grabs like this and demand an effective, evidence-based approach to combating terrorism.

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Author:

[Our Response to the Russia Report](#)

This watershed report confirms an alarming truth: **this Conservative Government has failed to take the Russian threat to our democracy seriously**, even despite the clear evidence they interfered to help Donald Trump to the presidency in 2016.

The PM must nannounce a wide-ranging investigation of potential Russian interference in our democracy

The first duty of government is to protect its citizens.

However, the Conservatives have been found asleep at their post with their failure to conduct an assessment of Russian interference in the 2016 Brexit referendum.

The protection of our democracy should never come second to the Tories

covering their embarrassing connections to Russian oligarchs before an election.

Given what has come to light, Boris Johnson should think again about who his party takes money from and gives influence to.

Without delay, the Prime Minister must now announce a wide-ranging and properly funded investigation of potential Russian interference in our democracy, including the EU referendum and independence referendum.

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Author:

Report from Federal Conference Committee

The Federal Conference Committee met via Zoom call on Saturday, 11 July for the agenda selection for our first virtual conference. The meeting was a lengthy one, which was in part due to the large selection of varied motions we received, but also to give us breaks from staring at computer screens for a number of hours.

As you will be aware, this year we will not be heading to the sunny beaches of Brighton, but instead you will be able to take part in Conference from your own home via our third party provider, Hopin. You will be able to find more information about the virtual conference <https://www.libdems.org.uk/autumn-conference>.

The FCC wants to pay its thanks to the extraordinary efforts of the Conference Office team and members who have worked so incredibly hard to make our first virtual conference happen. It is been a long and challenging process, as we wanted to make sure that we are able to replicate – as much as feasibly possible – the physical conference for our members. I also understand that Glee will also be happening virtually; although we will not all be crammed into one room at the conference hotel to enjoy it.

You will see from the timings of Conference that it is slightly different to the usual format, and we hope that this will give more people an opportunity to attend virtually.

A total of nine conference motions (plus two emergency slots, two later deadline motions on COVID and Europe.) In addition we have reserved time for two consultation sessions as requested by the Federal Board and the Federal Policy Committee.

The agenda will also include the Committee and Parliamentary reports, the Leaders Q&A and a number of Q&As and set-pieces set aside for Spokespeople and/or Leaders of the Welsh or Scottish Lib Dems. The full agenda will be published shortly.

On the topic of motions selection we always receive a very large number of motions for selection at Conference, and unfortunately cannot always choose all of them for selection at Conference. This year we received 45 motions and have selected nine motions, plus the 4 emergency/late deadline motions mentioned above.

Below I have included the selection grid of motions, and if they have been selected or not selected. You will see that some motions were selected but then eliminated at the second round which was due to time constraints. I have not included why the motion was not selected, this has been provided to the submitters of the motion. Please note that you can submit amendments to the motions by 14 September at 13:00 via the Conference Website.

Brexit and International Trade

A A Liberal Approach to Trade after Brexit Not selected

B European Union Not selected

Communities and Local Government

A Social Housing Not selected

B Decentralising Government "As Local As Possible" Not selected

Crime, Justice, Equalities and Civil Liberties

A Welcoming Child Refugees Eliminated at second round

B Human Rights and the Home Office Not selected

Culture, Media and Sport

A Nature of Public Debate During COVID-19 Selected

B Save the BBC Selected

C Liberal Vision for Technology Not selected

Defence

A Confronting Threats Real and Present Not selected

Economy and Tax

A Austerity is not the Answer Not selected

B Fairer Corporate Taxation Not selected

C Fairer Share – the Proportional Property Tax Not selected

Education and Families

A Accessibility in Higher Education Eliminated at second round

B Making Good Use of Apprenticeship Levy Not selected

C Study Credits for Community Gain Not selected

Energy and Environment

A Build Back Better – 2020 Vision Not selected

B A Green Recovery from the COVID-19 Pandemic Selected

C	A Progressive Carbon Tax including Aviation to Reduce CO2 and Poverty	Not selected
D	A Green Recovery	Not selected
Equalities		
A	Funding for Men's Shelters	Not selected
B	No Justice, No Peace	Not selected
C	Racial Justice Cannot Wait	Selected
D	Racism and the Hostile Environment	Not selected
E	Tackling Racial Inequality through Education	Not selected
F	Right to Know – Equal Pay for Equal Work	Not selected
G	Protecting Women's Employment in the COVID-19 Crisis	Eliminated at second round
Health and Social Care		
A	Beveridge 2.0: Brighter Future for Health and Social Care	Not selected
B	Improve Mental Health Support for Health and Care Staff	Selected
International Affairs		
A	Annexation under the Trump Plan	Eliminated at second round
B	Steps towards Peace between Palestine and Israel	Not selected
C	Towards a Peaceful Future for Palestine and Israel	Not selected
D	Hong Kong's Future	Selected
E	International Development: FCD0, Coronavirus and SDGs	Eliminated at second round
Political and Constitutional Reform		
A	Constitutional Convention	Not selected
B	Creation of a Federal United Kingdom	Selected
Work and Pensions		
A	Increasing Working Age Benefits	Not selected
B	Taskforce of Universal Basic Income	Not selected
C	Universal Basic Income	Selected
Miscellaneous		
A	Revised Policy Motion	Not selected
Business Motions		
A	Membership Subscriptions and Federal Levy	Selected
B	Social Contract Vision and Purpose	Not selected
C	Supporting Trans and Non-Binary People in the Lib Dems	Selected
D	Electoral Pack for Future General Election Constitutional Amendment	Not selected
A	Amendment of Section 18.5 of the Constitution	Not in order

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Author: