

My response to Nicola Sturgeon's speech at the SNP Conference

With her conference speech today Nicola Sturgeon has shown that she has given up on all the people across the UK trying to stop Brexit.

The momentum is with us. We can win this, if we stick together.

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Author:

Our new CEO

Mike joins us from his current position as Chief Executive of Addaction, a mental health, drug, alcohol and young persons charity, and was previously Assistant Chief Executive at Citizens Advice and through both of which he has extensive experience of managing member-style organisations.

I am delighted Mike will be taking on this crucial role at such an exciting time for the Liberal Democrats. Mike's experience in senior management and at leading organisations will be hugely valuable to the continuing growth of the party off the back of successive election campaigns which have put the Liberal Democrats back in a strong position in UK politics.

Mike Dixon has said in our press release:

"I'm delighted to take on this role. We've just had our best ever European election results and new members are joining all the time, taking us to record levels of membership.

Millions of people want the country to stop Brexit and focus on things like the climate emergency, investing in schools and people's mental health. I'm looking forward to getting started next week.

We've got a great team, inspirational political leadership and a thriving, inclusive party. If you want change, join us today."

He and our outgoing Chief Executive, Sir Nick Harvey have already started working together to ensure a smooth handover, and Nick will be around to

support Mike over the next few weeks.

I want to take this opportunity to reiterate my personal thanks to Sir Nick for all he has done for the party as Chief Executive over the last two years, picking us up after the difficult 2017 election.

He ensured the party was ready for the brilliant successes we have had in the local government elections and in the European Elections this year, as well as getting us ready for a possible snap General Election.

[Go to Source](#)

Author:

A winning plan for the Liberal Democrats

During the [recent online hustings](#), the chair Lorely Burt produced a horribly complicated diagram from a few years back showing how the Liberal Democrats are structured. It's a good point – our organisation can be complicated, confusing and even hazardous to navigate.

Looking at the diagram, I did a quick mental tally of how many of the bodies shown on it I've served on at some point in my many years as a party staffer, including running the party's digital operation for Charles Kennedy, and as a volunteer, as a local party officer, regional officer, English party committee member and federal committee member.

There's a serious, very relevant point here.

There's an urgency in the battle against Brexit. An urgency to protect our climate for cataclysmic change. An urgency to reduce inequality and heal the divisions in our society.

Which means there's an urgency in us stepping up, winning bigger and better than ever before.

That's what I can do if you choose to elect me your President.

I've got the experience, the knowledge, the friendships, even a few scars, from working out what needs doing – and then making it happen:

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Author:

Jo's Response to the Queen's Speech

Today, Her Majesty The Queen opened the new parliamentary session. But we have exactly the same problems as we did in the last session: **a government with no majority, no leadership and no realistic plan for our country.**

I used my speech in Parliament today to give a warning to my fellow MPs.

Here's my speech in full:

On behalf of my colleagues on these ever-expanding Liberal Democrat benches, I'd like to pay tribute to the mover and seconder of the Humble Address. Their wit and good humour have brought us all some light relief at this time of crisis.

The Honourable Member for Truro and Falmouth is a well-respected former Minister, who is liked on all sides of the House for the way she genuinely engages with everyone.

I understand that she was also Head Girl at school, graduated with a history degree from King's College London and then a masters as a Rotary Scholar. So some might call her a girly swot. She should know that, from these benches at least, that is meant as a compliment.

The Honourable Member for North East Derbyshire treated us to a speech that took us on a grand tour from Derbyshire to Venezuela. As a fellow child of the 1980s, I'd like to thank him for confirming that 39 is still considered 'up-and-coming'

Much of the last three years has felt a bit like Groundhog Day, but there was something about the last week that has felt particularly familiar to me. Then it dawned on me.

We've all been sat in meetings where a woman puts forward an idea and it gets shouted down. A little later, a man suggests virtually the same thing and pretends it was his great idea all along.

The Liberal Democrats have been crystal clear about this.

Whether it's a hard or a soft Brexit.

Whether it comes with a blue rosette or a red rosette.

Whether it is delivered by the Prime Minister or the Leader of the Opposition.

There is no form of Brexit that will be good for our country. And the Liberal Democrats will continue to fight to stop Brexit and secure a People's Vote with the option to remain in the European Union to give the public the final

say on Brexit deal.

Because there is no deal that will ever be as good as the one we currently have as members of the European Union.

Mr Speaker, there was nothing in this Queen's Speech that will bring comfort to the factory worker set to lose their job – or the many thousands who already have.

Nothing to bring comfort to families when they're having to pay more and more to put food on the table.

Nothing to bring comfort to our young people who are being stripped of the right to live, work, and study in 27 other countries.

Nothing to bring comfort to our NHS, on the cusp of yet another winter crisis, and having lost more than 5,000 EU nurses in the last two years.

Nothing to bring comfort to the cancer patients who fear delays to drugs will mean delays to treatments and risks to their survival.

There is nothing in this Gracious Speech will give the 3 million European citizens any comfort.

Bina is with us today. A Dutch national who moved here in 1999.

After the birth of her second daughter, she decided to go self-employed. But despite paying her taxes just as she should, the Home Office asked her for proof after proof before finally granting her Settled Status.

Weeks of anxiety and uncertainty. Weeks of being treated like a second-class citizen in the place she calls home.

Jennifer is also with us today. Her daughter, now 38-years-old, was born in Strasbourg, severely disabled. In 1986, Jennifer moved her family to the UK where Marie could get far better care and education.

Marie has Settled Status now, because her mother was there to help. Her mother was there to make sure that her daughter's rights were protected, that her family wasn't split apart.

But there are so many other vulnerable EU citizens in our country who cannot rely on a family member or friend to help them through the application process.

And, last but not least, Kristin, my constituent, has travelled down with her mother to be with us today too.

Margot moved to the UK 45 years ago from Norway. Two years later, she married Geoff and then Kristin was born. After raising her family, Margot went back to work, paying her taxes every step of the way.

As required, Margot applied for Settled Status, but struggled to get her

application approved.

Forty-five years of contributing to our society, our economy, and that's how this government treated her: like a bureaucratic problem.

Causing unnecessary anxiety and fear to an elderly couple trying to enjoy their retirement years. Their family fearful they'll be torn apart.

Will the Prime Minister have the courage to look Kristin, Margot, Bina and Jennifer in the eye and apologise for the anxiety he has caused them and the 3 million other citizens from the EU 27?

Our country is better than this: we don't turn our back on those who have come over to be our doctors, nurses, teachers and carers.

We don't turn our back on our family, friends and loved ones.

We don't turn our back on those who like the rest of us only want to make our country a better place. That's not who we are.

There shouldn't even be a Queen's Speech.

Mr Speaker, there's little more British than putting on our glad rags and taking part in pomp and circumstance.

But there is a time and place for that. Today was not it.

Today is a distraction from the fact that our country is fast hurtling towards catastrophe.

That the Prime Minister is more interested in hanging on to power at any price than what is best for our country.

This hard-line Brexit government has no majority, no plan, no clue and is putting the future of our great country at risk.

Mr Speaker, the benches opposite are clamouring for a General Election, and we're ready to give them one.

All they need to do is sign a simple letter and secure an extension to Article 50.

I've said this before in this House, and I'll say it again. I relish the opportunity to take on the Prime Minister in a General Election.

And I cannot wait to take to the country the positive alternative vision that people deserve.

A vision for a country where if you work hard and play by the rules, you are rewarded with a decent home and enough to get by and live with dignity.

Where every child and young person is nurtured and supported to become whatever they want to be, no matter who their parents are, how much money they have, or the colour of their skin.

And where the most vulnerable among us can always get the help they need, with no judgement or sanction.

Mr Speaker, we know our country is better than what this Government wants it to be.

I know that we can be open, generous and collaborative. And I know our politics can be one of hope and inclusion, firmly set on the better future we want to create.

But all this Government wants to do is turn us into an insular, closed and selfish country. Trading in fear and division to get their way.

That's what this Queen's Speech is all about. And that's why the Liberal Democrats will not be voting for it.

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[What would it be like?](#)

I know it's tempting fate and that I shouldn't really, but this week I have not been able to resist the temptation to think what life might be like if I were to win the Presidency.

So I decided to think what a week might be like in this possible future, combining my job as MP with the job of President.

I hope you enjoy this reading about this imaginary week as much as I did thinking about it – I think it looks like fun.

[Go to Source](#)

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