

# It's time to stop Brexit

When we think of great moments of political upheaval, social change and protests for justice, the images which often come to mind are marches. There is something acutely powerful about seeing so many come together to create, for one moment in time, a community of like-minded people. A crowd which passionately believes in a common cause will have its cause noticed. **Marches become beacons of free speech and spawn mass movements which captivate people's attention.**

These marches can seize or reinforce an agenda and create a new public narrative for how we view today's challenges.

We saw this recently in Westminster with the march for climate change, and at the pride marches around the country, as a rainbow of people flow through the streets of Britain every summer. These marches can seize or reinforce an agenda and create a new public narrative for how we view today's challenges.

While their disruptive methods caused frustration and, for some, may have overstepped the mark, no one can deny that Extinction Rebellion made people start discussing the environment around the kitchen table. It couldn't be clearer that **when people take a stand, they become impossible to ignore.**

I was so proud to join more than a million people took to the streets of London to show their support for a People's Vote.

My first march was 30-and-a-bit years ago with Amnesty International, highlighting the plight of prisoners of conscience abroad. Last month, as one of over 100 MPs I strode in solidarity to meet Richard Ratcliffe, the husband of Nazanin Zaghari-Ratcliffe outside the Iranian Embassy, during his hunger strike in protest at his wife's continued shocking and unlawful detention. I was also incredibly proud to be at the largest march this country has ever seen, back in 2003, against the Iraq war, when Charles Kennedy and the Liberal Democrats led the political protest in the face of overwhelming criticism from the Tory and Labour parties.

But I was even prouder, earlier this year, to be part of the largest march seen in the UK since then – when over a million people took to the streets of London to show their support for a People's Vote.

**And that's why I'm delighted the Lib Dems will be joining thousands of others on July 20 at the March for Change – unequivocally demanding this Brexit mess be stopped.**

We're unequivocally demanding this Brexit mess be stopped.

Again the Lib Dems were prominent, just as we have been dominant in the fight against Brexit since the day after the referendum three years ago. Back then, many people described our position as desperate, out on a limb while Jeremy Corbyn urged that Article 50 be triggered immediately. Yet over time, more people joined our cause, our rallies became bigger and we made more allies in our fight against a government increasingly committed to the most chaotic of Brexits. Our message has grown louder and more people have taken to the streets to shout loud and clear to Labour and the Conservatives that the Brexit they want to deliver is not in our name and not what the majority want.

We will take to the streets to shout loud and clear to Labour and the Conservatives that the Brexit they want to deliver is not in our name

Some will disregard the marchers' voices. The Tory candidates to be our prime minister are putting rocket boosters on their campaigns to reach the dreaded No Deal cliff-end sooner. Jeremy Corbyn is choosing to bury his head even deeper in the sand.

We the Lib Dems not only hear those voices, we are channelling their energy.

**I am proud to be the anti-Brexit spokesperson of the largest, loudest and proudest party committed to demanding better than Brexit and diverting us from the disastrous trajectory we've taken. More and more people are rallying behind our banner as we inch closer than ever to stopping Brexit.**

So, when we march in just a few weeks' time on July 20, we will do so with a more purposeful stride. I hope you will join us.

*The march for change are organising coaches to the march from across the UK. You can book a coach here: [https://www.marchforchange.uk/assembly\\_points](https://www.marchforchange.uk/assembly_points)*

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## **I'm a new(ish) member – and I just spent a week in Brecon and Radnorshire**

I'm Benny, and I've been a Liberal Democrat since 2017 – but I never really had a chance to get particularly involved.

That changed last week when I headed up to Brecon.

I knew how important this by-election is going in – we can't afford to take it for granted. **It's essential as many Liberal Democrats as possible head to Brecon and Radnorshire to support our candidate, Jane Dodds.**

Brecon and Radnorshire is closer than you think.

I was a bit nervous, initially. I'd never really done anything like this before. But the team on the ground were super welcoming and professional. I was paired up with experienced campaigners and learned a lot from them. I even got the opportunity to act as Jane's aide, travelling around the constituency with her – it was a lot of fun!

There's a variety of stuff to do, too. There's doorknocking, leaflet delivery, envelope stuffing and more – and I want you to know **as a first-timer that it was easier and more fun than I ever imagined.**



**Brecon and Radnorshire is closer than you think.** I live in Shepherd's Bush, and it's about a 3-hour drive to Brecon from home. It's pretty easy to get to by public transport too – just get the train out to Cardiff then switch onto a bus there. Many buses to the constituency are free on weekends – it can work out pretty cheap if you book in advance.

Time's ticking on. There's serious potential for a Lib Dem gain here, but the Conservatives and Brexit Party are working the constituency hard. We can't get complacent.

Our team is currently working on the plan for postal votes, which land in just 9 days. In a constituency like Brecon and Radnorshire, that's a huge chunk of the electorate. That means **this weekend is crucial for the campaign.**

Don't leave it to someone else – they might be leaving it to you.

If you've never helped before, don't be put off – everyone has to start somewhere and the team couldn't be more welcoming. Come along – you'll love it.

**Don't leave it to someone else – they might be leaving it to you.** Come to Brecon and Radnorshire – help us elect a new Lib Dem MP.

[I'll come!](#)

Follow Benny on Twitter: [@Benny\\_curtis1](#)

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## [Hear From Nadya in Pride month](#)

This is a strange way to start off this blog post, but please bear with me. In April 2016 I got my first telescope. I didn't spend a great deal, and it took me awhile to learn how to focus it, but eventually one night I caught Jupiter, its red spot and the bright twinkles of the four Galilean moons. It was at that moment I started to believe in Allah again. **At around the same time I properly and very bluntly came out to my father – the end of a rather long journey in me accepting that I was a gay woman.** Soon after, I popped down to the LGBT inclusive Christian church at the bottom of my road, in a bid to be able to reconcile faith in god with my sexuality. It was welcoming, but it did not feel like my spiritual home.

I am of Arab Muslim descent and in my late teens I was a devout Muslim.

See, I am of Arab Muslim descent and in my late teens I was a devout Muslim. I wore the hijab, prayed five times a day, did voluntary fasts, only ate halal, didn't drink, stopped listening to music, stopped watching films, and

would only read Islamic texts or books written by Islamic scholars. I found peace in Islam and prayer, but that peace started to shatter as my attraction to a Muslim sister I attended Jummuah prayer with started to increase. This wasn't the first time I had been attracted to a woman, but it was the first time I understood what my feelings meant. I buried that part of me, and met with a Muslim brother from my mosque to discuss marriage. Alhamdulillah that marriage did not take place as it would have been wretched for me and any children that eventuated.

**I walked away from Islam. I moved out of home. I met a woman who I was absolutely in love with. I had my first intimate experience with another woman (the former was unrequited). The day after I felt horrid, dirty, wrong and ashamed. I stopped calling myself Muslim.**

For the next decade and a bit, I would have relationships with women, self-sabotage them and then go back to dating men. Whilst I accepted and embraced seeing others in same-sex partnerships and unions, I couldn't embrace me being in one. A current close friend of mine commented that it was uncomfortable to watch.

I have a lot of regrets, the women I walked away from that could have made me so happy, the relationships I had with men that made me feel broken and disconnected inside (not their fault), the impact the above had on my mental health and all those lost years not being who I truly was.

I feel whole and am the person I was meant to be.

With all those regrets riding heavy on my shoulder, I attended Stonewalls' Diaspora Showcase last year. That led me to attending the Stonewall BAME/LGBT+ role models programme in November 2018, where I met a representative from Hidayah, a Muslim LGBT charity. I am utterly ashamed to say when I walked into the room, I automatically assumed that the person wearing Hijab and Abayah was an ally, not LGBT themselves. It was unconscious bias stemming from my own experience growing up with no LGBT+ Muslim role models.

**Where am I now? After 20 years of struggling with my sexuality I have embraced being a gay woman. Hidayah has helped me reconcile my sexuality with my renewed belief and has shown me there is more than one way to be Muslim. I feel whole and am the person I was meant to be. I am not sacrificing aspects of myself.**

I am also stepping up. It is hard. Whilst I have stopped caring if my extended family knows about me being gay, I am still petrified of bringing shame to my very supportive father. I have started to deliver talks about BAME and LGBT intersectionality. I was part of a panel on behalf of Hidayah in late March. It is nerve racking in the moments before I talk, but letting it all out and using my voice has given me a peace I thought was well and truly outside of my reach.



I want to change the outcomes of other Muslim LGBT people

And, most importantly I want to change the outcomes of other Muslim LGBT people. If I had been able to see someone like me growing up, I wouldn't have felt so alone, isolated, scared and have lost so many years being an unauthentic me. I am doing that by working with groups like the Liberal Democrat Campaign for Race Equality and Hidayah, but also by being visible.

Nadya Fadih-Phoenix – Brit, Aussie, Arab, Muslim, Gay (pronoun them/they)

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## [A fresh start for British democracy](#)

In a time of political crisis, we have some good news, and an invitation to demand democracy.

[I want Proportional Representation](#)

We have signed the [Good Systems Agreement](#), alongside other parties, organisations and public figures.

Together we have achieved something that has never been done in the UK. We're securing broad consensus about the principles that define good voting systems. Most importantly, **seats won in Parliament must closely reflect the votes cast**. We have also agreed that the best voting system for the UK would ideally be determined by citizens. This could be done through an evidence-based, deliberative process, like a citizens' assembly.

**We believe this is a major milestone on the path to winning real democracy.**

[Read more](#)

And now you have a chance to play your part! **On Saturday 6th July, we are supporting a major action by Make Votes Matter activists all across the country.** A host of street stalls and other activities are being organised for Demand Democracy Day. Check out the map and see what's happening in your area. You can volunteer to help out and meet some new friends, or **simply pop along to show your support for getting Proportional Representation in the House of Commons.**

# Show your support for fair votes this Saturday

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## Vince's speech at the Cheltenham People's Vote rally

**The Conservative Party has spent the whole time since the European elections absorbed in its own internal psychodrama.**

The Conservative Party has spent the whole time since the European elections absorbed in its own internal psychodrama.

And once again the future of the country has played second fiddle to the future of the Conservative Party.

The Conservative Party membership has been given the power to decide our next Prime Minister and the future of our country. This means they are simultaneously the most powerful people in our politics today, despite being the least representative of the country.

**On the whole, they are old, white and male – and economically so comfortable that they will never face the economic pain that they inflict on the majority of young and working people in our country.**

But once the internal battle in the Conservative party is over, the same hard realities which shackled Theresa May will hit the new Prime Minister too.

And we will have fourteen weeks from July 25th, when he takes office, to October 31st, to save this country from No Deal, to secure a People's Vote and to Stop Brexit.

The next Prime Minister will be hit by the same hard realities which shackled Theresa May

**Time and again in the past two years, when those prospects have seemed bleak, it is the People's Vote campaign which has lifted the chances and lifted our spirits.**

When one million people turned out on the streets before the last Exit Day, we turned the tide.

And this May we elected hundreds of Liberal Democrat councillors and sixteen Liberal Democrat MEPs and gained our highest share in a national election.

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At the European elections here in Cheltenham, the Liberal Democrat team led by Max Wilkinson decisively beat the Brexit Party.

**All around the country, Remain beat Leave.**

And all at elections people said would never happen.

These campaigns can change the course of our country's future. And it is the duty of all of us to keep up the fight.

We making a difference. These campaigns can change the course of our country's future. And it is the duty of all of us to keep up the fight.

In Parliament, I am confident we will stop No Deal.

At that point, there will be no choice but to seek a fresh mandate from the people and then will come our chance to battle again for Remain and for our place in the EU.

**And I and the Liberal Democrats will be in the heart of that battle.**

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