

[Baby Leave for MPs](#)

Last night, MPs finally got a chance to vote on bringing Parliament into the 21st century by introducing a year-long proxy voting trial. I've been working hard for this change along with MPs from all parties for a long time. **This is a welcome – if long overdue – victory.**

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[Signed Sealed Delivered](#)

This afternoon I delivered our letter to Jeremy Corbyn calling on him to back a people's vote.

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[Bye Bye Mr Dyson](#)

So James Dyson has Singapore slinging his hook and moved his company headquarters out of the UK.

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[Jeremy Corbyn's Missing Brexit Backbone – LIVE](#)

17:17: We've had a tipoff that Corbyn's backbone was spotted enjoying a slice of cake and a cuppa in a local cafe...

SPOTTED! Corbyn's backbone on Brexit.

Not where it should be though... Enjoying a slice of cake when it should be standing up to Brexit.

Tell Corbyn to back a people's vote now > <https://t.co/70T7fUlye5pic.twitter.com/ZUZBjb8Qx0>

– Liberal Democrats (@LibDems) [January 25, 2019](#)

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THE LEADER

Brexit latest

Following the Prime Minister's crushing defeat, there was a no confidence debate on Wednesday initiated by Labour. This was predictably defeated as Tory and DUP MPs all came dutifully into line. **"No to Mr Corbyn"**. The most memorable bit of the debate (I exclude my own five minutes – the maximum allowed) were the concluding speeches. Tom Watson was excellent: measured and intelligently critical – everything his party leader wasn't. Michael Gove was barnstorming: eloquent, funny (including at my expense) and cruelly hard-hitting against Corbyn. Could we have been witnessing the next Prime Minister and Leader of the Opposition in action?

The Prime Minister's response came on Monday. Party unity before national unity

Then came an invitation to all-party talks from the Prime Minister. I said at PMQs: "don't pick up the telephone unless 'no deal' is off the table and a 'people's vote' is on it. Someone did ring. We met. She was, as always, impeccably courteous without giving much sign of a change in position. **I think we have made the right call by engaging in talks unlike Jeremy Corbyn.** In the discussions, there was still an interest in exploring the practicalities of a Peoples' Vote, but no movement on the principle.

This defeat is beyond what anyone imagined. It is the beginning of the end of Brexit. Time for a [#PeoplesVote](#)

– Vince Cable (@vincecable) [January 15, 2019](#)

The Prime Minister's response came on Monday. No plan B. **'An open door but a**

closed mind' as one wag put it. Party unity before national unity. I have served for five years in the same Cabinet as Theresa May, I wasn't surprised, but disappointed. We now have a week marking time until another round of voting on her deal, and supposed alternatives, next Tuesday.

The immediate priority from here on is to stop the massively disruptive 'no deal' (and batty ideas like calling in the army). I am baffled at the way so many people have taken up this glib phrase 'WTO rules' who clearly have no conception of what the WTO does – and its limitations. I wrote a piece for the *Telegraph* recently on this worthy but toothless organisation. Sensible members of the Cabinet – led by the Chancellor – are making it clear that they will stop a 'no deal' and there are backbench proposals to seize the parliamentary agenda to push through legislation stopping 'no deal'. Maybe I am an optimist, but I think this battle will be won.

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I also think (without, so far, any evidence) that faced with the narrowing options the Prime Minister will do the maths and realise that she has very little chance of getting her deal through unless she takes the risk of making it one of two options in a People's Vote (against Remain). We shall see. The challenge to the opposition parties will be to stand up and be counted if the PM does decide to seek support for her deal, subject to a referendum.

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