

What should an election be about?

The government wants an election because it wants to end the impasse of this Parliament. It rightly sees that it is kept in office but not allowed to govern. There is no alternative government on offer in this Parliament that would have a majority to govern. The election should be about who is best suited to form that government.

Elections are the ultimate democratic act. The government may wish to define the debate its way. The Leader of the Opposition may wish to define it in a different way. In practice it will be defined as a result of a jostle of forces and voices trying to shift or dominate the agenda of the debate.

On this occasion it may well be that there is some shared interest between Conservative and Labour over what they want to talk about. Both want to pose the same choice of a majority government led by one or other of the main parties of the outgoing Parliament. Both will look beyond Brexit to issues of tax and spend, their approach to public service quality and reform, nationalisation and privatisation. There will be a genuine choice between a more socialist government than has been on offer for many years, and a Conservative government.

The Lib Dems and SNP will wish to make it an argument about Brexit, peddling their view that the public got it wrong in 2016. They will advance various ways of overturning or cancelling the Brexit vote and will seek to bring the conversation back to this single question that has consumed the last two Parliaments.

What do you want the election to be about , as it your election too?