



The 1964 Club

Epsom and Ewell

December Newsletter



Steve Whiteway FCILT
Chairman

I hope you are keeping well, despite the sudden cold snap as I write. I was delighted to see so many members and their guests at our annual dinner in London. I have received many favourable comments about the venue, The Carlton Club, which had just the right ambiance. Our speaker Gillian Keegan, Education Secretary, was a breath of fresh air and very down to earth, without toing the party line. A big thank you to our new member Ed McGuinness, for his help in organising.

More recently, our annual Quiz Night at the RAC in Epsom, was a fun and easy-going evening, with good food and the good company of over 50 members and guests. As ever, our stalwart member Tony Burgess, organised this and did a great job. As I write, Lynn and I are looking forward to our Christmas lunch, at the RAC on Sunday 10th

December. We look forward to welcoming you to our final event of a busy 2023 and thank another bedrock of the club, Bill Slade, for organising.

Talk of stalwart and bedrock, can't be mentioned without praising our Honorary Secretary, David Collins, who continues to hold the club together, with his superb organisational skills. David's experience and selfless service, goes back many years, we are very lucky to have him. Thank you, David, your efforts on our behalf are very much appreciated.

Looking ahead, we have our AGM on Thursday 14th March. At this time, I will be handing over the Chair to Chris Muller after three very enjoyable years as Chairman. I would rather have avoided a Pandemic, but we got through and it is good to see the club enter its 60th Anniversary year in good fettle. I know Chris will be an excellent leader, in a very special year. The AGM will also witness the last "State of the Nation" update from our President and MP, Chris Grayling, as Chris steps down at the next election. Chris has served Epsom & Ewell for over 22 years, providing excellent support for his constituents, as well as serving in several senior cabinet roles. As we look to Chris's successor, we will all be thankful for Chris looking after us through challenging times and wish him well for the future.

[News & views](#)

[Events](#)

[Activities](#)

[Join Us](#)

[People](#)

[Inspiration](#)

December Newsletter

State of the Nation

State of the Nation is a good way to start my observation of the current political scene. In truth, it changes so quickly, whatever I write may well be out of date by the time you read this! Some will say the nation is in a “state” and only a change of government can put it right. Others will point out, we have gone through unprecedented times, with BREXIT, a pandemic, the war in Ukraine and in the middle-east and any party in power would be up against it. I prefer the latter train of thought.

Looking back, a government that has been in place since 2010, has had ample opportunity to make its mark and as politicians always promise, make the UK and its citizens feel better and prosper. However, as is often quoted, it hasn't been 13 years of Conservative rule as the first 5 years were a coalition, with the Liberal Democrats. The need to pander to their idealism wasted a parliamentary term. They are not known as the “wishy washy” party for nothing! You only have to look at Liberal Democrat local authorities to see the mess they make of things. That was not the best start, but not long afterwards, we had the BREXIT vote, when the British people voted to leave the EU. It wasn't the government that decided, it was a government following the will of the people. There followed a long and frustrating battle with the EU and within the British Parliament for that matter, not helped by a Government that didn't have an overall majority, but relied on the support of others. Finally, in 2019, we had an election, which the Conservatives won with a decisive victory and a large majority, sufficient to get BREXIT done, in early 2020.

We all breathed a sigh of relief, that at last we could get on with the domestic agenda, free from the constraints of the EU and establish ourselves as an independent sovereign nation, that has always led the world in most things. Alas, it was not to be, as a worldwide pandemic hit us for six, as it did every other country apart from North Korea, if you believe them! So, it was all hands to the pumps, the Dunkirk spirit kicked in and we got through, but it took up the majority of government time, as everything else had to wait. Not since World War 2 has that happened. If all that wasn't enough, Russia decided to invade Ukraine, setting a weakened world economy on a downward spiral, from which we are only starting to recover. What other government have had so much thrown at it over a period of 13 years, of which only one year was in its direct control and not subject to exceptional outside influences?

It must be said, the Conservative party hasn't exactly shone through this period, but equally circumstances haven't allowed the best of the policies set out, to come through. It doesn't help with the constant in fighting within the parliamentary party. Whose side are these people on when they openly criticise government policy? I am sure they disagree and a certain amount of beating each other up privately is a good thing in business and government but there should always be a united front, for the greater good of the country. We must avoid the disaster of a Labour government which if they are elected, will for the first time, inherit a weak economy but with no signs they will rein in their usual spendthrift ways. Witness the last Labour administration, that bled the country dry from a good start left them by the Tories and changed so many aspects of our daily lives, we hardly recognise the country we were once so proud of.

[News & views](#)[Events](#)[Activities](#)[Join Us](#)[People](#)[Inspiration](#)

State of the Nation (continued from page 2)

There was of course, the dramatic financial crash of 2008, but that pails into insignificance compared to the last thirteen years. Whatever I say, those who recall a previous Labour administration with rose tinted specs or choose to forget, will remind us of 13 years of terrible harm done by the Tories. After 13 years (14 next year) it is time for a change, and it can't possibly be worse. Well, here's some news, it can! After a settling in period of a new Labour government, interest rates will rise above the recent highs, inflation will soar, our country will really be on its uppers and likely need outside help, as the poor man of Europe. Those with long memories will remember the days of the winter of discontent, the IMF bailout and the shame that this country was brought to its knees. I wager, a year in, the Conservatives will be as high in the polls as Labour are now. But, it will be too late, the damage will have been done, against a steadily improving picture now, if only the present administration after only one year, of "normal government" can have the chance to take us down the slow path of prosperity, we are starting to see now. This by increasing trade links with the wider world, making the UK more productive, cutting waste in public spending, reducing debt, cutting taxes and returning to a world of common sense rather than the "woke" world we increasingly live with.

Against the odds, it can be done, here's how:

- Immediately remove all diversity, equality and equal opportunities staff and committees from the public sector. This allegedly costs us all £500 million each year! It will send a strong signal the days of nonsense are over. While we are at it, lets go back to men and woman, boys and girls.
- Require all state employed staff to go back to work full time, not work from home. There is a duty, for the state to support the commercial sector which after all, pays their wages, as staff spend at their workplace and locality. We also need to ensure, those entering the world of work meet the people they meet with, not just see them on a screen. How else are they going to learn? The private sector also needs to get people back into the workplace. Mental health issues are soaring, partly though the isolation of working from home. We all need interaction with other people. It will also aid productivity.
- For all future state sector staff, move to a defined contribution pension scheme, leaving the existing staff in the final salary scheme. This in line with private enterprise who can no longer afford final salary schemes, mainly due to Gordon Brown! At the same time, use some of the saving, to increase salaries for those in the essential services, such as health, police and the emergency services. In this I would include the armed forces.
- Remove the requirement for nurses to go to university, move back to on-the-job training when they are paid to learn. This may apply to other sectors, having a degree should not be the be all and end all. There is already a move to this way of training, but it needs to be shouted from the roof tops. Stop dependents of overseas students staying in the UK during their studies.

[News & views](#)

[Events](#)

[Activities](#)

[Join Us](#)

[People](#)

[Inspiration](#)

State of the Nation (continued from page 3)

- Continue with vigour, the purge on the economically inactive, taking benefits for doing nothing. Mental health is a huge issue, I know, as I have suffered depression all my life, but it doesn't get better sitting doing nothing at home. In fact, quite the reverse.
- Review the "Barnett" formula as it is not working as intended, with citizens of Northern Ireland, Scotland and Wales, significantly better off than the majority in England. Even Joel Barnett before he died, said it isn't working. Instead, use the review to even up spend across the whole of the UK population. This is real "levelling up". It won't be popular in those regions, but they have had a good run, often wasting the extra funds, but still bleating to the UK parliament they are hard done by. Cruel but true, there are very few votes in these parts for a Conservative government.
- Curb net immigration by looking at the workers we really need, such as in health, but discounting the vast numbers who come here to work in the "hospitality sector". The number of takeaways and restaurants, along with nail bars, phone shops, vape outlets, tattoo parlours and barbers that fill our high streets is far too high, they can't all make money, and they use cheap labour. As a side benefit, less convenience food, might just make the UK a fitter nation, when you need to get off your couch to eat. This will give us a chance to either revitalise the High Street, or more likely, convert to housing.
- Stop messing around with the Home Office, set them a target to clear the immigration backlog within 12 months. Being in the office will help, as might a one of bonus for achieving the target. I would apply the same to the NHS, offer the clinical staff a substantial one-off bonus, paid in part from the savings from vacancies, to clear the present backlog, down to two million within 12 months. As necessary, use both the UK and overseas private health sectors. Let's use our superb facilities 24/7 and reward those who help to achieve it and get us out of a fix, which was no one's fault, other than maybe the Chinese! The knock-on benefits will be a healthier nation, less people in pain and get people back to the workplace, reducing the need for immigration. We are going to have to spend to clear the backlog, let's do it in one big push, under a Conservative government. Don't worry too much about the boats, it is a small fraction of the those coming here. Get Rwanda through and after the first few flights, we will find the boats stop coming. That surely is the point, as a deterrent. If not Rwanda, Accession Island, a British territory, so no legal wrangles. There won't be many going there.
- Increase the basic income tax allowance to £15,000 and the higher rate to £60,000 in the April budget. Although the basic rate allowance has doubled over 13 years, far more than inflation, it isn't appreciated that has helped a lot of people out of paying tax. We can go even further, but need to emphasize the benefit, which might not be immediately as apparent as a cut in the percentage rate.

[News & views](#)

[Events](#)

[Activities](#)

[Join Us](#)

[People](#)

[Inspiration](#)

State of the Nation (conclusion)

- Reduce the Corporation tax rate to 15%. It is only paid if a business makes a profit, so a reflection of success, which will surely come, if we continue the progress made to date. Experience suggests, a lower rate equals higher tax returns.
- Forget chasing the Red Wall vote, it was a one off because of BREXIT and Boris's man of the people act. Instead, concentrate on the Blue Wall, where for over a century we have seen electoral success. The above policies, especially if seen to be done, will ensure their support. These are all moves that could be implemented quickly, or at least mooted as part of the forthcoming manifesto. An election bribe? Yes, but it works as we have witnessed in the past. I know most people just want a return to common sense and will support any party who see through the nonsense offered by all three main parties, with some indication the Conservatives are starting to see the light. It will mean those adversely affected might not vote Tory, but then they probably wouldn't anyway!

Don't forget to renew your membership of the club, it promises to be a fascinating year ahead, with the best seats in the house for 64 Club members.

I could say a lot more, but I have run out of space! I look forward to seeing you at the Christmas lunch. May I wish you a peaceful Christmas and a happy and healthy New Year.

Our Dinner & Event Programme

Our next event is the Club Christmas lunch on 10th December at the RAC. Please get in touch with David Collins (the1964club@gmail.com) if you would like to attend

We are planning our usual programme of dinners and other events through the year, so please make a note of the dates as they are announced.



1964 Club members meet regularly to keep informed about current national political issues through presentations and discussions with political figures invited to our meetings.

AGM and State of the Nation Thursday, 14th March

The AGM will be held at the Police Federation in Leatherhead, with our President making his final address as the MP for Epsom & Ewell.

Lynn and I look forward to welcoming you and your guests. All are most welcome.

My very best wishes

Steve

Steve Whiteway FCILT
Chairman The 1964 Club

[News & views](#)

[Events](#)

[Activities](#)

[Join Us](#)

[People](#)

[Inspiration](#)

[News & views](#) [Events](#) [Activities](#) [Join Us](#) [People](#) [Inspiration](#)

David Collins the1964club@gmail.com c/o Hakim Fry, Epsom KT17 1BP