

Thursday
19 December 2019

Volume 669
No. 3



**HOUSE OF COMMONS
OFFICIAL REPORT**

**PARLIAMENTARY
DEBATES**

(HANSARD)

Thursday 19 December 2019

House of Commons

Alphabetical List of Members

[Returned at the General Election, 12 December 2019]

A

Abbott, Rt Hon. Diane Julie (Hackney North and Stoke Newington) (Lab)
Abrahams, Deborah Angela Elspeth Marie (Oldham East and Saddleworth) (Lab)
Adams, Nigel (Selby and Ainsty) (Con)
Afolami, Abimbola (Hitchin and Harpenden) (Con)
Afriyie, Adam (Windsor) (Con)
Ahmad Khan, Imran Nasir (Wakefield) (Con)
Aiken, Nicola Jane (Cities of London and Westminster) (Con)
Aldous, Peter James Guy (Waveney) (Con)
Ali, Rushanara (Bethnal Green and Bow) (Lab)
Ali, Tahir (Birmingham, Hall Green) (Lab)
Allan, Lucy (Telford) (Con)
Allin-Khan, Rosena Chantelle (Tooting) (Lab)
Amesbury, Michael Lee (Weaver Vale) (Lab)
Amess, Sir David Anthony Andrew (Southend West) (Con)
Anderson, Fleur (Putney) (Lab)
Anderson, Lee (Ashfield) (Con)
Anderson, Stuart Paul (Wolverhampton South West) (Con)
Andrew, Stuart James (Pudsey) (Con)
Ansell, Caroline (Eastbourne) (Con)
Antoniazzi, Antonia Louise (Gower) (Lab)
Argar, Edward John Comport (Charnwood) (Con)
Ashworth, Jonathan Michael Graham (Leicester South) (Lab/Co-op)
Atherton, Sarah Elizabeth (Wrexham) (Con)
Atkins, Victoria Mary (Louth and Horncastle) (Con)

B

Bacon, Gareth Andrew (Orpington) (Con)
Bacon, Richard Michael (South Norfolk) (Con)
Badenoch, Olukemi Olufunto (Saffron Walden) (Con)
Bailey, Shaun Stephen (West Bromwich West) (Con)
Baillie, Siobhan Kathleen (Stroud) (Con)
Baker, Duncan Charles (North Norfolk) (Con)
Baker, Steven John (Wycombe) (Con)
Baldwin, Harriett Mary Morison (West Worcestershire) (Con)
Barclay, Rt Hon. Stephen Paul (North East Cambridgeshire) (Con)
Bardell, Hannah Mary (Livingston) (SNP)
Barker, Paula (Liverpool, Wavertree) (Lab)
Baron, John Charles (Basildon and Billericay) (Con)
Baynes, Simon Robert Maurice (Clwyd South) (Con)
Beckett, Rt Hon. Margaret Mary (Derby South) (Lab)
Begley, Órfhlaith Acife (West Tyrone) (SF)
Begum, Apsana (Poplar and Limehouse) (Lab)
Bell, Aaron Stuart (Newcastle-under-Lyme) (Con)
Benn, Rt Hon. Hilary James (Leeds Central) (Lab)
Benton, Scott Lloyd (Blackpool South) (Con)
Beresford, Sir Alexander Paul (Mole Valley) (Con)
Berry, Rt Hon. James Jacob Gilchrist (Rossendale and Darwen) (Con)
Betts, Clive James Charles (Sheffield South East) (Lab)
Bhatti, Mohammad Saqib (Meriden) (Con)
Black, Mhairi (Paisley and Renfrewshire South) (SNP)

Blackford, Rt Hon. Ian (Ross, Skye and Lochaber) (SNP)
Blackman, Robert John (Harrow East) (Con)
Blackman, Kirsty Ann (Aberdeen North) (SNP)
Blake Dagnall, Olivia Frances (Sheffield, Hallam) (Lab)
Blomfield, Paul Christopher (Sheffield Central) (Lab)
Blunt, Crispin Jeremy Rupert (Reigate) (Con)
Bone, Peter William (Wellingborough) (Con)
Bonnar, Steven (Coatbridge, Chryston and Bellshill) (SNP)
Bottomley, Sir Peter James (Worthing West) (Con)
Bowie, Andrew Campbell (West Aberdeenshire and Kincardine) (Con)
Brabin, Tracy Lynn (Batley and Spen) (Lab/Co-op)
Bradley, Benjamin David (Mansfield) (Con)
Bradley, Rt Hon. Karen Anne (Staffordshire Moorlands) (Con)
Bradshaw, Rt Hon. Benjamin Peter James (Exeter) (Lab)
Brady, Sir Graham Stuart (Altrincham and Sale West) (Con)
Brady, Michael (Newry and Armagh) (SF)
Braverman, Sue-Ellen Cassiana (Fareham) (Con)
Brennan, Kevin Denis (Cardiff West) (Lab)
Brereton, Jack Edgar (Stoke-on-Trent South) (Con)
Bridgen, Andrew James (North West Leicestershire) (Con)
Brine, Stephen Charles (Winchester) (Con)
Bristow, Paul (Peterborough) (Con)
Britcliffe, Sara Alice (Hyndburn) (Con)
Brock, Deidre Leanne (Edinburgh North and Leith) (SNP)
Brokenshire, Rt Hon. James Peter (Old Bexley and Sidcup) (Con)
Brown, Alan (Kilmarnock and Loudoun) (SNP)
Brown, Lyn Carol (West Ham) (Lab)
Brown, Rt Hon. Nicholas Hugh (Newcastle upon Tyne East) (Lab)
Browne, Anthony Howe (South Cambridgeshire) (Con)
Bruce, Fiona Claire (Congleton) (Con)
Bryant, Christopher John (Rhondda) (Lab)
Buchan, Felicity Christiana (Kensington) (Con)
Buck, Karen Patricia (Westminster North) (Lab)
Buckland, Rt Hon. Robert James (South Swindon) (Con)
Burghart, Michael Alex (Brentwood and Ongar) (Con)
Burgon, Richard (Leeds East) (Lab)
Burns, Rt Hon. Conor (Bournemouth West) (Con)
Butler, Dawn Petula (Brent Central) (Lab)
Butler, Robert (Aylesbury) (Con)
Byrne, Ian Robert (Liverpool, West Derby) (Lab)
Byrne, Rt Hon. Liam Dominic (Birmingham, Hodge Hill) (Lab)

C

Cadbury, Ruth Margaret (Brentford and Isleworth) (Lab)
Cairns, Rt Hon. Alun Hugh (Vale of Glamorgan) (Con)
Callaghan, Amy (East Dunbartonshire) (SNP)
Cameron, Lisa (East Kilbride, Strathaven and Lesmahagow) (SNP)
Campbell, Rt Hon. Sir Alan Hugh (Tynemouth) (Lab)

Campbell, Gregory Lloyd (East Londonderry) (DUP)
 Carden, Daniel Joseph (Liverpool, Walton) (Lab)
 Carmichael, Rt Hon. Alexander Morrison (Orkney and Shetland) (LD)
 Carter, Andrew John (Warrington South) (Con)
 Cartlidge, James Roger (South Suffolk) (Con)
 Cash, Sir William Nigel Paul (Stone) (Con)
 Cates, Miriam Joy (Penistone and Stocksbridge) (Con)
 Caulfield, Maria Colette (Lewes) (Con)
 Chalk, Alexander John Gervase (Cheltenham) (Con)
 Chamberlain, Wendy Anne (North East Fife) (LD)
 Champion, Sarah Deborah (Rotherham) (Lab)
 Chapman, Douglas (Dunfermline and West Fife) (SNP)
 Charalambous, Charalambos (Enfield, Southgate) (Lab)
 Cherry, Joanna Catherine (Edinburgh South West) (SNP)
 Chishti, Atta-Ur-Rehman (Gillingham and Rainham) (Con)
 Chope, Sir Christopher Robert (Christchurch) (Con)
 Churchill, Johanna Peta (Bury St Edmunds) (Con)
 Clark, Feryal Demirci (Enfield North) (Lab)
 Clark, Rt Hon. Gregory David (Tunbridge Wells) (Con)
 Clarke, Simon Richard (Middlesbrough South and East Cleveland) (Con)
 Clarke, Theodora Roosevelt (Stafford) (Con)
 Clarke-Smith, Brendan (Bassetlaw) (Con)
 Clarkson, Christopher Mark (Heywood and Middleton) (Con)
 Cleverly, Rt Hon. James Spencer (Braintree) (Con)
 Clifton-Brown, Sir Geoffrey Robert (The Cotswolds) (Con)
 Coffey, Rt Hon. Thérèse Anne (Suffolk Coastal) (Con)
 Colburn, Elliott (Carshalton and Wallington) (Con)
 Collins, Damian Noel Thomas (Folkestone and Hythe) (Con)
 Cooper, Daisy (St Albans) (LD)
 Cooper, Rosemary Elizabeth (West Lancashire) (Lab)
 Cooper, Rt Hon. Yvette (Normanton, Pontefract and Castleford) (Lab)
 Corbyn, Rt Hon. Jeremy Bernard (Islington North) (Lab)
 Costa, Alberto Castrenze (South Leicestershire) (Con)
 Courts, Robert Alexander (Witney) (Con)
 Coutinho, Claire Coryl Julia (East Surrey) (Con)
 Cowan, Ronald Jack (Inverclyde) (SNP)
 Cox, Rt Hon. Charles Geoffrey (Torrige and West Devon) (Con)
 Coyle, Neil (Bermondsey and Old Southwark) (Lab)
 Crabb, Rt Hon. Stephen (Preseli Pembrokeshire) (Con)
 Crawley, Angela (Lanark and Hamilton East) (SNP)
 Creasy, Stella Judith (Walthamstow) (Lab/Co-op)
 Crosbie, Virginia Ann (Ynys Môn) (Con)
 Crouch, Tracey Elizabeth Anne (Chatham and Aylesford) (Con)
 Cruddas, Jonathan (Dagenham and Rainham) (Lab)
 Cryer, John Robert (Leyton and Wanstead) (Lab)
 Cummins, Judith Mary (Bradford South) (Lab)
 Cunningham, Alexander (Stockton North) (Lab)

D

Daby, Janet Jessica (Lewisham East) (Lab)
 Daly, James Barry (Bury North) (Con)
 Davey, Rt Hon. Sir Edward Jonathon (Kingston and Surbiton) (LD)
 David, Wayne (Caerphilly) (Lab)
 Davies, David Thomas Charles (Monmouth) (Con)
 Davies, Gareth Mark (Grantham and Stamford) (Con)
 Davies, Geraint Richard (Swansea West) (Lab/Co-op)
 Davies, James Michael (Vale of Clwyd) (Con)
 Davies, Miriam Jane Alice (Mid Sussex) (Con)

Davies, Philip Andrew (Shipley) (Con)
 Davies-Jones, Alexandra Mary (Pontypridd) (Lab)
 Davis, Rt Hon. David Michael (Haltemprice and Howden) (Con)
 Davison, Dehenna Sheridan (Bishop Auckland) (Con)
 Day, Martyn (Linlithgow and East Falkirk) (SNP)
 De Cordova, Marsha Chantol (Battersea) (Lab)
 Debbonaire, Thangam Elizabeth Rachel (Bristol West) (Lab)
 Dhesi, Tanmanjeet Singh (Slough) (Lab)
 Dinenage, Caroline Julia (Gosport) (Con)
 Dines, Sarah Elizabeth (Derbyshire Dales) (Con)
 Djanogly, Jonathan Simon (Huntingdon) (Con)
 Docherty, Leo (Aldershot) (Con)
 Docherty-Hughes, Martin John (West Dunbartonshire) (SNP)
 Dodds, Anneliese Jane (Oxford East) (Lab/Co-op)
 Donaldson, Rt Hon. Sir Jeffrey Mark (Lagan Valley) (DUP)
 Donelan, Michelle Emma May Elizabeth (Chippenham) (Con)
 Doogan, David Michael (Angus) (SNP)
 Dorans, Allan Hopkins (Ayr, Carrick and Cumnock) (SNP)
 Dorries, Nadine Vanessa (Mid Bedfordshire) (Con)
 Double, Stephen Daniel (St Austell and Newquay) (Con)
 Doughty, Stephen John (Cardiff South and Penarth) (Lab/Co-op)
 Dowd, Peter Christopher (Bootle) (Lab)
 Dowden, Rt Hon. Oliver James (Hertsmere) (Con)
 Doyle-Price, Jacqueline (Thurrock) (Con)
 Drax, Richard Grosvenor (South Dorset) (Con)
 Dromey, John Eugene Joseph (Birmingham, Erdington) (Lab)
 Drummond, Felicia Jane Beatrix (Meon Valley) (Con)
 Duddridge, James Philip (Rochford and Southend East) (Con)
 Duffield, Rosemary Clare (Canterbury) (Lab)
 Duguid, David James (Banff and Buchan) (Con)
 Duncan Smith, Rt Hon. George Iain (Chingford and Woodford Green) (Con)
 Dunne, Rt Hon. Philip Martin (Ludlow) (Con)

E

Eagle, Angela (Wallasey) (Lab)
 Eagle, Maria (Garston and Halewood) (Lab)
 Eastwood, Colum (Foyle) (SDLP)
 Eastwood, Mark Simon (Dewsbury) (Con)
 Edwards, David Jonathan (Carmarthen East and Dinefwr) (PC)
 Edwards, Ruth Rosamond (Rushcliffe) (Con)
 Efford, Clive Stanley (Eltham) (Lab)
 Elliott, Julie (Sunderland Central) (Lab)
 Ellis, Rt Hon. Michael Tyrone (Northampton North) (Con)
 Ellwood, Rt Hon. Tobias Martin (Bournemouth East) (Con)
 Elmore, Christopher Philip James (Ogmore) (Lab)
 Elphicke, Natalie Cecilia (Dover) (Con)
 Eshalomi, Florence (Vauxhall) (Lab/Co-op)
 Esterson, William Roffen (Sefton Central) (Lab)
 Eustice, Charles George (Camborne and Redruth) (Con)
 Evans, Christopher James (Islwyn) (Lab/Co-op)
 Evans, Luke Morgan (Bosworth) (Con)
 Evans, Nigel Martin (Ribble Valley) (Con)
 Evennett, Rt Hon. Sir David Anthony (Bexleyheath and Crayford) (Con)
 Everitt, Ben (Milton Keynes North) (Con)

F

Fabricant, Michael Louis David (Lichfield) (Con)
 Farris, Laura Rose (Newbury) (Con)
 Farron, Timothy James (Westmorland and Lonsdale) (LD)
 Farry, Stephen Anthony (North Down) (Alliance)
 Fell, Simon Richard James (Barrow and Furness) (Con)
 Fellows, Marion (Motherwell and Wishaw) (SNP)
 Ferrier, Margaret (Rutherglen and Hamilton West) (SNP)
 Finucane, John (Belfast North) (SF)
 Fletcher, Colleen Margaret (Coventry North East) (Lab)
 Fletcher, Katherine (South Ribble) (Con)
 Fletcher, Mark Peter (Bolsover) (Con)
 Fletcher, Nicholas Anthony (Don Valley) (Con)
 Flynn, Stephen Mark (Aberdeen South) (SNP)
 Ford, Victoria Grace (Chelmsford) (Con)
 Foster, Kevin John (Torbay) (Con)
 Fovargue, Yvonne Helen (Makerfield) (Lab)
 Fox, Rt Hon. Liam (North Somerset) (Con)
 Foxcroft, Victoria Jane (Lewisham, Deptford) (Lab)
 Foy, Mary Kelly (City of Durham) (Lab)
 Francois, Rt Hon. Mark Gino (Rayleigh and Wickford) (Con)
 Frazer, Lucy Claire (South East Cambridgeshire) (Con)
 Freeman, George William (Mid Norfolk) (Con)
 Freer, Michael Whitney (Finchley and Golders Green) (Con)
 Fuller, Richard Quentin (North East Bedfordshire) (Con)
 Furniss, Gillian (Sheffield, Brightside and Hillsborough) (Lab)
 Fysh, Marcus John Hudson (Yeovil) (Con)

G

Gale, Rt Hon. Sir Roger James (North Thanet) (Con)
 Gardiner, Barry Strachan (Brent North) (Lab)
 Garnier, Mark Robert Timothy (Wyre Forest) (Con)
 Ghani, Nusrat Munir (Wealden) (Con)
 Gibb, Rt Hon. Nicolas John (Bognor Regis and Littlehampton) (Con)
 Gibson, Patricia (North Ayrshire and Arran) (SNP)
 Gibson, Peter Alexander (Darlington) (Con)
 Gideon, Joanna Mary (Stoke-on-Trent Central) (Con)
 Gildernew, Michelle Angela (Fermanagh and South Tyrone) (SF)
 Gill, Preet Kaur (Birmingham, Edgbaston) (Lab/Co-op)
 Gillan, Rt Hon. Dame Cheryl Elise Kendall (Chesham and Amersham) (Con)
 Girvan, William Paul (South Antrim) (DUP)
 Glen, John Philip (Salisbury) (Con)
 Glindon, Mary Theresa (North Tyneside) (Lab)
 Goodwill, Rt Hon. Robert (Scarborough and Whitby) (Con)
 Gove, Rt Hon. Michael Andrew (Surrey Heath) (Con)
 Grady, Patrick John (Glasgow North) (SNP)
 Graham, Richard Michael John Ogilvie (Gloucester) (Con)
 Grant, Helen (Maidstone and The Weald) (Con)
 Grant, Peter (Glenrothes) (SNP)
 Gray, James Whiteside (North Wiltshire) (Con)
 Gray, Neil Charles (Airdrie and Shotts) (SNP)
 Grayling, Rt Hon. Christopher Stephen (Epsom and Ewell) (Con)
 Green, Christopher James (Bolton West) (Con)
 Green, Rt Hon. Damian Howard (Ashford) (Con)
 Green, Katherine Anne (Stretford and Urmston) (Lab)

Greenwood, Lilian Rachel (Nottingham South) (Lab)
 Greenwood, Margaret (Wirral West) (Lab)
 Griffith, Andrew (Arundel and South Downs) (Con)
 Griffith, Nia Rhiannon (Llanelli) (Lab)
 Griffiths, Kate Elizabeth (Burton) (Con)
 Grundy, James Nelson (Leigh) (Con)
 Gullis, Jonathan Edward (Stoke-on-Trent North) (Con)
 Gwynne, Andrew John (Denton and Reddish) (Lab)

H

Haigh, Louise Margaret (Sheffield, Heeley) (Lab)
 Halfon, Rt Hon. Robert Henry (Harlow) (Con)
 Hall, Luke Anthony (Thornbury and Yate) (Con)
 Hamilton, Fabian (Leeds North East) (Lab)
 Hammond, Stephen William (Wimbledon) (Con)
 Hancock, Rt Hon. Matthew John David (West Suffolk) (Con)
 Hands, Rt Hon. Gregory William (Chelsea and Fulham) (Con)
 Hanna, Claire Aisling (Belfast South) (SDLP)
 Hanvey, James Neale (Kirkcaldy and Cowdenbeath) (Ind)
 Hardy, Emma Ann (Kingston upon Hull West and Hessle) (Lab)
 Harman, Rt Hon. Harriet Ruth (Camberwell and Peckham) (Lab)
 Harper, Rt Hon. Mark James (Forest of Dean) (Con)
 Harris, Carolyn (Swansea East) (Lab)
 Harris, Elizabeth Rebecca Scott (Castle Point) (Con)
 Harrison, Trudy Lynne (Copeland) (Con)
 Hart, Sally-Ann (Hastings and Rye) (Con)
 Hart, Rt Hon. Simon Anthony (Carmarthen West and South Pembrokeshire) (Con)
 Hayes, Helen Elizabeth (Dulwich and West Norwood) (Lab)
 Hayes, Rt Hon. Sir John Henry (South Holland and The Deepings) (Con)
 Hazzard, Christopher John (South Down) (SF)
 Heald, Rt Hon. Sir Oliver (North East Hertfordshire) (Con)
 Healey, Rt Hon. John (Wentworth and Dearne) (Lab)
 Heapey, James Stephen (Wells) (Con)
 Heaton-Harris, Christopher (Daventry) (Con)
 Henderson, Gordon Leonard (Sittingbourne and Sheppey) (Con)
 Hendrick, Sir Mark Phillip (Preston) (Lab/Co-op)
 Hendry, Andrew Egan Henderson (Inverness, Nairn, Badenoch and Strathspey) (SNP)
 Henry, Darren George (Broxton) (Con)
 Higginbotham, Antony (Burnley) (Con)
 Hill, Michael Robert (Hartlepool) (Lab)
 Hillier, Margaret Olivia (Hackney South and Shoreditch) (Lab/Co-op)
 Hinds, Rt Hon. Damian Patrick George (East Hampshire) (Con)
 Hoare, Simon James (North Dorset) (Con)
 Hobhouse, Wera Benedicta (Bath) (LD)
 Hodge, Rt Hon. Dame Margaret Eve (Barking) (Lab)
 Hodgson, Sharon (Washington and Sunderland West) (Lab)
 Holden, Richard John (North West Durham) (Con)
 Hollern, Catherine Malloy (Blackburn) (Lab)
 Hollinrake, Kevin Paul (Thirsk and Malton) (Con)
 Hollobone, Philip Thomas (Kettering) (Con)
 Holloway, Adam James Harold (Gravesham) (Con)
 Holmes, Paul John (Eastleigh) (Con)
 Hopkins, Rachel Louise (Luton South) (Lab)
 Hosie, Stewart (Dundee East) (SNP)
 Howarth, Rt Hon. Sir George Edward (Knowsley) (Lab)

Howell, John Michael (Henley) (Con)
 Howell, Paul (Sedgefield) (Con)
 Hoyle, Rt Hon. Sir Lindsay Harvey (Chorley) (Speaker)
 Huddleston, Nigel Paul (Mid Worcestershire) (Con)
 Hudson, Neil Peter Hammerton (Penrith and The Border) (Con)
 Hughes, Edmund Francis (Walsall North) (Con)
 Hunt, Jane Marion (Loughborough) (Con)
 Hunt, Rt Hon. Jeremy Richard Streynsham (South West Surrey) (Con)
 Hunt, Thomas Patrick (Ipswich) (Con)
 Huq, Rupa Asha (Ealing Central and Acton) (Lab)
 Hussain, Imran (Bradford East) (Lab)

J

Jack, Rt Hon. Alister William (Dumfries and Galloway) (Con)
 Jardine, Christine Anne (Edinburgh West) (LD)
 Jarvis, Daniel Owen (Barnsley Central) (Lab)
 Javid, Rt Hon. Sajid (Bromsgrove) (Con)
 Jayawardena, Ranil Malcolm (North East Hampshire) (Con)
 Jenkin, Sir Bernard Christison (Harwich and North Essex) (Con)
 Jenkinson, Mark Ian (Workington) (Con)
 Jenkyns, Andrea Marie (Morley and Outwood) (Con)
 Jenrick, Rt Hon. Robert Edward (Newark) (Con)
 Johnson, Rt Hon. Alexander Boris de Pfeffel (Uxbridge and South Ruislip) (Con)
 Johnson, Caroline Elizabeth (Sleaford and North Hykeham) (Con)
 Johnson, Diana Ruth (Kingston upon Hull North) (Lab)
 Johnson, Gareth Alan (Dartford) (Con)
 Johnson, Kim Marie (Liverpool, Riverside) (Lab)
 Johnston, David Mervyn (Wantage) (Con)
 Jones, Andrew Hanson (Harrogate and Knaresborough) (Con)
 Jones, Darren Paul (Bristol North West) (Lab)
 Jones, Rt Hon. David Ian (Clwyd West) (Con)
 Jones, Fay Alicia (Brecon and Radnorshire) (Con)
 Jones, Gerald (Merthyr Tydfil and Rhymney) (Lab)
 Jones, Rt Hon. Kevan David (North Durham) (Lab)
 Jones, Marcus Charles (Nuneaton) (Con)
 Jones, Ruth Lorraine (Newport West) (Lab)
 Jones, Sarah Ann (Croydon Central) (Lab)
 Jupp, Simon James (East Devon) (Con)

K

Kane, Michael Joseph Patrick (Wythenshawe and Sale East) (Lab)
 Kawczynski, Daniel Robert (Shrewsbury and Atcham) (Con)
 Kearns, Alicia Alexandra Martha (Rutland and Melton) (Con)
 Keegan, Gillian (Chichester) (Con)
 Keeley, Barbara Mary (Worsley and Eccles South) (Lab)
 Kendall, Elizabeth Louise (Leicester West) (Lab)
 Khan, Afzal Mohammed (Manchester, Gorton) (Lab)
 Kinnock, Stephen Nathan (Aberavon) (Lab)
 Knight, Rt Hon. Sir Gregory (East Yorkshire) (Con)
 Knight, Julian Carlton (Solihull) (Con)
 Kruger, Daniel Rayne (Devizes) (Con)
 Kwarteng, Rt Hon. Kwasi Alfred Addo (Spelthorne) (Con)
 Kyle, Peter John (Hove) (Lab)

L

Laing, Rt Hon. Dame Eleanor Fulton (Epping Forest) (Con)
 Lake, Ben Morgan (Ceredigion) (PC)
 Lammy, Rt Hon. David Lindon (Tottenham) (Lab)
 Lamont, John Robert (Berwickshire, Roxburgh and Selkirk) (Con)
 Langan, Robert (High Peak) (Con)
 Latham, Pauline Elizabeth (Mid Derbyshire) (Con)
 Lavery, Ian (Wansbeck) (Lab)
 Law, Christopher Murray Alexander (Dundee West) (SNP)
 Leadsom, Rt Hon. Andrea Jacqueline (South Northamptonshire) (Con)
 Leigh, Rt Hon. Sir Edward Julian Egerton (Gainsborough) (Con)
 Levy, Ian (Blyth Valley) (Con)
 Lewell-Buck, Emma Louise (South Shields) (Lab)
 Lewer, Andrew Iain (Northampton South) (Con)
 Lewis, Rt Hon. Brandon Kenneth (Great Yarmouth) (Con)
 Lewis, Clive Anthony (Norwich South) (Lab)
 Lewis, Rt Hon. Julian Murray (New Forest East) (Con)
 Liddell-Grainger, Ian Richard Peregrine (Bridgwater and West Somerset) (Con)
 Linden, David Melvyn (Glasgow East) (SNP)
 Lloyd, Anthony Joseph (Rochdale) (Lab)
 Lockhart, Carla Rebecca (Upper Bann) (DUP)
 Loder, Christopher Lionel John (West Dorset) (Con)
 Logan, Mark Rory (Bolton North East) (Con)
 Long Bailey, Rebecca (Salford and Eccles) (Lab)
 Longhi, Marco (Dudley North) (Con)
 Lopez, Julia Louise (Hornchurch and Upminster) (Con)
 Lopresti, Giacomo (Filton and Bradley Stoke) (Con)
 Lord, Jonathan George Caladine (Woking) (Con)
 Loughton, Timothy Paul (East Worthing and Shoreham) (Con)
 Lucas, Caroline Patricia (Brighton, Pavilion) (Green)
 Lynch, Holly Jamie (Halifax) (Lab)

M

MacAskill, Kenny Wright (East Lothian) (SNP)
 McCabe, Stephen James (Birmingham, Selly Oak) (Lab)
 McCarthy, Kerry Gillian (Bristol East) (Lab)
 McCartney, Jason Alexander (Colne Valley) (Con)
 McCartney, Karl Ian (Lincoln) (Con)
 McDonagh, Siobhain Ann (Mitcham and Morden) (Lab)
 McDonald, Andrew Joseph (Middlesbrough) (Lab)
 McDonald, Stewart Malcolm (Glasgow South) (SNP)
 McDonald, Stuart Campbell (Cumbernauld, Kilsyth and Kirkintilloch East) (SNP)
 McDonnell, Rt Hon. John Martin (Hayes and Harlington) (Lab)
 McFadden, Rt Hon. Patrick Bosco (Wolverhampton South East) (Lab)
 McGinn, Conor Patrick (St Helens North) (Lab)
 McGovern, Alison (Wirral South) (Lab)
 Mackinlay, Craig (South Thanet) (Con)
 McKinnell, Catherine (Newcastle upon Tyne North) (Lab)
 Mackrory, Cherilyn (Truro and Falmouth) (Con)
 McLaughlin, Anne (Glasgow North East) (SNP)
 Maclean, Rachel Helen (Redditch) (Con)
 McMahan, James (Oldham West and Royton) (Lab/Co-op)
 McMorris, Anna Rhiannon (Cardiff North) (Lab)

Mc Nally, John Joseph (Falkirk) (SNP)
 MacNeil, Angus Brendan (Na h-Eileanan an Iar) (SNP)
 McPartland, Stephen Anthony (Stevenage) (Con)
 McVey, Rt Hon. Esther Louise (Tatton) (Con)
 Madders, Justin Piers Richard (Ellesmere Port and Neston) (Lab)
 Mahmood, Khalid (Birmingham, Perry Barr) (Lab)
 Mahmood, Shabana (Birmingham, Ladywood) (Lab)
 Mak, Alan (Havant) (Con)
 Malhotra Seema (Feltham and Heston) (Lab/Co-op)
 Malthouse, Christopher Laurie (North West Hampshire) (Con)
 Mangnall, Anthony James Holland (Totnes) (Con)
 Mann, Scott Leslie (North Cornwall) (Con)
 Marson, Julie (Hertford and Stortford) (Con)
 Maskell, Rachael Helen (York Central) (Lab/Co-op)
 Maskey, Paul John (Belfast West) (SF)
 Matheson, Christian John Patrick (City of Chester) (Lab)
 May, Rt Hon. Theresa Mary (Maidenhead) (Con)
 Mayhew, Jerome Patrick Burke (Broadland) (Con)
 Maynard, Paul Christopher (Blackpool North and Cleveleys) (Con)
 Mearns, James Ian (Gateshead) (Lab)
 Menzies, Mark Andrew (Fylde) (Con)
 Mercer, John Luther (Plymouth, Moor View) (Con)
 Merriman, Huw William (Bexhill and Battle) (Con)
 Metcalfe, Stephen James (South Basildon and East Thurrock) (Con)
 Milliband, Rt Hon. Edward Samuel (Doncaster North) (Lab)
 Millar, Robin John (Aberconwy) (Con)
 Miller, Rt Hon. Maria Frances Lewis (Basingstoke) (Con)
 Milling, Amanda Anne (Cannock Chase) (Con)
 Mills, Nigel John (Amber Valley) (Con)
 Mishra, Navendu Prabhat (Stockport) (Lab)
 Mitchell, Rt Hon. Andrew John Bower (Sutton Coldfield) (Con)
 Mohindra, Gagan (South West Hertfordshire) (Con)
 Molloy, Francis Joseph (Mid Ulster) (SF)
 Monaghan, Carol Frances (Glasgow North West) (SNP)
 Moore, Damien (Southport) (Con)
 Moore, Robert Peter (Keighley) (Con)
 Moran, Layla Michelle (Oxford West and Abingdon) (LD)
 Mordaunt, Rt Hon. Penny Mary (Portsmouth North) (Con)
 Morden, Jessica Elizabeth (Newport East) (Lab)
 Morgan, Stephen James (Portsmouth South) (Lab)
 Morris, Anne Marie (Newton Abbot) (Con)
 Morris, David Thomas (Morecambe and Lunesdale) (Con)
 Morris, Grahame Mark (Easington) (Lab)
 Morris, James George (Halesowen and Rowley Regis) (Con)
 Morrissey, Joy Inboden (Beaconsfield) (Con)
 Morton, Wendy (Aldridge-Brownhills) (Con)
 Mullan, Kieran John (Crewe and Nantwich) (Con)
 Mumby-Croft, Holly (Scunthorpe) (Con)
 Mundell, Rt Hon. David Gordon (Dumfriesshire, Clydesdale and Tweeddale) (Con)
 Murray, Ian (Edinburgh South) (Lab)
 Murray, James Stewart (Ealing North) (Lab/Co-op)
 Murray, Sheryll (South East Cornwall) (Con)
 Murrison, Rt Hon. Andrew William (South West Wiltshire) (Con)

N

Nandy, Lisa Eva (Wigan) (Lab)
 Neill, Robert James MacGillivray (Bromley and Chislehurst) (Con)
 Newlands, Gavin Andrew Stuart (Paisley and Renfrewshire North) (SNP)
 Nichols, Charlotte Louise (Warrington North) (Lab)
 Nici-Townend, Lia (Great Grimsby) (Con)
 Nicolson, John MacKenzie (Ochil and South Perthshire) (SNP)
 Nokes, Rt Hon. Caroline Fiona Ellen (Romsey and Southampton North) (Con)
 Norman, Rt Hon. Alexander Jesse (Hereford and South Herefordshire) (Con)
 Norris, Alexander James Jordan (Nottingham North) (Lab/Co-op)

O

O'Brien, Neil John (Harborough) (Con)
 Offord, Matthew James (Hendon) (Con)
 O'Hara, Brendan (Argyll and Bute) (SNP)
 Olney, Sarah Jane (Richmond Park) (LD)
 Onwurah, Chinyelu Susan (Newcastle upon Tyne Central) (Lab)
 Opperman, Guy Thomas (Hexham) (Con)
 Oppong-Asare, Abena (Erith and Thamesmead) (Lab)
 Osamor, Kate Ofunne (Edmonton) (Lab/Co-op)
 Osborne, Katherine Helen (Jarrow) (Lab)
 Oswald, Kirsten Frances (East Renfrewshire) (SNP)
 Owatemi, Taiwo (Coventry North West) (Lab)
 Owen, Sarah Mei Li (Luton North) (Lab)

P

Paisley, Ian Richard Kyle (North Antrim) (DUP)
 Parish, Neil Quentin Gordon (Tiverton and Honiton) (Con)
 Patel, Rt Hon. Priti Sushil (Witham) (Con)
 Paterson, Rt Hon. Owen William (North Shropshire) (Con)
 Pawsey, Mark Julian Francis (Rugby) (Con)
 Peacock, Stephanie Louise (Barnsley East) (Lab)
 Penning, Rt Hon. Sir Michael Alan (Hemel Hempstead) (Con)
 Pennycook, Matthew Thomas (Greenwich and Woolwich) (Lab)
 Penrose, John David (Weston-super-Mare) (Con)
 Percy, Andrew Theakstone (Brigg and Goole) (Con)
 Perkins, Matthew Toby (Chesterfield) (Lab)
 Phillips, Jessica Rose (Birmingham, Yardley) (Lab)
 Phillipson, Bridget Maeve (Houghton and Sunderland South) (Lab)
 Philp, Chris Ian Brian Mynott (Croydon South) (Con)
 Pincher, Rt Hon. Christopher John (Tamworth) (Con)
 Pollard, Luke (Plymouth, Sutton and Devonport) (Lab/Co-op)
 Poulter, Daniel Leonard James (Central Suffolk and North Ipswich) (Con)
 Pow, Rebecca Faye (Taunton Deane) (Con)
 Powell, Lucy Maria (Manchester Central) (Lab/Co-op)
 Prentis, Victoria Mary Boswell (Banbury) (Con)
 Pritchard, Mark Andrew (The Wrekin) (Con)
 Pursglove, Thomas Christopher John (Corby) (Con)

Q

Quin, Jeremy Mark (Horsham) (Con)
 Quince, William James (Colchester) (Con)
 Qureshi, Yasmin (Bolton South East) (Lab)

R

Raab, Rt Hon. Dominic Rennie (Esher and Walton) (Con)
 Randall, Thomas William (Gedling) (Con)
 Rayner, Angela (Ashton-under-Lyne) (Lab)
 Redwood, Rt Hon. Sir John Alan (Wokingham) (Con)
 Reed, Steven Mark Ward (Croydon North) (Lab/Co-op)
 Rees, Christina Elizabeth (Neath) (Lab/Co-op)
 Rees-Mogg, Rt Hon. Jacob William (North East Somerset) (Con)
 Reeves, Eleanor Claire (Lewisham West and Penge) (Lab)
 Reeves, Rachel Jane (Leeds West) (Lab)
 Reynolds, Jonathan Neil (Stalybridge and Hyde) (Lab/Co-op)
 Ribeiro-Addy, Bellavia Janet (Streatham) (Lab)
 Richards, Nicola Faye (West Bromwich East) (Con)
 Richardson, Angela Joy (Guildford) (Con)
 Rimmer, Marie Elizabeth (St Helens South and Whiston) (Lab)
 Roberts, Robert Joseph (Delyn) (Con)
 Robertson, Laurence Anthony (Tewkesbury) (Con)
 Robinson, Gavin James (Belfast East) (DUP)
 Robinson, Mary Josephine (Cheadle) (Con)
 Rodda, Mathew Richard Allen (Reading East) (Lab)
 Rosindell, Andrew Richard (Romford) (Con)
 Ross, Douglas Gordon (Moray) (Con)
 Rowley, Lee Benjamin (North East Derbyshire) (Con)
 Russell, Dean (Watford) (Con)
 Russell-Moyle, Lloyd (Brighton, Kemptown) (Lab/Co-op)
 Rutley, David Henry (Macclesfield) (Con)

S

Sambrook, Gary William (Birmingham, Northfield) (Con)
 Saville Roberts, Rt Hon. Elizabeth (Dwyfor Meirionnydd) (PC)
 Saxby, Selaine Rachel (North Devon) (Con)
 Scully, Paul Stuart (Sutton and Cheam) (Con)
 Seely, Robert William Henry (Isle of Wight) (Con)
 Selous, Andrew Edmund Armstrong (South West Bedfordshire) (Con)
 Shah, Naseem Akhtar (Bradford West) (Lab)
 Shannon, Richard James (Strangford) (DUP)
 Shapps, Rt Hon. Grant (Welwyn Hatfield) (Con)
 Sharma, Rt Hon. Alok Kumar (Reading West) (Con)
 Sharma, Virendra Kumar (Ealing, Southall) (Lab)
 Sheerman, Barry John (Huddersfield) (Lab/Co-op)
 Shelbrooke, Rt Hon. Alec (Elmet and Rothwell) (Con)
 Sheppard, Thomas (Edinburgh East) (SNP)
 Siddiq, Tulip Rizwana (Hampstead and Kilburn) (Lab)
 Simmonds, David Timothy (Ruislip, Northwood and Pinner) (Con)
 Skidmore, Rt Hon. Christopher James (Kingswood) (Con)
 Slaughter, Andrew Francis (Hammersmith) (Lab)
 Smith, Alyn Edward (Stirling) (SNP)
 Smith, Catherine Jane (Lancaster and Fleetwood) (Lab)
 Smith, Chloe Rebecca (Norwich North) (Con)
 Smith, Greg (Buckingham) (Con)

Smith, Henry Edward Millar (Crawley) (Con)
 Smith, Jeffrey (Manchester, Withington) (Lab)
 Smith, Rt Hon. Julian Richard (Skipton and Ripon) (Con)
 Smith, Nicholas Desmond John (Blaenau Gwent) (Lab)
 Smith, Royston Matthew (Southampton, Itchen) (Con)
 Smyth, Karin Marguerite (Bristol South) (Lab)
 Sobel, Alexander David (Leeds North West) (Lab/Co-op)
 Solloway, Amanda Jane (Derby North) (Con)
 Spellar, Rt Hon. John Francis (Warley) (Lab)
 Spencer, Ben (Runnymede and Weybridge) (Con)
 Spencer, Rt Hon. Mark Steven (Sherwood) (Con)
 Stafford, Alexander Paul Thomas (Rother Valley) (Con)
 Starmer, Rt Hon. Sir Keir (Holborn and St Pancras) (Lab)
 Stephens, Christopher Charles (Glasgow South West) (SNP)
 Stephenson, Andrew George (Pendle) (Con)
 Stevens, Joanna Meriel (Cardiff Central) (Lab)
 Stevenson, Andrew John (Carlisle) (Con)
 Stevenson, Jane Fiona Catherine (Wolverhampton North East) (Con)
 Stewart, Iain Aitken (Milton Keynes South) (Con)
 Stewart, Robert Alexander (Beckenham) (Con)
 Stone, Jamie Hume (Caithness, Sutherland and Easter Ross) (LD)
 Streeter, Sir Gary Nicholas (South West Devon) (Con)
 Streeting, Wesley Paul William (Ilford North) (Lab)
 Stride, Rt Hon. Melvyn John (Central Devon) (Con)
 Stringer, Graham Eric (Blackley and Broughton) (Lab)
 Stuart, Graham Charles (Beverley and Holderness) (Con)
 Sturdy, Julian Charles (York Outer) (Con)
 Sultana, Zarah (Coventry South) (Lab)
 Sunak, Rt Hon. Rishi (Richmond (Yorks)) (Con)
 Sunderland, James (Bracknell) (Con)
 Swayne, Rt Hon. Sir Desmond Angus (New Forest West) (Con)
 Syms, Sir Robert Andrew Raymond (Poole) (Con)

T

Tami, Rt Hon. Mark Richard (Alyn and Deeside) (Lab)
 Tarry, Samuel Peter (Ilford South) (Lab)
 Thewliss, Alison Emily (Glasgow Central) (SNP)
 Thomas, Derek Gordon (St Ives) (Con)
 Thomas, Gareth (Harrow West) (Lab/Co-op)
 Thomas-Symonds, Nicklaus (Torfaen) (Lab)
 Thompson, Owen George (Midlothian) (SNP)
 Thomson, Richard Gordon (Gordon) (SNP)
 Thornberry, Rt Hon. Emily (Islington South and Finsbury) (Lab)
 Throup, Margaret Ann (Erewash) (Con)
 Timms, Rt Hon. Stephen Creswell (East Ham) (Lab)
 Timpson, Anthony Edward (Eddisbury) (Con)
 Tolhurst, Kelly Jane (Rochester and Strood) (Con)
 Tomlinson, Justin Paul (North Swindon) (Con)
 Tomlinson, Michael James (Mid Dorset and North Poole) (Con)
 Tracey, Craig Paul (North Warwickshire) (Con)
 Trevelyan, Anne-Marie Belinda (Berwick-upon-Tweed) (Con)
 Trickett, Jon Hedley (Hemsworth) (Lab)
 Trott, Laura (Sevenoaks) (Con)
 Truss, Rt Hon. Elizabeth Mary (South West Norfolk) (Con)
 Tugendhat, Thomas Georg John (Tonbridge and Malling) (Con)
 Turner, Karl (Kingston upon Hull East) (Lab)

Twigg, John Derek (Halton) (Lab)
Twist, Mary Elizabeth (Blaydon) (Lab)

V

Vara, Shailesh Lakhman (North West Cambridgeshire) (Con)
Vaz, Rt Hon. Valerie Carol Marian (Walsall South) (Lab)
Vickers, Martin John (Cleethorpes) (Con)
Vickers, Matthew Alexander (Stockton South) (Con)
Villiers, Rt Hon. Theresa Anne (Chipping Barnet) (Con)

W

Wakeford, Christian (Bury South) (Con)
Walker, Sir Charles Ashley Rupert (Broxbourne) (Con)
Walker, Robin Caspar (Worcester) (Con)
Wallace, Rt Hon. Robert Ben Lobban (Wyre and Preston North) (Con)
Wallis, Jamie Hamilton (Bridgend) (Con)
Warburton, David John (Somerton and Frome) (Con)
Warman, Matthew Robert (Boston and Skegness) (Con)
Watling, Giles Francis (Clacton) (Con)
Webb, Suzanne (Stourbridge) (Con)
Webbe, Claudia Naomi (Leicester East) (Lab)
West, Catherine Elizabeth (Hornsey and Wood Green) (Lab)
Western, Matthew Raymond (Warwick and Leamington) (Lab)
Whately, Helen Olivia Bicknell (Faversham and Mid Kent) (Con)
Wheeler, Heather Kay (South Derbyshire) (Con)

Whitehead, Alan Patrick Vincent (Southampton, Test) (Lab)
Whitford, Philippa (Central Ayrshire) (SNP)
Whitley, Michael (Birkenhead) (Lab)
Whittaker, Craig (Calder Valley) (Con)
Whittingdale, Rt Hon. John Flasby Lawrance (Maldon) (Con)
Whittome, Nadia Edith (Nottingham East) (Lab)
Wiggin, William David (North Herefordshire) (Con)
Wild, James Oliver (North West Norfolk) (Con)
Williams, Alun Craig (Montgomeryshire) (Con)
Williams, Hywel (Arfon) (PC)
Williamson, Rt Hon. Gavin Alexander (South Staffordshire) (Con)
Wilson, Munira (Twickenham) (LD)
Wilson, Rt Hon. Samuel (East Antrim) (DUP)
Winter, Bethan (Cynon Valley) (Lab)
Winterton, Rt Hon. Dame Rosalie (Doncaster Central) (Lab)
Wishart, Peter (Perth and North Perthshire) (SNP)
Wood, Michael Jon (Dudley South) (Con)
Wragg, William Peter (Hazel Grove) (Con)
Wright, Rt Hon. Jeremy Paul (Kenilworth and Southam) (Con)

Y

Yasin, Mohammad (Bedford) (Lab)
Young, Jacob (Redcar) (Con)

Z

Zahawi, Nadhim (Stratford-on-Avon) (Con)
Zeichner, Daniel Stephen (Cambridge) (Lab)

House of Commons

Alphabetical List of Members

[Returned at the General Election, 12 December 2019]

A

Abbott, Rt Hon. Diane Julie (Hackney North and Stoke Newington) (Lab)
Abrahams, Deborah Angela Elspeth Marie (Oldham East and Saddleworth) (Lab)
Adams, Nigel (Selby and Ainsty) (Con)
Afolami, Abimbola (Hitchin and Harpenden) (Con)
Afriyie, Adam (Windsor) (Con)
Ahmad Khan, Imran Nasir (Wakefield) (Con)
Aiken, Nicola Jane (Cities of London and Westminster) (Con)
Aldous, Peter James Guy (Waveney) (Con)
Ali, Rushanara (Bethnal Green and Bow) (Lab)
Ali, Tahir (Birmingham, Hall Green) (Lab)
Allan, Lucy (Telford) (Con)
Allin-Khan, Rosena Chantelle (Tooting) (Lab)
Amesbury, Michael Lee (Weaver Vale) (Lab)
Amess, Sir David Anthony Andrew (Southend West) (Con)
Anderson, Fleur (Putney) (Lab)
Anderson, Lee (Ashfield) (Con)
Anderson, Stuart Paul (Wolverhampton South West) (Con)
Andrew, Stuart James (Pudsey) (Con)
Ansell, Caroline (Eastbourne) (Con)
Antoniazzi, Antonia Louise (Gower) (Lab)
Argar, Edward John Comport (Charnwood) (Con)
Ashworth, Jonathan Michael Graham (Leicester South) (Lab/Co-op)
Atherton, Sarah Elizabeth (Wrexham) (Con)
Atkins, Victoria Mary (Louth and Horncastle) (Con)

B

Bacon, Gareth Andrew (Orpington) (Con)
Bacon, Richard Michael (South Norfolk) (Con)
Badenoch, Olukemi Olufunto (Saffron Walden) (Con)
Bailey, Shaun Stephen (West Bromwich West) (Con)
Baillie, Siobhan Kathleen (Stroud) (Con)
Baker, Duncan Charles (North Norfolk) (Con)
Baker, Steven John (Wycombe) (Con)
Baldwin, Harriett Mary Morison (West Worcestershire) (Con)
Barclay, Rt Hon. Stephen Paul (North East Cambridgeshire) (Con)
Bardell, Hannah Mary (Livingston) (SNP)
Barker, Paula (Liverpool, Wavertree) (Lab)
Baron, John Charles (Basildon and Billericay) (Con)
Baynes, Simon Robert Maurice (Clwyd South) (Con)
Beckett, Rt Hon. Margaret Mary (Derby South) (Lab)
Begley, Órfhlaith Acife (West Tyrone) (SF)
Begum, Apsana (Poplar and Limehouse) (Lab)
Bell, Aaron Stuart (Newcastle-under-Lyme) (Con)
Benn, Rt Hon. Hilary James (Leeds Central) (Lab)
Benton, Scott Lloyd (Blackpool South) (Con)
Beresford, Sir Alexander Paul (Mole Valley) (Con)
Berry, Rt Hon. James Jacob Gilchrist (Rossendale and Darwen) (Con)
Betts, Clive James Charles (Sheffield South East) (Lab)
Bhatti, Mohammad Saqib (Meriden) (Con)
Black, Mhairi (Paisley and Renfrewshire South) (SNP)

Blackford, Rt Hon. Ian (Ross, Skye and Lochaber) (SNP)
Blackman, Robert John (Harrow East) (Con)
Blackman, Kirsty Ann (Aberdeen North) (SNP)
Blake Dagnall, Olivia Frances (Sheffield, Hallam) (Lab)
Blomfield, Paul Christopher (Sheffield Central) (Lab)
Blunt, Crispin Jeremy Rupert (Reigate) (Con)
Bone, Peter William (Wellingborough) (Con)
Bonnar, Steven (Coatbridge, Chryston and Bellshill) (SNP)
Bottomley, Sir Peter James (Worthing West) (Con)
Bowie, Andrew Campbell (West Aberdeenshire and Kincardine) (Con)
Brabin, Tracy Lynn (Batley and Spen) (Lab/Co-op)
Bradley, Benjamin David (Mansfield) (Con)
Bradley, Rt Hon. Karen Anne (Staffordshire Moorlands) (Con)
Bradshaw, Rt Hon. Benjamin Peter James (Exeter) (Lab)
Brady, Sir Graham Stuart (Altrincham and Sale West) (Con)
Brady, Michael (Newry and Armagh) (SF)
Braverman, Sue-Ellen Cassiana (Fareham) (Con)
Brennan, Kevin Denis (Cardiff West) (Lab)
Brereton, Jack Edgar (Stoke-on-Trent South) (Con)
Bridgen, Andrew James (North West Leicestershire) (Con)
Brine, Stephen Charles (Winchester) (Con)
Bristow, Paul (Peterborough) (Con)
Britcliffe, Sara Alice (Hyndburn) (Con)
Brock, Deidre Leanne (Edinburgh North and Leith) (SNP)
Brokenshire, Rt Hon. James Peter (Old Bexley and Sidcup) (Con)
Brown, Alan (Kilmarnock and Loudoun) (SNP)
Brown, Lyn Carol (West Ham) (Lab)
Brown, Rt Hon. Nicholas Hugh (Newcastle upon Tyne East) (Lab)
Browne, Anthony Howe (South Cambridgeshire) (Con)
Bruce, Fiona Claire (Congleton) (Con)
Bryant, Christopher John (Rhondda) (Lab)
Buchan, Felicity Christiana (Kensington) (Con)
Buck, Karen Patricia (Westminster North) (Lab)
Buckland, Rt Hon. Robert James (South Swindon) (Con)
Burghart, Michael Alex (Brentwood and Ongar) (Con)
Burgon, Richard (Leeds East) (Lab)
Burns, Rt Hon. Conor (Bournemouth West) (Con)
Butler, Dawn Petula (Brent Central) (Lab)
Butler, Robert (Aylesbury) (Con)
Byrne, Ian Robert (Liverpool, West Derby) (Lab)
Byrne, Rt Hon. Liam Dominic (Birmingham, Hodge Hill) (Lab)

C

Cadbury, Ruth Margaret (Brentford and Isleworth) (Lab)
Cairns, Rt Hon. Alun Hugh (Vale of Glamorgan) (Con)
Callaghan, Amy (East Dunbartonshire) (SNP)
Cameron, Lisa (East Kilbride, Strathaven and Lesmahagow) (SNP)
Campbell, Rt Hon. Sir Alan Hugh (Tynemouth) (Lab)

Campbell, Gregory Lloyd (East Londonderry) (DUP)
 Carden, Daniel Joseph (Liverpool, Walton) (Lab)
 Carmichael, Rt Hon. Alexander Morrison (Orkney and Shetland) (LD)
 Carter, Andrew John (Warrington South) (Con)
 Cartlidge, James Roger (South Suffolk) (Con)
 Cash, Sir William Nigel Paul (Stone) (Con)
 Cates, Miriam Joy (Penistone and Stocksbridge) (Con)
 Caulfield, Maria Colette (Lewes) (Con)
 Chalk, Alexander John Gervase (Cheltenham) (Con)
 Chamberlain, Wendy Anne (North East Fife) (LD)
 Champion, Sarah Deborah (Rotherham) (Lab)
 Chapman, Douglas (Dunfermline and West Fife) (SNP)
 Charalambous, Charalambos (Enfield, Southgate) (Lab)
 Cherry, Joanna Catherine (Edinburgh South West) (SNP)
 Chishti, Atta-Ur-Rehman (Gillingham and Rainham) (Con)
 Chope, Sir Christopher Robert (Christchurch) (Con)
 Churchill, Johanna Peta (Bury St Edmunds) (Con)
 Clark, Feryal Demirci (Enfield North) (Lab)
 Clark, Rt Hon. Gregory David (Tunbridge Wells) (Con)
 Clarke, Simon Richard (Middlesbrough South and East Cleveland) (Con)
 Clarke, Theodora Roosevelt (Stafford) (Con)
 Clarke-Smith, Brendan (Bassetlaw) (Con)
 Clarkson, Christopher Mark (Heywood and Middleton) (Con)
 Cleverly, Rt Hon. James Spencer (Braintree) (Con)
 Clifton-Brown, Sir Geoffrey Robert (The Cotswolds) (Con)
 Coffey, Rt Hon. Thérèse Anne (Suffolk Coastal) (Con)
 Colburn, Elliott (Carshalton and Wallington) (Con)
 Collins, Damian Noel Thomas (Folkestone and Hythe) (Con)
 Cooper, Daisy (St Albans) (LD)
 Cooper, Rosemary Elizabeth (West Lancashire) (Lab)
 Cooper, Rt Hon. Yvette (Normanton, Pontefract and Castleford) (Lab)
 Corbyn, Rt Hon. Jeremy Bernard (Islington North) (Lab)
 Costa, Alberto Castrenze (South Leicestershire) (Con)
 Courts, Robert Alexander (Witney) (Con)
 Coutinho, Claire Coryl Julia (East Surrey) (Con)
 Cowan, Ronald Jack (Inverclyde) (SNP)
 Cox, Rt Hon. Charles Geoffrey (Torrige and West Devon) (Con)
 Coyle, Neil (Bermondsey and Old Southwark) (Lab)
 Crabb, Rt Hon. Stephen (Preseli Pembrokeshire) (Con)
 Crawley, Angela (Lanark and Hamilton East) (SNP)
 Creasy, Stella Judith (Walthamstow) (Lab/Co-op)
 Crosbie, Virginia Ann (Ynys Môn) (Con)
 Crouch, Tracey Elizabeth Anne (Chatham and Aylesford) (Con)
 Cruddas, Jonathan (Dagenham and Rainham) (Lab)
 Cryer, John Robert (Leyton and Wanstead) (Lab)
 Cummins, Judith Mary (Bradford South) (Lab)
 Cunningham, Alexander (Stockton North) (Lab)

D

Daby, Janet Jessica (Lewisham East) (Lab)
 Daly, James Barry (Bury North) (Con)
 Davey, Rt Hon. Sir Edward Jonathon (Kingston and Surbiton) (LD)
 David, Wayne (Caerphilly) (Lab)
 Davies, David Thomas Charles (Monmouth) (Con)
 Davies, Gareth Mark (Grantham and Stamford) (Con)
 Davies, Geraint Richard (Swansea West) (Lab/Co-op)
 Davies, James Michael (Vale of Clwyd) (Con)
 Davies, Miriam Jane Alice (Mid Sussex) (Con)

Davies, Philip Andrew (Shipley) (Con)
 Davies-Jones, Alexandra Mary (Pontypridd) (Lab)
 Davis, Rt Hon. David Michael (Haltemprice and Howden) (Con)
 Davison, Dehenna Sheridan (Bishop Auckland) (Con)
 Day, Martyn (Linlithgow and East Falkirk) (SNP)
 De Cordova, Marsha Chantol (Battersea) (Lab)
 Debbonaire, Thangam Elizabeth Rachel (Bristol West) (Lab)
 Dhesi, Tanmanjeet Singh (Slough) (Lab)
 Dinenage, Caroline Julia (Gosport) (Con)
 Dines, Sarah Elizabeth (Derbyshire Dales) (Con)
 Djanogly, Jonathan Simon (Huntingdon) (Con)
 Docherty, Leo (Aldershot) (Con)
 Docherty-Hughes, Martin John (West Dunbartonshire) (SNP)
 Dodds, Anneliese Jane (Oxford East) (Lab/Co-op)
 Donaldson, Rt Hon. Sir Jeffrey Mark (Lagan Valley) (DUP)
 Donelan, Michelle Emma May Elizabeth (Chippenham) (Con)
 Doogan, David Michael (Angus) (SNP)
 Dorans, Allan Hopkins (Ayr, Carrick and Cumnock) (SNP)
 Dorries, Nadine Vanessa (Mid Bedfordshire) (Con)
 Double, Stephen Daniel (St Austell and Newquay) (Con)
 Doughty, Stephen John (Cardiff South and Penarth) (Lab/Co-op)
 Dowd, Peter Christopher (Bootle) (Lab)
 Dowden, Rt Hon. Oliver James (Hertsmere) (Con)
 Doyle-Price, Jacqueline (Thurrock) (Con)
 Drax, Richard Grosvenor (South Dorset) (Con)
 Dromey, John Eugene Joseph (Birmingham, Erdington) (Lab)
 Drummond, Felicia Jane Beatrix (Meon Valley) (Con)
 Duddridge, James Philip (Rochford and Southend East) (Con)
 Duffield, Rosemary Clare (Canterbury) (Lab)
 Duguid, David James (Banff and Buchan) (Con)
 Duncan Smith, Rt Hon. George Iain (Chingford and Woodford Green) (Con)
 Dunne, Rt Hon. Philip Martin (Ludlow) (Con)

E

Eagle, Angela (Wallasey) (Lab)
 Eagle, Maria (Garston and Halewood) (Lab)
 Eastwood, Colum (Foyle) (SDLP)
 Eastwood, Mark Simon (Dewsbury) (Con)
 Edwards, David Jonathan (Carmarthen East and Dinefwr) (PC)
 Edwards, Ruth Rosamond (Rushcliffe) (Con)
 Efford, Clive Stanley (Eltham) (Lab)
 Elliott, Julie (Sunderland Central) (Lab)
 Ellis, Rt Hon. Michael Tyrone (Northampton North) (Con)
 Ellwood, Rt Hon. Tobias Martin (Bournemouth East) (Con)
 Elmore, Christopher Philip James (Ogmore) (Lab)
 Elphicke, Natalie Cecilia (Dover) (Con)
 Eshalomi, Florence (Vauxhall) (Lab/Co-op)
 Esterson, William Roffen (Sefton Central) (Lab)
 Eustice, Charles George (Camborne and Redruth) (Con)
 Evans, Christopher James (Islwyn) (Lab/Co-op)
 Evans, Luke Morgan (Bosworth) (Con)
 Evans, Nigel Martin (Ribble Valley) (Con)
 Evennett, Rt Hon. Sir David Anthony (Bexleyheath and Crayford) (Con)
 Everitt, Ben (Milton Keynes North) (Con)

F

Fabricant, Michael Louis David (Lichfield) (Con)
 Farris, Laura Rose (Newbury) (Con)
 Farron, Timothy James (Westmorland and Lonsdale) (LD)
 Farry, Stephen Anthony (North Down) (Alliance)
 Fell, Simon Richard James (Barrow and Furness) (Con)
 Fellows, Marion (Motherwell and Wishaw) (SNP)
 Ferrier, Margaret (Rutherglen and Hamilton West) (SNP)
 Finucane, John (Belfast North) (SF)
 Fletcher, Colleen Margaret (Coventry North East) (Lab)
 Fletcher, Katherine (South Ribble) (Con)
 Fletcher, Mark Peter (Bolsover) (Con)
 Fletcher, Nicholas Anthony (Don Valley) (Con)
 Flynn, Stephen Mark (Aberdeen South) (SNP)
 Ford, Victoria Grace (Chelmsford) (Con)
 Foster, Kevin John (Torbay) (Con)
 Fovargue, Yvonne Helen (Makerfield) (Lab)
 Fox, Rt Hon. Liam (North Somerset) (Con)
 Foxcroft, Victoria Jane (Lewisham, Deptford) (Lab)
 Foy, Mary Kelly (City of Durham) (Lab)
 Francois, Rt Hon. Mark Gino (Rayleigh and Wickford) (Con)
 Frazer, Lucy Claire (South East Cambridgeshire) (Con)
 Freeman, George William (Mid Norfolk) (Con)
 Freer, Michael Whitney (Finchley and Golders Green) (Con)
 Fuller, Richard Quentin (North East Bedfordshire) (Con)
 Furniss, Gillian (Sheffield, Brightside and Hillsborough) (Lab)
 Fysh, Marcus John Hudson (Yeovil) (Con)

G

Gale, Rt Hon. Sir Roger James (North Thanet) (Con)
 Gardiner, Barry Strachan (Brent North) (Lab)
 Garnier, Mark Robert Timothy (Wyre Forest) (Con)
 Ghani, Nusrat Munir (Wealden) (Con)
 Gibb, Rt Hon. Nicolas John (Bognor Regis and Littlehampton) (Con)
 Gibson, Patricia (North Ayrshire and Arran) (SNP)
 Gibson, Peter Alexander (Darlington) (Con)
 Gideon, Joanna Mary (Stoke-on-Trent Central) (Con)
 Gildernew, Michelle Angela (Fermanagh and South Tyrone) (SF)
 Gill, Preet Kaur (Birmingham, Edgbaston) (Lab/Co-op)
 Gillan, Rt Hon. Dame Cheryl Elise Kendall (Chesham and Amersham) (Con)
 Girvan, William Paul (South Antrim) (DUP)
 Glen, John Philip (Salisbury) (Con)
 Glindon, Mary Theresa (North Tyneside) (Lab)
 Goodwill, Rt Hon. Robert (Scarborough and Whitby) (Con)
 Gove, Rt Hon. Michael Andrew (Surrey Heath) (Con)
 Grady, Patrick John (Glasgow North) (SNP)
 Graham, Richard Michael John Ogilvie (Gloucester) (Con)
 Grant, Helen (Maidstone and The Weald) (Con)
 Grant, Peter (Glenrothes) (SNP)
 Gray, James Whiteside (North Wiltshire) (Con)
 Gray, Neil Charles (Airdrie and Shotts) (SNP)
 Grayling, Rt Hon. Christopher Stephen (Epsom and Ewell) (Con)
 Green, Christopher James (Bolton West) (Con)
 Green, Rt Hon. Damian Howard (Ashford) (Con)
 Green, Katherine Anne (Stretford and Urmston) (Lab)

Greenwood, Lilian Rachel (Nottingham South) (Lab)
 Greenwood, Margaret (Wirral West) (Lab)
 Griffith, Andrew (Arundel and South Downs) (Con)
 Griffith, Nia Rhiannon (Llanelli) (Lab)
 Griffiths, Kate Elizabeth (Burton) (Con)
 Grundy, James Nelson (Leigh) (Con)
 Gullis, Jonathan Edward (Stoke-on-Trent North) (Con)
 Gwynne, Andrew John (Denton and Reddish) (Lab)

H

Haigh, Louise Margaret (Sheffield, Heeley) (Lab)
 Halfon, Rt Hon. Robert Henry (Harlow) (Con)
 Hall, Luke Anthony (Thornbury and Yate) (Con)
 Hamilton, Fabian (Leeds North East) (Lab)
 Hammond, Stephen William (Wimbledon) (Con)
 Hancock, Rt Hon. Matthew John David (West Suffolk) (Con)
 Hands, Rt Hon. Gregory William (Chelsea and Fulham) (Con)
 Hanna, Claire Aisling (Belfast South) (SDLP)
 Hanvey, James Neale (Kirkcaldy and Cowdenbeath) (Ind)
 Hardy, Emma Ann (Kingston upon Hull West and Hessle) (Lab)
 Harman, Rt Hon. Harriet Ruth (Camberwell and Peckham) (Lab)
 Harper, Rt Hon. Mark James (Forest of Dean) (Con)
 Harris, Carolyn (Swansea East) (Lab)
 Harris, Elizabeth Rebecca Scott (Castle Point) (Con)
 Harrison, Trudy Lynne (Copeland) (Con)
 Hart, Sally-Ann (Hastings and Rye) (Con)
 Hart, Rt Hon. Simon Anthony (Carmarthen West and South Pembrokeshire) (Con)
 Hayes, Helen Elizabeth (Dulwich and West Norwood) (Lab)
 Hayes, Rt Hon. Sir John Henry (South Holland and The Deepings) (Con)
 Hazzard, Christopher John (South Down) (SF)
 Heald, Rt Hon. Sir Oliver (North East Hertfordshire) (Con)
 Healey, Rt Hon. John (Wentworth and Dearne) (Lab)
 Heapey, James Stephen (Wells) (Con)
 Heaton-Harris, Christopher (Daventry) (Con)
 Henderson, Gordon Leonard (Sittingbourne and Sheppey) (Con)
 Hendrick, Sir Mark Phillip (Preston) (Lab/Co-op)
 Hendry, Andrew Egan Henderson (Inverness, Nairn, Badenoch and Strathspey) (SNP)
 Henry, Darren George (Broxton) (Con)
 Higginbotham, Antony (Burnley) (Con)
 Hill, Michael Robert (Hartlepool) (Lab)
 Hillier, Margaret Olivia (Hackney South and Shoreditch) (Lab/Co-op)
 Hinds, Rt Hon. Damian Patrick George (East Hampshire) (Con)
 Hoare, Simon James (North Dorset) (Con)
 Hobhouse, Wera Benedicta (Bath) (LD)
 Hodge, Rt Hon. Dame Margaret Eve (Barking) (Lab)
 Hodgson, Sharon (Washington and Sunderland West) (Lab)
 Holden, Richard John (North West Durham) (Con)
 Hollern, Catherine Malloy (Blackburn) (Lab)
 Hollinrake, Kevin Paul (Thirsk and Malton) (Con)
 Hollobone, Philip Thomas (Kettering) (Con)
 Holloway, Adam James Harold (Gravesham) (Con)
 Holmes, Paul John (Eastleigh) (Con)
 Hopkins, Rachel Louise (Luton South) (Lab)
 Hosie, Stewart (Dundee East) (SNP)
 Howarth, Rt Hon. Sir George Edward (Knowsley) (Lab)

Howell, John Michael (Henley) (Con)
 Howell, Paul (Sedgefield) (Con)
 Hoyle, Rt Hon. Sir Lindsay Harvey (Chorley) (Speaker)
 Huddleston, Nigel Paul (Mid Worcestershire) (Con)
 Hudson, Neil Peter Hammerton (Penrith and The Border) (Con)
 Hughes, Edmund Francis (Walsall North) (Con)
 Hunt, Jane Marion (Loughborough) (Con)
 Hunt, Rt Hon. Jeremy Richard Streynsham (South West Surrey) (Con)
 Hunt, Thomas Patrick (Ipswich) (Con)
 Huq, Rupa Asha (Ealing Central and Acton) (Lab)
 Hussain, Imran (Bradford East) (Lab)

J

Jack, Rt Hon. Alister William (Dumfries and Galloway) (Con)
 Jardine, Christine Anne (Edinburgh West) (LD)
 Jarvis, Daniel Owen (Barnsley Central) (Lab)
 Javid, Rt Hon. Sajid (Bromsgrove) (Con)
 Jayawardena, Ranil Malcolm (North East Hampshire) (Con)
 Jenkin, Sir Bernard Christison (Harwich and North Essex) (Con)
 Jenkinson, Mark Ian (Workington) (Con)
 Jenkyns, Andrea Marie (Morley and Outwood) (Con)
 Jenrick, Rt Hon. Robert Edward (Newark) (Con)
 Johnson, Rt Hon. Alexander Boris de Pfeffel (Uxbridge and South Ruislip) (Con)
 Johnson, Caroline Elizabeth (Sleaford and North Hykeham) (Con)
 Johnson, Diana Ruth (Kingston upon Hull North) (Lab)
 Johnson, Gareth Alan (Dartford) (Con)
 Johnson, Kim Marie (Liverpool, Riverside) (Lab)
 Johnston, David Mervyn (Wantage) (Con)
 Jones, Andrew Hanson (Harrogate and Knaresborough) (Con)
 Jones, Darren Paul (Bristol North West) (Lab)
 Jones, Rt Hon. David Ian (Clwyd West) (Con)
 Jones, Fay Alicia (Brecon and Radnorshire) (Con)
 Jones, Gerald (Merthyr Tydfil and Rhymney) (Lab)
 Jones, Rt Hon. Kevan David (North Durham) (Lab)
 Jones, Marcus Charles (Nuneaton) (Con)
 Jones, Ruth Lorraine (Newport West) (Lab)
 Jones, Sarah Ann (Croydon Central) (Lab)
 Jupp, Simon James (East Devon) (Con)

K

Kane, Michael Joseph Patrick (Wythenshawe and Sale East) (Lab)
 Kawczynski, Daniel Robert (Shrewsbury and Atcham) (Con)
 Kearns, Alicia Alexandra Martha (Rutland and Melton) (Con)
 Keegan, Gillian (Chichester) (Con)
 Keeley, Barbara Mary (Worsley and Eccles South) (Lab)
 Kendall, Elizabeth Louise (Leicester West) (Lab)
 Khan, Afzal Mohammed (Manchester, Gorton) (Lab)
 Kinnock, Stephen Nathan (Aberavon) (Lab)
 Knight, Rt Hon. Sir Gregory (East Yorkshire) (Con)
 Knight, Julian Carlton (Solihull) (Con)
 Kruger, Daniel Rayne (Devizes) (Con)
 Kwarteng, Rt Hon. Kwasi Alfred Addo (Spelthorne) (Con)
 Kyle, Peter John (Hove) (Lab)

L

Laing, Rt Hon. Dame Eleanor Fulton (Epping Forest) (Con)
 Lake, Ben Morgan (Ceredigion) (PC)
 Lammy, Rt Hon. David Lindon (Tottenham) (Lab)
 Lamont, John Robert (Berwickshire, Roxburgh and Selkirk) (Con)
 Langan, Robert (High Peak) (Con)
 Latham, Pauline Elizabeth (Mid Derbyshire) (Con)
 Lavery, Ian (Wansbeck) (Lab)
 Law, Christopher Murray Alexander (Dundee West) (SNP)
 Leadsom, Rt Hon. Andrea Jacqueline (South Northamptonshire) (Con)
 Leigh, Rt Hon. Sir Edward Julian Egerton (Gainsborough) (Con)
 Levy, Ian (Blyth Valley) (Con)
 Lewell-Buck, Emma Louise (South Shields) (Lab)
 Lewer, Andrew Iain (Northampton South) (Con)
 Lewis, Rt Hon. Brandon Kenneth (Great Yarmouth) (Con)
 Lewis, Clive Anthony (Norwich South) (Lab)
 Lewis, Rt Hon. Julian Murray (New Forest East) (Con)
 Liddell-Grainger, Ian Richard Peregrine (Bridgwater and West Somerset) (Con)
 Linden, David Melvyn (Glasgow East) (SNP)
 Lloyd, Anthony Joseph (Rochdale) (Lab)
 Lockhart, Carla Rebecca (Upper Bann) (DUP)
 Loder, Christopher Lionel John (West Dorset) (Con)
 Logan, Mark Rory (Bolton North East) (Con)
 Long Bailey, Rebecca (Salford and Eccles) (Lab)
 Longhi, Marco (Dudley North) (Con)
 Lopez, Julia Louise (Hornchurch and Upminster) (Con)
 Lopresti, Giacomo (Filton and Bradley Stoke) (Con)
 Lord, Jonathan George Caladine (Woking) (Con)
 Loughton, Timothy Paul (East Worthing and Shoreham) (Con)
 Lucas, Caroline Patricia (Brighton, Pavilion) (Green)
 Lynch, Holly Jamie (Halifax) (Lab)

M

MacAskill, Kenny Wright (East Lothian) (SNP)
 McCabe, Stephen James (Birmingham, Selly Oak) (Lab)
 McCarthy, Kerry Gillian (Bristol East) (Lab)
 McCartney, Jason Alexander (Colne Valley) (Con)
 McCartney, Karl Ian (Lincoln) (Con)
 McDonagh, Siobhain Ann (Mitcham and Morden) (Lab)
 McDonald, Andrew Joseph (Middlesbrough) (Lab)
 McDonald, Stewart Malcolm (Glasgow South) (SNP)
 McDonald, Stuart Campbell (Cumbernauld, Kilsyth and Kirkintilloch East) (SNP)
 McDonnell, Rt Hon. John Martin (Hayes and Harlington) (Lab)
 McFadden, Rt Hon. Patrick Bosco (Wolverhampton South East) (Lab)
 McGinn, Conor Patrick (St Helens North) (Lab)
 McGovern, Alison (Wirral South) (Lab)
 Mackinlay, Craig (South Thanet) (Con)
 McKinnell, Catherine (Newcastle upon Tyne North) (Lab)
 Mackrory, Cherilyn (Truro and Falmouth) (Con)
 McLaughlin, Anne (Glasgow North East) (SNP)
 Maclean, Rachel Helen (Redditch) (Con)
 McMahan, James (Oldham West and Royton) (Lab/Co-op)
 McMorris, Anna Rhiannon (Cardiff North) (Lab)

Mc Nally, John Joseph (Falkirk) (SNP)
 MacNeil, Angus Brendan (Na h-Eileanan an Iar) (SNP)
 McPartland, Stephen Anthony (Stevenage) (Con)
 McVey, Rt Hon. Esther Louise (Tatton) (Con)
 Madders, Justin Piers Richard (Ellesmere Port and Neston) (Lab)
 Mahmood, Khalid (Birmingham, Perry Barr) (Lab)
 Mahmood, Shabana (Birmingham, Ladywood) (Lab)
 Mak, Alan (Havant) (Con)
 Malhotra Seema (Feltham and Heston) (Lab/Co-op)
 Malthouse, Christopher Laurie (North West Hampshire) (Con)
 Mangnall, Anthony James Holland (Totnes) (Con)
 Mann, Scott Leslie (North Cornwall) (Con)
 Marson, Julie (Hertford and Stortford) (Con)
 Maskell, Rachael Helen (York Central) (Lab/Co-op)
 Maskey, Paul John (Belfast West) (SF)
 Matheson, Christian John Patrick (City of Chester) (Lab)
 May, Rt Hon. Theresa Mary (Maidenhead) (Con)
 Mayhew, Jerome Patrick Burke (Broadland) (Con)
 Maynard, Paul Christopher (Blackpool North and Cleveleys) (Con)
 Mearns, James Ian (Gateshead) (Lab)
 Menzies, Mark Andrew (Fylde) (Con)
 Mercer, John Luther (Plymouth, Moor View) (Con)
 Merriman, Huw William (Bexhill and Battle) (Con)
 Metcalfe, Stephen James (South Basildon and East Thurrock) (Con)
 Milliband, Rt Hon. Edward Samuel (Doncaster North) (Lab)
 Millar, Robin John (Aberconwy) (Con)
 Miller, Rt Hon. Maria Frances Lewis (Basingstoke) (Con)
 Milling, Amanda Anne (Cannock Chase) (Con)
 Mills, Nigel John (Amber Valley) (Con)
 Mishra, Navendu Prabhat (Stockport) (Lab)
 Mitchell, Rt Hon. Andrew John Bower (Sutton Coldfield) (Con)
 Mohindra, Gagan (South West Hertfordshire) (Con)
 Molloy, Francis Joseph (Mid Ulster) (SF)
 Monaghan, Carol Frances (Glasgow North West) (SNP)
 Moore, Damien (Southport) (Con)
 Moore, Robert Peter (Keighley) (Con)
 Moran, Layla Michelle (Oxford West and Abingdon) (LD)
 Mordaunt, Rt Hon. Penny Mary (Portsmouth North) (Con)
 Morden, Jessica Elizabeth (Newport East) (Lab)
 Morgan, Stephen James (Portsmouth South) (Lab)
 Morris, Anne Marie (Newton Abbot) (Con)
 Morris, David Thomas (Morecambe and Lunesdale) (Con)
 Morris, Grahame Mark (Easington) (Lab)
 Morris, James George (Halesowen and Rowley Regis) (Con)
 Morrissey, Joy Inboden (Beaconsfield) (Con)
 Morton, Wendy (Aldridge-Brownhills) (Con)
 Mullan, Kieran John (Crewe and Nantwich) (Con)
 Mumby-Croft, Holly (Scunthorpe) (Con)
 Mundell, Rt Hon. David Gordon (Dumfriesshire, Clydesdale and Tweeddale) (Con)
 Murray, Ian (Edinburgh South) (Lab)
 Murray, James Stewart (Ealing North) (Lab/Co-op)
 Murray, Sheryll (South East Cornwall) (Con)
 Murrison, Rt Hon. Andrew William (South West Wiltshire) (Con)

N

Nandy, Lisa Eva (Wigan) (Lab)
 Neill, Robert James MacGillivray (Bromley and Chislehurst) (Con)
 Newlands, Gavin Andrew Stuart (Paisley and Renfrewshire North) (SNP)
 Nichols, Charlotte Louise (Warrington North) (Lab)
 Nici-Townend, Lia (Great Grimsby) (Con)
 Nicolson, John MacKenzie (Ochil and South Perthshire) (SNP)
 Nokes, Rt Hon. Caroline Fiona Ellen (Romsey and Southampton North) (Con)
 Norman, Rt Hon. Alexander Jesse (Hereford and South Herefordshire) (Con)
 Norris, Alexander James Jordan (Nottingham North) (Lab/Co-op)

O

O'Brien, Neil John (Harborough) (Con)
 Offord, Matthew James (Hendon) (Con)
 O'Hara, Brendan (Argyll and Bute) (SNP)
 Olney, Sarah Jane (Richmond Park) (LD)
 Onwurah, Chinyelu Susan (Newcastle upon Tyne Central) (Lab)
 Opperman, Guy Thomas (Hexham) (Con)
 Oppong-Asare, Abena (Erith and Thamesmead) (Lab)
 Osamor, Kate Ofunne (Edmonton) (Lab/Co-op)
 Osborne, Katherine Helen (Jarrow) (Lab)
 Oswald, Kirsten Frances (East Renfrewshire) (SNP)
 Owatemi, Taiwo (Coventry North West) (Lab)
 Owen, Sarah Mei Li (Luton North) (Lab)

P

Paisley, Ian Richard Kyle (North Antrim) (DUP)
 Parish, Neil Quentin Gordon (Tiverton and Honiton) (Con)
 Patel, Rt Hon. Priti Sushil (Witham) (Con)
 Paterson, Rt Hon. Owen William (North Shropshire) (Con)
 Pawsey, Mark Julian Francis (Rugby) (Con)
 Peacock, Stephanie Louise (Barnsley East) (Lab)
 Penning, Rt Hon. Sir Michael Alan (Hemel Hempstead) (Con)
 Pennycook, Matthew Thomas (Greenwich and Woolwich) (Lab)
 Penrose, John David (Weston-super-Mare) (Con)
 Percy, Andrew Theakstone (Brigg and Goole) (Con)
 Perkins, Matthew Toby (Chesterfield) (Lab)
 Phillips, Jessica Rose (Birmingham, Yardley) (Lab)
 Phillipson, Bridget Maeve (Houghton and Sunderland South) (Lab)
 Philp, Chris Ian Brian Mynott (Croydon South) (Con)
 Pincher, Rt Hon. Christopher John (Tamworth) (Con)
 Pollard, Luke (Plymouth, Sutton and Devonport) (Lab/Co-op)
 Poulter, Daniel Leonard James (Central Suffolk and North Ipswich) (Con)
 Pow, Rebecca Faye (Taunton Deane) (Con)
 Powell, Lucy Maria (Manchester Central) (Lab/Co-op)
 Prentis, Victoria Mary Boswell (Banbury) (Con)
 Pritchard, Mark Andrew (The Wrekin) (Con)
 Pursglove, Thomas Christopher John (Corby) (Con)

Q

Quin, Jeremy Mark (Horsham) (Con)
 Quince, William James (Colchester) (Con)
 Qureshi, Yasmin (Bolton South East) (Lab)

R

Raab, Rt Hon. Dominic Rennie (Esher and Walton) (Con)
 Randall, Thomas William (Gedling) (Con)
 Rayner, Angela (Ashton-under-Lyne) (Lab)
 Redwood, Rt Hon. Sir John Alan (Wokingham) (Con)
 Reed, Steven Mark Ward (Croydon North) (Lab/Co-op)
 Rees, Christina Elizabeth (Neath) (Lab/Co-op)
 Rees-Mogg, Rt Hon. Jacob William (North East Somerset) (Con)
 Reeves, Eleanor Claire (Lewisham West and Penge) (Lab)
 Reeves, Rachel Jane (Leeds West) (Lab)
 Reynolds, Jonathan Neil (Stalybridge and Hyde) (Lab/Co-op)
 Ribeiro-Addy, Bellavia Janet (Streatham) (Lab)
 Richards, Nicola Faye (West Bromwich East) (Con)
 Richardson, Angela Joy (Guildford) (Con)
 Rimmer, Marie Elizabeth (St Helens South and Whiston) (Lab)
 Roberts, Robert Joseph (Delyn) (Con)
 Robertson, Laurence Anthony (Tewkesbury) (Con)
 Robinson, Gavin James (Belfast East) (DUP)
 Robinson, Mary Josephine (Cheadle) (Con)
 Rodda, Mathew Richard Allen (Reading East) (Lab)
 Rosindell, Andrew Richard (Romford) (Con)
 Ross, Douglas Gordon (Moray) (Con)
 Rowley, Lee Benjamin (North East Derbyshire) (Con)
 Russell, Dean (Watford) (Con)
 Russell-Moyle, Lloyd (Brighton, Kemptown) (Lab/Co-op)
 Rutley, David Henry (Macclesfield) (Con)

S

Sambrook, Gary William (Birmingham, Northfield) (Con)
 Saville Roberts, Rt Hon. Elizabeth (Dwyfor Meirionnydd) (PC)
 Saxby, Selaine Rachel (North Devon) (Con)
 Scully, Paul Stuart (Sutton and Cheam) (Con)
 Seely, Robert William Henry (Isle of Wight) (Con)
 Selous, Andrew Edmund Armstrong (South West Bedfordshire) (Con)
 Shah, Naseem Akhtar (Bradford West) (Lab)
 Shannon, Richard James (Strangford) (DUP)
 Shapps, Rt Hon. Grant (Welwyn Hatfield) (Con)
 Sharma, Rt Hon. Alok Kumar (Reading West) (Con)
 Sharma, Virendra Kumar (Ealing, Southall) (Lab)
 Sheerman, Barry John (Huddersfield) (Lab/Co-op)
 Shelbrooke, Rt Hon. Alec (Elmet and Rothwell) (Con)
 Sheppard, Thomas (Edinburgh East) (SNP)
 Siddiq, Tulip Rizwana (Hampstead and Kilburn) (Lab)
 Simmonds, David Timothy (Ruislip, Northwood and Pinner) (Con)
 Skidmore, Rt Hon. Christopher James (Kingswood) (Con)
 Slaughter, Andrew Francis (Hammersmith) (Lab)
 Smith, Alyn Edward (Stirling) (SNP)
 Smith, Catherine Jane (Lancaster and Fleetwood) (Lab)
 Smith, Chloe Rebecca (Norwich North) (Con)
 Smith, Greg (Buckingham) (Con)

Smith, Henry Edward Millar (Crawley) (Con)
 Smith, Jeffrey (Manchester, Withington) (Lab)
 Smith, Rt Hon. Julian Richard (Skipton and Ripon) (Con)
 Smith, Nicholas Desmond John (Blaenau Gwent) (Lab)
 Smith, Royston Matthew (Southampton, Itchen) (Con)
 Smyth, Karin Marguerite (Bristol South) (Lab)
 Sobel, Alexander David (Leeds North West) (Lab/Co-op)
 Solloway, Amanda Jane (Derby North) (Con)
 Spellar, Rt Hon. John Francis (Warley) (Lab)
 Spencer, Ben (Runnymede and Weybridge) (Con)
 Spencer, Rt Hon. Mark Steven (Sherwood) (Con)
 Stafford, Alexander Paul Thomas (Rother Valley) (Con)
 Starmer, Rt Hon. Sir Keir (Holborn and St Pancras) (Lab)
 Stephens, Christopher Charles (Glasgow South West) (SNP)
 Stephenson, Andrew George (Pendle) (Con)
 Stevens, Joanna Meriel (Cardiff Central) (Lab)
 Stevenson, Andrew John (Carlisle) (Con)
 Stevenson, Jane Fiona Catherine (Wolverhampton North East) (Con)
 Stewart, Iain Aitken (Milton Keynes South) (Con)
 Stewart, Robert Alexander (Beckenham) (Con)
 Stone, Jamie Hume (Caithness, Sutherland and Easter Ross) (LD)
 Streeter, Sir Gary Nicholas (South West Devon) (Con)
 Streeting, Wesley Paul William (Ilford North) (Lab)
 Stride, Rt Hon. Melvyn John (Central Devon) (Con)
 Stringer, Graham Eric (Blackley and Broughton) (Lab)
 Stuart, Graham Charles (Beverley and Holderness) (Con)
 Sturdy, Julian Charles (York Outer) (Con)
 Sultana, Zarah (Coventry South) (Lab)
 Sunak, Rt Hon. Rishi (Richmond (Yorks)) (Con)
 Sunderland, James (Bracknell) (Con)
 Swayne, Rt Hon. Sir Desmond Angus (New Forest West) (Con)
 Syms, Sir Robert Andrew Raymond (Poole) (Con)

T

Tami, Rt Hon. Mark Richard (Alyn and Deeside) (Lab)
 Tarry, Samuel Peter (Ilford South) (Lab)
 Thewliss, Alison Emily (Glasgow Central) (SNP)
 Thomas, Derek Gordon (St Ives) (Con)
 Thomas, Gareth (Harrow West) (Lab/Co-op)
 Thomas-Symonds, Nicklaus (Torfaen) (Lab)
 Thompson, Owen George (Midlothian) (SNP)
 Thomson, Richard Gordon (Gordon) (SNP)
 Thornberry, Rt Hon. Emily (Islington South and Finsbury) (Lab)
 Throup, Margaret Ann (Erewash) (Con)
 Timms, Rt Hon. Stephen Creswell (East Ham) (Lab)
 Timpson, Anthony Edward (Eddisbury) (Con)
 Tolhurst, Kelly Jane (Rochester and Strood) (Con)
 Tomlinson, Justin Paul (North Swindon) (Con)
 Tomlinson, Michael James (Mid Dorset and North Poole) (Con)
 Tracey, Craig Paul (North Warwickshire) (Con)
 Trevelyan, Anne-Marie Belinda (Berwick-upon-Tweed) (Con)
 Trickett, Jon Hedley (Hemsworth) (Lab)
 Trott, Laura (Sevenoaks) (Con)
 Truss, Rt Hon. Elizabeth Mary (South West Norfolk) (Con)
 Tugendhat, Thomas Georg John (Tonbridge and Malling) (Con)
 Turner, Karl (Kingston upon Hull East) (Lab)

Twigg, John Derek (Halton) (Lab)
Twist, Mary Elizabeth (Blaydon) (Lab)

V

Vara, Shailesh Lakhman (North West Cambridgeshire) (Con)
Vaz, Rt Hon. Valerie Carol Marian (Walsall South) (Lab)
Vickers, Martin John (Cleethorpes) (Con)
Vickers, Matthew Alexander (Stockton South) (Con)
Villiers, Rt Hon. Theresa Anne (Chipping Barnet) (Con)

W

Wakeford, Christian (Bury South) (Con)
Walker, Sir Charles Ashley Rupert (Broxbourne) (Con)
Walker, Robin Caspar (Worcester) (Con)
Wallace, Rt Hon. Robert Ben Lobban (Wyre and Preston North) (Con)
Wallis, Jamie Hamilton (Bridgend) (Con)
Warburton, David John (Somerton and Frome) (Con)
Warman, Matthew Robert (Boston and Skegness) (Con)
Watling, Giles Francis (Clacton) (Con)
Webb, Suzanne (Stourbridge) (Con)
Webbe, Claudia Naomi (Leicester East) (Lab)
West, Catherine Elizabeth (Hornsey and Wood Green) (Lab)
Western, Matthew Raymond (Warwick and Leamington) (Lab)
Whately, Helen Olivia Bicknell (Faversham and Mid Kent) (Con)
Wheeler, Heather Kay (South Derbyshire) (Con)

Whitehead, Alan Patrick Vincent (Southampton, Test) (Lab)
Whitford, Philippa (Central Ayrshire) (SNP)
Whitley, Michael (Birkenhead) (Lab)
Whittaker, Craig (Calder Valley) (Con)
Whittingdale, Rt Hon. John Flasby Lawrance (Maldon) (Con)
Whittome, Nadia Edith (Nottingham East) (Lab)
Wiggin, William David (North Herefordshire) (Con)
Wild, James Oliver (North West Norfolk) (Con)
Williams, Alun Craig (Montgomeryshire) (Con)
Williams, Hywel (Arfon) (PC)
Williamson, Rt Hon. Gavin Alexander (South Staffordshire) (Con)
Wilson, Munira (Twickenham) (LD)
Wilson, Rt Hon. Samuel (East Antrim) (DUP)
Winter, Bethan (Cynon Valley) (Lab)
Winterton, Rt Hon. Dame Rosalie (Doncaster Central) (Lab)
Wishart, Peter (Perth and North Perthshire) (SNP)
Wood, Michael Jon (Dudley South) (Con)
Wragg, William Peter (Hazel Grove) (Con)
Wright, Rt Hon. Jeremy Paul (Kenilworth and Southam) (Con)

Y

Yasin, Mohammad (Bedford) (Lab)
Young, Jacob (Redcar) (Con)

Z

Zahawi, Nadhim (Stratford-on-Avon) (Con)
Zeichner, Daniel Stephen (Cambridge) (Lab)

HER MAJESTY'S GOVERNMENT

MEMBERS OF THE CABINET

(FORMED BY THE RT HON. BORIS JOHNSON, MP, DECEMBER 2019)

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CHANCELLOR OF THE DUCHY OF LANCASTER—The Rt Hon. Michael Gove, MP
LORD CHANCELLOR AND SECRETARY OF STATE FOR JUSTICE—The Rt Hon. Robert Buckland, QC, MP
SECRETARY OF STATE FOR EXITING THE EUROPEAN UNION—The Rt Hon. Stephen Barclay, MP
SECRETARY OF STATE FOR DEFENCE—The Rt Hon. Ben Wallace, MP
SECRETARY OF STATE FOR HEALTH AND SOCIAL CARE—The Rt Hon. Matt Hancock, MP
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SECRETARY OF STATE FOR ENVIRONMENT, FOOD AND RURAL AFFAIRS—The Rt Hon. Theresa Villiers, MP
SECRETARY OF STATE FOR HOUSING, COMMUNITIES AND LOCAL GOVERNMENT—The Rt Hon. Robert Jenrick, MP
SECRETARY OF STATE FOR TRANSPORT—The Rt Hon. Grant Shapps, MP
SECRETARY OF STATE FOR NORTHERN IRELAND—The Rt Hon. Julian Smith, MP
SECRETARY OF STATE FOR SCOTLAND—The Rt Hon. Alister Jack, MP
SECRETARY OF STATE FOR WALES—The Rt Hon. Simon Hart, MP
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SECRETARY OF STATE FOR DIGITAL, CULTURE, MEDIA AND SPORT—The Rt Hon. Nicky Morgan
SECRETARY OF STATE FOR INTERNATIONAL DEVELOPMENT—The Rt Hon. Alok Sharma, MP
MINISTER WITHOUT PORTFOLIO—The Rt Hon. James Cleverly, MP

DEPARTMENTS OF STATE AND MINISTERS

Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy—

SECRETARY OF STATE—The Rt Hon. Andrea Leadsom, MP

MINISTERS OF STATE—

The Rt Hon. Kwasi Kwarteng, MP (Minister for Business, Energy and Clean Growth)

The Rt Hon. Chris Skidmore, MP (Minister for Universities, Science, Research and Innovation) §

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Kelly Tolhurst, MP

Nadhim Zahawi, MP

Lord Duncan of Springbank §

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PRIME MINISTER, FIRST LORD OF THE TREASURY AND MINISTER FOR THE CIVIL SERVICE—The Rt Hon. Boris Johnson, MP

CHANCELLOR OF THE DUCHY OF LANCASTER—The Rt Hon. Michael Gove, MP

MINISTER WITHOUT PORTFOLIO—The Rt Hon. James Cleverly, MP

LEADER OF THE HOUSE OF COMMONS AND LORD PRESIDENT OF THE COUNCIL—The Rt Hon. Jacob Rees-Mogg, MP

LEADER OF THE HOUSE OF LORDS AND LORD PRIVY SEAL—The Rt. Hon. Baroness Evans of Bowes Park

MINISTERS OF STATE—

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 LIBRARY CLERKS—Graeme Cowie, Neil Johnston, Richard Kelly, Dr David Torrance

Science and Environment—

HEAD OF SECTION—Edward Potton

LIBRARY CLERKS—Dr Elena Ares, Bukky Balogun, Dr Sarah Barber, Elizabeth Rough, Sarah Coe, Jonathan Finlay, Gabrielle Garton Grimwood, Suzanna Hinson, Georgina Hutton, Sara Priestley, Louise Smith

Social and General Statistics—

HEAD OF SECTION—Richard Cracknell

LIBRARY CLERKS—Grahame Allen, Dr Carl Baker, Cassie Barton, Paul Bolton, Shadi Danechi, Noel Dempsey, Dr Rachael Harker, Georgina Sturge, Dr Elise Uberoi

Social Policy—

HEAD OF SECTION—Wendy Wilson

LIBRARY CLERKS—Hannah Cromarty, David Foster, Manjit Gheera, Susan Hubble, Tim Jarrett, Steven Kennedy, Robert Long, Melissa Macdonald, Andrew Mackley, Elizabeth Parkin, Tom Powell, Nerys Roberts

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PARLIAMENTARY AND HEALTH SERVICE OMBUDSMAN—Rob Behrens CBE

House of Commons

Thursday 19 December 2019

The House met at twenty-five minutes past Eleven o'clock

PRAYERS

[MR SPEAKER *in the Chair*]

Message to attend Her Majesty delivered by the Lady Usher of the Black Rod.

The Speaker, with the House, went up to attend Her Majesty; on their return, the Speaker suspended the sitting.

Members Sworn

1.58 pm

Mr Speaker: Will Members wishing to take their seats please come to the Table?

The following Members took and subscribed the Oath, or made and subscribed the Affirmation required by law:

Jon Hedley Trickett, *for* Hemsworth

Stephen Charles Brine, Winchester

Adam James Harold Holloway, Gravesham

Colum Eastwood, Foyle

Mr Speaker: The sitting is suspended until 2.30 pm. The bells will ring five minutes before the sitting resumes. Thanks, everybody.

2.3 pm

Sitting suspended.

Speaker's Statement

2.30 pm

Mr Speaker: Colleagues, I want to begin this Session by marking the terrorist attack in London on 29 November during which Saskia Jones and Jack Merritt lost their lives. I am sure the whole House will join with me in sending our condolences to their families.

The House has directed the Speaker to make a statement at the beginning of each Session about the duties and responsibilities of hon. Members. I begin by reminding hon. Members of their duty to observe the code of conduct agreed by the House and to behave with civility and fairness in all their dealings. We all have duties to

our constituents, but we are also part of a wider parliamentary community. I consider it essential that all hon. Members, both new and returning, undertake the Valuing Everyone training. The behaviour code applies to Members as it applies to others who visit or work in Parliament, and provides clear guidance. Unacceptable behaviour will be dealt with seriously, independently and with effective sanctions.

The House asserts its privilege of freedom of speech. It is there to ensure that our constituents can be represented by us without fear or favour. It is an obligation upon us all to exercise that privilege responsibly. Members must be mindful of the impact of what they say, not only on other Members but on others who follow our proceedings, and Members should be heard courteously, whatever their views. That privilege is enjoyed by Members of Parliament only in their work in this House: as private individuals, we are equal under the law with those whom we represent.

Parliament should be open to those whom it represents. We should seek to explain its work to those who elect us and to make them welcome here. The security of this building and those who work and visit here depends upon us all. We have a duty to be vigilant and to assist those whose job it is to maintain this place as a safe place to work.

Before moving to the first business of the new Parliament, I would like to express my very best wishes to all hon. Members, those newly elected and those returning, and all those who work in this House.

Mr Barry Sheerman (Huddersfield) (Lab/Co-op): On a point of order, Mr Speaker.

Mr Speaker: Not at this stage.

OUTLAWRIES BILL

A Bill for the more effectual preventing Clandestine Outlawries was read the First time, and ordered to be read a Second time.

DEPUTY SPEAKERS

Ordered,

That, for the period up to the first sitting day following the election of the Deputy Speakers under Standing Order No. 2A, Sir Roger Gale be Chairman of Ways and Means, Sir George Howarth be First Deputy Chairman of Ways and Means and Sir Gary Streeter be Second Deputy Chairman of Ways and Means.—
(*Mr Rees-Mogg.*)

Business of the House (19 and 20 December)

2.32 pm

Mr Speaker: Before calling a Minister to move the next motion, which relates to the presentation of the European Union (Withdrawal Agreement) Bill and the sitting of the House tomorrow, I want to make a short statement. Substantive motions may be moved without notice only with the sanction of the Chair and with the concurrence of the House. I am, exceptionally, allowing this motion to be moved only for four reasons, which are unlikely to apply to other motions without notice. First, I am satisfied that there has been proper engagement through the usual channels with other parties about the contents of this motion. Secondly, informal notice of the motion has been given by means of its inclusion in the Chamber information note. Thirdly, it offers the House a choice between a sitting tomorrow and a sitting on Monday if the motion were not agreed to. Fourthly, the motion enables the House to see the contents of the Bill to be debated earlier than would otherwise be possible.

The Leader of the House of Commons (Mr Jacob Rees-Mogg): I beg to move,

That—

(1) notwithstanding the provisions of Standing Order No. 57 and the practice of this House, at this day's sitting a Minister of the Crown may, without notice, present the European Union (Withdrawal Agreement) Bill; and

(2) this House shall sit on Friday 20 December 2019.

Subject to the House agreeing this motion, I shall make a Business statement this evening following the debate on the Queen's Speech.

Valerie Vaz (Walsall South) (Lab): Welcome back, Mr Speaker. I agree with you that this is a highly unusual motion, but I am pleased that the business managers

have agreed that we can sit tomorrow and that the Bill will be published. It will be scrutinised by Her Majesty's Opposition so that we consider it in the best interests of the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland. On that basis, we support the motion.

Pete Wishart (Perth and North Perthshire) (SNP): Thank you very much, Mr Deputy Speaker—Mr Speaker, even! Sorry about that; old habits die hard. This is an unusual state of affairs, and you have been generous to the Government in order for this debate to go ahead tomorrow. This is what the past three years have been all about: ensuring that they get their disastrous, dismal Brexit tomorrow. Scotland opposed it in 2016 and opposed it last week, and the SNP will vote against it tomorrow.

Question put and agreed to.

Mr Speaker: Just for the record, I did negotiate to ensure that we were not coming back after Friday. I wanted the House to be in the right place, and I think that was part of my duty.

BILL PRESENTED

EUROPEAN UNION (WITHDRAWAL AGREEMENT) BILL
Presentation and First Reading (Standing Order No. 57)

Secretary Stephen Barclay, supported by the Prime Minister, Michael Gove, the Chancellor of the Exchequer, Secretary Priti Patel, Secretary Robert Buckland, Secretary Elizabeth Truss, Secretary Julian Smith and the Attorney General, presented Bill to implement, and make other provision in connection with, the agreement between the United Kingdom and the EU under Article 50(2) of the Treaty on European Union which sets out the arrangements for the United Kingdom's withdrawal from the EU.

Bill read the First time; to be read a Second time tomorrow, and to be printed (Bill 1) with explanatory notes (Bill 1-EN).

Queen's Speech

Mr Speaker: I have to acquaint the House that this House has this day attended Her Majesty in the House of Peers and that Her Majesty was pleased to make a most gracious Speech from the Throne to both Houses of Parliament, of which I have obtained a copy for greater accuracy. I shall direct that the terms of the speech be printed in the *Votes and Proceedings*. Copies are available in the Vote Office.

The Gracious Speech was as follows:

My Lords and Members of the House of Commons

My Government's priority is to deliver the United Kingdom's departure from the European Union on 31 January. My Ministers will bring forward legislation to ensure the United Kingdom's exit on that date, and to make the most of the opportunities that this brings for all the people of the United Kingdom.

Thereafter, my Ministers will seek a future relationship with the European Union based on a free trade agreement that benefits the whole of the United Kingdom. They will also begin trade negotiations with other leading global economies.

The integrity and prosperity of the United Kingdom is of the utmost importance to my Government. My Ministers will work urgently to facilitate talks to restore devolved government in Northern Ireland.

My Government will embark on an ambitious programme of domestic reform that delivers on the people's priorities. For the first time, the National Health Service's multi-year funding settlement, agreed earlier this year, will be enshrined in law.

Steps will be taken to grow and support the National Health Service's workforce and a new visa will ensure qualified doctors, nurses and health professionals have fast-track entry to the United Kingdom. Hospital car parking charges will be removed for those in greatest need.

My Ministers will seek cross-party consensus on proposals for long term reform of social care. They will ensure that the social care system provides everyone with the dignity and security they deserve and that no one who needs care has to sell their home to pay for it. My Ministers will continue work to reform the Mental Health Act.

A modern, fair, points-based immigration system will welcome skilled workers from across the world to contribute to the United Kingdom's economy, communities and public services.

My Government will bring forward measures to support working families, raising the National Insurance threshold and increasing the National Living Wage. To ensure every child has access to a high-quality education my Ministers will increase levels of funding per pupil in every school.

Measures will be brought forward to encourage flexible working, to introduce the entitlement to leave for unpaid carers and to help people save for later life. New measures will be brought forward to protect tenants and to improve building safety. My Government will take steps to support home ownership, including by making homes available at a discount for local first-time buyers. My Ministers will develop legislation to improve internet safety for all.

My Government is committed to a fair justice system that keeps people safe. My Ministers will establish a Royal Commission to review and improve the efficiency

and effectiveness of the criminal justice process. New sentencing laws will ensure the most serious violent offenders, including terrorists, serve longer in custody. New laws will require schools, police, councils and health authorities to work together to prevent serious crime. My Government will ensure those charged with knife possession face swift justice and that the courts work better for all those who engage with them, including victims of domestic abuse. Legislation will be brought forward to support victims of crime and their families. Measures will be developed to tackle hostile activity conducted by foreign states.

My Ministers will bring forward measures to ensure that every part of the United Kingdom can prosper. My Government will invest in the country's public services and infrastructure whilst keeping borrowing and debt under control; maintaining the sustainability of the public finances through a responsible fiscal strategy. My Government will prioritise investment in infrastructure and world-leading science research and skills, in order to unleash productivity and improve daily life for communities across the country. It will give communities more control over how investment is spent so that they can decide what is best for them.

To support business, my Government will increase tax credits for research and development, establish a National Skills Fund, and bring forward changes to business rates. New laws will accelerate the delivery of gigabit capable broadband. To ensure people can depend on the transport network, measures will be developed to provide for minimum levels of service during transport strikes.

My Government will continue to take steps to meet the world-leading target of net zero greenhouse gas emissions by 2050. It will continue to lead the way in tackling global climate change, hosting the COP26 Summit in 2020. To protect and improve the environment for future generations, a bill will enshrine in law environmental principles and legally-binding targets, including for air quality. It will also ban the export of polluting plastic waste to countries outside the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development, and establish a new, world-leading independent regulator in statute.

A Constitution, Democracy and Rights Commission will be established. Work will be taken forward to repeal the Fixed-term Parliaments Act.

My Ministers will continue to invest in our gallant Armed Forces. My Government will honour the Armed Forces Covenant, which will be further incorporated into law, and the NATO commitment to spend at least two per cent of national income on defence. It will bring forward proposals to tackle vexatious claims that undermine our Armed Forces and will continue to seek better ways of dealing with legacy issues that provide better outcomes for victims and survivors.

My Government will work to promote and expand the United Kingdom's influence in the world. An Integrated Security, Defence and Foreign Policy Review will be undertaken to reassess the nation's place in the world, covering all aspects of international policy from defence to diplomacy and development. My Ministers will promote the United Kingdom's interests, including freedom of speech, human rights and the rule of law. My Government will work closely with international partners to help solve the most complex international security issues and to promote peace and security globally. It will stand firm against those who threaten the values of the United Kingdom, including by developing a sanctions regime to

[Mr Speaker]

directly address human rights abuse, and working to ensure that all girls have access to twelve years of quality education.

Members of the House of Commons

Estimates for the public services will be laid before you.

My Lords and Members of the House of Commons

Other measures will be laid before you.

I pray that the blessing of Almighty God may rest upon your counsels.

Debate on the Address

[1ST DAY]

Mr Speaker: I call Tracey Crouch to move, and then Eddie Hughes to second, the Address.

2.37 pm

Tracey Crouch (Chatham and Aylesford) (Con): I beg to move,

That an humble Address be presented to Her Majesty, as follows:

Most Gracious Sovereign,

We, Your Majesty's most dutiful and loyal subjects, the Commons of the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland, in Parliament assembled, beg leave to offer our humble thanks to Your Majesty for the Gracious Speech which Your Majesty has addressed to both Houses of Parliament.

Mr Speaker, despite the fact that this is quite possibly the most terrifying thing that I have ever done, it is, of course, a great honour to move the Address as the re-elected and proud Member for Chatham and Aylesford. This speech is usually a gift reserved by the Whips for those thought to have had their best times. The Chief Whip, a man well known for his elegance, charm and wit, has clearly clocked that it is panto season, for asking me to do this speech is the equivalent of shouting, "Your career is behind you!" [HON. MEMBERS: "Oh no it isn't."] I think we can do a bit better than that and, frankly, I would feel a bit more reassured if the Prime Minister could join in. The Chief, a man well known for his elegance, charm and wit, has clearly clocked that it is panto season, for asking me to do this is the equivalent of shouting, "Your career is behind you." [HON. MEMBERS: "Oh no it isn't!"] [*Laughter.*]

Instead of "Cinderella" or "Puss in Boots", let us raise the literary tone and note that today is the anniversary of "A Christmas Carol" being published in 1843. Charles Dickens was a son of Chatham, so this old has-been speech makes me feel like the ghost of Christmas past; my hon. Friend the Member for Walsall North (Eddie Hughes) will presently play the ghost of Christmas future; and the Prime Minister is oven ready for the role of the ghost of Christmas present.

Scrooge would have been brilliantly played by the former Chancellor, Philip Hammond, but he was sadly pipped for the part by the last Speaker, who auditioned powerfully for the role for many a bleak year. Old Marley sits on the Front Bench opposite, chained and regretful—and that is just about Arsenal's recent performances. But who is our Tiny Tim, so valiant and small, the object of universal pity? It could be none other than the hon. Member for Westmorland and Lonsdale (Tim Farron), whom we welcome back to the House; we wonder whether he will have another go at his party's leadership.

I had thought of continuing the "Love Actually" election theme by delivering my speech on bits of card, with the parliamentary choir singing carols in the background, but: one, we are not allowed to bring props into the Chamber; two, I think Hugh Grant has suffered enough; and, three, it would be simply impossible to fit in all the names of the new Conservative intake.

I note that the last Kent MP to propose the Loyal Address was Bob Dunn, the long-serving Member for Dartford, who started his speech by mentioning that he had been

“returned as its Member in four successive general elections—at each election, the Conservative vote has been significantly higher than the time before.”

Thanks to this Prime Minister, I now know how he felt. This legislative programme outlines plans for a Bill authorising the construction and operation of High Speed 2, but it was in the Queen’s Speech of November 1994 that the legislation for High Speed 1 was proposed. Along with the constituency of Dartford, High Speed 1 travels through mine and many others in Kent. Bob Dunn spoke of its potential virtues, predicting

“the economic benefits associated with it”.—[*Official Report*, 16 November 1994; Vol. 250, c. 7-9.]

And he was right. Thanks to that Bill, 25 years ago, parts of Kent have seen major regeneration thanks to a much-reduced travel time to London, and there is still even more potential to unlock.

I am privileged to be the Member for Chatham and Aylesford, a diverse constituency with a strong naval history. A friend and mentor of mine, my right hon. Friend the Member for North Thanet (Sir Roger Gale), mentioned to me earlier this week that he is now the only Kent MP to have been serving while the Chatham dockyard was still operational, but rumour has it that he is also the only Kent MP to have been here the last time a Thanet MP proposed the Loyal Address: in 1937—[*Laughter.*] Sorry, Sir Roger.

Although the dockyard, while not within the boundary of my constituency, has always been of critical significance to the town, it ceased operation in 1984. However, its regeneration has been remarkable, paying tribute to its heritage through housing, employment and tourism.

Another female member of the 2010 intake to have proposed the Loyal Address is, of course, my right hon. Friend the Member for Portsmouth North (Penny Mordaunt). Like Chatham, her constituency is built very firmly on the foundations of the Royal Navy and, of course, she famously littered her speech with bits of the male anatomy as a dare from her colleagues in the reserves. I thought I would seek her advice, given that I knew I would feel sick to the core and would be shaking with fear, whereas she has served with great calmness and tranquillity during tough times at the highest level. She looked at me, took my hand and said, “Tracey, you’ll be fine. Just don’t cock it up.”

I note that the last Loyal Address after a December election was proposed by a Mr Reginald Mitchell Banks from Swindon. *Hansard* notes that he delivered his speech in court dress, a tradition I am grateful no longer exists, although if *Hansard* wishes to note that I am wearing high-street chic, it is of course welcome to do so. Mr Banks spoke of the importance of trading with our friends abroad, and of course the bonds of commerce and enterprise between the United Kingdom and countries both near and far have only strengthened since. The famous Watling Street—a trading route used by ancient Britons, Vikings, Saxons and Romans—runs through Chatham. It was on that road that famous battles were fought against Roman invaders, but I am delighted to say that things have changed, and it is on that road, now known as the A2, running through Aylesford, along

with the M20, that goods come and go from the port of Dover, which, as the Foreign Secretary now knows, is a rather important trading point.

It is in that spirit of being open to the world that, 96 years on from that election and its subsequent Humble Address, we have proposed legislation that, by delivering on Brexit, creates new and exciting trading opportunities—and it starts in this House tomorrow with the European Union (Withdrawal Agreement) Bill. That Bill and other Brexit legislation announced this morning will unlock and unleash Britain’s potential. We stand ready to build a new relationship with our friends in the EU and elsewhere based on free trade and co-operation. Thanks to the legislative programme announced today, we can raise our own standards in areas such as agriculture and of course—my personal passions—animal welfare and environment.

The reintroduction of the Environment Bill will protect and restore our natural environment for generations to come, set ambitious, world-leading but achievable programmes to tackle pollution, and enable us to make the most of our much loved landscapes. For those of us with densely populated, polluted constituencies, whose last pockets of green space are threatened by inappropriate and strategically ill thought through planning proposals, demonstrating that those fields provide not only a haven for wildlife but a breathing space in urban areas that enhances the health and wellbeing of our residents is our last remaining hope.

As well as other extremely important pieces of legislation, I know from my campaigning throughout the election that my constituents will warmly welcome plans to enshrine in law increased funding for the NHS, greater access to GP appointments, fairer funding in education, more police officers and tougher sentences for serious criminals. They will also be delighted to hear of further commitments to support those with poor mental health. Members of this House, including me, have spoken powerfully and personally about their own brushes with various mental health conditions. It is right that we help to remove the stigma around mental health by talking about it, but it is actions, not words, that matter. It is paramount that we ensure that our constituents, whose voice may not be as loud as our own, receive the treatment they need by guaranteeing that mental health will be treated with the same urgency as physical health.

I was proud that our manifesto included commitments to improve the overall wellbeing of the nation. Although measures such as investing in grassroots sport, enhancing physical education in schools and reforming the out-of-date gambling legislation may not be in the legislative programme outlined today, the Prime Minister should know that there is wide cross-party support for such improvements beginning the laborious Whitehall process, and I hope that will happen soon.

I made my maiden speech during a debate on poverty. Part of my constituency suffers enormously from deprivation, and I work alongside many organisations to support those who find themselves unable to cope. Charles Dickens chronicled vividly the poverty of Victorian Britain and the inequalities alleviated in the ensuing 180 years by moderate, enlightened Governments of all colours. Mercy and altruism must remain our mission in today’s one nation Conservative party. I have worked with many MPs from other parties in this House on various issues. Of course I welcome and congratulate

[Tracey Crouch]

my new colleagues on the Conservative Benches, but there are friends who sat on the Opposition Benches whom I will miss enormously. Although we have not covered ourselves in glory in the past few years, new MPs will soon discover that this place is at its best when we work together, and that relationships and friendships will be formed over issues that need cross-party consensus if progress is to be made.

Chatham's hero, Dickens, may have been a great social reformer, but he also observed that there is nothing in this world so irresistible as laughter and good humour. Perhaps that would be no bad guide for us, as we repair this House of Commons in the coming months. Let laughter and good humour replace recent rancour; let friendships thrive through adversity; and let us respect our differences but not let them divide us. And of course, let Tottenham finish above Arsenal in the league this year. As I finish my humble offering to Her Majesty, I take this opportunity to wish colleagues and all the hard-working House staff a very merry Christmas, a happy Hanukkah and a peaceful holiday season. In the words of Tiny Tim at the end of "A Christmas Carol", God bless us everyone!

2.49 pm

Eddie Hughes (Walsall North) (Con): I hope you will forgive me, Mr Speaker, if I look slightly bewildered to be called to address a full House of Commons Chamber: I have simply never had this experience previously. In fact, over the previous two and a half years, I have got used to being called at the end of a debate to address a Chamber that is almost completely empty, and then being given two minutes to make a 10-minute speech. If you like what you hear over the next few minutes, Mr Speaker, I would like to think you will call me early in debates, unlike your much-loved predecessor. For the moment, though, I am just going to relish this amazing opportunity to talk to all these people.

It is an incredible privilege to be seconding the Humble Address, and it is also an incredible privilege to follow my dear and good friend, my hon. Friend Member for Chatham and Aylesford (Tracey Crouch). If I remember correctly, she won her seat in 2010 from a Labour Member. If my maths is right, some 50 new Conservative MPs in this Chamber won their seats from Labour Members, right across the country from Ynys Môn to Ipswich—[HON. MEMBERS: "Not in Scotland."] SNP Members had to ruin the flow, didn't they? Come on guys—you are meant to be nice. [Interruption.] You are meant to be nice to me. Conservative MPs won Labour seats from Ynys Môn to Ipswich and from Kensington to Blyth Valley. Anybody who has a political bone in their body should just take a minute to remember how they felt when that Blyth Valley result came in.

I won my seat from a Labour Member in 2017, but the Conservatives last won the seat in 1976, and they only managed to win it then because John Stonehouse, the Labour MP, faked his own death. While on a business trip to Miami, he left a pile of clothes on the beach, pretending that he had gone for a swim, never to be seen again, supposedly. I tell you what: he was a damn fine swimmer, because five weeks later he turned up 10,000 miles away in Melbourne, Australia. He was arrested and tried to apply to a couple of countries for

asylum, but that did not happen, so he was deported back to the United Kingdom. Incredibly, while out on bail he continued to serve as a Labour MP. I am not sure, but I do not think the Home Secretary, my right hon. Friend the Member for Witham (Priti Patel), would allow such leniency these days. I found it amusing to read a line on Wikipedia that said:

"Although unhappy with the situation, the Labour Party did not expel him."

That sounds like a familiar theme these days.

For those of us who are 2017 MPs, this has felt like a very precarious innings—like we are never more than five weeks away from a general election. I was getting a bit concerned, because my Conservative predecessor, who is now Baron Hodgson of Astley Abbotts, managed to serve 910 days as the MP for Walsall North. When Parliament was dissolved on 5 November, I had served for 881 days—[HON. MEMBERS: "Ooh!"] I thank my hon. Friends for playing their part—so I knew I had to win the election to beat the baron.

The good omen for me and for this incredible Conservative victory should have been apparent to me on 27 April this year. With just a few days to go before the local elections, I was visited by a man who was at that time a humble Back Bencher: my right hon. Friend the Member for Uxbridge and South Ruislip (Boris Johnson); he was not the Prime Minister then. The blond bombshell was unleashed on the unsuspecting people of Bloxwich, and the result was truly magnificent to behold. Everybody who asked for a selfie was greeted with a beaming smile and an occasional tussle of those famous blond locks. When our tour reached its inevitable destination, the Bloxwich showman—the future Prime Minister—obviously pulled a pint of Thatchers Gold. I know what you are thinking, Mr Speaker: you are thinking, "So what? What was the consequence of this great visit?" The consequence for me was that, in those local elections a few days later, we won two more council wards against the national trend and, for the first time in 20 years, the Conservatives took outright control of Walsall Council.

Perhaps that should not have been a surprise because, over the past three years, we have had a blue-collar revolution. The working people—the working class—of Britain have sent two shock results and who led both those campaigns? It was one man who completely understands that, actually, what the public want—what ordinary working people want—are a Government who will stay out of their way, but will ensure that they have safe streets, a good standard of education for their children, and a great national health service when they need it. We now have a Government and a Prime Minister who understand that and will deliver. People lent us their vote in this election. We cannot let them down; we must not let them down; we will not let them down.

Mr Speaker, I think you know the answer to this question. What is the first priority for this country? [HON. MEMBERS: "Ah!"] Members are supposed to say, "Get Brexit done." Anyway, get Brexit done. Indeed, in an interview immediately after the election result, I think I heard the right hon. Member for Hayes and Harlington (John McDonnell), the shadow Chancellor, say that he now understood that the public want to get Brexit done, but Labour had not been listening.

In my constituency of Walsall North, 74% of people who voted in that referendum voted to leave, but that was not the interesting thing for me during the general election. When I was telephone canvassing, I spoke to lifelong Lib Dem voters who voted remain in the referendum, but who were now voting Conservative because they said that they were real democrats. They knew how important it was for this country to deliver on the result of that referendum.

Walsall North is like many of the constituencies that we have just won. It is among the most deprived constituencies in the country, but now we have a Prime Minister who completely understands that, although ability is equally distributed across the country, opportunity is not. That is why we are going to transform the further education system by investing in a huge new rebuild programme worth £1.8 billion.

Investment in infrastructure is also incredibly important. There are towns such as Willenall in my constituency where the manufacturing base has been decreased over recent years. I was delighted to work with the Mayor of the West Midlands and secure the money for a new train station for Willenall, because that train station will be a lifeline for that town. It will allow the people of Willenall to travel to Birmingham and to Wolverhampton more easily for job or education opportunities. It will also allow people to travel into Willenall, so if we can continue to remediate those old industrial sites, we will automatically free up new opportunities. I am imagining a time when we have a robotic factory in Willenall, making goods that would otherwise be brought over from the other side of the world, therefore also reducing our carbon footprint for free.

Mr Speaker, I know what you are thinking. You are thinking—

Kevin Brennan (Cardiff West) (Lab): Sit down!

Eddie Hughes: I will look at the camera to see who said that. That is not what you were thinking, Mr Speaker. I know you. You were thinking, “What about the NHS? Is it safe in this Conservative Government’s hands?” Let me tell you, it certainly is in Walsall North, because thanks to the Health Secretary my constituency has got £36 million for a new A&E department, which is going to increase capacity and improve conditions for staff and patients alike.

What about the rest of the country, though? I do not know where to begin: 50,000 extra nurses; 50 million extra GP practice appointments a year; and 40 new hospitals. And what about the future of our great nation? Well, I am delighted to read that this Conservative Government will be investing a stonking £3.2 billion a year in research and development by the end of this Parliament, although I completely agree with my hon. Friend the Member for Harborough (Neil O’Brien), who said that we simply cannot continue to spend half that money in just three cities—London, Oxford and Cambridge—but that we need to spread it throughout the country.

From my point of view, it certainly looks like the future of the whole United Kingdom is incredibly bright with this Conservative Government. As we look to 2020 with a new-found spirit of optimism and ambition, it is my privilege, on behalf of the great people of the Black Country, to commend this Gracious Speech to the House.

3.1 pm

Jeremy Corbyn (Islington North) (Lab): It is the tradition at the beginning of each Session of Parliament to commemorate former Members of the House who have died. It has only been two months since the last state opening, but in that time we have sadly lost our great friend Frank Dobson, the former MP for Holborn and St Pancras. Frank was a very, very committed Health Secretary from ’97 to ’99, who began the rebuilding of our national health service after it had been so disgracefully run down by the Conservative Government at that time. He was always an incredibly friendly face, and always full of anecdotes and jokes that I cannot repeat here. He will be greatly missed by all of us on these Benches and, I suspect, by many others who knew him as a thoroughly decent Member of Parliament who was very committed to his constituents and to the cause of good housing across the country. We have also lost David Lambie at the magnificent age of 94. David was a Labour MP from 1970 to 1992, and I knew him very well as a committed peace campaigner.

On Tuesday, the Prime Minister and I remembered Saskia Jones and Jack Merritt, the wonderful young friends who died in the appalling terror attack at Fishmongers’ Hall. It is right that we pay tribute to them again today for the way in which they lost their lives and the message they left behind.

I would like to take this opportunity to welcome all new Members, on both sides of the House. Being a Member of Parliament is a massive achievement and a massive honour. I would imagine that, in witnessing our opening proceedings today, many must be thinking, “What on earth have I taken on? The pantomime season has come very early this year.” [*Interruption.*] Yeah, look behind you. [*Interruption.*] If I may continue, I would also like to pay tribute to the former Members who lost their seats in the general election. To serve in Parliament and then fight the election and not be returned is an amazingly traumatic experience, when they have put such a huge amount of work into their campaign as well as into the work they have done here. We should all think for a moment about the human side of what it is like to go through that experience, and the trauma they must all feel. I pay tribute to them and thank them all. I will not mention all the names, but I would just like to commemorate and thank Dennis Skinner for his amazing work and the presence he has been in this Parliament throughout all the years that he was an MP.

I would like to congratulate the proposer of the Loyal Address, the hon. Member for Chatham and Aylesford (Tracey Crouch), who showed passion and integrity. That is what she became known for since her very principled resignation from the Government over their failure to restrict fixed odds betting terminals, and I thank her for that. But I am afraid that that is where we part ways, for if there is anything that can drive a wedge between two people even more than a Brexit vote in this place, it is the north London rivalry between Spurs and Arsenal. These things may seem trivial, but, as the great Bill Shankly once said:

“Some people believe football is a matter of life and death. I am very disappointed with that attitude. It is...much more important than that.”

To put it another way, to help the hon. Member, Arsenal won 13 league titles and Tottenham two—but we take our victories where we can find them. I compliment the

[Jeremy Corbyn]

hon. Member particularly on the last part of her speech dealing with the natural world and the environment: it was incredibly important and very well put.

I also congratulate today's seconder of the Loyal Address, the hon. Member for Walsall North (Eddie Hughes), on his speech and the spirit with which he gave it. I got a sense of the spirit of Walsall when I was in Walsall College recently—a wonderful place with wonderful students. Conservative Members are renowned for their membership of various clubs: the Bullingdon club, the Reform club and so on. There are many of those clubs. But I was absolutely overjoyed when researching the hon. Member to find that he is a member of one of the greatest and most prestigious clubs of them all—he is a trustee of the Walsall Wood allotment charity, which is a fantastic honour, I am sure everyone will agree. He will understand more than most the ecstatic pleasure that we allotment holders, including him, get from our allotments and the produce we get from them. I hope this will provide an opportunity for a genuine, bipartisan working relationship over the onions and the carrots.

It was just two months ago that the Prime Minister made the Queen come here in the rain as part of a pre-election stunt. Since then, he has made many promises to many different parts of the country. He has promised to address problems that are the result of his own party's actions in government and its political choice to impose austerity cuts on this country. There can no longer be any doubt that austerity has caused unnecessary suffering to millions of people all across this country. The communities to whom the Prime Minister made his promise will now judge him on whether he keeps them.

In this Queen's Speech, the Government have tried to mimic some of the priorities and, interestingly, much of the language of Labour policies, but without the substance. On austerity, on investment, on regional inequality, on the national health service, we can see how we forced the terrain to shift. They say that imitation is the sincerest form of flattery—even if it is a very pale imitation. But I fear that those who were swayed by the Prime Minister's promises will be sorely disappointed, as this Queen's Speech shows that what the Government are actually proposing is woefully inadequate for the scale of the problems that this country faces.

Our NHS, the country's most precious institution, is on its knees due to this Tory Government. The Government now talk about enshrining the funding settlement in law. Enough of the gimmicks—just fund it properly. I do not remember the last Labour Government having to pass a law to force themselves to invest in the NHS, yet they increased NHS funding by a rate of 6% per year. This Government are proposing little more than half that—less, in fact, than the historical average.

The gap between the Government's rhetoric on the NHS and the reality is enormous. Last week, for the first time ever, every single major accident and emergency unit in England failed to hit its four-hour waiting time target. Every major unit failed to meet the target—every single one—under this Government. The number of people in England waiting for operations is the highest since records began—4.4 million—and the number of unfilled staff vacancies has ballooned. The Prime Minister's promise of 50,000 extra nurses was quickly revealed as a

sham—19,000 of them already work for the NHS—and his promise of 40 new hospitals turned out to be a reconfiguration of just six. The public will remember this. They will not look kindly on promises that are not kept.

This Government say that they will take action on hospital car parking fees, following our lead, but whereas we propose to abolish those fees, apparently only some people will be entitled to free parking under their plans. It was the disastrous Health and Social Care Act 2012, brought in by the Conservatives and the Liberal Democrats when they were in coalition, that flung open the door to privatisation, which is the cause of so many problems in our NHS, yet the Queen's Speech says nothing whatsoever about the Health and Social Care Act and the privatisation that it has brought.

Not so long ago, the Prime Minister stood on the steps of Downing Street and announced that he had a plan to solve the social care crisis, so where is it? It was not in his party's manifesto, and all we have today are empty words about bringing forward proposals. Perhaps we should not be surprised—all we had in the last Queen's Speech were empty words about bringing forward proposals. And in the Queen's Speech before that, what did we get from the Conservatives? Empty words about bringing forward proposals. At least they have continuity on this. Cuts to adult social care are expected to reach almost £8 billion by the end of 2019-20, but the Government are only putting £1 billion back in. It is like taking £8 from someone and expecting them to be grateful when you give them back £1.

When it comes to young people, the Government seem to have given up altogether. This is yet another Queen's Speech that is miserably weak on education, with nothing for early years, nothing for colleges and nothing for universities. The Government clearly have not heard the anxious cry of parents and teachers about school funding, overcrowding and unqualified teachers. The funding promised for schools will still leave them hundreds of millions of pounds worse off in real terms than they were in 2010.

When it comes to Brexit, the election result demonstrated a strong determination from many people across our country to end the mess and paralysis of the last three years. We understand that people are desperate to move on. That does not mean that we will just accept the Prime Minister's reckless approach to how it is done. He has now deliberately resurrected the threat of no deal at the end of next year, which would decimate industry and destroy people's jobs. That threat is now written into the withdrawal agreement Bill.

The Prime Minister has shown time and again that his priority is a toxic deal with Donald Trump that will sell out our NHS and risk the safety of our food, our environmental protections and workplace rights. We do not want our NHS given over to US corporations, and we do not want expensive medicines with extended patents. We do not want food like chlorinated chicken on our dinner tables either. We know that the Prime Minister's deal will not put Brexit to bed. It will just be the beginning of years of more drawn-out negotiations.

It has been reported that the Government want to scrap the Department for International Development—a proud achievement of Labour in government. Will the Prime Minister confirm that this Government will not close DFID, and will he ensure that 0.7% of the UK's

spending continues to be used to help end global poverty and destitution? I note the commitment to develop a sanctions regime to directly address human rights abuses. That sounds like good news for Saudi Arabia. Should the Saudi regime be worried, or will the Government continue to ignore its human rights abuses and war crimes in Yemen, which have resulted in famine and humanitarian disaster? According to the UNHCR, the refugee commission, there are almost 71 million forcibly displaced people around the world. Where is the Government's commitment to do anything for those desperate people fleeing war, violence and famine?

Around the world, Britain should stand up for human rights and democratic rights, including the right of workers facing exploitation and abuse, so it is very worrying that here at home the Conservative Government are planning an assault on workers' rights to withdraw their labour, beginning with the transport workers. No worker goes on strike lightly, but we will oppose any attempt to curtail that right. We have already seen some of the most draconian anti-worker laws, and now the Government seek to take us even further back in time—again, in breach of the conventions of the International Labour Organisation. In a country where pay is too low, work too insecure and bad employers too common, attacking the rights of the working people to stand up for themselves is a completely wrong-headed approach.

On the subject of transport, with planned transport investment in the north less than half that in London, what assurances can the Prime Minister give that the commitments on investment in the Queen's Speech are not just another failed gimmick, as the northern powerhouse was? We should take it as a form of flattery that, on investment, the words of the Queen's Speech echo what Labour has long argued—that investment is desperately needed in every part of our country. However, the scale of investment planned by the Government falls woefully short of what is required.

Speaking of falling woefully short, this Queen's Speech contains nothing of substance to deal with the colossal challenge of climate and environmental emergency. Net zero carbon emissions by 2050, which is the Government's target, is too late and, in any case, at the current rate of progress we will not reach net zero until 2099. Any target date will be fanciful if action does not start now. What are the Prime Minister's plans on climate for this year and for each year after that? It is clear that COP 25 this year was a failure. Next year, Britain has the honour of hosting COP 26 and, frankly, I think it will be embarrassing for all of us to host such a vital conference if we are not doing enough to reduce our own carbon emissions and show we have made some real progress towards bringing forward the target date. The Government need to get serious and put young people's futures before those of the big polluters, many of whom fund the Conservative party.

This Christmas, thousands of people will be sleeping rough on the streets, thanks to this Government and their housing policy. Rough sleeping has doubled on the watch of the Conservative party in government. Everyone who sees people huddled in doorways in the cold—in the fifth richest country on earth—knows it is morally wrong. Shelter says that 280,000 people will be homeless on Christmas day in England alone, either rough sleeping or living in temporary housing or hostels, so can the Prime Minister explain why there is no mention of

homelessness in the Queen's Speech and why there is so little to address the housing crisis? Could it be that he does not want to upset the billionaire landlords who back his party? The Prime Minister has used Labour's idea of offering discounted homes to first-time buyers. It is okay—it is more flattery—but let us see the substance of it. What reassurance can he provide that this will not go the same way as the failed starter homes programme? Remember when we were promised 200,000 starter homes in 2015? But, as yet, we have seen absolutely zero.

The fire at Grenfell Tower exposed a housing system that is fundamentally broken. Yet two years later—two years later—319 of the 446 buildings covered in aluminium composite cladding have not had it removed. Imagine living in one of those buildings and feeling at risk. That is probably not something many Members of this House go through, but it is an experience that thousands of people go through every day, living with the fear of a burning inferno that is their home. Will the Prime Minister now set a hard deadline for all landlords to replace dangerous cladding? Will he fund the installation of sprinklers in high-rise social housing blocks, and reverse budget cuts to the fire service? We will look at the findings of the Government's royal commission on the criminal justice process, but any changes to sentencing must be done in consultation with anti-terror experts, and not as a knee-jerk reaction to make political capital.

This Queen's Speech is notable for what is not in it. It does nothing for students who are being lumbered with huge debts, it does nothing for older people unable to pay their heating bills this winter, and it does nothing to address their levels of poverty in our country. This year, the United Nations—yes, the United Nations itself—had to take our Government to task over the shocking fact that 14 million people are living in poverty in this, the fifth richest country in the world. Should that not be a source of shame for this Government? Should not their Queen's Speech contain something to address that? Why is there not even a mention of universal credit, the cruel policy that has ruined so many lives?

Why is there no commitment to immediately raise the minimum wage to £10 an hour so that people no longer have to work their fingers to the bone yet still remain in poverty? These things are not in this Queen's Speech because this Government, and that Conservative party, do not stand for the people on the receiving end of their policies. Despite all their promises, that is exactly what this Queen's Speech shows.

The central aim of my party, the Labour Party, is to stand up for working people and for every part of this country—for the many, not the few—and to deliver social justice, prosperity and a society that works for all. As this Government plough ahead with their programme of gimmicks and false promises, we will be holding them to account every step of the way. We will be campaigning inside and outside Parliament, and across the country, for the real change that sadly this Government will not deliver, but that our country so desperately needs.

3.22 pm

The Prime Minister (Boris Johnson): This is the moment to repay the trust of those who sent us here, by delivering on the people's priorities with the most radical Queen's Speech for a generation. If there was one resounding lesson from this election campaign, and one message

[*The Prime Minister*]

that I heard in every corner of these islands, it is not just that the British people want their Government to get Brexit done, although they do, it is that they want to move politics on, and move the country on, by building hospitals, renewing our schools, and modernising our infrastructure, as well as making our streets safer, our environment cleaner, and our Union stronger. This Queen's Speech, from this people's Government, sets in motion a vast interlocking programme to unite and level up across the whole United Kingdom, and unleash the potential of all our people.

This one nation Government will enshrine in law record funding for our NHS, take back control of our borders with a wholly new immigration system, toughen our criminal justice system with longer sentences for the most dangerous offenders, double investment in basic science research, and protect our environment with a Bill so ambitious and so vast, that there is no environmentally friendly way of printing it off.

This is not a programme for one year or one Parliament; it is a blueprint for the future of Britain. Just imagine where this country could be in 10 years' time, with trade deals across the world creating jobs across the UK, and with 40 new hospitals, great schools in every community, and the biggest transformation of our infrastructure since the Victorian age. Imagine British scientists using new gene therapies to cure the hitherto incurable, and leading the dawn of a new age of electric vehicles—not just cars, but planes—and pioneering solutions to the challenge of climate change. I do not think it vainglorious or implausible to say that a new golden age for this United Kingdom is now within reach. In spite of the scoffing, in spite of the negativity, in spite of the scepticism that you will hear from the other side, we will work flat out to deliver it.

Her Majesty's Gracious Speech was expertly proposed by a beacon of our one nation Conservatism, my hon. Friend the Member for Chatham and Aylesford (Tracey Crouch). She is not only a football coach of great distinction who has done much to champion the female game, which will be a key part of this country's bid for the 2030 World cup, but is so personally skilled at the game, with what has been described by her adversaries as a "take no prisoners" style, that according to *The Daily Telegraph*—if you cannot believe *The Daily Telegraph*, Mr Speaker, what can you believe?—she was once barred from playing against men to protect their egos. She has even used this Dispatch Box for an impromptu game of keepy-up, using it as a goalmouth in what was probably one of the less shocking innovations tolerated by the previous Speaker.

My hon. Friend has also done pioneering work on tackling loneliness, improving dementia care, and, as we have heard, curbing the harms inflicted by gambling and alcohol. She is so dedicated to her job that she has regularly brought her son Freddie into the Lobby, so reducing the voting age to about six months. Chatham's great parliamentary sketch writer, Charles Dickens, would himself confirm that her speech was in the very finest traditions of this House. [HON. MEMBERS: "Hear, hear."]

My hon. Friend the Member for Chatham and Aylesford was followed with great style by my hon. Friend the Member for Walsall North (Eddie Hughes). When he addressed this House for the first time in 2017, he said:

"the good people of Walsall North...have had to wait 41 years to hear a maiden speech from their Member of Parliament. You can only imagine how disappointed they will be".—[*Official Report*, 3 July 2017; Vol. 626, c. 978.]

My hon. Friend was being characteristically modest, but I cannot help noticing how the good people of Walsall North have taken drastic steps to avoid another maiden speech. They not only re-elected my hon. Friend, but they quintupled his majority just to be sure. As the right hon. Member for Islington North (Jeremy Corbyn) pointed out, you wait years for a Queen's Speech then along come two in short order—something my hon. Friend will appreciate, as one of the growing number of bus drivers' children on the Conservative Benches. He was elected—

Ian Paisley (North Antrim) (DUP): Will the Prime Minister give way?

The Prime Minister: I know the hon. Gentleman wants to ask about buses, but I must make progress.

My hon. Friend was elected as a blue collar Conservative from a traditionally Labour seat, a path that many have just followed. Since then, as he pointed out quite rightly, he has secured funding for a new A&E department at his local hospital and a new railway station for Willenhall. I know he comes from a Labour family. In fact, I think his brother is a Labour councillor. When he first declared himself a Conservative he felt, he said, like the black sheep of the family. All I can say is I bet that if they are watching today, they will feel nothing but pride in my hon. Friend's brilliant speech.

Let me also welcome to his place the right hon. Gentleman the Leader of the Opposition, a stickler, as we all know, for watching a Queen's Speech at the right time. [*Laughter.*] Although I do not know what he has against coronation chicken, Mr Speaker. As our exchanges across the Dispatch Box come towards a close—alas—let me say that our personal relations have always been excellent. For all our disagreements, I have never doubted that the right hon. Gentleman's beliefs are deeply held and his sincerity is to be admired. Certain members of his shadow Cabinet, on the other hand, are absolutely clear where the responsibility for the election result lies. The voters of the country have let his side down. They have forfeited the confidence of the Opposition and the time has come for Labour to take the only possible step: dissolve the electorate and replace it with a new one—at least, I think that is what the right hon. Member for Islington South and Finsbury (Emily Thornberry) said.

For my own part, I feel a colossal sense of obligation to the electorate that I and we are humbled to serve. I say to those people who lent us their votes, however hesitantly, that this Government will now engage flat out on a programme of change for the better. Tomorrow is the day when we finally peel back the plastic wrapping, about which you have heard so much, Mr Speaker, and present our oven-ready deal. It will go into the microwave as the withdrawal agreement Bill—it works in both devices, this deal—taking back control of our money, our borders, our laws and our trade, clearing the way for an overarching programme of national renewal.

Above all, it is time to invest in the institution that gives the country its cohesion and even our national spirit—the simple and beautiful idea that whoever you are, the NHS is there for you when you fall sick. As our NHS cares for us, so we will care for the NHS, delivering

the biggest cash boost in a generation, and, for the first time, this Queen's Speech guarantees a new funding settlement in law. What will that pay for? The biggest hospital-building programme in living memory, with 40 new hospitals, 50,000 more nurses—and their bursaries—6,000 more GPs and 50 million more GP appointments, and we will introduce a new NHS visa to fast-track talented staff from overseas. We will scrap those iniquitous hospital parking charges for all staff and vulnerable people, and we will guarantee dignity and fairness for everyone in their later years with a long-term and sustainable solution to social care. Indeed, I invite cross-party work on that solution, in the spirit of co-operation that I think is supported by many, many Members on both sides of the House.

While many of these measures were indeed foreshadowed in the last Queen's Speech, fortified by our new mandate we will go even further. We will give millions of tenants greater rights over their rented homes, abolishing no-fault evictions. We will help millions of commuters whose lives are made miserable by strike action by imposing minimum service agreements.

Alan Brown (Kilmarnock and Loudoun) (SNP): Will the Prime Minister give way?

The Prime Minister: I will happily give way—if the hon. Gentleman is opposed to helping struggling commuters, I am delighted to hear from him.

Alan Brown: Earlier on, the Prime Minister used the slogan, the “people's Parliament”, but the people of Scotland rejected his Government. If he really believes in the people, is it not right that the people of Scotland should have their say in a referendum?

The Prime Minister: I think it was Nicola Sturgeon herself who said that the referendum in 2014 was a “once in a generation” event. I do not know about you, Mr Speaker, but I feel that the Scottish Nationalist party should concentrate more on delivering on the domestic priorities of the people of Scotland and rather less on breaking up our United Kingdom.

Stewart Malcolm McDonald (Glasgow South) (SNP): Will the Prime Minister give way?

The Prime Minister: I believe that if I gave way to the hon. Gentleman, I would be forced to repeat the point I have just made.

We will abolish the threat of no-fault evictions, and we will take forward our plans to rejuvenate and, in many cases, to revolutionise the infrastructure of Britain, including Northern Powerhouse Rail. We will remedy the scandal that Leeds is the largest city in western Europe without light rail or a metro. We are dramatically improving local bus services, levelling up across the country to the standards set in London—at least, as they were set under a previous Mayor—and we are investing nearly £30 billion in our road network, including upgrading the A66 to be the first continuous dual carriageway across the Pennines since the 1970s.

Above all, this one nation Government will strengthen our United Kingdom of England, Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland—the most successful Union in history and a sacred inheritance that this Parliament will never allow anyone to rip up or rend asunder.

We will stand by one of the greatest international symbols of British courage and daring: our armed forces—the men and women who sacrifice so much to safeguard our way of life. We will protect our protectors from unfair and vexatious legal claims that undermine their morale and confidence. We will spare no effort in addressing the profound concerns of millions about the state of our criminal justice system with the first royal commission for almost 30 years, and there will be action now to impose tougher sentences on the most serious offenders.

Stephanie Peacock (Barnsley East) (Lab) *rose*—

The Prime Minister: If the hon. Lady wants to contest the need for tougher sentences for serious offenders, I am happy to hear her view.

Stephanie Peacock: The Queen's Speech mentioned a sentencing Bill. Will that include provision for increasing the sentence for causing death by dangerous driving from 14 years to life imprisonment? If not, are the Government open to accepting an amendment?

The Prime Minister: The hon. Lady makes an important and valid point. I have no doubt that she reflects the concerns of her constituents, and we will certainly be looking at what we can do to make sure that people who are guilty of dangerous driving receive the penalties they deserve. I know that the Home Secretary will have listened very carefully to what the hon. Lady has said.

We will also end the dangerous practice of early release of terrorists, but our reforms will only stand the test of time if our system of government here at Westminster meets the challenge of a new era. The steady erosion of faith in politics has poisoned our public life, so we will establish a constitution, democracy and rights commission to recommend proposals to restore trust in our institutions and our democracy. As a first step, we will repeal the Fixed-term Parliaments Act 2011 so that never again can we have the ludicrous spectacle of an Opposition party trying to defy the will of a majority of the House and running away from a general election. We will do everything in our power to restore devolved government in Stormont so that Northern Ireland is once again ruled by its own elected representatives.

Ian Paisley: Of course, we all look forward to devolved government being re-established in Northern Ireland fairly and equitably for all. Will the Prime Minister make good on his commitment for a golden age for all of the United Kingdom by making good on his promises for bus building and infrastructure in Northern Ireland so that we can all enjoy that golden age, and will he build a Boris bridge, not just the Boris bus?

The Prime Minister: I am grateful to the hon. Gentleman, and he can certainly be assured of my commitment to ensuring that the beautiful buses continue to be built in Ballymena. I will do everything we can to ensure that that continues to be the case. As for his desire for a bridge to connect the two biggest isles of the British Isles, all I can say is that it is a very interesting idea. I advise him to watch this space and, indeed, to watch the space between the islands, because what he has said has not fallen on deaf ears.

[*The Prime Minister*]

When it comes to standing by our friends, whether in Northern Ireland or elsewhere, one innovation that this Queen's Speech introduces is that we will stop public bodies taking it upon themselves to boycott goods from other countries and to develop their own pseudo-foreign policy against countries that, with nauseating frequency, turn out to be Israel.

Liz Saville Roberts (Dwyfor Meirionnydd) (PC): Will the Prime Minister give way?

The Prime Minister: No.

The scale of our programme is matched only by the sense of responsibility that now falls on all of us who have been elected. Again, I congratulate all new Members, and a huge responsibility now falls on all of us to redeem and repay the trust of the British people. I say to the people of this country that we owe you, we know it and we will deliver. We have now the energy, the ideas, the mandate and the people and we will spare no effort in fulfilling that mandate. As we engage full tilt now in this mission of change, I am filled with invincible confidence in the ability of this nation, our United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland, to renew itself in this generation as we have done so many times in the past. After the dither, after the delay, after the deadlock and after the paralysis and the platitudes, the time has come for change and the time has come for action, and it is action that the British people will get from this Gracious Speech, this most Gracious Speech. I commend it to the House.

3.40 pm

Ian Blackford (Ross, Skye and Lochaber) (SNP): I hope—[*Interruption.*]

Mr Speaker: Order. Will those who are leaving now leave quietly? We will try again.

Ian Blackford: Thank you, Mr Speaker.

There was absolutely nothing for the people of Scotland in that address from the Prime Minister, and I hope that, for those who were watching and listening back home, it was preceded by an announcement that it was not for viewers and listeners in Scotland.

I congratulate the hon. Members for Chatham and Aylesford (Tracey Crouch) and for Walsall North (Eddie Hughes) on their addresses. I listened to all the stories about "A Christmas Carol", but we did not hear which Conservative Front Bencher would be playing Scrooge. The hon. Member for Walsall North is a great football fan, and I thought that he would perhaps mention Aston Villa. They are not having the best of times, but I hope that he is enjoying watching John McGinn, whom we gifted to him from Hibernian last year.

This morning, Scotland's First Minister, Nicola Sturgeon, wrote to the Prime Minister demanding the transfer to the Scottish Government of legal powers to hold a second independence referendum under section 30 of the Scotland Act 1998. As the First Minister outlined, there has been a material change in the circumstances since the independence referendum of 2014, based on the prospect of Scotland's leaving the European Union against its will.

It is for the Prime Minister to explain to the people of Scotland why he is denying Scotland the right to choose our own future. Why did democracy stop, in the Prime Minister's world, with the independence referendum in 2014? And may I say to the Prime Minister that it is not a good look to be playing with his phone rather than listening to the legitimate demands of the Scottish National party? [*Interruption.*] The Prime Minister says, "Say something more interesting." Well, Prime Minister, this is about democracy. This is about the Scottish National party, which stood in the election on a manifesto about Scotland's right to choose, and it is about the Conservatives, who said no to indyref2—and what happened? Well, the Conservatives lost more than half their Members of Parliament.

Prime Minister, you got your answer from the people of Scotland. The SNP got 45% of the vote, a 20 percentage point difference from the Government. We got 80% of the Members of Parliament who sit on these Benches. Some time, some day, the Prime Minister is going to have to respect democracy. The Prime Minister cannot and will not continue to say no.

Drew Hendry (Inverness, Nairn, Badenoch and Strathspey) (SNP): The Prime Minister says that looking at his phone is more interesting than hearing what Scotland needs. Does that not tell us everything about this Prime Minister and his view of Scotland?

Ian Blackford: Indeed it does. There is not much that can be added to that, because the image of the Prime Minister playing with his phone and not listening to the Scottish National party says it all.

The people of Scotland did not vote for this Prime Minister. Scotland did not vote for this Conservative Government, and we certainly did not vote for the con of a Tory plan that has been set out today.

In December 1967, my old friend Winnie Ewing proclaimed that

"the march of time can bring anomalies between elections, so that sometimes a Government may have a majority in this House but be in a minority in the country."—[*Official Report*, 6 December 1967; Vol. 755, c. 1551.]

In Scotland, that is certainly the case. Here in this place, we face a Tory Government we have rejected, implementing a manifesto that Scotland rejected. For too many years, Scotland has been held back by successive Tory Governments we did not vote for.

Scottish National party MPs have today set out an alternative Queen's Speech to deliver for the people of Scotland. With a renewed and strengthened mandate, our expanded SNP team will focus on our priorities—on Scotland's priorities: stopping Brexit and protecting Scotland's NHS from any grubby Trump trade deal; dealing with the climate emergency; and, once and for all, putting an end to Tory austerity. Instead, the Government's Queen's Speech sets out another Tory programme that the people of Scotland rejected. Despite the fact that Scotland voted to remain a member of the European Union, we now face being dragged out against our will.

We often hear about losers' consent, but the fact is that Scotland voted to stay in the EU to maintain our rights as EU citizens. This Conservative Government do not have the consent of the people of Scotland, the Scottish Parliament or our Government to take Scotland

out of the EU. We ask that the solemn right, claimed by the people of Scotland, to determine the form of government best suited to our needs be exercised. This House accepted that claim of right as a principle, on a motion that I moved in July 2018. It is the Scottish people who are sovereign.

In that context, it is right for the House to respect our Scottish Parliament and last week's election result. But of course, in the last Parliament, the Tories ignored our interests and sidelined the will of the Scottish Government, intent on bringing forward a deal that will destroy our economy and risk jobs and livelihoods. As the former EU permanent representative to the EU, Sir Ivan Rogers, said, that pledge will create

“the biggest crisis of Brexit to date”

in late 2020. He said that “get Brexit done” was

“diplomatic amateurism, dressed up domestically as boldness and decisiveness.”

From selling off our NHS to selling out Scotland's fishing communities, the Prime Minister will inflict hardship on our communities as the cost of delivering his damaging Brexit.

The voices of the people of Scotland are being silenced—80% of their representatives in this House are not listened to by a Tory Government showing contempt. That is why we stand up for Scotland and against cruel, punishing policies and narrow, backward-gazing politics. Instead, we are determined that Scotland's right to choose our own future will be delivered, not simply because we in the SNP want that, but because the people of Scotland demand it. We stood on a mandate to give Scotland the right to choose its own future. I put the Prime Minister on notice that SNP Members will never stop fighting this Government for that case and for our mandate—for a fresh independence referendum—to be respected.

Andrew Bowie (West Aberdeenshire and Kincardine) (Con) *rose*—

Ian Blackford: I see the hon. Gentleman seeking to intervene. Will he accept democracy and Scotland's right to choose?

Andrew Bowie: I thank the right hon. Gentleman for giving way. Will he accept democracy and that last week, 55% of Scottish voters voted for parties that want to remain in the United Kingdom? There is no mandate for a second independence referendum in Scotland. The Scottish people are not calling for a second independence referendum. They want us to get on with the day job. Fix your own backyard before coming in here, demanding a referendum on Scottish independence. [*Interruption.*]

Ian Blackford: Well, as my hon. Friend the Member for Glasgow South (Stewart Malcolm McDonald) says, “What absolute tosh!” The hon. Member for West Aberdeenshire and Kincardine (Andrew Bowie) cannot get away from the fact that we won the election. We are here standing up as a voice for Scotland, and he lost most of his colleagues. They were rejected at the ballot box; they have been reduced to rump. The fact of the matter is that we on our side have 80% of the seats. The Government can only wish that they had such a mandate and such a majority in the rest of the UK. The reality is that no democrat can deny that we won the election.

We demand a right to have a referendum. The Scottish Government and the Scottish Parliament have a strong record for bettering the lives of citizens across Scotland, and we know that with more powers and with independence, we can and will do so much more.

Today, the Scottish National party has published our alternative Queen's Speech. The people of Scotland voted to lock the Prime Minister out of Downing Street and escape Brexit. Scotland voted to choose a better future, and our plan is to deliver that better future. We want to see a national health service protection Bill to stop the NHS across the UK being at risk from a US trade deal. It would guarantee that trade deals would not undermine the founding principles of the NHS that we cherish so much. We will continue to make the case and work to ensure that Scotland's voice is heard. Our nation has the right to choose its future. We will also deliver in Scotland a Bill to increase parental leave with an additional 12 weeks to be ring-fenced for the father in order to encourage take-up, as well as to increase statutory maternity and paternity pay.

The SNP new green deal will build on the transition towards a greener, sustainable future. We will continue to press the UK Government to match Scotland's net zero emissions target by 2045, putting oil and gas receipts into a net zero fund focused on measures to battle climate change and putting tackling the climate emergency front and centre of our priorities. That is what a responsible Government do.

Unlike the Conservatives, our ambition is to end poverty, not to increase it by a failure to act or to show leadership. Poverty is not inevitable. To fight it, we will work to end the disgraceful two-child cap on tax credits and the associated rape clause. We call on the United Kingdom Government immediately to end the benefits freeze and to halt the roll-out of universal credit. We will use every device open to us in this place to make the case that we cannot allow our citizens to be dragged into debt, hardship and despair by this nasty, careless Tory Government. We want to bring forward an equal living wage Bill, meaning an increase in the living wage to at least the level of the real living wage and an end to age discrimination.

The Scottish National party MPs reject the wholly immoral replacement of nuclear weapons at a cost of over £200 billion, and we call on other parties to follow us, to say no to Trident and to remove those weapons of mass destruction from the Clyde.

We want to help our pensioners by ensuring that the BBC licence fee remains free for those aged over 75. We will not abandon those women born in the 1950s, and, just as we have done in previous Parliaments, we will demand that this Government deliver justice for the 3.8 million women born in the 1950s who are being denied their pension by this Conservative UK Government. We will be pressing for an NHS funding boost from the UK Government that matches the current Scottish level and for constitutional change in abolishing the House of Lords and extending the franchise to include 16 and 17-year-olds.

This expanded SNP group is determined, and we are ready for the challenge. The Government think they can do what they want with Scotland and get away with it. That will not happen on our watch. The Tories are risking our economy and reducing opportunities for citizens.

[*Ian Blackford*]

The choice is clear: an outward-looking country with a vision of tolerance, inclusiveness and prosperity for all, or the offering of the Union run by a Tory party that does not care about Scotland. The Tory programme for government will push child poverty to a 60-year high and devastate our economy. The hardest of Tory Brexits risks up to 800,000 jobs in Scotland. The Tory manifesto means that day-to-day spending on public services outside health will still be almost 15% lower in real terms in 2023-24 than it was at the start of the 2010s. Austerity has hit communities hard, and it is not going away—more of the same from the Tories. Despite the climate emergency, there is nothing in the Queen's Speech to make real progress on reducing emissions. The UK Government have already failed to match the Scottish Government's 2045 net zero emissions target. That is just the start of it.

Yes, the Conservatives can say that England and Wales have had their say, but what about Scotland? We had our say, and Scotland rejected this Prime Minister and rejected the Tories. Those of us who represent the people and the will of Scotland will use every avenue open to us to protect our people against this Government and their shoddy plan.

Before I close, I want to appeal to Members across the House. In the previous Parliament, Members conducted themselves in less than acceptable ways on occasion. People across these islands have recognised that, and they are fed up with it. Let us start this Parliament with respect and let the strength of our arguments win the case, rather than drag this place into the gutter.

Finally, in setting out the SNP's clear opposition to the Government's Queen's Speech and offering our alternative, I have set out to the people of Scotland the tale of two Governments, of two parties, of two futures. I started with the words of Winnie Ewing, and I want to begin closing with the words of another parliamentarian. Let me remind the House of the words of Charles Stewart Parnell, who said that

"no man has the right to fix the boundary of a nation. No man has the right to say to his country, 'Thus far shalt thou go and no further'".

Now Scotland must have the chance to choose its own future: one shackled to the Brexit destruction imposed by Westminster, or one with hope, opportunity and ambition and with an independent Scotland in the European Union.

Mr Speaker: I call former Prime Minister Theresa May.

3.57 pm

Mrs Theresa May (Maidenhead) (Con): Mr Speaker, may I first take this opportunity to congratulate you on your election as Speaker? I know that, in residing in that Chair, you will uphold the best traditions of the Speaker of the House of Commons. I also want to thank you for the work that you have done, and I know you will continue to do, in showing concern for the health and well-being, including the mental health, of Members of this House and staff across Parliament. Thank you for all that you have done here.

I have been in this House for over 22 years, and this is the largest number of Conservative Members of Parliament that I have seen. I congratulate my right hon. Friend the

Prime Minister on leading our party to an overwhelming victory. One thing now is certain: the Lobby is going to be rather crowded. It will also be a rather welcome change to see all Conservative MPs going through the same Lobby. [*Laughter.*]

I hope my right hon. Friend will forgive me if I just reflect that this was the result that was supposed to happen in 2017. Of course, back then, people still thought the Labour party supported Brexit. Two years on, they saw that that was a sham, a pretence and a betrayal of millions of traditional Labour voters, and those voters have now elected Conservative Members of Parliament. This victory brings with it a huge responsibility, because they have put their trust in us and, as my right hon. Friend has said, we must work flat out to repay that trust—not just Ministers, but every single one of us. Of course, that means delivering Brexit. It means delivering our manifesto commitments on schools, the NHS and infrastructure, which is why the legislation and the commitments in the Queen's Speech are so important. But it means more than that. It means building a country that truly works for everyone. That has always been the ambition of the Conservative party, because we are a party that is at its strongest when we appeal across the board to people regardless of age, gender, ethnicity, sexuality, background, income or where they live. That is the true Conservative party.

We must deliver on Brexit and on our manifesto commitments, but we must go further. We must ensure that, in every decision we take in this House, we remember those communities that have lent us their vote. That means things like taking forward the modern industrial strategy, ensuring prosperity across the whole country, and I welcome the commitment in the Queen's Speech to spend on science and on research and development.

It also means remembering those communities when we negotiate trade deals around the world, including with the European Union, because good trade deals will protect the jobs of those who have put their faith in us and, more than that, will bring good, new, better jobs to the UK. It is interesting to note that we have not yet had a reference in this debate to the fact that, under a Conservative Government, yet again, we have seen employment go up.

Geraint Davies (Swansea West) (Lab/Co-op): Will the right hon. Lady give way?

Mrs May: No.

Good trade deals will protect the rights of workers and of those who have put their trust in us. I welcome the commitment in the Queen's Speech to an employment Bill, which I trust will not only enshrine but enhance workers' rights in this country. Good trade deals will also ensure that we maintain this country's high standards in areas like the environment. The environment Bill will be a very important piece of legislation.

We need to deliver on all those issues, particularly for communities that have lent us their vote, because these are the communities that feel most left behind by globalisation. These are the communities that, all too often, have borne the brunt when rights and standards have not been protected. We have a very real job to do in delivering for those people who have put their trust in us.

Of course, as we deliver Brexit and look ahead to the end of next year, we have to deliver a trade deal with the European Union by the end of December 2020. There are those who say it cannot be done, but I do not believe that. I have every confidence that it can be done, but we must do more than that because, by the end of December 2020, we have to agree and ratify a new treaty on security with the European Union such that it will come into operation on 1 January 2021. Again, I have every confidence it can be done, because significant work has already been put into these issues. Elements of that were agreed with the EU in the political declaration. There is work to be done, but it can be done and it must be done to that timetable.

There is another matter that people across the UK will look to us to deliver on: the social injustices that still persist. I welcome the reference in the Queen's Speech to the domestic abuse Bill, and I am grateful to the Prime Minister for the speed with which he responded to me when I pressed him on this matter earlier this week.

The Prime Minister: I responded instantly.

Mrs May: Indeed. That Bill has cross-party support and it will genuinely improve the lives of victims and survivors of domestic abuse.

I also welcome the reference to reforming the Mental Health Act, although, yet again, I am bound to say that I would have preferred a more full-blooded commitment to a new Mental Health Act. The review of the current Mental Health Act raised many issues about how we deal with and treat people with mental health problems. It is not just about resources; it is also about the attitude and the way in which people are treated. If we put those changes into place in a new Mental Health Act, we will bring genuine and significant improvements to people in this country who have mental health problems.

There are other social injustices we need to look at. Often, social injustice is underpinned by a feeling among the powerful that there are others in our society whom they can treat as second-class citizens. One of the worst examples and what really brought that home to me was the way in which the young girls and boys being sexually abused and groomed in Rotherham were treated by the authorities in that place. It was as if they were people who did not count. But they did count, and we must always remember that every member of our society, every resident of the UK, counts. It is that spirit of ensuring equality that lay behind the work done on social housing, and I note the commitment the Government have made to produce a social housing White Paper. It is important that we continue that work to ensure that the voice of those in social housing is heard.

Another injustice we need to tackle was highlighted by the race disparity audit—groundbreaking work by a Conservative Government that shone a light on injustice that too many experience and too few are willing to acknowledge. We cannot address all the issues raised and all the findings immediately, but we must ensure that the Government do not abandon the work on the race disparity audit. If we take action across the board, we will truly be creating one nation.

Speaking of one nation, my right hon. Friend the Prime Minister has, on a number of occasions, expressed his desire to unite the country. Of course, that will not happen if the United Kingdom is torn asunder by those

who want to ignore the ties of family, of history, of shared endeavour, of shared purpose, that we have formed together over the years. My view is simple: breaking up the United Kingdom is to the benefit of no one and the detriment of all. I am grateful to him for the reference in the Queen's Speech to the importance the Government attach to the integrity of the United Kingdom, and I look forward to the work that I know the Government will do to ensure that that is demonstrated.

Neil Gray (Airdrie and Shotts) (SNP): The former Prime Minister has spent a lot of her speech talking about the debt that her party and her successor owe to those who lent her party their support, but she will know better than anyone that a true leader, a true statesman, acknowledges those who did not vote for them. In Scotland, the Scottish National party secured 45% of the vote. Nobody denies the current Prime Minister's right to govern on 43% of the vote, so how can she turn round to the people of Scotland and say that we cannot have our say on our own future, after the general election results that we just had in Scotland?

Mrs May: As the hon. Gentleman will have heard from my excellent hon. Friend the Member for West Aberdeenshire and Kincardine (Andrew Bowie), 55% of people in Scotland voted for parties that support the Union of the United Kingdom. At the end of his speech, the right hon. Member for Ross, Skye and Lochaber (Ian Blackford) made a great plea about how an independent Scotland would be in the European Union. We all know that an independent Scotland will not be in the European Union—it will not be allowed to be in the European Union. So what the Scottish nationalists are saying to people in Scotland is simply not true.

The Queen's Speech refers to the UK's place and influence in the world. I note that there is to be a full review of international policy, no doubt building on a number of reviews that have taken place and work done in recent years. It is important that we look at this issue now. Of course, global Britain has never gone away; we have always been a global Britain. In recent years, we have continued to play an important role in international fora on matters such as climate change; we have played a key role in dealing with terrorism, modern slavery and people smuggling; and we have enhanced our presence in key areas east of Suez and in the Asia-Pacific region. We brought together action across the world when we found that a chemical weapon had been used on the streets of the UK by Russia.

At the same time, we have seen the international fora and the rules-based international order on which we have depended for decades coming under significant threat. At the same time as we have seen the atmosphere and discourse of politics in the UK become more acrimonious. Across the world we have seen a change, too. We have seen an emphasis on absolutism and confrontation rather than compromise. We have a decision to take as to where we sit in that: whether we side with the absolutists or continue to be a country that believes it is right that big countries come together internationally and restrain their own demands in order to seek agreement for the greater good of all.

We have also seen from some an interest in stepping back from a defence of democracy, human rights and the rule of law. We have to decide whether to look

[Mrs May]

inward or to continue to play a role in defending those values; I believe we should, because that is what global Britain is all about. It is important that we continue to uphold those values around the world. Of course, that may bring into the spotlight our relationship with the United States of America. It is a special relationship that we must nurture and preserve. It is in the interests not only of us and the United States but of the world that that special relationship is maintained. But it is not a one-way relationship. We do not just accept every position that the US takes; we consider our own interests and, when we disagree with the US, we tell them clearly that we disagree with them.

Over the past three years, we have seen this House focusing so much on Brexit and on so much internally, but we now have an opportunity: we can set that to one side and move on to being the global Britain that the Prime Minister has spoken about and that every Conservative Member on the Government Benches espouses. We can be a Britain that takes its place in the world; a Britain that recognises the need to reform the international rules-based order, playing not just a role but a leading role in that reform; and a United Kingdom that stands up for the values that we share—the values of democracy, the rule of law and human rights. A United Kingdom standing proud in the world. I believe the world needs the United Kingdom to take that role. I know that, under my right hon. Friend, we will do just that.

4.12 pm

Meg Hillier (Hackney South and Shoreditch) (Lab/Co-op): It is a pleasure to welcome you back to the Chair of the House, Mr Speaker, and it is a pleasure to follow the right hon. Member for Maidenhead (Mrs May), because despite our political disagreements she and I agree on what she said about everybody counting and the Government's being there for everybody. I thank the people of Hackney South and Shoreditch who re-elected me for the fifth time to stand up for them all—not just for the 73% of them who voted for me, but for the others who did not. I will stop at nothing to stand up for them in this House.

The Queen's Speech is quite incredible. It talks about investment in education, the NHS and public services, but this Government have slashed spending over the past nine and a half years. The promise of more funding for schools comes now, but only after nine years of funding cuts that have led to an 8% per pupil funding decrease over the past decade. The Government talk about more police, but who was it who cut their numbers in the first place? The Prime Minister has been keen to talk about the past as though it were a different country; were he in his place, I would remind him that he has been not just the Prime Minister for a few hundred days but an MP and the Mayor of London. He cannot dodge responsibility.

I will of course welcome things in the Queen's Speech that will deliver for the people of my constituency. It feels a bit bitter to hear talk about investment in broadband from the same Government who rigged the most recent broadband competition, particularly for rural broadband, so that only one bidder could win, but it is important that we invest in infrastructure in our country. Even in

my constituency—even in Shoreditch—where we have the best tech businesses beating like a heartbeat for Britain, we have too poor a broadband service. I will join the Government in supporting investment in broadband if they will deliver in my constituency and across the country.

I cannot stand here today without highlighting the real challenges for the people of Hackney South and Shoreditch. As the former Prime Minister said, everybody counts. In my constituency, that includes half of our children who live in poverty after housing costs are taken into account. In my constituency, or across Hackney, 30% of deaths are still premature, and the leading cause of that is cancer, so investment in our health service for early diagnosis and treatment is absolutely vital. One fifth of adults, which is above average, still smoke in my constituency, compared with around 14% of the London population.

With a ratio of nearly one in 10, Hackney has the highest rate of diagnosed depression of any London borough. I would welcome a review of mental health support, but, as the former Prime Minister said, I think that we may need to be more radical than that, so I will be watching what happens closely. Hackney as a borough is the 11th most deprived of the 326 English local authorities. Although some people talk about our being achingly cool—they think of the hipsters with their beers and of our bread makers and our beer makers and so on—a very high percentage of my constituents are in great need, with more than a third living in financial poverty, earning 60% of median earnings after housing costs are taken into account.

I wanted this Queen's Speech to say a lot more about housing. In my borough, it takes 17 times a person's salary to buy a home. That compares with the London average of 13.8 times, which is pretty high, and the England and Wales average of eight times the amount, which is also high. It means that home ownership is out of the reach of so very many. In my constituency, there are more private renters than homeowners. Half of all households are represented in social housing, which is more than the other two combined.

A real stain on one of the richest countries in Europe and in the world is the fact that more than 3,000 families are living in temporary accommodation. Just in the past few weeks, a man wrote to me begging for help because for two and a half years he has lived with his eight-year-old son in one room in a hostel. We have a fantastic Labour elected mayor in Hackney, who is doing his utmost to resolve this housing crisis, which is costly to the individuals concerned, costly to our communities and costly to the taxpayer. Without more from this Government, it will be difficult—if not impossible—to deliver for those 3,000 families who need help, and for those children who will be living without a permanent roof over their heads and who will be celebrating Christmas in one room in a hostel or in short-term, inadequate temporary accommodation.

I would not want to suggest that this poverty is also a poverty of ambition, because boy, do my constituents want to get on in life. None the less, without those basic building blocks of primarily secure long-term, affordable housing, and swift and easy access to proper healthcare, to secure and properly paid jobs and to skills development, they will never get there. Some in my constituency earn enough money to work a four-day week, but many,

many more work three or four jobs on poverty wages on zero-hours contracts just to pay the rent. There is also the invidious bedroom tax policy, which does not work. On one estate, the Wenlock Barn estate in Hoxton, 74 families are hit by this policy and they do not have an option to move to a different property. It is a cloud cuckoo policy, and if the Prime Minister is anywhere near honest about his desire to be a one nation Conservative, it is one that he would abolish right now.

All Governments should be creating a ladder of opportunity for the people of this country. This Government, or the Governments before them, have ripped away the lower rungs of that ladder, so it is a very long reach for too many of my constituents. I want to see some commitment from this Government that they will help my constituents.

Let me move on the specifics of the Queen's Speech. Her Majesty talked about the Government continuing to "lead the way" in tackling climate change. It has been my great sorrow, in one of my responsibilities as the former Chair of the Public Accounts Committee—a role I hope to resume in this Parliament—to have pored over the detail of the Government's policy on climate change. And what do we see? There was carbon capture and storage: three expensive competitions, wasting millions of pounds achieving absolutely nothing. There was the much vaunted green deal, with the noble aim of greening our homes, because, let's face it, more domestic emissions come from housing than from aviation. But that scheme was scrapped as a total failure—predictably—and cost the taxpayer the equivalent of £17,000 per loan granted.

Caroline Lucas (Brighton, Pavilion) (Green): The hon. Member is making a powerful speech. She will know that the Committee on Climate Change wrote to the Prime Minister yesterday to say that action on climate change is falling short. Does she agree that that will continue to be the case for as long as this Government do not commit to leaving fossil fuels in the ground, and that that means ending mass road building, mass aviation expansion and the mass subsidies to the fossil fuel industry?

Meg Hillier: I thank the hon. Lady for her point, which I am sure she will be making more firmly later.

We have to look at this issue in the long term. Let us be clear: Governments of different colours did not deal with it early enough or properly, but we now need to tackle it, and a Government with a majority of 80 have every opportunity to be bold and ambitious in this direction. But they privatised the green investment bank, which became the Green Investment Group and now does not even need to deliver on any of its green principles. There are very few guarantees about where that money will go. Had the green investment bank remained in public hands, we would have had a huge opportunity to invest in emerging green industries to create jobs and opportunities as well as tackle climate change issues. But that was another squandered opportunity.

In order to compare this situation with what Labour in power can do, I turn to my own borough—the Labour-run Borough of Hackney—which has set bold targets to tackle climate change, and is achieving those targets. Already, half the electricity for the council and local schools is generated from renewable sources, and that will rise to 100% by April next year. Only very

recently, the council established a publicly owned clean energy company that will maximise all council-owned roof space to generate renewable electricity. The council is also decarbonising its vehicles and tackling many other issues. I do not have time to go into everything today, but it is setting an example to show what can be done. If one London borough can do this, what could a Government do if they set their mind to it? This Government really need to step up. Of course, we await reshuffles, but I invite the relevant Minister to come and see what my borough is doing; we can show them how we are leading the way.

The Queen's Speech also touched on "swift justice" for knife possession. There is a scourge of knife possession among our young people in particular, and too many people in my borough are fearful of walking their own streets because of the impact of knife crime. Only during this election campaign, another young man's life was lost and another family are bereaved. I am angry and disturbed for the families I visit who have lost loved ones and whose lives have been devastated as a result of knife crime. However, I urge the Government to tread carefully. Yes, knife crime is a scourge, but if we simply say that we will criminalise more the people who carry knives, people will choose to carry other sharp weapons. We will need to look closely at the detail of that legislation to ensure that it achieves what it sets out to—not just a headline.

The Queen's Speech included new rules requiring councils, police, schools and housing associations to work together. Of course, the Labour Mayor of London set up the violence reduction unit to do just that, and my constituency has the Hackney Integrated Gangs Unit. Once again, I genuinely and openly offer the Government the opportunity to come and see what we are doing locally in Hackney. We do not have all the answers, but we are tackling this issue—unfortunately, from bitter experience of the impact on our community.

It rather surprised me to hear Her Majesty talk about setting up a royal commission on justice. I do not think this is really necessary. I could refer the Government to a slew of Public Accounts Committee reports and concerns raised on probation, where we have seen a failure of the modernisation of the system and an attempt to reverse those changes; on prisons, where we have seen a slashing of prison officer numbers and huge issues there; on chaos in courts and tribunals; and on a huge IT project that is behind schedule. The problem is that several Secretaries of State for Justice were throwing everything in the air wanting to change everything overnight, and that is a recipe for chaos. We need to go back to the basics—to stability. We must not have stop-start and reversal; we must make sure that there is proper investment in our criminal justice system. A royal commission worries me. It kicks the can down the road as there is a danger that we will never actually deliver. A royal commission can take a couple of years and then the Government have to consider it. We do not have that time to wait. Actually, it is much simpler than that. I hope the Government will look at those bits of our work and make sure that they take those points on board.

I am interested in the national skills fund. I hope—maybe too much—that this might mean investment for people in low-paid work who want to improve their skills, as the Labour manifesto proposed. I hope that it will end the barrier to skills and training in further education

[Meg Hillier]

that is the loan system. Many of my constituents who are women returning to work, had been in low-paid jobs and had children do not want to take the risk of a loan in order to possibly get a better-paid job. They cannot afford that, they do not have the credit record for it, and they are very nervous about it. If the national skills fund supports them, then fantastic. If it also makes sure that our young people are training in the tech skills—the global skills—that many of my tech businesses in Shoreditch find hard to get in the UK, then great. As I said at the very beginning, if there is something that the Government are doing that will help my constituents, I will work with them on that, but I wait to see the detail.

On immigration, I am sadly an expert in the failings of the Home Office in this area, as one of its top six customers among the 650 Members of this House in representing constituents' concerns. I represent the world in one borough. People from across the world come to my surgery telling me their problems with immigration. We have 40,000 European citizens in Hackney, as well as many Commonwealth citizens. The hostile environment is a reality in my borough. When leave to remain was reduced from five years to three years, guess what—that meant that constituents had to pay two fees before they could apply for their citizenship. Then, in a very mean-spirited way, it was reduced to two years, so they have to pay three times the fees before they can qualify for citizenship. Many of my constituents really struggle with those costs. Of course, I want a fair system, a clear system and a faster system, but we should not be putting up barriers to people who have demonstrably shown that they have a legitimate right to be here and are being pushed through a bureaucratic process that delays their eventual proper opportunity to fulfil work and family hopes and to contribute to our communities and our economy.

The Government have talked about investment and borrowing in this Queen's Speech. That is a very simple phrase and I look forward to seeing the detail. Her Majesty talked about the Government

“keeping borrowing and debt under control”

and “a responsible fiscal strategy”. Let me assure the Government that if I am returned to the position of Chair of the Public Accounts Committee—or, indeed, even if I am not—I will hope that that Committee watches every penny and pound of taxpayers' money that is being spent. I will be challenging the Government on the efficiency, effectiveness and economy of every promise made in this Queen's Speech and every plan that emerges from it. But above all, I will challenge, cajole, criticise and at every stage make sure that this Government are doing what they can to deliver for the best interests of my constituents in Hackney South and Shoreditch.

4.29 pm

John Redwood (Wokingham) (Con): It was a pleasure to see our new Speaker in the Chair at the start of the debate, and I would like to send my congratulations to him through you, Mr Deputy Speaker. I was delighted at his election, and I am quite sure that he will be a fair and experienced judge of our affairs and will look after our House very well.

The recent election and the conversations that I was able to conduct even more intensively than usual with the electors of Wokingham told me that they do want some changes. I made promises to them that I would come here again as an advocate for more money for our local schools, which have been short-changed in recent years, so it is a pleasure to see in the Gracious Speech the down payments promised for next year, and I look forward to those continuing in the years that follow.

My electors and I agreed that we need more money for our local surgeries, more nurses and doctors to be recruited and better support for our local district general hospital in Reading. Again, I see that answer already in the Gracious Speech, with a promise of substantial new resources—financial and personnel—for the national health service, which will be laid out in legislation for a five-year period. I welcome that. It is a pleasure to say to my electors that two parts of the job seem to be well on the way to being done, but having a little experience of government, I know that there will remain, day by day and month by month, issues to sort out, to ensure that my constituency gets its fair share of the money.

Liz Saville Roberts: In his capacity as a former Secretary of State for Wales, does the right hon. Gentleman share my concern and disappointment that there was no mention of Wales whatsoever in the Queen's Speech, as well as my concern about how the money being promised to England will find its way to Wales, through the Barnett formula or wherever? Finally, will he perhaps ask the same question as me: how much longer do we need the Wales Office for? Looking at the behaviour of this place, there will be people outside saying, “Surely Wales could do a bit better than this.”

John Redwood: The right hon. Lady knows full well that there is a formula and consequentials from the English settlement. I am quite sure that my right hon. Friends in the Government will look after Wales, and it is her job to test them out in the appropriate debates. This speech is not the appropriate moment, because I am not here to speak for Wales; I am here to speak for Wokingham and West Berkshire, and I am here to speak for the wider nation, as we all do.

I am also looking forward to the promises on infrastructure. The Government have rightly said that we have a big job of work to do to improve our railways and roads, to make sure that people can get to work and get their children to school, that we can bust the congestion and that people have easier journeys. That, too, will reduce pollution and increase safety.

Wokingham is a very fast-growing area, because we are doing more than our fair share for the national housing achievement. We particularly need support on putting in additional transport links, with digital signals on the railways so that we can have more capacity and more trains, and an improved road network. It was a pleasure to work with the previous Secretary of State for Transport in the last Parliament on the idea of strategic local highway networks. We needed more money and support for those important roads, which are under the control of councils. They do not qualify for trunk status but can often relieve trunk roads and provide an important means for my constituents and others to get to work or get their children to school. The previous Government answered that, but it falls to the new

Government, with the more generous financial settlement that I look forward to, to ensure that we can work together, so that I can get some of those road schemes and rail improvements for the Wokingham area, which will be much needed.

The big thing, which represents a seismic shift in Government policy and which I welcome, is the introduction of optimism and enthusiasm—the belief that this country can achieve great things, that we do not have to constantly cut under the Maastricht criteria and that we should no longer make state debt the main objective of economic policy. I have been working away for some time to get that change of policy, but Philip Hammond was not sympathetic to my views in all sorts of ways. I am delighted that the new Prime Minister and the new Chancellor are enthusiastic about the idea that the aim of economic policy for this Parliament must be prosperity—prosperity for the many, and tax cuts for everyone.

Tax cuts are a very important part of creating greater prosperity. People work hard, and they want to keep more of their own money. They are often better judges of how to spend their money than councils and Governments. It falls to a renewed Conservative party to take that message to every part of the country, implement that message in the forthcoming Budget and show that not only will we find more money for schools, hospitals and roads, which is needed, but we will also have some money for tax cuts.

Some tax cuts do pay for themselves because our rates are too high, and if we cut them to an affordable rate, people work harder, stay here, contribute more and are more enterprising, and we get more money in. Other tax cuts will reduce the revenue, so we need to grow the economy, and over the years it works because growth generates more jobs and higher incomes, and in comes more money.

To fulfil this new objective, the Government have rightly changed the basis on which the economy is going to be governed. We have gone away from state debt as a percentage of GDP, the iron rule that dominated the last dreadful years of the Labour Government—a period of collapse, when state debt got out of control—dominated the coalition period of recovery and dominated the Philip Hammond Conservative Government period, when he seemed to like that particular proposition. Now we have a much more sensible idea, which is that we should of course be prudent—there is no magic money tree, and we cannot spend safely on the scale Labour recommended to the country—so what we are suggesting now as the golden rule is that any current expenditure must be covered out of taxation, but we can borrow up to 3% of GDP to put in those big new investments and the myriad smaller investments in broadband, rail, road, water and the other things where public money is needed as an adjunct to the substantial private investment that will in many places be going into those important developments.

This will make a lot of difference, because this Parliament needs to understand that there has been a very nasty world manufacturing recession over the last six months or so and there has been a worrying slowdown in the world economy over the last year. It began, as these things always do, with the central banks that get it wrong. It began with the tightening of the central bank in America, the Federal Reserve Board, in the third and fourth quarters of 2018. We could feel the shake on the

world economy, and we saw what was happening to world markets. It spread to the eurozone, which stopped all its quantitative easing, although its economy was still very weak and could not really take that particular shock, and it came to the United Kingdom, where we had a very severe policy being pursued by the Bank of England. Very predictably—I remember warning about it some time ago—these changes in central bank policy did indeed slow the world economy.

Now things have changed, but they have not changed yet in the United Kingdom, so I urge the Prime Minister and the Chancellor to get the UK authorities into line with the analysis and the prescription of the world central banks outside the United Kingdom. What we have seen in the last six months is a very big move to cut interest rates worldwide by most of the major central banks not only in the advanced world, but even more dramatically in quite a number of the emerging market countries from Turkey to India and Brazil. We have seen cuts in the United States of America, and we have seen the reintroduction of quantitative easing—bond buying, created money—in the eurozone, because the eurozone economy has shuddered to a halt in some places. We have seen further developments in Japan, which carried on with quantitative easing and zero or negative interest rates throughout the difficult period, but it too needs to boost things rather more.

However, there has been no response in the United Kingdom. Indeed, only in the last few days the Bank of England has gone the other way. It has done a series of stress tests on the major banks, and I am delighted to say that our major banks passed with flying colours. The worst case in the stress test was very severe, but there were no problems for the banks, as the Bank of England reported. However, the Bank of England then said that the clearing banks had to double the counter-cyclical buffer of capital they keep. That is technical language. What does it mean? It means there is about £20 billion less available for mortgages, car loans, business expansion and new investment. That is what it means—a very fundamental monetary tightening. It happened at the same time that sterling went up about 10%—another very strong monetary tightening.

Money growth is eye-wateringly low in the United Kingdom, unlike in the eurozone, and it is well below that in the United States of America. At exactly the point when we were doing this, the Federal Reserve Board, with 2%-plus growth in America, which we would love to have on this side of the Atlantic, was injecting billions—I think about \$150 billion was injected in a single month—into the money markets to keep things liquid so that the American consumer, car buyer, mortgage demander and small businesses would have access to the money they needed to continue the very successful American growth strategy. Let us ensure a growth strategy in which monetary policy does not stand too much on the brake.

There is also the issue of how the Treasury has been recalculating our obligations at official level. Around October, when it probably thought that we might be leaving the European Union—there was a chance of that at the time—it decided that the student loan system was costing us £12 billion a year more, although that system had not been accounted for in such a way up to that point. There were no changes to the student loan system, or to the experiences of those who could not

[John Redwood]

repay their loans, yet the figures that we presented deteriorated sharply as a result of that decision. I do not think we should allow that to deviate from what I hope will be a positive Budget—probably at the end of next month, given the rumours I see in the press.

We need the Budget to provide that boost to growth. I think it is eminently affordable to have the increases that we promised and talked about in the general election regarding schools, hospitals and infrastructure, and also eminently affordable to have those promised tax cuts to business rates and national insurance. We would not need to offset that with other tax increases, because this economy desperately needs a boost.

In a world where some other Governments are boosting on the fiscal side, and practically every other country is boosting on the monetary side, in order to see off the threat of the world slowdown turning into something worse, it is important that the United Kingdom authorities do the same thing. I have every confidence in my right hon. Friend the Prime Minister, who I think is single-handedly turning around the mood with his message of confidence and enthusiasm for how we can do better. That will take some cash, however, and now is the time to spend a bit of that.

This country and its economy can achieve a lot more, so let us ensure that the new message of prosperity for the many and tax cuts for everyone is seen through. That is the way to bring most people in this country together, and honour the promises that many of us made in the general election. That will show that the country has made wise decisions up to this point, and that Brexit will not be damaging to our economy, but can be part of a positive move towards faster growth, better jobs, and more paid jobs, just as we have experienced in recent years and months.

4.42 pm

Sir Edward Davey (Kingston and Surbiton) (LD): It is a great privilege to follow the right hon. Member for Wokingham (John Redwood), and it was a delight to hear that he is a convert, however late, to increased public spending. He made some interesting points about macroeconomic policy and he spoke about the new fiscal rule that the Chancellor announced just before the general election, which I hope the House will soon get to debate. He welcomed that rule, but I have some concerns about it as I think it rather old-fashioned. I would like a new fiscal rule to consider the net worth of the public sector and ensure that it is growing over time; at the moment it is in negative territory, particularly because of various pension fund liabilities. That would be a much better approach to managing fiscal policy long term, because it looks at the whole balance sheet of the public sector, which is what a normal business would do. We now have a data set for the past three years from the Office for National Statistics, and I hope we can have that debate later on, because it is important to get fiscal policy right.

The right hon. Gentleman made two other interesting points about monetary policy. He spoke about wanting to bring back quantitative easing, which is an interesting question.

John Redwood *indicated dissent.*

Sir Edward Davey: The right hon. Gentleman shakes his head, and I am sorry if I misinterpreted his remarks. We should look at quantitative easing and how it is done, both in this country and elsewhere. There is some concern that the way central banks have done it has not led to a fair distribution of prosperity and that the money has gone into a small number of hands, resulting in increased inequality.

I am slightly worried by something that the right hon. Gentleman said about monetary policy that might imply—he might disagree that this was his implication—that there should be some challenge to the independence of the central bank by the Government of the day. I would not welcome that, although I would certainly welcome a debate on quantitative easing. I look forward to debating with him, so that we get our macroeconomic policy right. Finally, I will just say this. It did appear that the right hon. Gentleman was talking about expansionary fiscal policy and expansionary monetary policy. I wonder if he is worried about the impact of Brexit on our economy.

Like the Leader of the Opposition, I would like to remember one of our late friends, Frank Dobson, who passed away last month. Although we were members of different political parties, I found Frank to be one of the friendliest, most decent and most committed Members of this House I have ever met in my 20 years here. From his opposition to the Iraq war and apartheid to the work he did to rebuild the NHS, Frank leaves a proud record. In his role as the Brian Blessed of the Commons, Frank also leaves several volumes of funny, filthy and totally politically incorrect jokes. Mr Deputy Speaker, I am sure you would like to hear an example, but I fear I must remind the House that our proceedings are being broadcast before the 9 pm watershed.

I pay tribute to the mover and the seconder of the Humble Address. The hon. Member for Chatham and Aylesford (Tracey Crouch) has a bright career in front of her, particularly in pantomime. I invite her to join me in my annual walk-on part for St Paul's Players in Chessington. This year, during the general election, I took my family and I had my walk-on part as one of Robin Hood's merry men. I can tell you, Mr Deputy Speaker, that I know where the baddies are in this House and where the Sheriff of Nottingham sits. The hon. Member for Walsall North (Eddie Hughes) made an impressively long speech as a bid for a job ahead of the Prime Minister's ministerial reshuffle. I wish him luck.

I believe our United Kingdom is one of the greatest examples of international co-operation in world history, so much so that four nations can be as one while being themselves: democratic, open and internationalist, operating under the rule of law and under the uniting presence of Her Majesty. We have been a beacon of political stability in the world. I believe we remain fundamentally a people who are outward-looking, inclusive, compassionate and capable of progressive reform as we recognise and value the lessons of history.

Christine Jardine (Edinburgh West) (LD): I thank my right hon. Friend for giving way. Does he agree that, while the Scottish National party might trumpet gaining 80% of Scottish seats, the fact is that only 45% of the people of Scotland voted for it? If we had a more proportional representation system, that would have been reflected in the seats there, in the same way as the seats here might have been a little different.

Sir Edward Davey: My hon. Friend is exactly right. The majority of people in Scotland voted for parties who want to preserve the Union. I get a sense that right hon. and hon. Members on the Government Benches should also note that the majority of people voted for parties who wanted to give the people a final say on the European Union.

We needed a Queen's Speech that would truly keep our country together, heal the divides and tackle the challenges of inequality, lack of opportunity and climate change. However, I fear the Prime Minister's Queen's Speech will only undermine our united country's great traditions. I fear that, with this Government's programme, we will become a more inward-looking, more illiberal and less compassionate country. The one nation rhetoric of the Prime Minister is not matched by his actions. Let me start with Brexit.

Let us be clear that the Prime Minister and the Conservative party now own Brexit. It is their total and complete responsibility. They cannot blame anyone else any more. They have become the Brexit party from top to bottom. The question, of course, is this: will the Prime Minister get Brexit done? More precisely, will he get it done by the end of the year, so we can avoid the disaster of a no-deal Brexit? Well, we shall see.

The Prime Minister's biggest weapon in his Brexit deal endeavour is surely his unmatched flexibility with the truth. His so-called triumph of achieving a deal for Brexit phase one was possible only because he betrayed his big promise to the Democratic Unionist party, his erstwhile big supporters. His willingness to jump unashamedly over every red line he had previously been willing to die in a ditch for will have been noted in Brussels by Europe's rather more skilful negotiators.

Mr Gregory Campbell (East Londonderry) (DUP): The right hon. Gentleman makes a fairly accurate assessment of the communication between the Conservative party, its leader and my party, but does he agree that there is still the opportunity and time for redemption?

Sir Edward Davey: There is always time for redemption, but if the hon. Gentleman is hoping for it in this case from this Prime Minister, I wish him well.

Some of us have led successful negotiations, pan-Europe, in Brussels—difficult negotiations that I won for Britain—on everything from economic reform of the single market to climate change. I did not succeed by adopting this Prime Minister's tactics of bulldog bluster combined with the record of a turncoat. I do not believe that that is the right approach, and I do not believe that he will succeed without renegeing on all, or most, of his previous promises to leave voters. My parliamentary interest in this is whether or not, in the dark Conservative forests of the Brexit Spartans, his erstwhile friends have yet smelt betrayal. We shall see, but as we oppose Brexit and continue to point out the extra costs, economic damage and loss of influence, we will also remind Government colleagues of the previously unthinkable concessions that now need to be made for any chance of a deal next year.

I turn to the NHS, which the Prime Minister has made so much of. Every Member of the House was elected on a manifesto committed to increasing spending on the NHS in real terms—maybe there is a little political consensus there. I, for one, am relaxed about

putting a spending commitment for the health service into law, but that prompts one question: is the spending enough? I do not want to repeat the election debate, where the Labour party and the Liberal Democrats were arguing for higher health spending than the Government. Instead, let me approach it in a rather different way, in terms of what our medium-term NHS spending target should be.

Most health analysts tend to talk, not as the Prime Minister does, in the abstract—in total spending, which is bound to go up with an ageing population and economic growth—but in comparisons between similar countries: on spending per person, on the percentage of the national income. If we compare the UK's health spending in these ways—even with the Prime Minister's rises—against the world's other largest developed countries, the UK fares badly. In the G7, our health spending per person is the second lowest—lower than Germany and France. As a share of national income, in the G7, the UK again performs badly, with Italy the only country that is spending less.

I readily admit that the NHS is far more efficient as a health service than, say, the health system of the United States, but surely we should be really ambitious for the NHS, and the factual evidence shows that this Government and this Queen's Speech are not. As we legislate for future NHS spending targets, why do we not take the opportunity to be really ambitious? Why do we not aim to spend 10% of our national income on the NHS, as a minimum? That would bring us up to G7 comparators, and I think that the British people would back a policy where £1 in every £10 of the national cake was spent on the nation's health. I accept that the Government may be nervous about spending targets based on national income because their economic policies look set to fail so badly and national income will grow very slowly.

John Redwood: Does the right hon. Gentleman accept that comparing a health service that is completely free to the user with one where there are payments through insurance schemes and collections of money is not a fair comparison? He should add in all the costs of the Inland Revenue in the UK, because that is the way we collect the revenue. And in relation to a previous point that he made, I think Brexit is good for the economy, not bad—I have always said that.

Sir Edward Davey: I will come to that last point in a second, but the right hon. Gentleman's point about health systems is an interesting point for debate. I point to countries such as Denmark, which have a taxpayer-funded system and spend a significantly higher share of their national income on health. I am afraid that his point is not valid.

Crispin Blunt (Reigate) (Con): Will the right hon. Gentleman give way?

Sir Edward Davey: No, I am going to make some progress.

On economic policy and Brexit, I have to tell the House that I am worried about self-imposed Brexit austerity. I will explain why. First, take the damage to growth from Brexit and the red tape of Brexit at our customs borders, a cost estimated by Her Majesty's Revenue and Customs at a mere £15 billion every year. We had a red tape battle in the coalition, and we never

[Sir Edward Davey]

got anywhere near saving that amount of money, yet this Government want to impose that cost on our businesses.

Then we have the damage to businesses and our NHS from the ending of free movement of labour within the EU. That will damage growth overnight. It is not just the impact on economic growth of this Brexit austerity that worries me, but the impact on the poorest and most vulnerable in our society who will feel it the most. We have already seen the numbers of children in poverty rise by nearly 400,000 since 2015, and we have seen the report from the Resolution Foundation, which I hope that Government Members will read, that analysed the Conservative's general election manifesto and said that child poverty will continue to rise year-on-year with that party's policies.

Wera Hobhouse (Bath) (LD): One hundred and thirty-five thousand children will live in temporary accommodation this Christmas, and this Government make no proposal to resolve that tragedy. Temporary accommodation causes childhood trauma and the problem will be resolved only if we build a lot more social homes for rent.

Sir Edward Davey: I could not agree more with my hon. Friend. Shelter's report made that very point this week. There was no mention of homeless people in the Queen's Speech, and no mention of tackling child poverty.

There was another huge omission from the Queen's Speech: the climate emergency. Sure, we heard the unambitious 2050 net zero target mentioned again, but just like in the Conservative manifesto, there was a lack of a sense of urgency and of a set of practical but radical measures. I find that truly alarming. It is particularly alarming because this Prime Minister has previously written so scathingly about the need to tackle climate change.

Meg Hillier: The right hon. Gentleman will know, as a former Secretary of State for Energy and Climate Change, how long it takes to get these major projects that will deliver big change up and running. In my speech, I outlined three failures that happened because of this Government and their predecessor. Does he agree that we need to get action going now?

Sir Edward Davey: I absolutely do. In her speech, the hon. Lady mentioned carbon capture and storage; I had pushed that competition forward, and it was going very well but, directly after the 2015 election, the then Chancellor cancelled it overnight and put Britain's global leadership on this key climate change technology back years. It was a disgraceful measure.

I was talking about the opinions of the Prime Minister on climate change. Just seven years ago, in his infamous *Telegraph* column, he sought to cast doubt on mainstream climate science, dismissing it as complete tosh. You can hear him saying that, can you not, Mr Deputy Speaker? Instead, he warned about the

"encroachment of a mini ice age".

That is what our Prime Minister said.

On wind power, in which Britain now leads the world thanks to Liberal Democrat Ministers—[HON. MEMBERS: "Oh!"] If anybody wants to contest that point, I am

happy to take an intervention. None are coming. What did this Prime Minister have to say about what is now the cheapest form of renewable power? He said that wind farms would barely

"pull the skin off a rice pudding".

This technology is a global leader from Britain. It is powering our homes, but the Prime Minister apparently does not believe in it.

Then we see the Conservative record on climate change since 2015, voted for at every stage by the Prime Minister: scrapping the zero carbon homes regulations, banning onshore wind power and stopping tidal lagoon power.

And then we come to Heathrow. In south-west London, we do not forget what the Prime Minister said just four years ago, when he promised that he would

"lie down in front of those bulldozers and stop the construction of that third runway."

If only, Mr Deputy Speaker—if only.

Sarah Olney (Richmond Park) (LD): Does my right hon. Friend agree that this Conservative Government's commitment to expanding Heathrow, and the economic benefits claimed for it, do not justify the impact on climate change, the impact on air quality and the impact on noise, in south-west London in particular but also over a very wide area?

Sir Edward Davey: My hon. Friend is absolutely right. She has been an amazing campaigner against the third runway, and I always admire her advice and thank her for it.

When we on these Benches say that we do not trust this Prime Minister and this Government on climate change. The evidence is with us, so we will raise the need for radical action on climate change time and again in this Parliament. We will work to force the Government to make the next global climate change talks in Glasgow in November a success, even though they come, ironically, just when the UK will be losing its influence on climate change at the European table. We will champion the need to decarbonise capitalism, and to build on the fantastic work done by the Governor of the Bank of England, Mark Carney. Today, in the *Financial Times*, we read that Mr Carney is taking action, introducing world-leading climate stress tests in major financial institutions. If only this Government would back the Bank of England in the City, there would be a historic opportunity for this country to lead the world with a gold standard for green finance, but I fear that there is no ambition on the Conservative Benches for that.

This Queen's Speech is disappointing on so many levels, and we will vote against it. Liberal Democrats in this Parliament will do our democratic duty: we will scrutinise the Government, and argue for the liberal, inclusive, fairer and greener society in which we believe.

5.2 pm

Greg Clark (Tunbridge Wells) (Con): It is a pleasure to follow the right hon. Member for Kingston and Surbiton (Sir Edward Davey), who, in his parade of greatest hits, somehow forgot to mention that the achievements that he described were under a Conservative-led Government. However, it is nice to know that he regards them as successes. It is also a great pleasure to

see a fellow Kent MP in the Chair, Mr Deputy Speaker. I congratulate you on your position, and on taking the Chair today.

Throughout the Prime Minister's speech, he referred consistently to "one nation", and it is right that he did so, because what we have experienced in the last week is something extraordinary. In towns, villages and cities in every part of our country, individual men and women have resolved, quietly but together, to move on, not only from the divisions of the past three and a half years but, in many cases, from differences that have endured for decades. There has been a coming together of the nation in a spirit of quiet pragmatism and a determination to progress, rejecting both an attempt to divide our nation between Leave and Remain and an attempt to impose an extreme and ideological doctrine on a moderate and flexible people.

I have never been prouder to swear the oath of allegiance to Her Majesty—and, by extension, to our country—than I was earlier this week. The spirit of national cohesion, of one nation, means so much to me because of the course of my own life. As you know, Mr Deputy Speaker, my constituency of Tunbridge Wells is a beautiful and famous place: famous for being home to people with strong views who are given to expressing them robustly and confidently, and I would not have it any other way, but famous too for a civility and courtesy that made even going from door to door during a winter election campaign a warm and convivial experience. I enjoyed it enormously.

Tunbridge Wells has always chosen a Conservative Member of Parliament, but it would be a fatal error to assume that that is automatic and that support can be taken for granted. Tunbridge Wells is an articulate, discerning and demanding place. People there work very hard. They live prudently rather than lavishly, and many face tough challenges that belie our reputation as a place of uniform affluence.

Tunbridge Wells has elected Conservatives in part at least because it has experienced good, effective Conservative representation, whether from my predecessors, Sir Patrick Mayhew and Archie Norman—and, I hope, myself; from Kent county council, led by effective public servants such as Sir Sandy Bruce-Lockhart and Paul Carter; or from a borough council that has regularly provided some of the best facilities and services, offering some of the best value in the country.

I was born at the other end of the country, in Middlesbrough, and went to comprehensive school in South Bank, in the constituency of my hon. Friend the new Member for Redcar (Jacob Young). My early training in canvassing was going door to door round the estates on Thursday and Friday nights, collecting the milk money for my father and grandfather, who were local milkmen. During those years, it was impossible to imagine that South Bank, Eston and Normanby would return a Conservative Member of Parliament.

The dividing lines of two nations seemed to be impregnable, but I think one of the reasons for that was people's lack of experience of Conservative administration at a local level. That was made a thing of the past through the election and record in office of Ben Houchen as the Mayor of Tees Valley. I am proud that, as Minister for cities, and later as Secretary of State for Communities and Local Government, I introduced the concept of city deals, which became growth deals, and

then devolution deals, in which, for the first time in 100 years, the flow of power was away from Whitehall and towards our great towns and cities. Negotiating the Tees Valley devolution deal, which established the mayoralty and devolved funding and decision making from the banks of the Thames to the banks of the Tees, was a big moment. It meant that every Teessider has experienced what a dedicated, effective Conservative Mayor can do. I believe that it paved the way for the strong representation of Tees Valley MPs who now sit on the Conservative Benches.

The same is true for the west midlands, which has become close to my heart through my work with manufacturing industry. I negotiated the devolution deal that led to Andy Street being elected Mayor of that great region. With energy, tenacity and intellect, he has shown everyone in that region what Conservative administration can deliver.

It would not be right or fair to my hon. Friends to say that without Ben Houchen, we would not have Jacob Young and Peter Gibson in the Tees Valley, and that without Andy Street, we would not have Nicola Richards and Shaun Bailey in West Bromwich. Their mandate is their own, and we are proud of their achievements. However, I know that my hon. Friends would agree that it was an enormous help to have that experience of effective Conservative administration. That is why I commend the commitment in the Queen's Speech to give communities even greater control over how investment is spent so that they can decide what is best for them, just as my right hon. Friend the Prime Minister did when he was a very distinguished Mayor of London.

The people of Tunbridge Wells and the people of Teesside do not belong to different nations, for all the assumptions over the years that that was so. They are all of one nation. They believe identically in working hard to get on, and taking pride in our country and its history, which is not in conflict with knowing that we need to do new things well to advance. They are straightforward enough to know that things have to be earned and paid for, rather than conjured from thin air. They will pay their taxes, but want them to be used responsibly on useful things and not squandered. They are practical men and women, suspicious of ideology and dogma, and when they elect people to office, they expect them to do what they promise and to see concrete results. From Tunbridge Wells to Teesside, they are the same people and part of the same nation: one nation, our United Kingdom, and I am proud that the Conservative party is now indisputably their champion and their choice.

5.9 pm

Sammy Wilson (East Antrim) (DUP): May I first congratulate the Government on winning the election? For many people across the United Kingdom, the kind of Queen's Speech we could have had today could have been vastly different: probably a programme for bankruptcy rather than a programme for a brighter future for the United Kingdom. It is significant that, right across the United Kingdom, people who would normally have voted for other parties decided that they were not taken in by the Leader of the Opposition wrapping himself in his big red coat and promising all kinds of Christmas presents. They knew that, if they voted for that, they would be paying for Christmas for years.

[Sammy Wilson]

It is important that we have a Government who have promised to deliver sensible arrangements for services across the United Kingdom and sensible economic growth, while at the same time recognising that one of the major things that people in this country wanted was delivery on the promise that the referendum to leave the European Union would be honoured. I will come back to that issue in a moment or two, because I do not believe that the approach the Government are taking fully fulfils that commitment. There are things that we as a party want to see the Government changing in the next year. But let me just say that we welcome many of the commitments that have been made.

I know from the campaign that I had around the doors in East Antrim that one of the major things that came up time and again was the state of our health service. Given the growing demands on the health service, the greater possibilities for treatments that did not exist in the past, and the higher standards that people expect, there are increasing demands on the health service's resources. We have a commitment from the Government to put more money into the health service. I know that there have been complaints. There was no mention of Wales in the Queen's Speech. Of course Northern Ireland, like Wales and Scotland, will benefit from these decisions because there will be Barnett consequential for the devolved Administrations to spend.

I also welcome the promise of infrastructure development, and I look forward to the Prime Minister delivering on the comment he made to my hon. Friend the Member for North Antrim (Ian Paisley), when he talked about physically linking Northern Ireland to the GB mainland with a bridge. He said, "Watch this space", and we will be watching this space. We expect the space between Scotland and Northern Ireland to be filled at some stage with a physical link. Physical links and major infrastructure projects like this all over the world are judged not only on their economic benefits but on their political benefits, including how they integrate countries. Indeed, if one looks at the arguments for HS2 integrating the north of England with the south of England, we see that it is as much a political project as it is an economic one.

Geraint Davies: My right hon. Friend has mentioned Wales and infrastructure. Wales has 5% of the population, 11% of the rail track and 1.5% of the rail investment. We do not benefit from HS2, and we would look to have a consequential from that. Does he agree that this is not a fair system, and that Wales needs more in that sense?

Sammy Wilson: This should apply to all national infrastructure projects. I am pleased to see, for example, that even with an infrastructure project such as the third runway at Heathrow, there is a commitment to ensuring that some of the benefits are spilled out across the rest of the United Kingdom through various Heathrow hub projects, which I hope Northern Ireland will benefit from. There are ways of dispersing the expenditure on those major projects, even if they do not physically run through some parts of the United Kingdom.

The commitment to the application of the armed forces covenant is especially important in Northern Ireland, given the number of people who served through

the troubles. Tens of thousands are still living with the consequences, and they do not have access to services on the same basis as in other parts of the United Kingdom. We look forward to the commitment on that and on the promise that legacy issues will be dealt with, so that soldiers are not dragged through the courts for things that happened 40 years ago, while, incidentally, terrorists walk free as a result of arrangements made by the Labour party during the Belfast agreement negotiations.

We are happy to support the benefits that high streets will see from changes to business rates. I have seen the devastation done by high rates to businesses across town centres in my constituency. Business rates relief is, of course, only one part of the solution to the changing retail environment right across the United Kingdom. Promoting business through tax incentives for research and development, for training and for opening up new markets will be especially important as we look to the wider global benefits that we can take when we leave the EU and can do our own trade deals.

Those are the things to which we can give our support. Throughout many of today's speeches, including the Prime Minister's, people have talked about the Government party being a one nation party. However, if we are to talk about a one nation party, it must not be one nation just in terms of bringing forward policies that affect all the social layers in the economy and in the country; it must also extend to all parts of the United Kingdom. The Conservative party wants to be the party of the Union and I noted that the Prime Minister said that he would not allow anyone to rip up the UK—one of the most successful political unions. Yet one of the first things mentioned in the Queen's Speech is the pushing through of the withdrawal agreement Bill, the content of which will, in effect, leave Northern Ireland behind the EU's customs frontier. It will leave us outside UK customs arrangements and inside the EU customs arrangements. In effect, when it comes to trade and the economy, the European boundary will be extended around the outside of Northern Ireland, which will have economic consequences for businesses in Northern Ireland: increased costs, delays in goods going through customs, or extra bureaucracy. Of course, it will also affect trade from Northern Ireland into Great Britain, which is our biggest market. Those are only the immediate economic consequences; there will also be long-term political consequences.

Mr Gregory Campbell: Does my right hon. Friend agree that, as the Government proceed with getting Brexit done in the course of 2020, which many people will be content with, the bigger picture beyond that will be the unity of the United Kingdom and increased prosperity? It has to flow—the Prime Minister alluded to this—not just to the south-east of England, but to all the United Kingdom.

Sammy Wilson: That is the other argument: not just that the Prime Minister would not allow the UK to be ripped up, but that he wanted to extend UK prosperity to every part of it. I understand that many people in Northern Ireland will never share the view of the Union that my party and I have. They may not look at it from a cultural or historical point of view, but they understand the importance of being part of the fifth biggest economy in the world. They understand the value of that, how it benefits them economically and how it shelters them

from the economic storms that affect the world economy from time to time. We would not have survived the banking crisis, for example, had we not been part of the United Kingdom. It is significant that some of those who aspire to a united Ireland turn a blind eye to the fact that the Irish Government had to seek a multibillion-pound loan from the United Kingdom because they could not survive the economic storm of the world banking crisis. Being part of the United Kingdom has huge economic benefits, and not only for Northern Ireland but for Scotland.

The Scottish National party, because of its electoral success, is now pushing for a second referendum. The SNP says the situation has changed. Ironically, of course, the situation has changed since the last once-in-a-generation referendum. The SNP now has fewer MPs and a lower share of the vote than in 2015. What has changed is that there is now less support. If anything, this agitation for another referendum is not based on the democratically expressed views of the people of Scotland. In that absence, it is right that referendums should not be continually offered year after year just because a party claims its electoral fortunes have gone up or down a little. Otherwise, we could have demands after every election.

It is now important for this Government to sell the benefits of the Union right across the United Kingdom and to act so that people see those benefits. Where the Government have acted, they should talk up what they have done. As I know from having been a Minister in the Northern Ireland Executive, there is a tendency for devolved Administrations, both Unionist and nationalist, to claim all the good things that happen and to say that all the bad things are because of what Westminster has done. If we are to spend more money on projects that benefit the whole United Kingdom, and if we are to put more money into the health service and into education, Ministers should make it clear by going out across the United Kingdom to sell that it has happened because of decisions made in London, where the centre of government rests in the United Kingdom. Let us be bold in selling the Union.

Before the Government can do that, they must address what their current agreement will do to Northern Ireland. The Conservatives cannot claim to be a Unionist party while cutting Northern Ireland off.

Sir Jeffrey M. Donaldson (Lagan Valley) (DUP): My right hon. Friend is coming to the heart of the matter for us. I agree that the Union is crucial and that many of the issues that need to be addressed to mitigate the consequences of the withdrawal agreement are internal to the United Kingdom. There are measures the Government can take to mitigate the impact on the economy and on businesses in Northern Ireland, and we seek a commitment from the Government that they will do that to benefit the whole United Kingdom.

Sammy Wilson: My right hon. Friend is right. We have another year before we finally settle our relationship with the EU and, if they really want to live up to their commitment to be a one nation party, the Government should refuse to have the United Kingdom ripped up. They should want to see the United Kingdom prosper as a whole, without part of it being left as an economic backwater because it is cut off from its main market, GB.

The opportunity of the Government's stronger negotiating position has to be taken. I would say to the Prime Minister, "Use your parliamentary majority. Use the fact that Europe can no longer rely on the Government of the United Kingdom being undermined by actions and decisions taken in this House. Get changes made that ensure we leave the EU so that we get Brexit done, and get it done for the whole United Kingdom."

5.24 pm

Sir David Amess (Southend West) (Con): I rise to speak in support of the Gracious Address. I begin by congratulating the proposer and seconder of the Humble Address. It is a huge honour to be chosen for either position. My hon. Friend the Member for Chatham and Aylesford (Tracey Crouch), who is a very popular colleague, did not disappoint the House. Her speech was first class. Our hon. Friend the Member for Walsall North (Eddie Hughes) kept us well entertained with a tour de force delivered with no notes.

Mr acting Deputy Speaker, last night someone said to me, "David, you've been here a long time. You must be near to becoming the Father of the House." I looked up the list of seniority to find that I am No. 7, which left me depressed. In part, that is because I think I am a little young to be Father of the House, but let me make it abundantly and absolutely clear that, as the father of five children, the idea of becoming father to 649 MPs is too much.

Unlike my right hon. Friend the Member for Tunbridge Wells (Greg Clark), I hated every minute of the general election campaign.

Victoria Prentis (Banbury) (Con): Oh!

Sir David Amess: I am sorry, but I did. I did not want an election to take place two weeks before Christmas. I did more than 100 canvassing sessions in the wet and the cold, tripping up steps at night, holding a handkerchief in one hand because of a cold. I found it depressing, although obviously I am thrilled to bits by the result. Thinking of the detail of the campaign, it seems to me that in my constituency the manufacturers of grey paint must have run out of supplies; every other house was grey. Often when I pressed a doorbell, the purple thing went round and round and then I found myself talking to people who were not inside the house. I thought it was a huge risk to hold a general election when we did. I had no idea that the British people would turn out in such great numbers. From the Conservative point of view though, the result is fantastic.

Among the Opposition parties, the smaller ones had mixed results and I do not know what their take on the election is, but I entirely understand why SNP Members are very happy with the result they achieved. I do not know what their strategy is for the next five years, but previously when they had a lot of Members they energised the place and a lot of robust debates were had. I hope that they will achieve something in the next five years, even though they may be disappointed regarding their overall objective.

Now, I look at the Labour Benches. All new Members are thrilled to bits about winning their seat, but those of us who were previously MPs tend to think about the human side of it all and those, including some of our

[Sir David Amess]

colleagues, who lost their seat. I think we have lost some very good colleagues indeed from the Labour Benches. I will not get involved in the internal discussions within the Labour party, but I hope that those colleagues who lost their seat are given as much support as possible and are not simply abandoned.

As I look at the Conservative Benches, I remember—as do you, Sir Roger—the day in 1983 that we were elected. We remember the joy of that election and the huge thrill. It is a huge honour to be sworn in and to make one's maiden speech, perhaps with mum and dad, family and friends looking on. I have been looking at the figures for that election: 397 Conservatives were elected and Labour was down to 209. We had a majority of 144. Fast forward to last Thursday, and we now have an overall majority of 80, with 365 Conservative MPs. Labour has 203. Although not too many of my new colleagues are present to listen to what I am going to say, I hope they will read *Hansard* and reflect on what happened.

I became famous for 30 seconds in 1992, when I retained the Basildon seat for the third time. We had a huge election victory, but five years later—or 14 years after you and I were elected, Sir Roger—we suffered an absolutely catastrophic defeat. Labour got 418 seats and the Conservatives were down to 165. Sir Michael Shersby, who was the Member of Parliament for the constituency that the Prime Minister now represents, died a week after the general election and we were down to 164. So I say to my colleagues and to anyone who is interested: it is no good the Conservative party winning an election and being the Government again after a miserable two and a half years unless we do something with our majority. There is no point in time-serving; it is now up to the Conservatives to deliver on the manifesto.

I will not reiterate what was in the manifesto, because we are probably all sick to death of it, but it is now up to the Conservative party, which has a wonderful opportunity, to make sure that every part of the country that has elected a new Conservative Member of Parliament enjoys prosperity—if we deliver on the manifesto, all those new MPs' constituents will enjoy that prosperity. What is the point of being in politics just for the sake of it? We are in politics to get things done. For the past three and a half years, we have got nothing done. We have argued with each other and there has been a horrible atmosphere in this place. We have been falling out with one another. It is now down to my Conservative colleagues to get on and deliver on the manifesto.

Although there are not many newly elected MPs present to listen to me, I am going to give them a bit of advice. They should be very careful who they trust; be wary of the colleague who does not make eye contact but wants to know them only when they want something; and be very wary of their ambitions. I know my own limitations—my wife reminds me of them every single day—and we cannot all be Prime Minister. I have been covering up my disappointment at not being Prime Minister for 36 years. Do not be in a hurry to get ministerial office. There are plenty of other things that Members can do in this place. As far as Ministers are concerned—we have a splendid lot of Ministers—once they are on the ladder and get to the top, I am afraid there is only one way to go.

We are here for five years and there is an awful lot that we can do. I agree with every part of the manifesto, so I shall pick up on only two points. The first is about building regulations. I am honoured to be the chairman of the all-party group on fire safety and rescue. Had we been listened to, the Grenfell disaster would never have happened. That is a reality. There is a sentence in the manifesto about it; we have to do something with the building regulations. We have to make sure that there are sprinklers in every new school that is built and we must retrospectively fit sprinklers in high-rise blocks. That has to be delivered.

My second point is about animal welfare. My right hon. Friend the Member for North Thanet (Sir Roger Gale), who is currently in the Chair, and I were among the four or five Conservatives who voted against foxhunting. There has been a sea change among those of us on the Conservative Benches and we must not let the animal kingdom down. If I did not have the support of every constituent in Southend West, I had the support of every dog. I had dog of the day on my Twitter account. I will not let the animal kingdom down, and I hope that, on a cross-party basis, we can do something to stop the live exports of animals—we must do that.

Let me come now to my final measure—social care. Anything can happen in five years. Whatever we do—whether it is a royal commission or not—we must tackle this issue. My constituents say, “David, we are all growing older”, and I say, “You are either growing older or you are dead. Which way do you want it?” Given that we are all growing older, we must do something about social care.

Let me end with these thoughts. For many colleagues the election is over, so what are they going to do for the next five years? I am already going to be involved in an election, because when we get back in January there are two vacancies for Deputy Speaker on the Conservative side and I will be one of the candidates, and I will be asking colleagues for their first preference vote. Furthermore, when we get Brexit done, there is something else that we must get done, which is to make Southend-on-Sea a city. Let us get it done. I wish everyone a very happy Christmas and a wonderful new year.

Mr Deputy Speaker (Sir Roger Gale): Order. Just before we proceed, may I remind the House that the convention is that maiden speeches are heard uninterrupted? I am saying that now because it gives me great pleasure to call the first maiden speaker of the 2019 Parliament, the hon. Member for Foyle (Colum Eastwood).

5.36 pm

Colum Eastwood (Foyle) (SDLP): Thank you, Mr Deputy Speaker. No pressure then!

As the leader of the Social Democratic and Labour party, may I thank the people of Foyle and Belfast South for the resounding mandates that they have given my hon. Friend the Member for Belfast South (Claire Hanna) and me? We will not let you down and we will not take your support for granted. I also want to thank my predecessor for the work that she did in the constituency.

I stand here, Mr Deputy Speaker, as an Irish nationalist. In fact, I stand here because I am an Irish nationalist, not in spite of it, because I believe that every single person in all our constituencies needs to be properly

and fully represented. I am glad to be here, but we are not narrow nationalists. We come from the tradition of Parnell and Hume. Our vision is big and it is broad. Our mission is to unite all of our people, not divide them any further. We intend to represent nationalists, unionists and everybody else, and we will do that to the best of our ability.

This Prime Minister wants to drag us out of the European Union against our will. I know that he has a huge majority, but the only majority that I am concerned about is the pro-remain majority in Northern Ireland that has thankfully now got its voice back in this place. We may be few in number, but we intend to be very, very loud in voice.

The Prime Minister's approach to Brexit is totally reckless. It drives a coach and horses through the Good Friday agreement and the relationships that we have built up over many years, right across our community and right across our islands. I am glad to see now that the Democratic Unionists are very concerned about the checks between this island and our island. It is a pity that they did not think about that when they drove the Brexit agenda, and when they rejected Theresa May's deal. Now we are in a situation that none of us is happy with. We are in a situation that every one of us should be trying to reverse and to reject.

Equally damaging to our progress and our peace process is the current proposal that basically gives an amnesty to British soldiers for whatever they carried out in Northern Ireland during our very, very difficult troubles. I come from a place called Derry. In 1972, 14 innocent civil rights marchers were gunned down by the British Army on the streets of Derry. They were demanding their rights and they were marching against internment. An international tribunal has stood by the fact that they were innocent and were unlawfully killed. Is prosecuting those veterans vexatious? No, it is not. We will resist this attempt to undermine our peace process and our political progress, and this insult to all the victims of our terrible, terrible past, who have been denied the opportunity to find full truth and full justice since 1998. We stand by every single one of those victims, no matter who the perpetrator was. Government Members need to understand that if they begin with an amnesty for the British Army, they will end up with an amnesty for everybody; that is the door they are opening with this proposal. It would better suit the Prime Minister and the Government to stand by all the innocent victims who have been searching for truth and justice for far too long.

I will end with one other comment. A proposal has been mentioned today by a number of people, including by the Prime Minister, who said, "Watch this space." The Government want to build a bridge from Scotland to Northern Ireland. Well, they would be much better suited building a decent road from Belfast to Derry.

5.41 pm

Victoria Prentis (Banbury) (Con): It is always a pleasure and an honour to follow a maiden speech. No, I did not agree with everything said by the hon. Member for Foyle (Colum Eastwood), who is new to this place, but remarkably fluent and adept at using the Chamber. However, I absolutely applaud his desire to speak for all his constituents, whether or not they voted for him. I am sure we will be hearing much more from him in this place.

It is an enormous honour to have been re-elected for the third time in a very short number of years to represent my home area of Banbury, Bicester and 62 villages, and it is a great excitement to be part of what the Prime Minister describes as his "stonking" majority. It is also a great pleasure to speak in this debate and to follow some very important speeches including that of my right hon. Friend the Member for Maidenhead (Mrs May), who spoke—as she has done so powerfully before—about social justice. My right hon. Friend the Member for Tunbridge Wells (Greg Clark) also made a very important speech about how we should come together and celebrate being the party of one nation.

It is fair to say that Banbury had the closest result in the nation in the referendum, as we voted to leave by 500 votes. Three years ago probably about half of my constituents wanted to get Brexit done. That is not how they feel now. I have lost count of the number of times people told me our slogan on the doorstep before I said it. There was a coalescence of views from former liberals and former Labour voters, who reinforced again and again their strong belief in democracy, doing the right thing and respecting how people voted three years ago; they were passionate about it. It is important that this Government—this stonking democracy—delivers for everyone. I am thrilled, having gone on about it rather a lot in the previous Parliament, that if tomorrow goes as the Prime Minister expects it to, we will leave the EU with a deal. I also hope that his negotiations for a trade deal next year go as well as he hopes, and that we are able to protect the motor industry in Banbury and the just-in-time jobs on which we depend locally, in so much of our area.

Far more important to Banbury than the EU, though, is the Horton General Hospital. That is what people really wanted to talk about on the doorstep, day after day. I was able to tell them that, with the new investment from this Government, it is likely that we will be able to build a new modular set of buildings on the Horton site that will make the hospital truly fit for the future. I noticed after a very minor and very silly accident that I had during the campaign that we now have a severe parking problem at Horton General Hospital because so many more procedures are being undertaken there. I want to make sure that the buildings are fit for purpose and that we are able to bring maternity back to Banbury in the very near future so that babies are able to be born there, as I was. People also wanted to talk to me about school funding. We live in a historically underfunded area, and I was glad to hear what we heard over the course of the campaign on this issue.

But right up the agenda, before Brexit and just after the Horton, was the environment. That was the subject that people—women in particular, but people of all ages—wanted to talk about on the doorstep, in hustings or in schools anywhere I went. This was an ambitious Queen's Speech on that agenda, but real change in this area will require from all of us behavioural change that is going to be difficult. I am pleased that I was able to work in a small way on creating ideas like the Great British Spring Clean and in helping to reduce single-use plastics during the last Parliament. There are real green opportunities and a real chance now for the Government to shape policy both across industry and across people's lives on this agenda, and I look forward to working on that.

[Victoria Prentis]

Something I learned particularly at the end of the last Parliament was the importance of cross-party working when I was proud to take part in the group of MPs for a deal, which had some enormous success when 19 very brave Opposition Members voted with Conservative Members for the Second Reading of the Bill that became the European Union (Withdrawal) Act 2018. I pay tribute, in particular, to my friend from Don Valley who lost her seat and who did more, perhaps, than any other to represent leave voters on the Opposition Benches at a very difficult time in our parliamentary democracy. Working cross-party was a leap of faith, but, to my mind, it was worth it, and we gained more than we could quantify, perhaps, from the unpleasant atmosphere that surrounded those very difficult votes.

I hope that in this Parliament, despite our stonking majority, we will work together on the environment and, in particular, on social care and on something I have a very personal interest in—achieving good deaths for our citizens—both of which were mentioned by my hon. Friend the Member for Southend West (Sir David Amess). As he said, we know that just as taxes happen to us, death will happen to us all. It is important that we focus and work together on the way that we enable people's deaths to take place—we hope at home and we hope peacefully.

Another personal priority of mine is justice. During this Parliament I will take a keen interest in the work of the new royal commission on justice that has been announced today. Of course, I welcome that. I welcome any interest in justice; I have been banging on about this area for the past 25 years. Most of my waking thoughts for the past 25 years have been about our justice system. Of course a royal commission is a good thing, but I very much hope that it acts speedily, that the right people are appointed to it, and that it looks very closely at the reports of the Justice Committee, of which I am rather proud, from the last two Parliaments—particularly those on probation and on the prison population, which is quite a large and weighty report, I must confess.

Alec Shelbrooke (Elmet and Rothwell) (Con): Building on the issue of cross-party working, which is very important, the hon. Member for Barnsley East (Stephanie Peacock) mentioned sentencing. May I urge my hon. Friend to take a serious look at this? Two young lads, Harry Whitlam and Callum Wark, were constituents of mine killed by drunk drivers. Callum's killer, a Bulgarian HGV driver who drank a bottle of vodka, drove straight over his car and killed him on the day before his 20th birthday, was out of prison in three years. Eleven-year-old Harry Whitlam's killer, who was five times over the drink-drive limit and killed him on a farm, could be prosecuted only under the health and safety Acts and got 18 months. When my hon. Friend looks into sentencing and bringing this cross-party work together, will she ensure, for the families who mourned the loss of their children—Callum was an only child—that people recognise that if they intoxicate themselves, these are not accidents but manslaughter and should carry a similar sentence?

Victoria Prentis: I thank my right hon. Friend for his intervention. He raises a very serious issue that has been discussed a great deal on both sides of the House over

the last few years. He will have heard the Prime Minister give an undertaking earlier to incorporate that in the sentencing review, but he touches on an important difficulty that we have when talking about justice.

When we consider sentencing, we think about a punitive element, but I hope we will remember that the aim of us all—even those of us who have spent 25 years often advocating for prisoners' rights—is to reduce crime and ensure that we protect future victims by stopping crime from ever happening again. It is so important that we concentrate on reforming people while they are in prison and do not lock them up and throw away the key, because nearly everybody who goes into prison is coming out again. It is really important that we have informed debate in this House. We must recognise that we are over the 20% mark of people in prison having committed a sexual offence. A large number of sexual offenders in prison are coming out, and we have to think very carefully about the treatment they are given in prison, the effort we put into reforming them and how we supervise them when they are released. That is my bandwagon, as you know, Mr Deputy Speaker, having heard me talk about it before. I would like in this Parliament to concentrate once again on the justice sphere, and I hope that I will be able to do so.

It is a great honour to have been re-elected and to be part of an enthusiastic, one nation Government who are going to get things done. I would like to conclude by asking everyone to remember that Christmas is a time of enormous good will, but it also gives us a few days off to reflect and think about what we are going to do better next year. Merry Christmas to all, and I hope we come back refreshed and enthused about getting Brexit done and everything else we want to do.

5.52 pm

Jim Shannon (Strangford) (DUP): It is a pleasure to follow the hon. Member for Banbury (Victoria Prentis), who I thank for her contribution. I am pleased to see you in your place, Mr Deputy Speaker, and it was nice to see Mr Speaker earlier. He is a worthy gentleman, and I look forward to catching his eye often.

I wish to welcome home some old faces and welcome some new ones. We are able to have a friendship again with some who were in the House from 2015 to 2017 and then were absent for a short time. I am making it my business to learn all the new names and faces, with the help of the wee directory we have, and to introduce myself and take the time to help them, in the way that many Members—especially on the Opposition Benches—helped me when I came here in 2010. It will be an honour to work with them as we attempt to do what the electorate have resoundingly called for us to do in the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland: to get this country off her knees and standing firmly on solid ground.

In the early hours of Friday morning after the election, I was very privileged to be re-elected as the Member for Strangford once again. I thanked my God for that victory, and I do so in this House as well, because it is clear to me that my first thanks should be to my God and saviour for giving us victory in Strangford. During the election campaign, I said that the DUP voice of Strangford will be heard, and today in this Chamber, on the first occasion that there is, the voice of the DUP in Strangford will be heard through this Member.

I congratulate the hon. Member for Foyle (Colum Eastwood) on his contribution. Obviously we have a very different constitutional position. As I have said to him, there will be things that we disagree on, but there will also be many things in this House that we will agree on and work together on. Although we come from a different political background, we will be together on many things in this House on behalf of the constituents of Strangford and Foyle, because both need the same things. Let us see what we can do to make those things happen.

How heartening it is to see the rise of the pound against the dollar, which was at 1.18 during my family holiday in August but was sitting at 1.32 when I last checked. How heartening it is to see that the world is aware that the days of in-fighting and bickering are at an end and that the ability to do something and deliver is now at the Government's feet. We look to the Government to do that. I want to sow into the mix the most important aspects that Her Majesty so graciously raised today.

I declare an interest, as a former member of the Ulster Defence Regiment and a member of the Territorial Army in the Royal Artillery for some 14 and a half years collectively. I welcome the Government's commitment to the military covenant, but I ask them for not only words but action. We will see that same commitment in Northern Ireland, because it is so important that those who have served in uniform in Northern Ireland and need the help of the military covenant but are not getting it have that opportunity. I wish to see that happen. It is not words but action that we need. I also welcome the Government's commitment to spending 2% of GDP on defence, and I urge other NATO countries to see what they can do to match that, because our Government have taken a step in the right direction.

I am pleased to welcome the Government's commitments to building controls for rental accommodation and to knife control. As I have said in the House before, I very much welcome the Government's commitment to net zero carbon emissions by 2050 and tackling environmental issues. I am pleased that the National Farmers Union and its sister organisation in Northern Ireland, the Ulster Farmers' Union, are committed to those same things. If the farming community is committed to the 2050 net zero carbon target, we should welcome that.

The Government mentioned immigration in the Queen's Speech. I have discussed this matter with the Parliamentary Secretary, Cabinet Office, the hon. Member for Torbay (Kevin Foster), and the hon. Member for Banff and Buchan (David Duguid). We need tier 2 visas for fishermen and the fishing sector, so that those who keep the boats going in Portavogie, Ardglass and Kilkeel can continue to do so. The Minister has indicated that he is willing to consider that, and we look forward to it happening.

In the last Session of the previous Parliament, the Government appointed a special envoy to tackle the persecution of Christians. I am particularly interested in that issue, as I know others in the House are, so I want to ensure that the Government commit to that again; perhaps the Minister who sums up the debate can confirm that.

The Under-Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, the hon. Member for Rochester and Strood (Kelly Tolhurst), who has responsibility for retail and the high street, was over in my constituency before the election was called. Like my right hon. Friend

the Member for East Antrim (Sammy Wilson), I recognise that the Government have some good ideas to help the high street and retail businesses, and we wish to see those implemented.

I am very much a community man in my constituency, and I keep my ear to the ground, so I was not surprised when I went to the doors in Strangford to hear that the main issue was getting a functioning Assembly up and going. Talks are ongoing, and I know that the Secretary of State has been working extremely hard with the parties to begin the journey to bring them together, so that they can do what they have been elected to do but prevented from doing: legislating and running Northern Ireland. We very much hope that those talks will be successful, and we look forward to that happening.

The next issue on the doorstep in Strangford was Brexit—the stalemate, the preservation of the Union and the way forward. The most important thing was not necessarily Brexit; it was the Union. I remind the Government and Conservative Members of the importance of securing the Union. People wondered how Scotland would follow, after the divergence for Northern Ireland. I look to my Scots Nats friends and comrades here in the Chamber. I do not want them to leave the great United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland. I want them to stay. I want the Scottish National party to recognise that the large majority of people in Scotland want to stay within the United Kingdom, and only a minority want to leave. The Government have a job to do, which is to persuade my Scots Nats friends and comrades of the need to stay in the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland, and I hope that they can do that.

What will the PM's aforementioned deal look like in reality? The fishing industry, through Alan McCulla and the Anglo-North Irish Fish Producers Organisation, have posed this interesting scenario, which I feel deserves airing and clarification. It is so important that we look at what the deal the Prime Minister has brought forward will mean to us. They say:

“Brexit offers Northern Ireland's fishing industry once in a lifetime opportunities” —

that is also what the fisheries Minister says —

“It will end the inequality, hypocrisy and disrespect of Europe's Common Fisheries Policy, which has damaged the fishing industry in County Down. However, imagine this scenario”.

This is a real scenario because it comes from the withdrawal agreement that the Prime Minister has put forward. They continue:

“A County Down fisherman owns a UK registered trawler. On 1 January 2021 the trawler sails from” —

Portavogie, Ardglass or —

“Kilkeel. For the next few days it fishes in UK territorial waters in the Irish Sea. The trawler complies with the rules of the UK's new fisheries policy. Its catch is recorded against UK fishing quotas. It then returns to Kilkeel” —

Ardglass or Portavogie —

“to land and sell its catch entirely within the UK. HOWEVER, one interpretation of the latest Northern Ireland Protocol” —

in the withdrawal agreement —

“is that if this UK registered trawler wants to land its catch in Northern Ireland it will be treated as though it is a trawler from a Third Country and will be required to submit a series of documents that although they are not new, are not currently required.”

[*Jim Shannon*]

There will be tariffs on the fish, so when my fishermen leave Portavogie, go across the harbour and go 1 mile out to sea, what happens? They catch the fish, bring them back in and they are due tariffs. This agreement, indirectly or directly, disadvantages my fishermen in Portavogie. They go on:

“We accept that in the absence of a Free Trade Deal with the EU these documents may well be required for exports to the EU, but they should not be needed if the catch is destined for our most important markets in England, Scotland and Wales—all within the United Kingdom.

The Conservative Party manifesto stated, ‘We will ensure that Northern Ireland’s businesses and producers enjoy unfettered access to the rest of the UK...’ Urgent clarification is needed that the travesty outlined above will not happen.”

On this issue, we need clarification that the fishermen will not face the tariffs or the bureaucracy that has been suggested. It is so important that we do that.

Just today, my fishermen in Portavogie in the constituency of Strangford have been told, after the new fishing discussions that took place in Brussels yesterday and today, that they will face a 50% reduction in our prawn catch quota in the Irish sea. I put on record my dismay that that is happening, because it will impact greatly on those in my constituency who know that the prawn quota is so important for our fishing sector, our economy and the jobs it creates.

May I just say this as well, because this is what it means? Through the Government’s withdrawal agreement, not only will the EU be able to reduce our prawn quota for our trawlermen and for those who work in the Irish sea, but it will be able to continue to do that. We are not just disadvantaged today, but come 31 January, when all the rest of the United Kingdom leaves—Scotland, Wales and England—with free trade, we in Northern Ireland will be disadvantaged. The rules that Brussels has imposed today on the fishermen of Portavogie, Ardglass and Kilkeel in Northern Ireland will be reinforced doubly come 31 January. I look to the Government and to the Minister, and I ask them with all sincerity to look at that.

The phrase “special circumstances” does not come close to answering these questions and the questions raised by many whose trade will be affected by the Irish sea border that has been threatened. The agri-food sector in my constituency told me just last Friday—one of the major meat exporters told me a week ago—that the withdrawal agreement the Prime Minister has put in place will impact greatly on the meat sector. The cost will be immense on food travelling east-west and west-east in the meat sector. If we have that, we have a serious threat to the meat sector in Northern Ireland. Again, I ask what has been done to ensure that this does not happen?

We in Northern Ireland, because of the border down the Irish sea, will be subject to the possibility of a new VAT regime coming from Europe. We will be subject to that, but the rest of the United Kingdom—Scotland, England and Wales—will not be. Again, I suggest to Ministers, given what is on paper and is there, that what has been put forward disadvantages us in Northern Ireland greatly in relation to that possibility and also other tax possibilities, with the real focus changing from Westminster towards the EU and towards Dublin.

One of the biggest issues for me on the election trail was that of health. My right hon. Friend the Member for East Antrim referred to the Barnett formula, and the Government have made a large commitment on this. I have watched Ministers on TV and heard what they have said, and what was said today is a really good commitment to the health sector, and to listening in relation to jobs, doctors and hospitals, and some of that money will come to us in Northern Ireland under the Barnett formula.

Paul Girvan (South Antrim) (DUP): I appreciate my hon. Friend’s point about the crisis we are currently facing in our health sector in Northern Ireland, but major reform is required not just in Northern Ireland but in the UK to ensure that we are not spending all our block grant on health and that we are getting a good bang for our buck.

Jim Shannon: I thank my hon. Friend for his intervention, and he is absolutely right. No matter what happens, when the money comes across, we need to have a Minister in place to ensure that the moneys do go to the Department of Health where they are needed, and are not swallowed up in the block budget and therefore do not become as effective as they could be.

We need to address the issue of appropriate staffing pay and working conditions, as well as having acceptable waiting lists. There are waiting lists for occupational therapy referrals, hip replacements or cataract operations. There are massive numbers of people waiting not just to be assessed, but to have such operations, so it is really important that we have this in place so that we can serve the people of Northern Ireland better. I do not blame our current permanent secretary or his senior civil servants, who are attempting to do the job of running the Department that belongs to an elected representative and which they have been asked to oversee without the power of the position of a Minister. They are being asked to run the largest Department with one hand behind their backs, and I believe that that must end.

I spoke to many nurses and families of nurses on the doorsteps in the run-up to and on the day of the election, and they told me that even with the pay rise, the lack of staff on the wards makes their position untenable. We need the Department of Health—this is a devolved matter in Northern Ireland—to employ extra nurses, not to have all the temporary staff they have, which is a large cost on the health budget in Northern Ireland. I support the Government’s desire to raise staffing levels and to put in additional funding to achieve this, but I am asking, in the same way the House believed it appropriate to step in and legislate for abortion and same-sex marriage in Northern Ireland, that it steps in and legislates for life-and-death matters, and sorts out the pay scales in the trusts and the pension issues as a matter of urgency. As I said about the Labour amendment in the last Session, if the House and the Government can rule on this issue, there is a responsibility to continue the interference and to step in for our hospitals and for our schools.

It is very important that we have a system in place that can respond positively to what is happening on universal credit. I see that the hon. Member for Inverness, Nairn, Badenoch and Strathspey (Drew Hendry), who speaks for the Scots Nats on this, has just left the

Chamber, but he and I have the same opinion on this. Universal credit should be suspended. At the moment, we have a scheme that disadvantages the people of my constituency, and I want to put that on the record. People are losing out on four to five weeks of possible help and of moneys to help them through this process. I am very fortunate to have a very good manageress in the local social security office, but she cannot work miracles with the system she has. I ask the Government to look at this again because it has thrown many into poverty across the whole of the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland, especially in my constituency.

In Northern Ireland, we are coming to the end of the welfare supplementary payments and the food banks in Northern Ireland are already oversubscribed. I put on record my thanks to the Trussell Trust food bank in Newtownards, which is run through the Thriving Life church. It does a magnificent job, but it tells me that more and more people are being disadvantaged and are going to the food bank because of the delays in benefit payments. That has to be looked at.

The middle and working classes are about to implode, without intervention, and in the absence of a functioning Assembly, this place must do the right thing by Northern Ireland and get the ball rolling, starting with health and education funding and decision making.

6.8 pm

Giles Watling (Clacton) (Con): It is an honour to follow the hon. Member for Strangford (Jim Shannon), and I absolutely agree with him about the Union. The Union is important in relation not only to Northern Ireland, but to Scotland. I would like to reiterate the words of the late, great David Bowie, who said, “Scotland, don’t leave us. We love you. Stay with us.”

I would like to congratulate the hon. Member for Foyle (Colum Eastwood) on his maiden speech, getting it out of the way so early and with such aplomb—very good work there. I would also like to disagree with my hon. Friend the Member for Southend West (Sir David Amess), who said he did not like to campaign in the winter. I loved it. I knocked on many doors—I canvassed for all six weeks—and I got offered cups of tea everywhere I went. I would like now to apologise to some residents of the Clacton constituency that I could not have a cup of tea with them all. A man can only take so much tea while walking the streets.

Only yesterday, I had a chat with a friend who recently lost his seat on the Opposition Benches. He was very candid, and said that although the result of the election was not what he would have preferred, he is happy that the Government now have a serious majority and can finally get on with delivering an agenda without more fuss and delay—that was an ex-Labour MP, but I frequently found that attitude on the doorsteps in Clacton. People want us to get on with it and deliver on the promises made.

When walking in Clacton, I gained support from many previous Labour voters; there were people who had voted Labour all their lives, as had their parents and grandparents, yet this time they gave me their vote. I am deeply humbled and honoured by the confidence placed in me and, like the Prime Minister, I am acutely aware of the responsibilities placed on me by that support.

We now have to earn it. I am delighted, once again, to have been elected to represent the glorious sunshine coast of Clacton, and I have strong support from my constituents for my work, and the work of this Conservative Government, who today laid out a comprehensive and progressive policy programme.

During the election, I stood on doorsteps in Clacton with a simple message: “We must get Brexit done and then focus on other vital priorities, including even more police, better healthcare and infrastructure improvements, not to mention education.” Predominantly, the response I got back was the same. People said, “Yes, those are our priorities too. I am so glad that somebody is finally listening.” We are not just listening, we are acting—indeed, we have already acted. In Clacton, more than 30 new police officers now operate locally, and I am proud that they were recruited after a campaign I led to increase the police precept in the area.

Bob Stewart (Beckenham) (Con): I have known my hon. Friend for 54 years and I have visited his house, which is not in Clacton—I rather like Frinton, but it has not been mentioned. I think he should mention Frinton.

Giles Watling: As my constituents know I am a resident of Frinton, which is part of the glorious Clacton constituency. I am delighted that my hon. Friend has reminded me where I live.

As we know, hundreds more officers—20,000 in total—have been promised for every policing area, and I understand that Essex Police has already started recruiting the first wave of new officers. I am delighted that a Bill will be introduced to increase policing powers and ensure that violent convicts are kept off the streets. We have had issues in Clacton and I know my constituents expect no less.

On healthcare, we have secured a change in management at four local surgeries where services were woefully substandard. I thank Ed Garrett, leader of the local clinical commissioning group, for his perseverance on that matter. It has been my priority to hold the management to account. We have done that, and residents will see an improvement in another key doorstep issue. The Government have provided nearly £15 million for an upgrade at Clacton Hospital, which is in addition to the £33.9 billion funding boost for the NHS by 2023-24. It is right to enshrine that key pledge into law, along with the other healthcare announcements in this programme.

Some £318 million has been set aside by the Government to fund two local infrastructure schemes, including a new railway station at Beaulieu, which has been a pinch-point on our rail lines and held up transport for the Clacton community. Clacton is just under 70 miles from the great conurbation of London, yet that journey takes the best part of one hour and 40 minutes. These days that is an outrage and it should be improved. Money will also be spent on the new link road between the A120 and the A133—my hon. Friend the Member for Harwich and North Essex (Sir Bernard Jenkin) will agree with me on this, because we worked hard to get funding to build that new road. The Conservative party manifesto pledges to spend £100 billion on additional infrastructure spending, which will go on roads and rail. That productive investment will repair and refurbish the fabric of our country, and generate greater growth in the long run.

[Giles Watling]

On the doorstep, I saw how popular our policies are and—at least in my local experience—that was one of the great differences in this election. We listened to, and will deliver for, the electorate we have, rather than the imaginary electorate championed by those on the Opposition Front Benches. We will deliver pragmatic and practical policies for those voters, whereas the Opposition take them for granted and promise the undeliverable. We will get Brexit done. We cannot continue to deny the Brexit result. We know that the Prime Minister has achieved a good deal that delivers on the result of the referendum and allows us to move on, and I for one will be happy to reach a place where we never have to hear the word “Brexit” again.

People know that this is a credible Government who will act on their demands, and in five years our record will speak for itself—post Brexit. That record of delivery starts with this Government programme, although of course there is more I want to do, including further improvements in animal welfare, a ban on dog and cat meat consumption in this country, making elder abuse a hate crime that carries a tougher sentence, and ensuring that school funding is spread evenly across the county of Essex.

We must care for those who protect us by increasing defence spending, and protect and promote our incredible “Theatre” offer, which does so much to inform, educate and promote the UK internationally. We should also introduce a differential rate of beer duty between pubs and supermarkets, after the B-word has been delivered. I will bother Ministers greatly about those matters in due course, but for now I recognise that this is a strong programme that gets Brexit done and delivers on our priorities, and I happily support it.

6.16 pm

Geraint Davies (Swansea West) (Lab/Co-op): It is a great pleasure to follow the hon. Member for Clacton (Giles Watling). The Queen’s Speech introduced by the right hon. Member for Maidenhead (Mrs May) stated:

“My government’s priority is to secure the best possible deal”, and mentioned working with the devolved Administrations and business. That was then dropped to become, “My priority is to secure a deal by 31 October, do or die”, and now we have 31 January.

Hon. Members know that we have a different system for referendums—they are one person, one vote, which decided the referendum in 2016—compared with elections for constituency MPs. Under the one person, one vote system, other than generating a significant Conservative majority, this election also generated 16.5 million votes for remain parties, and 14.5 million for leave parties, which is 2 million fewer. If we consider the number of parties that do not agree with the deal that is being railroaded through, which includes the Brexit party, that is 18.1 million people who do not agree with the deal as it stands. Nevertheless, this deal will be hammered through on the basis of an election that was thrust on us on a cold, dark night, and that disadvantaged poorer people who do not have cars and so on.

The election was engineered in such a way because the Conservatives realised that they could unite the smaller pro-Brexit vote, divide the remain vote, secure a majority, and hammer Brexit through on the back of a

few slogans such as “get Brexit done”, and “oven-ready” convenience food. We all know that living on oven-ready convenience food is not particularly good for our health, but we are where we are. I am sad that we have lost so many good Labour MPs, and our next task is to ensure that people’s jobs, livelihoods and environments, and workers’ rights, are secured in this deal through democratic scrutiny. I fear that that will not happen, that those things will not prevail, and that we will end up with a Brexit that will make us all poorer, weaker and more divided.

Given that, it is incumbent on the Government to deliver a Queen’s Speech that counteracts the negative economic impacts of Brexit by making as its centrepiece a re-engineering of our economy to deliver the white heat of technology focused on sustainability, given that we have a climate crisis—a new green economic renaissance. Sadly, we did not see that in the Queen’s Speech. We saw “get Brexit done”—whatever that means—and, yes, we will have some trade deals, but there will be no scrutiny. Instead, we will stand alone, weak against China and weak against the United States, as we turn our back on the European market.

We should have accelerated our ambition to be carbon-neutral by 2050, and put in place a fiscal strategy to deliver excellent green technologies and products that would form an export base for a new economy. I welcome the fact that we will host the COP26 summit, which will give us an opportunity to showcase ideas. I very much hope that the Budget will focus on fiscal strategies and incentives for investment to push that agenda forward.

As the chair of the all-party group on air pollution, I welcome the legally binding targets in the Queen’s Speech. The devil, however, will be in the detail. It is important that we meet the World Health Organisation target on particulate matter—the target to reach PM2.5 down from the 15 micrograms per cubic metre we have in London now to 10 micrograms per cubic metre by 2030. Microparticulates will penetrate unborn babies and we are seeing dreadful public health problems in Britain. The latest estimate on premature deaths from air pollution is approximately 62,000 people a year, at a cost of £20 billion a year. It is therefore very important that we focus on this issue. People doubted much of the economics in the Labour manifesto, but according to the Royal College of Physicians the cost of air pollution is £20 billion a year. If we saved £3 billion—a fairly modest saving—that income stream could service, at a 5% interest rate, a borrowing of £60 billion to invest in green manufacturing.

We need a transition towards the electrification of all our trains and buses sooner rather than later. We need to incentivise, through scrappage schemes, the switchover to electric cars for normal consumers. It is unfortunate that the roll-out of much of the electric grid is in the hands of BP, which has a vested interest in slowing it down in order to sell more petrol and diesel. We need to re-engineer our duties to incentivise people towards a sustainable future and for the Government to invest in public transport alternatives. There are a lot of technological opportunities. Our subsidy focus should move from fossil fuel to renewable energy—whether wave, wind or solar—and towards the manufacture of associated products.

Bob Stewart: Everyone talks about electric cars, but we should also be talking about hydrogen, which is a very clean fuel. Hydrogen could power cars and trains, too.

Geraint Davies: I completely agree with the hon. Gentleman. Hydrogen is a major part of the mix for the future in terms of transport. He makes an excellent point. There are opportunities for solar tiles on public buildings or even roads. New technology can make buildings net contributors and help us to move towards carbon neutrality before 2050. The latest projections are that there will be a 1.5° increase in global temperatures by 2030, and not 2040 as previously thought. We need to look again at such ideas as the Swansea Bay tidal lagoon, which was rejected by the Conservative party on the grounds that it would have been done through the private sector and backed by very expensive private equity loans. This should be public sector investment, with low interest rates over a 120-year timeline, in light of the fact that 80% of all identified fossil fuels are unexploitable if we are to avoid irreversible climate change.

The Government need to stop their ambitions in relation to fracking. Fracking is worse than coal for climate change, because methane is 85 times worse than carbon dioxide for global warming. There has been a suspension of fracking. I hope that suspension will become permanent, because fracking is certainly the wrong thing to do and the wrong signal to send. On plastics, the Queen's Speech states that we will stop exporting polluting plastics to non-OECD countries. We need to do much more than that. We need to stop the production of single-use plastic. We need to tax plastic to incentivise consumers and producers towards sustainable alternatives.

On NHS funding, the funding targets enshrined in the Queen's Speech are not high enough. They are not ambitious enough in relation to our European counterparts. Those on the Government Front Bench should remember that poverty is a major driver of mental and physical ill health, so one of the best ways of sorting out the problems of the NHS is to confront the poverty that current Government policies are creating.

On the political future we face, I fear that the nature of politics in Britain will deteriorate. I say that because some of our finest public institutions—the BBC, the civil service, our universities—are under fundamental threat. They hang together and support our fundamental values of freedom, democracy and human rights. Through frustration, people voted for Brexit, which is rolling forward without a clear conclusion. They voted to leave in order to have a future, but if they lose their jobs they will be very unhappy.

It is very important that the Government keep their word and reach out from London and the south-east to rejuvenate other areas, including Wales. I am here to represent Swansea. The simple fact of the matter is that we in Wales make up 5% of the population, have 11% of the railway, but receive only 1.5% of rail investment. It takes me three hours to get from London to Swansea. It takes about two hours to get to Manchester. With HS2, that journey will take about one hour and 10 minutes. Investors will ask themselves the question: where am I going to invest? We need our fair share of investment in Wales and we need rejuvenation.

I stood on a mandate to remain in the EU, which would be good for Swansea and Wales, but I realise that we are heading towards an imminent Brexit. I also stood on a mandate to invest in green technology. I hope that a fairer share of investment in a green renaissance

can be taken forward, upping our game on the global stage so that out of the ashes of Labour's defeat we can build a greener future for all.

6.28 pm

Mr Tobias Ellwood (Bournemouth East) (Con): It is a pleasure to follow the hon. Member for Swansea West (Geraint Davies). I may not agree with everything that he said, but I certainly stand with him on the call for us to do as much as we can to tackle climate change. We will host a huge event next year and the world will be watching. I would love us to be able to be more ambitious on the targets we set for 2050, but that will be for the Government to decide.

I repeat the thanks I gave on election night to the good people of Bournemouth East for returning me to Westminster. I see that my right hon. Friend the Member for Bournemouth West (Conor Burns) is in his place. It is an honour to represent the finest seaside town in the country. For those of us who have endured months—indeed years—of political gridlock and political turbulence, this new Parliament and new Government see the paralysis replaced by optimism, purpose and vision; an invigorated Parliament and Government with a clear and decisive election result for us to work on. The result reflected a nation that was tired of parliamentary gridlock, frustrated with Brexit and yearning for strong resolute leadership. The result also confirmed a rejection of far-left socialism, irresponsible public spending, big Government and a further delay to Brexit. However, after a tough decade, there were also clear calls for increased but responsible investment in our public services, particularly health and education—this has been reflected in the Queen's Speech—as well as greater support for councils in tackling housing and homelessness challenges, and more determined efforts to deal with climate change, as we touched on.

I believe that the size and manner of this historic win will see us embark on a new period of British politics. Mercifully, without the threat of another general election, we will have a Government with a large majority giving clarity over Brexit and a fiscal envelope to responsibly increase Government spending. To put it another way, we have the time, the mandate, the energy and the aspiration to lead Britain towards a new era of British patriotism, opportunity and prosperity, allowing the divisions of the nation to begin to heal. If people such as Tony Blair on one side and Michael Heseltine on the other are saying that they have lost the argument and that they recognise that we must move forward, it is time for the nation to move forward, too.

Much has been said about one nation Conservatism, the political philosophy that stemmed from Disraeli's social mission to improve the lives of all people, not just those from business or privileged backgrounds. It is worth emphasising what that means. It is the military equivalent of the higher officer's intentions—how our individual decisions and missions are knitted together to give a stronger and greater effect. Our party wins elections because it is willing to change, advance and adapt, while still being anchored to its core values.

The adjective “conservative” does not imply that something is progressive or reforming, but let us go back to what Edmund Burke, one of the founding voices of Conservatism, said. He spoke of the need to reform in order to conserve what is important to us:

[Mr Tobias Ellwood]

community bonds and shared values. It is for that reason that I was so cheered by the Prime Minister using his first speech outside No. 10 to thank those who lent us their support, saying that it would not be taken for granted. As the geographical footprint of our party changes, so must its attitude, with a commitment to turning that endorsement into longer-term or permanent support.

I am sure that most Prime Ministers can look back and proudly point to key achievements that may define their time in office, but as our great history shows, occasionally in British politics, a true giant emerges who not only solves the crisis, but reunites the nation and invigorates a new sense of purpose and national pride, leading us into a brighter chapter where we can hold our heads up high. We saw this with Peel, Disraeli and Churchill, and I believe that the stage is set for something potentially very big now: a new era of one nation Conservatism. That is not a repeat, a rehash, or a play on previous moulds. It is not simply a soundbite to mollify a wing of the party—it is a tailored political philosophy relevant for today.

The phrase “one nation” is used a lot—it has been used today and it was used during the campaign. Given that it will form the backbone to strategy and policy thinking and to the implementation of the Gracious Speech, I would like to add some detail. First, it is about someone’s belief in a sense of duty to better themselves and support themselves, their family, their community and their nation, with a Government promoting life chances and choice, wherever and whoever someone is. Secondly, it is a belief in business, where hard work is rewarded. Economic liberalism is the best vehicle for prosperity. Encouraging the entrepreneurial and generational growth is what one nation Conservatism is about. There are consequences for indolence, but we support those who may stumble or require help, through no fault of their own, and we temper excessive greed.

Thirdly, it is about fiscal responsibility. We invest in public services and infrastructure, but we do so wisely. We identify and tackle inequality, but we are dependable in managing the nation’s finances. Fourthly, it is about a belief in strong but small government—the rule of law with empowered localism and a strong and engaged society. Finally, it is about active global leadership—a nation able not only to defend itself, but to stand up and defend our interests abroad. That is why we participate actively in NATO, stay close to the United States and invest in overseas aid.

We would be naive to think, however, that the time that we have spent debating Brexit has not impacted on that global reputation. We have some work to do to re-engage, so I am pleased to see in the Queen’s Speech a commitment

“to promote and expand the United Kingdom’s influence in the world”.

As the first line of the security review in 2015 reminded us:

“Our national security depends on our economic security, and vice versa.”

We face an increasingly unpredictable and unstable world. On the one hand, threats are becoming more diverse and complex, eroding the international rules-based

order, but on the other, we are seeing a rise in populism, protectionism and isolationism, and a reticence to stand up and defend the erosion of the rules-based order. There has been little effort to review the outdated Bretton Woods organisations that have served us well since the second world war, but which now need reviewing. We have entered a chapter of real change, with resurgent nations, creeping authoritarianism, technological advances moving conflict into the cyber-world and space, and climate change pressures leading to mass migration. Sadly, terrorism and extremism have also not been defeated, as we saw with the London Bridge attacks.

As the Chief of the Defence Staff touched on in his Royal United Services Institute speech this month, technology is providing new ways to conduct political warfare. Why conduct a kinetic attack when such economic harm can be brought about through the theft of intellectual property, cyber-attacks, satellite disruption or information and propaganda operations, such as election interference?

It is right that we conduct a full defence and foreign policy review. I have long called for a grand Government strategy that better co-ordinates our international-facing Ministries—perhaps under the leadership of a deputy Prime Minister who co-ordinates the Foreign and Commonwealth Office, the Ministry of Defence, the Department for International Development and our trade Ministries—to truly leverage and co-ordinate our respected soft and hard power and our status as a country, traditionally with the ability and the desire to shape the world as a force for good.

I do not apologise for repeating what I have said many times in this House: our defence posture matters and we must invest more in our armed forces. I hope that the review will praise the professionalism of our brave service personnel, but 2% is not enough. It is the NATO minimum. We do not strive to have the minimum or the average—we strive to lead. We cannot do that on just 2%, but I agree that the review should include procurement. Our Storm Shadow missile, for example, has a stand-off range of 250 km—it is our most potent air-to-ground weapon—yet we insist that it is fired only from a \$100-million stealth fighter, when in some circumstances, such as over Afghanistan, a propeller aircraft costing one fifth of the price could do exactly the same job.

I encourage the security review to look at the long term, at what is coming over the horizon. I mention China directly; in our lifetime, it will overtake the United States as the world’s single dominant power. This year alone—indeed, in every year over the last five years—its navy has grown by the size of our navy. Its air force is moving into fifth-generation capability and it has the largest army in the world. In our lifetime, the RMB is likely to challenge the dollar as the global reserve currency. The BeiDou constellation of satellites will also challenge GPS, in terms of being used by other nations, and the China club of nations that are indebted to China grows every year.

In 2000, global debt to China was just \$500 billion. Today it is \$5 trillion, \$1.3 trillion of which is from the United States. Left unchecked, the trajectory of China’s technological, economic and military capabilities will extend far beyond the accepted norms of currently recognised international standards. Chinese tech giants such as Alibaba, Tencent and Huawei are able to operate in this country, but our equivalents, Apple, Facebook,

eBay and so forth, cannot operate in the same circumstances in China. Those companies are state-funded and are moving ahead technologically faster than any of ours. We need to avoid the dangerous, bipolar world that we are heading towards.

There is a huge opportunity for leadership and a vacuum to be filled not just in Britain but on the international stage. We need to think carefully in post-Brexit Britain about how we define ourselves militarily, politically and economically and how we upgrade the Whitehall machine to advance, modernise and improve our statecraft. As the Prime Minister said, we are seeing a realignment of British politics and of the Conservative party as we have ventured into territory long seen as Labour strongholds. The opportunity for our party and this Government to rise to the occasion and take us forward as a modern, fiscally responsible and progressive one nation party is one that we will not see again for a long time. I hope that we can present an optimistic, inclusive agenda, replace division with unity, lead the nation forward and again be a force for good on the international stage.

6.41 pm

Patrick Grady (Glasgow North) (SNP): I have a wee sense of *déjà vu*, Mr Deputy Speaker, because in the last Queen's Speech debate I spoke immediately after the right hon. Member for Bournemouth East (Mr Ellwood). By the luck of the draw, here we are again. He raises important points about the state of the modern world. None of his arguments seems to me to be a very compelling case for pulling away from one of the biggest and most successful international unions in the shape of the European Union, which the Conservative party is now determined to do. That, I suppose, will define much of the debate in the coming days and weeks.

Let me start by congratulating all new and returning Members, particularly those who have arrived in increased numbers on the Scottish National party Benches. In particular, I want to pay tribute to my friend Stephen Gethins, who was not successful in holding North East Fife but who still has very much to contribute to Scotland before and after we achieve our independence.

Today is a day of great constitutional importance. A woman with a significant constitutional role has outlined a vision for the future of her country, and the Scottish Parliament has endorsed that by passing the Referendums (Scotland) Bill, supported by the First Minister of Scotland, by 68 votes to 54. It is funny, because we have had this coincidence of Queen's Speeches on days of important constitutional significance up in Scotland several times now. Each time, it demonstrates the contrast between the narrow, backward vision of the Conservative Governments and the progressive, outward view of the Scottish Government.

This is the second Queen's Speech in three months and the third election in four years. I think that Black Rod must be breaking records for the amount of time that she is spending walking up and down the corridor. However, just because the Conservatives have secured a stable majority of seats in England and Wales, that does not mean that there is not chaos ahead. We may now have a battering ram Parliament through which the Tories think they can push through any policy they please, but the effect outside this place will undoubtedly

be further unpredictability for business and economic uncertainty and increased hardship for the poorest and most vulnerable members of our society.

The Bills outlined today do not seek to build a new caring, sharing socio-economic consensus or to earn the trust of voters in the north of England who might have lent their votes to the Prime Minister's party. Hidden behind the rhetoric and the spin is a hard-right reborn Thatcherite ideology that wants to strip back the functions of the state, liberalise the economy at the expense of workers' and environmental protections, sell off the NHS in a Trump trade deal and scrap whatever vestiges of democratic accountability are left in the UK's unwritten constitution—including, it seems, the Fixed-term Parliaments Act 2011. Whatever its flaws, the power to hold snap elections should not rest with the prerogative of the Prime Minister and the standard length of terms must be defined in legislation.

Of course, half of the laws outlined today will be subject to the English votes for English laws procedure. We hear about the great one nation Government, and they are governing for one nation in at least half of the Bills that they are proposing. The Governments much reduced number of Scottish MPs and the incredibly reduced number of Scottish MPs from the other Unionist parties will not have very much to do. The EVEL process is a complete waste of time and should be scrapped immediately.

The Conservatives may have won in parts of the UK where they have never won before, but Scotland wants no part of this. The agenda presented in the Tory manifesto and in today's Queen's Speech has been comprehensively rejected by voters in Scotland. I am proud to have been re-elected in the constituency with the highest share of the remain vote in Scotland in the 2016 referendum, which also had the fifth highest in the whole of the United Kingdom. That determination to protect Scotland's right to remain a member of the European Union has been reinforced by the result last Thursday, and that must also mean the right to decide a different future for our country, a future that could deliver the vision outlined in our manifesto and in the alternative Queen's Speech that the SNP has published today. That is an open, welcoming and inclusive vision of a country that plays its part in meeting the highest global ambitions to tackle the climate emergency, that provides not just refuge but jobs and livelihoods for those fleeing war and famine elsewhere, and that wants everyone who can contribute to our society to make their home here. It is of a country that meets its commitments to international aid and delivers them through a dedicated Government Department, which also seems to be at risk in this Queen's Speech.

In Glasgow North over the past six weeks, people on the doorsteps said time and time again that they wanted to stay in the European Union. They also wanted an end to the misery of the last nine years of Tory rule. They were inspired by the SNP's commitments to a proper step change in NHS funding, to building a social security system based on dignity and respect, and to releasing funds for many such vital public services by scrapping the abomination of nuclear weapons on our shores. If this Tory Government refuse to listen and ignore Scotland as so many UK Governments of whatever colour have done over the years, they do so at their own peril.

[Patrick Grady]

Throughout my lifetime, the result of the general election in Scotland has not affected the result across the UK. The Prime Minister has always been chosen by voters in England and Wales. Until 2015, however, the majority party elected in Scotland to Westminster was, for whatever reason, committed to itself one day being part of a Government of the United Kingdom. Although there was a stark democratic deficit, which led to the campaign for and creation of Scotland's devolved Parliament, it was fair to say that the majority was bound to accept the UK result. Since 2015 however, the majority of Members returned to this place by constituencies in Scotland have a different view. We believe that if the United Kingdom cannot and will not deliver on the priorities of our constituents, we must have the opportunity to choose an alternative path.

There are no Liberal Democrats here, but they were complaining earlier about proportional representation. They were in government with this lot for five years and they completely failed to deliver on that pledge so they cannot complain now when the system works against them—

Mr Ellwood: We had a referendum.

Patrick Grady: Which, incidentally, voters in my part of the world supported.

Our belief has been reinforced by the mandate we have won in this election. I am immensely grateful and hugely privileged to have been elected to represent Glasgow North once again. I accept that not all voters will agree with everything I have said today, and we all have a responsibility to listen to, respect and act on behalf of those who did not support the majority party, but if that applies in constituencies it must apply to the Government as well. If the Conservatives are so convinced of the case for their precious Union, what do they have to be afraid of? The United Kingdom that people voted to be part of in 2014 has already fundamentally and materially changed, and by 31 January it will definitively no longer exist if the Government achieve Brexit.

We heard from the Government, the Prime Minister and, indeed, the right hon. Member for Bournemouth East about this one nation Government, but what nation is that? The Prime Minister is supposed to be the Prime Minister of a United Kingdom made up of four distinct constituent territories each with their own traditions and experiences of nationhood. If he wants to govern in the interest of just one nation, that is up to him. It is a small, isolationist and reactionary vision harking back to an imperial glory that never really existed in the first place. Scotland's vision is internationalist. Our independence is defined by our interdependence on the global family of nations and institutions, of the United Nations and the European Union. The real separatists are the people who want to take us out of those institutions and to reduce our commitments to tackling global challenges, move us out of alignment with the highest agreed standards on social wellbeing and the environment, and ignore rulings of the United Nations General Assembly and the International Court of Justice on the Chagos islands, for example.

As I said earlier, and as I said at the SEC Centre in Glasgow last Thursday, Scotland wants no part of that. Whether the Prime Minister likes it or not, one day

soon Scotland's future will be back in Scotland's hands, and we will continue our work, as we always do, towards those early days of a better nation.

6.50 pm

Tim Loughton (East Worthing and Shoreham) (Con): I rise to support the humble address. It is a pleasure to see you in the Chair, Mr Deputy Speaker, but let me also say that it is a particular pleasure to see the new Speaker in the Chair—a proper Speaker who, while he may suffer from the disadvantages of not being a Yorkshireman, is a man who has strong and many opinions but does not feel compelled to inflict them on the Chamber and the country, in contrast to his predecessor. We look forward to many years of fair adjudication of debates in the House.

The hon. Member for Glasgow North (Patrick Grady) began his speech by talking about *déjà vu*. I fear that every time a member of the Scottish National party rises to speak, it is *déjà vu* all over again. Earlier today the leader of the hon. Gentleman's party, the right hon. Member for Ross, Skye and Lochaber (Ian Blackford), in true BBC Christmas repeat fashion, came out with the same old speech—to which many of us have had to listen for the last few years—about Scotland being dragged out of the EU. Well, for goodness' sake let us have something new. The fact is that, as we all know, the United Kingdom voted to come out of the European Union and that decision was upheld in the recent general election in the whole United Kingdom, of which Scotland is a component.

It was a particular pleasure to listen to my hon. Friend the Member for Chatham and Aylesford (Tracey Crouch), who proposed the motion for a Humble Address. Let me say for the benefit of those who could not see that she did so barefoot. As a founding member of the all-party parliamentary group on mindfulness, which I hope to have the privilege to chair when it is reconstituted, she said that using mindfulness techniques and anchoring herself to the floor gave her great confidence, and she demonstrated that with aplomb in her excellent speech. Let me recommend to those who are still feeling stressed by the result of the election the mindfulness classes which are available to all Members at 5.30 pm on Tuesdays. So far, some 240 Members of both Houses have taken advantage of them, and that has certainly improved the standard of debate in both Chambers. Let me also compliment my hon. Friend the Member for Walsall North (Eddie Hughes)—who is the embodiment of the cheeky chappie—on the excellent way in which he seconded the motion.

In many respects, this is the easiest Queen's Speech to which to respond on the first day, just hours after its delivery in the other place. We did, after all, have a dry run for it on 14 October, although today's turned out to be a fuller-fact version. The 22 Bills that were promised back in October have now become 40. This is certainly no longer a wish list; it is now a comprehensive and substantial programme for government. I am therefore pleased to get in early, ahead of the, no doubt, Cook's Tour of maiden speeches that will be made in subsequent days and weeks by the plethora of Members who have just been elected to seats around the United Kingdom—mostly, I am glad to say, on this side of the House. I wish them all well.

We also approach this Queen's Speech on the basis of the strong likelihood that we might actually get it passed. What a joy it is—and I aim this particularly at new Members—that at last, for the first time in the 22 and a half years that I have spent in the House along with the new Speaker, we have a strong and stable Government with a decent majority and, ostensibly, support from all Conservative MPs on the same side. Long may that continue.

Let me say to those new Members, “You've got it easy.” The last couple of years and, in particular, the last 12 months in this place have been hugely stressful and exasperating, not knowing when you get up in the morning what will happen in Parliament that day—whether the Government will win votes or not, or whether they will be tied—and not being able to make plans, with the possibility of the House having to sit on Saturdays. We have all been prepared to do that, but the unpredictability has made nursing a constituency, and the other responsibilities that we all have as Members, somewhat more challenging, and throughout that time a Speaker was making up the rules and rewriting the discussion as he went along.

No more, Mr Deputy Speaker. This Administration will get on with the job of being in power and in government, and implementing a programme of the people's priorities. That is going to happen, which is a real joy and pleasure for those of us who have seen the ups and downs of a Parliament that has not been at its best in recent years.

On Saturday, when I conducted one of my regular Saturday morning street surgeries, the sense of relief among my constituents was palpable. Whether they had voted for Brexit or remain, people wanted certainty, clarity and a way forward out of the maelstrom and gridlock that this place had become over recent months. However, there was one rather sad exception. In response to the general election result, the Momentum zealots who form the local Labour party and its councillors tweeted the contact details of the Samaritans, on the basis that people would be feeling depressed and driven to mental illness. That was crass, disgusting and inappropriate.

As for what we need in this country, a piece of advice was given to me in 2001, after the second Blair landslide, by a local Labour councillor whom I respected greatly. He said to me, “Tim, you need to be a good, strong Opposition”, and he was right. In this House we need a good, strong Opposition, so I take no delight in the current problems with the Labour party. For the functioning of democracy in this country, we need a good—and moderate—strong Opposition. That keeps a good Government on their toes, and I hope that it emerges in the months to come. I am afraid that the current Momentum-hijacked Labour party is not that strong Opposition, and I hope that it sorts itself out as soon as possible.

A measure in the Queen's Speech that I particularly welcome is the plan to abolish the Fixed-term Parliaments Act 2011. One view that united all the candidates throughout the election, certainly in my constituency, was that December elections suck. I am sure that we all spent the last five to six weeks constantly damp and constantly frozen, frustrated by our attempts to push soggy leaflets through those terrible letterboxes with the brushes. I recall that last year the Government agreed to amend the building regulations to get rid of floor-level letterboxes, and it should now be a priority for them to

amend the regulations to get rid of furry letterboxes. They are a cancer on our society, whether you are a volunteer delivering leaflets, a political activist, or a professional postman or postwoman. If the Government will not do that, I will present a private Member's Bill and we will see how well that does.

Bob Stewart: It is not the furry stuff but the guillotine behind it that really does your knuckles in.

Mr Deputy Speaker (Sir George Howarth): Order. Fascinating and relevant though this topic is, I hope that the hon. Member for East Worthing and Shoreham (Tim Loughton) is not going to embark on a whole debate on the positioning of letterboxes. I do not think that there was any mention of it in the Queen's Speech.

Tim Loughton: That is why I am going to move on very quickly, Mr Deputy Speaker.

Another measure was absent from the Queen's Speech. I am making no reference to the current Speaker, but we need to change the procedures in the House so that we have a way of sacking a dud Speaker. We did not have that in the last Parliament, and I moot it now as something that the Procedure Committee may wish to consider.

I am particularly pleased with the big emphasis in the Queen's Speech on the climate emergency. The Environment Bill that was published just before the election was an excellent and comprehensive piece of work, and there are many ways of improving it. Whatever people might say, the Conservatives have terrific green credentials, including our being the first country to have a legally enforceable target on net zero carbon emissions. Although 2050 is too far away—I have no doubt that as technology develops, we will be able to bring the date forward—the fact that we have that target and are determined to see it through is great credit to a Conservative Government.

Renewable energy sources now account for just under 39% of our electricity generation—up from 6% in 2010. Onshore wind accounted for just 7.5 terawatts an hour in 2010, but the figure is now 30.5. The £5.8 billion that we put into the international climate fund shows us taking responsibility towards the climate emergency internationally, and not confining our actions to the boundaries of our country.

We should be proud of the action that we are taking and will continue to take on plastics, and on the protection for the 4 million sq km of ocean within the British overseas territories. We will build on all that in the new environment Bill, which will put environmental principles in legislation and create legally enforceable targets. It will establish a world-leading environmental watchdog in the office of environmental protection, which will include climate change. It will also set out plans to enhance the drive from Government, public organisations and private business to deliver environmental improvements and sustainable growth. It will enshrine the “polluter pays” principle. It is important that we have extended producer responsibility schemes, so that those who use packaging and sell products in it are responsible for its sustainable disposal, recycling or reuse.

The measures in the Bill to restore or create wildlife-rich habitats to enable wildlife to recover and thrive are also important, as are the targets and legal action on air pollution. We should be very proud of those.

[Tim Loughton]

Measures on the NHS have been much mentioned. Extra spending will be enshrined in law in the hope that we can at last stop using the NHS as a political football. In every election in which I have stood, as sure as eggs are eggs, we are told, “There are two weeks to save the national health service” or, “There’s a week to stop the wicked Tories selling off the national health service”. Why would we want to? We have the best national health service in the world. It is one of the things we are most proud of and famous for. Why would we want to do a deal with the United States that meant paying more rather than less for drugs? That nonsense must stop.

I am pleased that we have the best hospital in the world in my constituency. Worthing Hospital was rated outstanding in all five criteria; better than any other acute hospital in the country, yet 12 years ago, the last Labour Government tried to downgrade it. Let us not forget that the Labour Government and their fascination with keeping debt off the balance sheet saddled the NHS with £18 billion of debt, with at least one hospital trust spending a sixth of its annual income servicing the private finance initiative debt for years to come. Let us therefore stop using the NHS as a political football.

I hope we will work together on adult social care to find solutions that work for all our constituents. An ageing population means that the health challenges will be greater and more complex in future.

I welcome the announcement of recruiting and retaining the additional 50,000 nurses. We also need incentives to get more medical students coming out of medical school to go into general practice. That is a particular problem in the south-east of England, where the money is there, but we cannot find the GPs to take up the positions.

We must do more about mental health, particularly with child and adolescent mental health services. I am therefore pleased with the references to mental health in the Queen’s Speech. As someone who has chaired a perinatal mental health charity and the 1001 critical days all-party group, I know that we must do much more earlier for the mental health of parents and young children. One in six women in this country will suffer from some form of perinatal mental illness. There is a 99% likelihood that the mothers of 15 or 16-year-olds in this country who have mental health issues suffered from some form of depression or mental illness during pregnancy. We should concentrate more of our resources on preventing mental illness, which undermines the important bond of attachment between a parent and a child in those crucial early years.

We must ensure that more of our children are school ready. I hope that some of the extra investment in the NHS will be used for our health visitors. As I said in a debate before the election, we had a great record under the Cameron coalition Government. Health visitors detect the early warning signs of things going wrong between parents and children. They are there to give help and support.

I welcome the reference in the Queen’s Speech to the troubled families programme. It has been tremendous and should be continued and expanded. There should also be a pre-troubled families programme, which is applied preventively to families before they get into the difficulties that the troubled families programme deals with.

This year, some 32,000 children will go into care. I have a long-standing interest in that and I have declared it in the Register of Members’ Financial Interests. We must do much better for children who go into the care system. I do not know whether the figure of 32,000 is too high or too low. We must ensure that the right children go into care, that their life chances are improved while they are there, and that they get a second chance at a good, stable and loving upbringing in those vulnerable early years.

I welcome the reference in the Queen’s Speech to levelling up school funding. It was announced in the autumn statement and it was the biggest issue for me in the election campaign and, indeed, in the previous one. Every school in my constituency, and in every constituency, will receive an increase in per pupil funding next year. In one primary school in my constituency, the rise will be 8.2%. Those are real increases, to the sort of levels that heads told me they needed. They will now get them. We need to ensure that a rise in standards and outcomes accompanies that additional funding so that no child, whatever their background, is left behind.

We must also stop what I call the apartheid between those who go to university and everybody else. Many people go to university for whom it is not the most appropriate route. There are vocational and other courses that would be more appropriate, but for too many schools, if the pupils do not go to university, they are the also-rans. That is the wrong attitude and culture. We need to change that mindset and reboot the apprenticeship programme that did so well in the coalition Government years. We should restore funding and improve the standards and range of opportunities available in our further education colleges. For example, Worthing College is outstanding. It is well managed and has some fantastic outcomes for our young people, but I want more of them to benefit from the opportunities there.

I particularly welcome the Bill to prevent vexatious prosecutions of veterans. We expect and receive remarkable service from our servicemen and women. We put them in danger—on the frontline in times in conflict—and they are always there for us in times of turmoil and natural disaster. The least we can do is protect them and keep them safe from the frontline of vexatious litigation. I pay particular tribute to my hon. Friend the Minister for Defence People and Veterans, who has championed that cause along with others in the House.

I welcome the return of the Domestic Abuse Bill. I pay tribute to the former Prime Minister, my right hon. Friend the Member for Maidenhead (Mrs May) for championing that cause. We need to ensure that the measure goes through at speed and does what it says on the tin.

I welcome the Employment (Allocation of Tips) Bill. Lower paid staff have suffered from being ripped off for too long.

Hon. Members also mentioned our record on animal welfare. The Animal Welfare (Sentencing) Bill will reinforce the fact that we respect animals in this country and that people who are cruel to animals deserve to be called out and punished properly for it.

I also appreciated the reference to human rights and sanctions in Her Majesty’s speech. As a former chairman of the all-party parliamentary group for Tibet, I suggest that that must include calling out China. The death of

some 1 million Tibetans at the hands of the Chinese since the invasion in 1959 is still not properly recognised. Now, there are more than 1 million Uighurs in supposed re-education camps. The abuse of human rights in that country continues to be appalling. The Chinese ambassador to the United Kingdom continues to refuse to come to this House to meet members of the all-party parliamentary group for Tibet to discuss our concerns over what is happening in China. The environmental catastrophe that is taking place in the Tibetan plateau, which is responsible for servicing the water supply of about a quarter of the world's population, is deeply worrying. China needs to be called out and held to account on a human rights level and on an environmental vandalism level, and I hope that the words in the Queen's Speech will be translated into action.

Can I just put in a plea for the south as well? Rightfully, there are many promises and plans for investment in infrastructure in the north of England, and I very much applaud that, but the A27 is the most crowded and congested road in Sussex at the moment, and we need the upgrade to the A27 between Worthing and Shoreham that was recognised in the previous roads plan but has still not materialised.

May I end on one thing that is not in the Queen's Speech? It is an issue that featured rather disgracefully during the election campaign, and it is that of the so-called WASPI women. Many on this side and, of course, on the other side have championed the case of the 1950s pension women who were hit disproportionately by those changes in the pension age under previous Governments. Many of us have been lobbying the Government to acknowledge that disproportionate disadvantage and to do something about it. I will call on the Government again and, working with my co-chair of the all-party group on state pension inequality for women, we will continue to put pressure on the Government to acknowledge that and do something about it. The Labour Opposition's uncosted promise of £58 billion, which did not appear in their manifesto, disgracefully raised false hopes in vulnerable women. That amount was almost half the NHS budget, and it was never going to happen. I do hope that we can come up with a realistic, deliverable, doable offer for those women who have suffered and are suffering disproportionately, because that is the right thing to do.

This is a comprehensive programme for government for the next four to five years, and I very much support it. This is the programme of an ambitious and progressive one nation Conservative Government, of which I am proud to be a supporter. It is a programme to take the United Kingdom forward after these last few dark years of gridlock and division. It is a programme for an optimistic and bright future, and I very much hope that this House rallies behind these measures, because that is the right thing to do for the whole of the United Kingdom.

7.13 pm

Karl Turner (Kingston upon Hull East) (Lab): It is a real honour to be called in this important Queen's Speech debate, and it is a pleasure to follow the hon. Member for East Worthing and Shoreham (Tim Loughton). I agreed with some of what he said, but there was an awful lot that I disagreed with entirely, not least the mention he made of the former Speaker. For me, John

Bercow was somebody who jealously guarded the rights of Back Benchers and more junior Members in this House to hold the Government to account, whether they were on the Government Benches or the Opposition Benches.

If you will indulge me, Mr Deputy Speaker, I want to make brief mention of some colleagues who are not here today. Some from my own region include Nic Dakin, who loyally represented Scunthorpe, Melanie Onn who represented Great Grimsby, Caroline Flint, who was a great colleague and a loyal servant to this House and her constituents, and Paula Sherriff. There are too many to mention all of them, but I just want briefly to say that I have rarely spoken in this House without having the privilege of looking over to the Bench there and seeing the Beast of Bolsover. I have known Dennis Skinner since I was a young child and I remember him fondly. He shared a flat with my predecessor, John Prescott, who I am glad to say is recovering from a period of ill health; he is doing well. This House will miss the likes of Dennis Skinner, and it would have been remiss of me not to pay tribute to him in this way.

I welcome some of the things in the Humble Address, some of which were taken directly from the Labour party's socialist manifesto. However, those people in east Hull who lent their vote to the Conservatives did not give the Government permission to flog off our NHS to Donald Trump's America. Nor did they give their permission for environmental standards and consumer protections to be thrown away in the withdrawal agreement. They did not give the Government permission to deliberately and savagely erode their hard-fought and hard-won employment rights. It is clear from the Queen's Speech that the Government intend fully to take away the employment rights of those hard-working people in my constituency.

There has also been mention of facilitating a situation whereby transport workers will be prevented from taking strike action. I declare an interest as a loyal member of the Rail, Maritime and Transport parliamentary group in this House. People who get up in the morning and go to work do not need fewer rights in the workplace. They need better, stronger rights in the workplace and, my word, they are really going to need them as we move forward with this particular Government. It was a real shame that this Government did not address the social injustices in east Hull. People who get up in the morning, get on a bike, pedal to their place of work and work hard for very long hours tell me regularly in my surgeries that they often resort to using food banks. It is true not just in east Hull but across the country that there are more food banks than there are McDonald's restaurants. When I was elected in 2010, that simply was not the situation. It simply was not true, but it is now.

What the Government have not done in this Queen's Speech is address the issues that concern people in my constituency. They include the bedroom tax, which is incredibly unfair and affects the most vulnerable people in my constituency the hardest. The Government have not addressed the unfairness of universal credit, or the fact that people are still really struggling to navigate that new system of welfare. They did not address an awful lot of things in the Queen's Speech. It is true that people in my constituency lent their vote to the Conservatives on this occasion, but they will not make that mistake again because the proof of the pudding is

[Karl Turner]

in the eating, and we know from this Queen's Speech that it is going to get a lot worse for people who live in east Hull. I am here to defend and work hard to protect those vulnerable people, and I promise my constituents in east Hull that I will be doing that at every single opportunity I get.

7.19 pm

Sir Bernard Jenkin (Harwich and North Essex) (Con): I could not find the result as I listened to the closing remarks of the hon. Member for Kingston upon Hull East (Karl Turner), but I think the Brexit Party received substantially more votes than the margin of his majority—do correct me if I am wrong—so he was saved, if you like, by a split in the Brexit vote. I hope that he will reflect on how little his voters respected the Labour party's position on Brexit.

Mr Deputy Speaker, I congratulate you on your sudden elevation, and may I also congratulate Mr Speaker on his election? I also congratulate the Prime Minister not just on achieving a stunning outturn to a difficult election, but on striking such a sensible and moderate tone at the moment of victory. He humbly accepted the responsibility, and his comments were far from the triumphalism that he might have indulged in and that, in fact, is not part of his character.

There has been much speculation about the long-term significance of this result. Is 2019 going to be like a 1945, 1979 or 1997 watershed? It is far too soon to be certain about that, but it is rightly the Government's ambition to make it a watershed by changing the nature of the Conservative party, with its new intake and the new constituencies that we represent, ensuring that we deliver in constituencies that have not been represented by the Conservative party for a very long time, if ever.

It is certain, however, that this is a watershed moment in our relationship with the European Union. I still hear among many of the comments a reluctance, perhaps, from the Opposition parties to accept this, but the election result represents a substantial consolidation of what was decided in the referendum. Incidentally, the effect of leaving the European Union will be far less about economic and social matters. It is far more significant in terms of its political and constitutional intent. It is about the intent of the British people and a signal of our national determination to be a self-confident country, to take control of our own affairs, to make our own laws, and to navigate our own way in the world, as the sixth largest economy in the world is perfectly capable of doing. Yes, there will be problems of transition, but most countries are not in the EU and they are absolutely fine. We will find our way out of the European Union probably in a manner that most people in this country will not even notice in terms of immediate policy effects, but they will understand that they voted for us to be a self-governing nation.

The election converted the direct mandate of the 2016 vote to leave into a clear representative mandate, and that was always going to have to happen, because direct democracy does not sit comfortably in our system of representative government. This election represented that transition: not just to leave the EU in principle, but a mandate to deliver the deal negotiated by my right

hon. Friend the Prime Minister. The election decided how we are going to leave the EU, as set out in our manifesto.

Incidentally, we are leaving with a deal. It is quite extraordinary that a narrative is developing that we will somehow leave without a deal in a year's time. We might leave without a free trade agreement, and the Prime Minister has made it absolutely clear that we are leaving at the end of 2020 come what may, but that puts us in a far stronger negotiating position than we would be in if our hands were still being cuffed by a House of Commons determined to inflict defeat on the Government at any cost and to subvert the referendum result and the election result. We are now in a position to negotiate more effectively than we have ever negotiated before and, with the experience of the previous negotiation, is it not apparent that there has been a sea change in the attitude of the other members of the European Union? They want to get this done. They are not against free trade. They are not in favour of protection for its own sake. They are not in favour of inflicting some kind of vengeance Brexit on the United Kingdom. They will want their exporters to benefit just as much as our exporters will benefit, and we are in a strong position to achieve that.

In this election, people also voted for this rather mobile concept of "one nation". Actually, one nation, as somebody recently reminded me, was a term coined not by Disraeli but by Baldwin. Disraeli talked about the two nations—the rich and the poor—but Baldwin fused it into a political philosophy about forging one nation, so that the divide does not exist. My right hon. Friend was right to emphasise that that has always been the role of successful Conservative Governments. In fact, poverty has generally declined under the Conservatives, and inequality tends to increase under Labour Governments, because they try to tax people too much and, in the end, the taxes fall on those least able to pay.

This election result was not about those who made the biggest promises. If the party that won the election was always the one that made the biggest promises, we would never win an election. The fact is that some of the Labour party's promises, as my hon. Friend the Member for East Worthing and Shoreham (Tim Loughton) was saying earlier, were irresponsible. They were not credible, and they looked cynical. Those kinds of promises do not work. People vote for a track record. There has never been a Labour Government that did not leave office with a higher rate of unemployment than they inherited from their Conservative predecessors. That is a fact, and people remember that. The election reflected the fact that common sense prevailed over the temptation to allow extravagance that the nation could not afford and over a continuation of the institution-breaking paralysis that a hung Parliament had inflicted on the Government at this particular juncture in our history.

This election result is a defeat for the idea that we should somehow move to a more proportional voting system. The advantage of our voting system is that it distils a decision so that hung Parliaments are rare. This election demonstrated that the nation does not like hung Parliaments. It likes decisive government. The nightmare possibility of a continuing state of paralysis encouraged people to vote tactically and make a judgment about how they wanted the political deadlock to be broken. They did not want it to be left to a lot of politicians on lists filling smoke-filled rooms and stitching

things up for themselves. It was not just that period of government that was unpopular, because the coalition between 2010 and 2015 turned out not to be very popular in the end.

I welcome the Gracious Speech. The withdrawal agreement represents a compromise Brexit, which we now all must live with, and all can do so because it is a good compromise. There has been much speculation about the European Research Group, which I do emphasise is primarily a research group, and about whether we should rename ourselves the “manifesto support group” because we are not at loggerheads with the Prime Minister. We are not holding him to ransom. We supported his deal before the election. It was remainers who were trying to destroy his Government before the election, and they will now hopefully lay down their arms and sue for peace, because this has been resolved. That is what our voters expect.

I am just as interested in the proposals in this Queen’s Speech for a constitution, democracy and rights commission, which will have a large agenda after a period of constitutional strain in which so many of the norms and conventions of our constitutional settlement were just simply thrown aside in the battle over Brexit. The Select Committee on Public Administration and Constitutional Affairs, which I chaired before the election, has looked at electoral law, the Fixed-term Parliaments Act 2011, the role of the Electoral Commission—maybe we should look more at that role—constituency boundaries, the royal prerogative and the Supreme Court judgment, alongside the nature of our civil service. I am pleased the Prime Minister is considering how the effectiveness of Whitehall can be improved.

Now we have a mandate and a majority to address all these matters, we need a careful and consensual approach so that we do not make the mistake of previous changes, like the Fixed-term Parliaments Act. That Act was a rather grubby deal to try to cement the coalition into office, and it had all sorts of unintended consequences. We must legislate on the constitution very carefully to avoid making such mistakes in future.

John Spellar (Warley) (Lab): The hon. Gentleman mentions the redistribution of boundaries. There was a strong feeling in the previous Parliament that it would be a huge mistake to reduce the number of Members of Parliament and the number of constituencies from 650 to 600. Does he think that ought to be revisited?

Sir Bernard Jenkin: I certainly do. On Second Reading of the Parliamentary Constituencies (Amendment) Bill, the private Member’s Bill introduced in the last Parliament, I spoke in favour of the compromise that seemed to be emerging for a variation of 7.5% instead of 5%, so as not to corral constituencies into artificial shapes, and for 650 seats instead of 600. Overwhelmingly, the objective should be to re-establish consensus on boundaries through the usual channels. Boundaries should not have become a politicised issue. We could not get any boundary changes through because it had been politicised—another clumsy mistake by the coalition Government.

We have to recognise that this cavalier fiddling with the constitution and this period of paralysis have left the public with much less confidence in our political institutions. There has always been cynicism about politics, but never about Parliament as an institution. The public

were becoming very jaundiced about Parliament as an institution, and this majority Government is an opportunity for all sides to recognise what the rules are and to make this place work for the benefit of our constituents, whether we are in opposition or in government.

I also welcome the emphasis on the national health service in Her Majesty’s Gracious Speech. I was at a roundtable at Conservative conference a couple of years ago to discuss the staffing crisis in the NHS—this was before the staffing crisis had moved up the political agenda—and I asked who is accountable for workforce planning in the NHS. A variety of opinions came from the various professional bodies around the table and, actually, some of us persuaded the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care that he should make himself accountable.

We then got an interim people plan for NHS England that was extraordinarily thin on numbers and analysis, so I welcome the breakthrough into numbers that appeared in our manifesto. I am a little sceptical about how easy it will be to achieve 50,000 more nurses, and I immediately pressed the Secretary of State to explain exactly what 50,000 more nurses means and how it will be achieved. That is yet to be fleshed out in hard policy detail, but we have set ourselves the challenge and we have to deliver it.

Karl Turner: It is made up.

Sir Bernard Jenkin: No, I promise that it is not made up, but it would be fair to say that a great deal of work needs to be delivered to make it happen, and it may well cost more than the Government expect. We have to deliver it, and I hope the hon. Gentleman supports the objective, even if he criticises how it will be achieved.

Although the Health Service Safety Investigations Bill, which had its Second Reading in the House of Lords at the end of the previous Parliament, was not specifically mentioned in the Gracious Speech, I have had it confirmed that the Bill is in the Government’s programme for a later date. The Bill would introduce a new healthcare investigations body to establish the causes of clinical incidents in the NHS without blame by using a safe space so that people can speak freely without fear of prosecution or attack, in the same manner as the air accidents investigation branch of the Department for Transport. An independent body is required, and it requires legislation. The Public Administration and Constitutional Affairs Committee, which I chaired, made that proposal, which the Government accepted. I chaired a pre-legislative Committee in the last Parliament, and we have the draft legislation we want. All we are waiting for is for the Government to introduce the Bill, and I hope it comes quickly.

Our greatest challenge in this Parliament is to restore faith in our House of Commons, our Parliament and our democracy. I hope the Gracious Speech will contribute to addressing that, but it depends on our attitudes and our behaviour with each other. I hope we move past previous animosities and rediscover some of the consensus that makes this place work. I look forward to working with colleagues on both sides of the House to that end.

7.36 pm

Neil Gray (Airdrie and Shotts) (SNP): As this is my first opportunity in this new Parliament, I put on record my thanks to the people of Airdrie and Shotts for

[Neil Gray]

placing their faith in me for a third time and for doing me the honour of representing them in this place. I will work for them and listen to them, regardless of which way they voted.

Although I welcome my party's much-swelled numbers, I echo the tribute of my hon. Friend the Member for Glasgow North (Patrick Grady) to Stephen Gethins, who sadly lost his seat. He is the best of us—there is no doubt about that—and I wish him and his young family well for the future.

Today's programme for government in the Queen's Speech is thin gruel for those who have been hammered by austerity for almost 10 years, but that is hardly a surprise when we look at the Tory party manifesto, which makes just four mentions of universal credit and none of disability support such as personal independence payments. I can find absolutely nothing new on work and pensions. In fact, all the Tory manifesto does for social security is conflate universal credit as only being for people who are out of work when, in fact, more than a third of recipients are in work.

The Tories have nothing new in their manifesto and, again, nothing new in today's programme for government for people on low incomes. It seems that the Brexit bonanza predicted by the Prime Minister will not reach those on low incomes—quelle surprise.

In fact, yesterday the Department for Work and Pensions removed the right of disabled people to choose whether to have the results of their work capability assessment sent to their GP. That will make it harder for those who fail these notoriously unfair and inaccurate assessments, but who simply cannot work, to get signed off with a sickness line by their GP. The Tories wasted no time in hurting the rights of disabled people.

Today, we have seen the announcement of the statistic of the year, which has been covered widely. The Institute for Fiscal Studies says that 58% of all those living in poverty in the UK are in work, which is shameful. A wee national insurance tax break will do nothing to solve this and, unless there is radical change, it will become an even greater social crisis during this Parliament. Whatever time I have left here, however long it is, I will do what I can to fight for people who deserve so much better from this UK Government.

Also conspicuous in its absence from today's programme for government is any meaningful mention of Scotland, or indeed any legislative plans for Scotland's future. The First Minister, Nicola Sturgeon, has written to the Prime Minister today with a clear democratic and constitutional case for Scotland being given the right to choose our own future. The Referendums (Scotland) Bill has been passed by Holyrood this evening.

Scotland is not a region questioning its place in a larger unitary state. We are a country in a voluntary Union of nations. Our friends in the rest of the UK will always be our closest allies and neighbours but, in line with the principle of self-determination, people in Scotland have the right to determine whether the time has come for a new, better relationship in which we can thrive as a genuine partnership of equals. That is the Scottish Government's very reasonable assessment. The response of the Prime Minister and the Tory party means that democracy stopped for the people in Scotland in 2014

and that means that, right now, Scotland's membership of this Union, according to the Prime Minister, is involuntary.

I know many of my constituents disagree with me about whether Scotland should be independent. I speak to them. I listen to them. I hear what they have to say. I would never deny them the right to have their say, and my vote counts equally, in equal weight as theirs. What the Prime Minister is suggesting is that what he has to say is more important and carries more weight than what we have to say in Scotland, and that people who both agree and disagree with him in Scotland matter not to him. He puts himself above the people in Scotland. Taking back control indeed.

Stewart Malcolm McDonald: Can my hon. Friend imagine the howls of indignation from Conservative Members if a scenario were to arise in which the First Minister of Scotland prevented the rest of the United Kingdom from having a referendum on whether to stay in or leave the European Union? Heaven and Earth would be moved by a Government in London to make sure it happened.

Neil Gray: Absolutely. I am about to make the point that what is good for the goose is good for the gander, and my hon. Friend makes that point well.

Our case is made stronger because of the nature of the election campaign we just had in Scotland. Jackson Carlaw, the acting Tory leader in Scotland, said the Union was on the ballot paper. Annie Wells MSP said that if Nicola Sturgeon and the SNP win, "they get their referendum." I am yet to see a Tory leaflet in Scotland that did not have opposition to a second referendum at the heart of it. The SNP manifesto and all my literature talked about Scotland's right to choose. I was clear, even with prospective voters who were undecided on voting for me but opposed to independence, that I would campaign for a second referendum if I was re-elected.

The result in Scotland was clear—even clearer than here in the rest of the UK. The Tories lost half their seats in Scotland. Their share of the vote went down and the SNP won more than 80% of the seats we contested. We have a higher share of the vote than the Prime Minister enjoys. In response to my intervention, the former Prime Minister, the right hon. Member for Maidenhead (Mrs May), suggested that because we achieved only—only!—45% of the vote in Scotland our mandate can be ignored. She has not really thought that through, has she? Extend that logic to the fact that the Prime Minister achieved only 43% of the vote in the rest of the UK. Nobody is denying the Prime Minister his democratic right to govern, and they should not be denying Scotland's right to choose any longer.

Sir Bernard Jenkin *rose*—

Neil Gray: I look forward to hearing from the Tory Benches the democratic case for how Scotland can be denied its say.

Sir Bernard Jenkin: The fact is that nobody in Scotland can possibly have voted without the knowledge that the Government of the United Kingdom were not going to agree to a referendum, so they could vote for whichever protest party they liked in the full knowledge that the

hon. Gentleman's promise would not be delivered in any case. Also, as was pointed out earlier, the SNP got fewer seats than it got in 2015. Why this result is regarded as a great triumph when the SNP has been going backwards, I do not know.

Neil Gray: The Union was on the ballot paper. No clearer campaign message came from the Scottish Conservatives than that, and it was wholeheartedly and comprehensively rejected by the people of Scotland. It would be wise of a so-called leader—one who aspires to statesmanship—to listen not just to those who voted for him, but those who voted against him, and to listen to the second largest member of this Union, which wholeheartedly rejected the manifesto that he put forward at the general election.

In her entertaining speech, the hon. Member for Chatham and Aylesford (Tracey Crouch) suggested that the Prime Minister was oven ready. Well, I say that what is good for the goose is good for the gander. Tory Members and the right hon. Member for East Antrim (Sammy Wilson) say that the SNP does not respect the results of democratic events. Well, in 2014 we respected the result of the referendum. Scotland did not become independent against the wishes of the people of Scotland. In spite of the even greater victory in 2015—the general election that saw us return 56 SNP MPs—we did not push in the first part of that Parliament for a second referendum. Then Brexit completely changed the offer of the Union voted on in 2014. In 2017, we lost seats, although we still held a majority of seats in Scotland. We won the election in Scotland, but there was contrition and our campaign for a second referendum after the 2017 general election took a step back.

It is the Tories now who wish to ignore the people and ignore the people of Scotland, but make no mistake: we now have a mandate from four consecutive parliamentary elections, and the result last week is unarguable by any democrat. It is for the Prime Minister to explain in a reasoned way why he would deny Scotland the right to have our say. It is he who now has to justify his unsustainable position. If he continues to refuse our right as the second largest nation in the Union to choose, he will be judged as the one nation Prime Minister he so desperately craves to be. He will continue to be judged as the vote leave, little Englander Prime Minister, and that will not serve him well in Scotland.

7.46 pm

Alex Chalk (Cheltenham) (Con): I rise in support of the Gracious Speech. It is a pleasure to follow the hon. Member for Airdrie and Shotts (Neil Gray). I did not agree with a great deal of what he had to say, but he certainly delivered his remarks with his characteristic force and eloquence.

I thank the people of Cheltenham for returning me for the third time. It was a hard-fought campaign, and I pay tribute to those who stood against me, because I think anybody who puts themselves up for election, particularly in the social media age, takes a brave step.

The result nationally is fantastic. We are able now to break the paralysis and to move forward. It is right also to recognise that with the great power that comes from this majority comes responsibility. I was delighted to hear the Prime Minister speak the language of one nation, but of course one nation can be merely motherhood

and apple pie. It is incumbent on us to define what we mean by it, so I will say a few words about what it certainly means to me and what I think and hope it means to others.

One nation conservatism is about patriotism, not narrow nationalism. It is about a nation based on one United Kingdom that recognises that nationalism is never the answer to any social problem. One nation conservatism is about being engaged and involved in the world—playing a part on the world stage and not retreating into isolationism. It is a belief in social mobility and the moral imperative to drive it. It is a belief in the role of the state to deliver excellent public services and sensible regulation. It is a belief in universal human rights and the rule of law as the bulwark of our individual freedoms. Critically, it is a belief in the environment—that conservatism must elide into conservationism. There is a moral duty upon us to bequeath a cleaner and greener environment to the next generation.

Stewart Malcolm McDonald: The hon. Gentleman says that my party is never the answer, so can he tell me why it is that when his party and my party are on a ballot paper, his lot get horsed and we keep beating them?

Alex Chalk: I worry that the hon. Gentleman never seems ready to listen to what the Scottish people have said. In 2014, Scottish people said they wanted to remain part of the United Kingdom, but he refuses to listen to them. Respect the people of Scotland. Listen to them. Honour the referendum result,

On Brexit, the language of this one nation Prime Minister is that this is not the time when we become fortress Britain; it is the time when we become global Britain. We will be more open, more welcoming, more internationalist, more tolerant. That is the direction that we need to go in.

The second element of the Queen's Speech—such an important, striking element—relates to the NHS. In the election campaign, so much nonsense was talked about privatisation of the NHS. The problem was that sometimes, mischievously, the word "privatisation" was used to mean two different things. It is important to emphasise that the principle of healthcare being provided free at the point of need, regardless of ability to pay, is sacrosanct. It is simply not up for discussion and it never was going to be up for discussion. It is an article of faith for this nation, part of what marks us out in the community of nations. I am so proud that I was able to stand in Cheltenham on the record of what the Government had achieved for Cheltenham and for Cheltenham General Hospital. We had had more money put into our A&E services and saved our A&E. We had delivered the new £2 million Apollo surgical theatre for the hospital, £1 million for Gloucestershire air ambulance, linear accelerators and so on and so forth.

What is exciting about the Queen's Speech is the pledge to invest yet more in our hospitals and the NHS in general. I want to see in Cheltenham a Gloucestershire cancer institute, and I will support the oncologists who do such a fantastic job and provide health services not just in Cheltenham and not just in Gloucestershire, but as far afield as Wales, Warwickshire, Herefordshire and still further afield. The Queen's Speech rightly focuses on recruiting more staff, and on ending the injustice of the parents of a small child who has to be cared for

[Alex Chalk]

overnight, or people with disabilities, or out-patients who require repeated treatments having to pay car parking charges. The Queen's Speech also addresses the issue of doctors' pensions and the fact that too many clinicians, particularly senior clinicians, are feeling priced out of going back to work because of the law of unintended consequences and the way it applied to pensions. That issue will be resolved.

I am excited about what will happen to our schools. One thing that did not really surface enough in the election campaign is how standards in our schools have risen, and risen relentlessly. The situation we inherited in 2010 was that our schools were on a downward trajectory, and we were slipping down the league tables in respect of the international comparisons. That is no more: we are now heading up the league tables and are ahead of France, Germany and the United States in reading and mathematics. That is something to be celebrated and we should be paying tribute to our teachers, the parents who support them and the school governors who are doing it time and again. In Cheltenham in particular, the results being achieved in our secondary schools—in Balcarras, in Bournside, in Pate's, in All Saints' and in all the other schools—are absolutely fantastic.

The Government have indicated that we will provide more funding. It is a fact that schools have delivered services despite the fact that the cost base and cost pressures have been going up, not least in respect of teachers' pensions and so on. Whereas in 2015 the schools in my constituency received about £4,200 per head as a minimum, that will go up next year to a minimum of £5,000 per head. In fact, the average in Cheltenham will be closer to £5,300 per head. That is going to empower and turbo-charge our schools to continue the fantastic work that they are doing.

One point ably made by my hon. Friend the Member for East Worthing and Shoreham (Tim Loughton) was about our environment. As I said when I introduced my private Member's Bill on net zero carbon, we need a new radicalism, but although we need to proceed with our heart, we also need to proceed with our head. I was delighted to hear of the new independent office for environmental protection, which will provide legal targets, including on air quality. There are important measures on planting more trees—the great Northumberland forest—and on new national parks and areas of outstanding natural beauty, but also a clear and hard-headed commitment to phase out coal completely by 2025 and to ensure that newly built houses no longer have fossil-fuel heaters. As we build more homes in Cheltenham as part of the cyber-park project, on any view they should no longer have gas boilers—I think they should be carbon neutral. That is what we need to focus on and the Queen's Speech does so.

In summary, I could talk for a long time, but this Queen's Speech can deliver a future for our country that is healthier, with children who are better educated, a country that is cleaner and an environment that is better protected. I am delighted to support the Gracious Speech. The future for our country can be very bright indeed.

Mr Deputy Speaker (Sir Gary Streeter): We now welcome back Anne McLaughlin.

7.54 pm

Anne McLaughlin (Glasgow North East) (SNP): I have been returned to Parliaments often enough to know that in the first few days it is supposed to be friendly, collegiate and jovial. There is barely a human being on the planet who I do not wish well, but I cannot feign joviality simply because some Conservative Members get irritated and would rather we in the SNP cheered up or just shut up. I cannot feign it when I represent many people who have long since lost the energy or reason to smile because of what successive Tory Governments have put them through. I cannot pretend that there is anything collegiate about this place when I have sat through debates in Committees, spoken up for constituents and talked about the real pain and distress that many of them have felt because of UK Government policies, yet the policies are still railroaded through and their pain and distress are ignored and intensified. There is nothing collegiate about that, so I will not be feigning anything. I will just be sticking up for my constituents and for Scotland.

During this long debate, I was softening, because I am a very soft-hearted person, until the hon. Member for East Worthing and Shoreham (Tim Loughton) got up to speak. I am going to pick up on just two of the many things he said that absolutely enraged me. The first was when he talked about somebody—I missed who it was—who had posted the number for the Samaritans in response to the Conservative Government getting their big majority. If he does not understand that thousands of people are in a really bad way and are very distressed that they will have to go through another five years of even worse policies and the impact they will have on them, he does not understand even his constituency.

The hon. Gentleman then talked about how the absolute priority must be letterboxes. Now, I am a letterbox anorak as much as anybody else in here, but he talked about how he was constantly damp and frozen during the election campaign and how he had to deal with all these horrible letterboxes, and he said that had to be an absolute priority. I am sorry, but I have loads of constituents who are constantly damp and frozen because they cannot afford to heat their homes, and he will have plenty of them as well. If they had heard him say that, they would feel extremely let down by him.

I will be collegiate about my predecessor. Paul Sweeney was a tough opponent, mainly because we agreed on so much and shared so many political interests. He is passionate about urban regeneration, restoring civic pride and the built heritage of Glasgow, particularly Glasgow North East, from where he hails. He considered it a huge honour to represent the area he grew up in. Politics can be really tough. It is not just a job we lose, and it is not just us who lose our jobs, so I wish him and his team well for the future.

I would like to redress a terrible faux pas that I made when the results of the election were announced in Glasgow. I paid tribute to my opponents' campaigners and completely omitted to mention my own team. This has been pointed out to me once or 25 times in the past week, so now, from the bottom of my heart, I thank not just the voters of Glasgow North East, whom I do thank, but my brilliant campaign team, who were determined to move heaven and earth to get me elected—and they did. If it is not stretching it a wee bit too much, can I just say that one of them, Esther, celebrates her birthday today? Happy birthday, Esther.

What is in the Queen's Speech for the constituents of Glasgow North East? *[Interruption.]* "Hee haw" I hear my colleagues say. Let us look at some of the issues facing some of my constituents. What is in the Queen's Speech for people being forced to use food banks as they wait weeks for universal credit—support to which they are entitled—to arrive? Nothing. What is in the Queen's Speech for the WASPI women, who should not have to be fighting but whose fight will continue, alongside many of us, until justice is done? Nothing.

What in the Queen's Speech for people such as my constituent Donna from Carntyne, who is due to give birth in March but will do so alone because she does not earn enough for this heartless Government to allow her Tunisian husband to join her? Donna was a residential childcare worker—not highly paid but highly valued and absolutely necessary. She did that work by day and DJed by night and she still did not meet the minimum income threshold. What is in the Queen's Speech for her? Absolutely nothing.

What is in the Queen's Speech to help to stem the rising number of drugs-related deaths in Scotland—I refer to measures over which the Scottish Government have no control? Absolutely nothing. What is in the Queen's Speech for EU citizens living in my constituency who have been stuck in limbo for the last three years? Nothing but more fear, more uncertainty and more hostility.

What is in the Queen's Speech for children, often born here, whose parents cannot afford the £1,000-plus fee to apply for citizenship? Nothing, although now that the High Court has ruled these charges on children to be illegal, I look forward to the Government's response. Finally, what is in the Queen's Speech to help communities to transition to be greener and more sustainable? Nothing.

Let me elaborate on some of the aforementioned. I assume that information on the green energy deal to aid communities to become greener and more sustainable will be forthcoming at some point. I urge the Government to be very careful about how whatever it is they plan to do is implemented. Nothing should discourage people from participating but, unfortunately, the last attempt by the Government to do this, the last green deal, left many people penniless and mistrusting. Putting right what happened to those people will go some way—some way—to lifting the suspicion that many now feel.

Not long before losing my seat in the 2017 election, I was made aware of the issue of green deal mis-selling in the Barmulloch and Balormock areas of my constituency. A constituent who I have come to know very well—Mr Dougie Wilson—turned up at every surgery to update me on what was by then coming to light. That started me on a road that I am still on—a road that I stayed on, in solidarity with the 60 constituents affected by this, when I lost my seat. I am a little further along in terms of getting justice for people, but truth be told we have got nowhere near as far as we should have done because of the shambolic response from previous Governments. If this truly is a clean slate and fresh start, as the Prime Minister alluded to, I urge the Government to do what the SNP Government have to do as part of their day job, which is to mop up the mess left behind by the last UK Government.

Let me read something that one of those constituents said to me. This is important. May is 84 years old and she is widowed. She was told by a company approved by

the UK Government that the cost of her green deal products would be nominal, that she should not worry, it was a Government scheme and they would pay the bulk; she would have pennies to pay. That was followed up by, "Hurry up and sign, or you will lose out." This is what she said to me:

"When I got the paperwork with the figures on it I was so shocked I had an asthma attack. I was very distressed and panicked to see that I had somehow signed up to a loan of £10,000 with interest of £8,000. I am from a generation of people who save up if they want something. Other than my mortgage, I have never taken out debt, and although that sum might seem low to some people, it was horrifying to me.

At the time, I did not say anything because I was too shocked, too embarrassed. I am 84 years old, I felt stupid for not knowing what I was signing. I felt ashamed and I felt vulnerable. I did not feel in a position to complain. I thought I had no choice and I blamed myself. I don't blame myself any longer."

She does not blame herself any longer because she has the support of the fantastic Green Deal Action Group in Glasgow North East, which is made up of 60 of her neighbours, all of whom have different mis-selling stories to tell, all of whom this Government have heard from, but most of whom have been ignored or fobbed off. Let me be clear: they will not be getting fobbed off any longer. Apologies, cancelled credit agreements, refunds and compensation are what I am asking for. This is an issue that affects people not just in my constituency, but across Scotland. I am very grateful to those of my colleagues, particularly on these Benches, who carried on the fight and formed the all-party group on green deal mis-selling, for which I provided the secretariat.

I said that there was nothing in the Queen's Speech on drug deaths. Last year, in Scotland, we lost 1,187 of our citizens to drug-related deaths. The Scottish Government have set up a drugs death taskforce, which is made up of a range of experts, including those with lived experience. They are looking at the changes that they can make, but some changes cannot be made without the permission of the UK Government. The Scottish Government want to allow injecting drug users to use a safe and supervised health facility so that, if they go into overdose, someone is there to get help, but they—the grown-up, democratically elected Government of Scotland—are not allowed to do that.

I join the calls of my hon. Friend the Member for Glasgow Central (Alison Thewliss) who has led the charge on this in the way that only she can. I join in her calls for the devolution of powers to enable Scotland to provide safe injecting facilities, and I will say more about that on a future occasion, but I am one of those people with lived experience of drug addiction. I lost a family member to a heroin overdose. He died, yes, because he injected heroin, but also because when he went into overdose, instead of calling for medical assistance his friends took fright and fled the scene because they were scared that they would be arrested. It is absolutely clear to me that he could still be with us today if those facilities had been available, as he would have been allowed to feed his terrible addiction in relative safety. Disappointed as I am not to see anything in the Queen's Speech to help people in that position, I will work with other families, with drug users in Glasgow North East and with campaigners such as Faces and Voices of Recovery UK to fight for whatever measures are necessary to preserve lives and to make those lives worth living.

[Anne McLaughlin]

I said at the start that I would not feign joviality. I talked about the fact that no matter what we say and no matter how good a point we make, the UK Conservative Government are not listening, but that will not stop me, because I learned a very valuable lesson when I was elected in 2015. I met a group of women in Springburn in my constituency, and they were excited because two days earlier they had watched me speak in a debate on benefit sanctions. I told them how I felt that I had wasted my time and that I was banging my head against a brick wall because it changed nothing as nobody on the Government Benches was listening. They told me never to think like that. Yes, they want us to change things for them, but they told me that just knowing that someone who understood what they were going through was in this place, speaking up for them and fighting on their behalf, and being able to see and hear me do that meant so much to them. It made them feel that they were not voiceless.

So I will fight for the justice that my constituents need and deserve, but even if this Government are not listening, never again will I feel like I am wasting my time. Speaking up for the constituents of Glasgow North East is what I will do every day until the day we all walk out of here for the last time and head home to Scotland to build the socially just, compassionate and independent Scotland in which they deserve to live. We know that it will happen. This Government may be in denial, but deep down they know it, too. Independence is coming very soon, and Members should be sure of that.

8.7 pm

Crispin Blunt (Reigate) (Con): Obviously, it is a pleasure for me to welcome the hon. Member for Glasgow North East (Anne McLaughlin) back to her place in the House and to congratulate her on her victory. I enjoyed listening to her warm-heartedness. I particularly liked the power with which she presented the case on the new deal, which obviously has been something she has been working on with the all-party group while she has not been in this House.

I gently invite the hon. Lady to open her warm heart to the possibility that there may be allies all over this House who share the same public policy objectives—to serve their constituents and to make sure that the benefits system and everything else works in the right way. One of the issues on which she alighted in her speech was the consequence of our current drug policy and the work that is going on cross-party in Scotland. I understand that all the parties there are in agreement about how policy can be improved. It has been my pleasure to work with her hon. Friend the hon. Member for Inverclyde (Ronnie Cowan) on this issue.

It is not only the hon. Lady who I hope will reassess her view about what she believes are the motivations of those who sit on the Conservative Benches. I will come on to what a one nation Government actually means, and I look forward to the reassessment that will have to take place. Hon. Members on the Opposition Benches, if they have a warm heart and are open to evidence, will have to reassess the way that they have conducted the political conversation, which has become much too strident. Obviously, that has been reinforced by having to deal with the issue of Brexit over the past few years.

We now have the opportunity of a Conservative Government who can begin to change the tone. I hope that the tone and the co-operation that we have will change across the House.

Before moving on to the main points of my speech—*[Interruption.]* And before the hon. Member for Airdrie and Shotts (Neil Gray) leaves his place, I just want to pick up on a couple of points he made in his speech. I hope he will recall that in 2013 it became the Conservative party's policy to have a referendum for the United Kingdom to leave the EU. The Scottish National party then decided to have its referendum on independence in the knowledge that that referendum would take place in 2014, and we know what the outcome of that referendum was. I congratulate SNP Members on their astonishing result in the 2015 parliamentary elections. Of course, they did not raise the issue of a further independence referendum because they had had one just a year before, and it was understood by all—including their own leader—that this was a “once in a generation” event.

I say to right hon. and hon. SNP Members gathered on the Front Bench that my colleagues in Scotland are absolutely right. The Union was on the ballot in every constituency in the United Kingdom, because if the Conservative party had not obtained a majority, quite obviously the price of the SNP's support for being part of an alternative coalition to the Conservative party would have been to revisit that issue; that is unarguable. Who knows when in the course of this Parliament it would have happened, but it was pretty clear from the language of the Labour leader in the course of the campaign that it would have been conceded at some point during the Parliament. For me, that is not “once in a generation”. I would have thought that the difficulty that the United Kingdom has had in extracting itself from the European Union over the last two and a half years might just cause a conversation in Scotland about the price of breaking up a Union that is infinitely deeper, infinitely longer lasting, and which I would argue is the most successful political Union in the world.

Stewart Malcolm McDonald: I know and respect the hon. Gentleman, but voters in Castlemilk, Croftfoot and all over Scotland do not give a stuff what a Tory MP from Reigate thinks of their changing their mind. I say that with all the respect it deserves—and it does deserve some. Just as the hon. Gentleman asked my hon. Friend the Member for Glasgow North East (Anne McLaughlin), who I welcome back to this place, to open her mind to the fact that others might be right, I ask that he might do the same. I invite him to Scotland to come and have those conversations, and he will see that the conversation has changed. That is why more than half the Scottish intake of his party from 2017 are no longer here.

Crispin Blunt: I would be delighted to take up that invitation. There are a number of issues on which the hon. Gentleman and I work together, and I look forward to discussing those issues in Scotland as well as the whole issue of drug policy. It is clear that Scotland faces the same scale of challenge on drug policy as Portugal did in the late 1990s that led to a radical change of policy in Portugal. On the basis of the evidence, many would argue that the change Portugal has made has been of huge benefit to its people. One only has to examine the figures—this will obviously be very close to

the heart of the hon. Member for Glasgow North East—to see that deaths from heroin overdose in Portugal, which were at a catastrophic level in the late 1990s, have dropped in the most astonishing manner. However, the position in Scotland—a country of comparable size—is that the figures remain of a horrifying scale, as the hon. Lady said.

Anne McLaughlin: Does the hon. Gentleman understand that that is one of the arguments for independence because we do not have the option to do what Portugal did—we cannot make that decision in Scotland? The Scottish Parliament could decide it wants to do it, every Scottish council and every person in Scotland could say, “Yes, we want to do it,” but we would not be able to do it because we would still have to ask permission from the hon. Gentleman’s Government, and just wait and see whether they said yes or no.

Crispin Blunt: Indeed. Well, guess what? The hon. Lady has an ally over here, as someone who wants to ensure that we have sensible policy, based on evidence across the whole United Kingdom. *[Interruption.]* Mr Deputy Speaker, you rightly drag me back to the Queen’s Speech.

The background to this Queen’s Speech is, of course, the huge sense of relief that exactly a week ago the country gave its Government the authority and majority to escape the awful trap we found ourselves in after the outcome of the 2017 general election. The nation has given a mandate for a one nation Government. The Gracious Speech makes it clear that it is those principles that will define our approach, and I am happy to give it an unqualified welcome. There is mention of the integrity and prosperity of the United Kingdom being of the utmost importance—and so are the values and principles that should underlie the new role that global Britain will play under a one nation Government. I will return to how those principles will inform our future foreign and security policy in a moment, but I first want to reflect on the scale of the opportunity now available to this Administration, led by my right hon. Friend the Prime Minister.

We should be in no doubt about how much the Prime Minister is the author of this opportunity. Before the leadership election, following our drubbing in the European Union elections last June, I did not think that anyone could deliver an exit from the European Union without an electoral alliance with the Brexit party. That is why I hesitated and delayed my support for my right hon. Friend when he was running as a candidate for the leadership of our party, despite the fact that he was self-evidently the best equipped to lead. Perhaps I was drawing on my experience of my exit from the chairmanship of the Foreign Affairs Committee in 2017, when I found that I was challenged on one side for not being a Brexit party enough. I would say that no, I was not a “believer” as such; I thought it was the right conclusion for the long-term interests of the United Kingdom based on my assessment of the evidence. On the other side, I was then successfully challenged by a new, articulate, personable and able Conservative voice for remain, who made a strong case as to why he should be marking the then Foreign Secretary’s report card. Combined with the support of my hon. Friends elected in 2015 and their understandable desire to have one of their own on an important platform, I suddenly found that my expectations

of what I was going to be doing in the 2017 Parliament were rather disagreeably and abruptly changed—a feeling that my right hon. Friend the Member for Maidenhead (Mrs May) would have had when she saw the results of the 2017 election. She dutifully tried to make the 2017 Parliament work in order to deliver Brexit, and we know the story. That Parliament was elected on a mandate to deliver Brexit. As she said in her own contribution, some reneged on that promise to the electorate and have now paid the price, as the electorate were able to revisit the issue.

Perhaps unlike my right hon. Friend the Member for Maidenhead, I was able to find a more enjoyable and productive role on issues that we have touched on today, particularly drug policy reform. It is good to see the hon. Members for Bristol West (Thangam Debbonaire) and for Manchester, Withington (Jeff Smith) in their places. We have worked together on this incredibly important issue and look forward to progressing that work in this Parliament by making the case for a policy based on evidence. But my right hon. Friend the Member for Maidenhead was not able to square the impossible circle. It was only when we went back to the country, who made their decision a week ago, that we were able to escape the situation.

My assessment in June this year was that there would have to be a Brexit alliance to enable us to escape the position we were in. I thought the Conservative party would have to come to an accommodation with the Brexit party to get the kind of result we have today. There would have been a price to pay for that, because we would not have been dealing with a Queen’s Speech set in the same terms as this one. The Brexit party would have had its own view and the Conservative party would have taken reputational damage as the price of that relationship. The true triumph of my right hon. Friend the Prime Minister is that we have been able to effect this majority without that arrangement. I did not think he could do that and most of this House did not think he could get a withdrawal agreement with the European Union, yet he has managed to do both. And now what is open to us is the kind of prospect available for a one nation Government delivering on the values and policies that sit in this Queen’s Speech.

Let me now turn to the detail of the Queen’s Speech and reflect on some things on the basis of my experience in government. I welcome the royal commission to review and improve the efficiency and effectiveness of the criminal justice process. There is a theme that informs Britain’s place in the world and the values that we stand for, and that is justice. We cannot really face the rest of the world if the standards of the bit of our justice system that works immensely well and runs efficiently and to the highest possible standards—the commercial courts in London where the world’s companies come to have their cases adjudicated in British courts—are then not reflected in the rest of the justice system under which British citizens have to operate. Having worked in the Ministry of Justice when it was unprotected from the costs of the necessary fiscal adjustment following the 2010 election and the financial crisis that we inherited, I know that this has to be addressed. We have to find a way of making sure that all the elements of the criminal justice system are able better to work with each other, and to reflect new technologies and take those savings where we can, but also of improving the service that is delivered to all our citizens.

[Crispin Blunt]

I want to deal with the question of Britain's role in the world and the values that are going to underpin that. I wholly agree that we need to look at an integrated security, defence and foreign policy review that must also cover all aspects of international policy, from defence to diplomacy to development. I know that we do not comment on intelligence matters, but our intelligence agencies are an important part of the defence of the United Kingdom, and I ask Ministers to ensure that they are part of the consideration of how we use the resources that we make available to our security, defence and diplomacy. That is all part of the picture.

As the Queen's Speech makes clear, the United Kingdom's interests will of course be promoted by Ministers. Freedom of speech, human rights and the rule of law have to be the values that global Britain stands for. The challenge to Government Members over the next four and a half years is not only to destroy the canard that we have heard about what Opposition Members appear to believe about the nature of the Conservative party—that ought to be relatively straightforward to do—but to inculcate those values in Britain's place in the world. It is about justice, the international rule of law and the maintenance of the global international institutions. There is a space for the United Kingdom to stand up for the kind of values that will make our children proud. In the way that the political discourse has taken place during the election campaign and the years that preceded it, they have been sold a total canard about the Government who have just taken office. We have four and a half years to put the United Kingdom in a place where we can be really proud of the values that we stand for both at home and abroad.

8.23 pm

Thangam Debbonaire (Bristol West) (Lab): It is a pleasure to follow the hon. Member for Reigate (Crispin Blunt). I hope to be working with him over the course of this Parliament to help to reform our drug laws, along with my hon. Friend the Member for Manchester, Withington (Jeff Smith), whom he so kindly mentioned.

The people of Bristol West did not vote for this Government or this Queen's Speech. I have read the detailed briefing as well as the speech. There is a lot in there, but unfortunately there are things missing in the detail and other things missing entirely that the people of Bristol West will want me to mention. They wanted a Government whose programme treats the climate emergency as a clear and present danger needing urgent action so as to be carbon neutral by 2030, not 2050. They wanted our schools and early years provision to be properly funded—and they do know the difference between a cash rise and a real-terms rise. They want the global refugee and forced migration crisis dealt with, but the immigration system mentioned in the Queen's Speech does not address refugees at all. They know that homelessness is not going to be solved by the warm words in the speech, but needs action. They know the importance of science and research, whether in dealing with antimicrobial resistance or getting tidal wave and wind to be more efficient and economically viable so that we can get to our carbon-neutral targets.

The people of Bristol West wanted an approach to drug policy that, as the hon. Member for Reigate said, focuses on harm reduction, saving lives, protecting victims

and tackling exploitative gangs, but also provides protection for the neighbours of people involved in drug misuse or drug dealing. They want a country that values equality and human rights, and they want that to be shown in how we treat adults and schoolchildren with autism, special educational needs and disabilities.

Crispin Blunt: The hon. Lady is correct that drugs policy is not in the Queen's Speech, but I would say to her and to the hon. Member for Glasgow North East (Anne McLaughlin) that only one manifesto mentioned the issue of drug deaths, and that was the Conservative party's manifesto.

Thangam Debbonaire: I thank the hon. Gentleman for that intervention, but I have to correct him; I will direct him towards the relevant page of our manifesto at another point. However, the issue is not dealt with in the Queen's Speech.

The people of Bristol West want a Government who know the value of music and cultural industries. Again, that was not in the Queen's Speech. I declare an interest in that area and refer the House to my entry in the Register of Members' Financial Interests.

I will fight for all of this for the people of Bristol West. I give the Government due warning that I will be a thorn in their side, but also a cross-party ally where I can be. I will be a campaigner for the people of Bristol West in doing whatever it takes to move this Queen's Speech and its list of Bills, which I have been through this afternoon, to where my constituents want it to be. I will be challenging the Government not just to put more money into schools but to reverse the cuts of the past decade, whether to schools and early years, health, councils or police and fire services. I want them to be properly funded and the dedicated men and women in our emergency services and other public services to have the working conditions that they deserve. I will be pushing the Government to understand the need for musicians and others to be able to tour the European Union as they do now, no matter what happens in the next six weeks or two months, and to continue to benefit from the cultural and intellectual exchange that our membership of the EU has brought. Again, I would like to have seen that in the Queen's Speech.

I will do everything I can to make sure that the Government's Windrush compensation scheme actually does what it needs to do. Unfortunately there are people in Bristol West who have really suffered because of the Windrush scandal. Despite my lobbying and the hard, dedicated work of my caseworkers, they are still waiting for money that they are owed, and I want justice for them.

I will push this Government further on their health policy. Again, the Queen's Speech makes a start but does not get to where I would like it to go. For instance, on public health, I would like PrEP to be provided for those parts of the population that need it to protect them from HIV. I would like to make sure that drug treatment is available to all who need it. I would like the Government to encourage and enable councillors and planners to design cities and towns for active, healthy living, making it easier to walk, cycle and use public transport.

I want so much for the people of Bristol West, but they also want so much for the people of the world, and I will be their champion on that, in matters of human

rights and international relationships. Again, the Queen's Speech makes noises, but it goes nowhere near far enough. The people of Bristol West want us to maintain and increase our globally respected international development and human rights work. They want the global refugee and forced migration crisis—which, again, is not mentioned in the Queen's Speech—dealt with in ways that foster international co-operation, increasing safe and legal routes to asylum and supporting the right of all asylum seekers to work, which I believe Members on both sides of the House want. My constituents want us to reduce the inequality, injustice, conflict and poverty that all lead to the forced migration crisis, and they want us to build peace.

The people of Bristol West love science and research, so I welcome the mention of that in the Humble Address. They value our universities and colleges, and they want us to be able to contribute that knowledge to the global challenges of climate change, the decline in nature, the deadly consequences of antimicrobial resistance and the impact of diseases such as malaria and HIV/AIDS. I will campaign for all those things in this place as the Queen's Speech is developed into a series of Bills.

The people of Bristol West want trade agreements that enhance, not cut, workers' rights, environmental protection and a decent quality of life. I have looked at the content of the Trade Bill, mentioned in the Humble Address, and unfortunately it is not good enough. It does not do what my constituents want it to, which is to value human rights, workers' rights and environmental protections. I am also worried at the signs that there might be less parliamentary scrutiny, not more.

I want to add something that could be allied to the provision in the Queen's Speech on cutting hospital parking charges. This is something that is very personal to me, and it would make a huge impact to the thankfully small number of families who are affected by cancer in children, teenagers and young adults. Thankfully it is rare, but because it is rare, it is often difficult to treat, so families often have to take long and expensive journeys. Mr Deputy Speaker, I am sure that you will be aware that children in your constituency often have to travel to mine to be treated. When those families do not have much of an income, or one parent has to give up work to care for their child, as is often the case, travel expenses are yet another worry. We could attach this to the hospital parking charges legislation. The legislation could also be expanded to the families of children suffering from other serious illnesses, but I am focusing on this particular awful disease because of CLIC Sargent's proposals for a young cancer patient travel fund, which I hope can be added to this provision.

Finally, I must say that I already miss colleagues who either lost their seats or stood down at this election—colleagues from all wings of all political parties, but particularly my own. I sat here on the last day of the previous Parliament and listened to valedictory speeches by hon. and right hon. Members from around the House, which moved me greatly, and I heard their assessments of the contribution that they had been able to make. I think in particular of my retiring colleague from Ealing North, Stephen Pound, and Alistair Burt and others who made this place richer. Democracy is poorer when good and talented people feel that they cannot continue to serve our country. This is a bit partial of me, but I also think that democracy is richer and stronger for the dedicated work of the Whips on both sides.

Nick Smith (Blaenau Gwent) (Lab): Hear, hear!

Thangam Debbonaire: Obviously I have a biased audience around me. I have been proud to be a Whip for three years, so I want to say a very personal thanks to our colleague Nic Dakin, who lost his seat. We all miss him very much already, and I believe that that also goes for the Government Whips Office.

The Queen's Speech offers the illusion of action on many matters of great importance, but at the moment there is still too much that is implied or missing. I promise the people of Bristol West that I will do my best to persuade, cajole and challenge this Government at every step in this Parliament on their behalf.

8.32 pm

Neil O'Brien (Harborough) (Con): It is a pleasure to follow the hon. Member for Bristol West (Thangam Debbonaire) and the thoughtful contributions we have heard from my hon. Friend the Member for Reigate (Crispin Blunt) and the wonderful, passionate one nation speech by my hon. Friend the Member for Cheltenham (Alex Chalk). It is also a pleasure to follow the hon. Member for Glasgow North East (Anne McLaughlin). I am incredibly sorry to hear about her loss. As somebody who met many heavy heroin users in the six years that I worked with street homeless people, I agreed with much of what she said about the need to fight this terrible addiction. It was a powerful speech.

Apart from the commitment to get Brexit done, the great highlight of this Queen's Speech is the commitment to enshrine in law a multi-year budget for the NHS and the extra nearly £34 billion a year that we will be spending on it—a huge increase in funding for our national health service. Having a multi-year budget and the certainty that comes with it is something that I have long argued for. Being able to plan not year to year or hand to mouth but for the long term is what will enable us to take forward huge projects such as the £450 million investment that is being made in Leicester's hospitals, which will benefit my constituents. It means in practice that we will have a new maternity hospital, a new children's hospital and upgrades to all the operating theatres and wards. It means additional car parking, because at the moment someone can spend as much time driving around the royal infirmary as they spend actually in there. These are the things that this Queen's Speech actually means on the ground for my constituents.

On health, there is much else to welcome. There is the new NHS visa, so that those who want to serve the NHS can get into this country without hassle. There is the Bill to accelerate access to new medicines. All of those in the House who were involved in the campaign to get rare drugs such as Spinraza approved quickly and who saw the torment of the families who were waiting for them will really welcome that piece of legislation. The return of nurses' bursaries is hugely important, as is the extra £700 million for more GPs and more GP appointments, which is probably one of the things I heard about most during the campaign.

Equally, with the new money for the NHS, the other hugely important commitment that we see in the Gracious Speech is the commitment both to increase funding and to reform the basic structure of social care. I believe that, since about 1997, there have been about 13 different

[Neil O'Brien]

commissions, consultations, Green Papers, and so on and so forth, and we have talked about this for too long. Although there has been progress through things such as the better care fund, there are still a large number of my constituents who I know, even today, are not getting the care they need because of our broken social care system. Let me welcome that commitment in the Queen's Speech and quote the Prime Minister: "Let's get this done!"

Closely tied up with the whole question of fixing social care is the whole question of fair funding for our local government, which of course funds it. In the last Parliament, I spent a lot of time banging the drum for fair funding—for the Leicestershire model of fair funding, because Leicestershire has been the lowest funded county council anywhere in the country for many years. If we were funded at the same level as Camden Council, we would have an extra £350 million a year to spend, and such imbalances in funding simply cannot be fair. I have banged the drum for it, the Government have listened and we have the commitment to introduce a fair funding formula. Now we must land that, and the detail of it.

On schools, again we have seen a move towards more fairness. Again, we have the welcome certainty of a multi-year financial settlement. Leicestershire schools have been among the lowest funded in the country for many years, and I think we are the seventh lowest funded authority. It is not fair that, while the average pupil in Islington or Kensington and Chelsea is getting £6,000 a year, pupils in Leicestershire have been getting just under £4,300. That imbalance is just too big. But, through this Queen's Speech and through the fair funding formula, we are now going to make progress. In fact, the average increase in per pupil funding for schools in my constituency next year will be in the top fifth of the country. We have a 4.6% increase per pupil and, because there are 21 primary schools below the new funding floor, they will see an even bigger increase of over 6% a year. That is really welcome change for my local schools.

I will continue to campaign on a personal passion of mine, which is for small and village schools. In the last couple of decades, there has been a huge decline in the number of village schools and small schools. In 1980, there were 11,464 small primary schools with fewer than 200 pupils, but by 2018 there were just half that—5,406—and a disproportionate number of those losses have been in villages. Of course, small schools are at the heart of village life, and we cannot afford to lose them. Now that we have the multi-year funding settlement, I hope we can use some of the money to help smaller schools by doing things such as upgrading the lump sum, which is so important for schools in my constituency, including little primary schools such as Foxton at the top of the hill above the village. I remember hearing the children playing above the village during the campaign. It is a wonderful sound and we have to keep it.

I welcome the additional 20,000 police. We are getting 107 extra police this year in Leicestershire, and I want to make sure that we get our fair share of those new police. Although I am limited on what I can say about it, I hugely welcome the commitment to end automatic early release, to have the fundamental review of sentencing—I called for that before it happened—and to have a wider review of the functioning of the criminal justice system. These are hugely important.

The last thing I will talk about is something that has been a passion of mine for many years, which is the whole issue of levelling up poorer places and poorer regions. I welcome the Prime Minister's strong personal commitment to this. In the Queen's Speech, we see a lot of good things. We see the White Paper on levelling up capital investment across the regions across. We see the commitment, finally, to roll forward devolution beyond where it has got to in England, which is hugely welcome. There are measures to cut and to reform business rates, which is so important to help high streets that are competing with the internet. There are things such as the commitment to roll out and to fund the roll-out of faster broadband, and the shared Rural Services Network for mobile phones, which will improve coverage in blackspots, in constituencies like mine, in places such as Husbands Bosworth.

A lot of positive things are being done, but there is an awful lot to do. It cannot be right that so much of the Government's most growth-enhancing spending is concentrated in already wealthy areas. It cannot be right that half of the fundamental science budget is going to just three cities—Oxford, Cambridge and London. It cannot be right that transport spending per head in London is twice the national average, but half the national average in the east midlands. It cannot be right that so many funding formulas have a circular logic, so that housing spending is directed towards areas with high house prices, and transport spending towards areas with high congestion. There is a circularity to that, which is like trying to put out a fire by pouring petrol on it, or saying that I will not water my plants until they start growing.

As well as changing the Government's growth and spending we should also consider what the tax system can do to help drive private sector inward investment into poorer places—that is the fundamental thing that will help to change the pattern of decline that we have seen in too many places over the years. Manufacturing needs twice as much capital investment per head as other types of economic activity, yet our tax system is probably less friendly to capital investment than anywhere else in the G20. If we can change that, outside the EU we will have much more freedom to enhance those capital allowances that will help manufacturing. That in turn will help the regions where manufacturing is more dominant, which tend to be poorer areas. Finally, we must learn from countries such as Ireland, which has been aggressive in the way it has competed for inward investment around the world, and also ensured that a lot of high-wage, high-skilled employment has gone to poorer areas. People have been very clever in doing that in Ireland, and we should learn from them.

This Queen's Speech is about better healthcare, a stronger NHS, better schools, more police and stronger law and order, and about having more chances to get on in places that have been left behind for a long time. This is about a levelled-up country, performing strongly across the board, firing on all cylinders, and I commend it to the House.

8.41 pm

Jessica Morden (Newport East) (Lab): This has been a long and interesting debate, and I wish to make a short and—I hope—to-the-point contribution, and ask the new Government to spell out what they will do to

support our manufacturing industry, particularly our steel industry which I believe needs urgent and proactive support in extremely difficult times. As others have said, there is no mention of Wales in the Queen's Speech. There was no mention of steel either, yet the need for steel to be mentioned is pressing and urgent.

Tomorrow, Tata's Orb steelworks in Newport will close its doors at 12 o'clock, having operated since 1898. This is a sad day in our city. Many generations of families in Newport have worked at Orb, and it has a special place in Newport's history. I pay tribute to those steelworkers who are moving on tomorrow, and who are so passionate about their industry. They have made many sacrifices and adapted in recent years to help the business, and they make world-class steel. I pay tribute to them for the fight they put up, and are putting up, to find a future for their plant. I also pay tribute to the Community and Unite unions, and their trade union representatives Paul—tomorrow he will have completed 12,849 days at Orb—Brett, Lee, Rhys, John, Gareth and Dai, for doing the hardest job in those circumstances.

Earlier the Prime Minister mentioned electric vehicles and he spoke yet again about making the UK a home for them—I believe that was in the Queen's Speech. That shows the travesty of the situation at Orb. Orb is significant because it is the only electrical steel plant in the UK, and with investment it could, and should, play a key part in the future of electrification. With investment it could produce steel for electric vehicles, for which demand is set to grow and grow. The irony is that although the Government support Jaguar Land Rover to develop electric vehicles, they have not stepped in with Tata to help that vital component of an end-to-end supply chain.

Ministers in the Department for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy will start work after the Queen's Speech. What I ask of them—I ask Ministers on the Front Bench to pass this on—is for the plant to be mothballed, and for them to please work with the Welsh Government and Tata to try to find a buyer in the new year. Will they proactively support us in Newport so that we can restart the plant, help keep electrical steel making in this country, and not have to import steel, which we will have to do if we lose that capacity? Tata's Llanwern steelworks is also in my constituency, and news during the election campaign that Tata is to cut 1,000 roles in the UK has caused uncertainty and great worry. We need the chance urgently for Ministers to report back on their discussions with Tata, and on how they, alongside the Welsh Government, are going to help. Tata's handling of this situation has been badly done. As Community union has said, it needs to be clear about its strategy for the future.

The situation at Orb, and Tata more generally, amplifies the challenges facing the wider steel industry. We need vision from the Government to tackle them. The steel industry should be at the forefront of the Government's thinking in Brexit negotiations and in the construction of future trade deals. Some 40% of all UK steel produce is exported and it is vulnerable to the deterioration of our existing trading relationships with other EU countries and the rest of the world. We also need urgent action on energy prices, which are higher than in other EU countries.

This year, the UK steel industry has paid 62% more than its German counterpart. Representatives from the steel sector have also been crying out for action on procurement. BEIS data shows that at least 42% of steel procured by the UK Government is sourced from outside the UK, so there is significant room for improvement. The Government must get that right. These are all things that Ministers can work on with the all-party group on steel. I hope the Government will do that urgently in the new year.

As other hon. Members have mentioned, we lost two fantastic steel MPs from the all-party group on steel. Sadly, they lost their seats in the general election. Both were great champions of their steel communities and absolutely passionate about the industry. Those colleagues were Nic Dakin and Anna Turley. I know their contributions from the Labour Benches will be greatly missed. While I am at it, may I also pay tribute to Madeleine Moon, who lost her seat? She made an immense contribution in this Chamber on defence issues, latterly as President of the NATO Parliamentary Assembly. I know that her knowledge and expertise will be greatly missed.

Bob Stewart: May I absolutely endorse the hon. Lady's comments about Madeleine Moon? She was an outstanding President of the NATO Parliamentary Assembly. She must be gutted about what has happened and I feel so much for her.

Jessica Morden: I thank the hon. Gentleman for that intervention. I am sure we shall both tell her that she was mentioned in this debate tonight.

Finally, I would like to thank the voters of Newport East for electing me for the fifth time. I will do my very best to stand up for them in the long years ahead, including and not forgetting the 1950s women hit by pension changes. We need fast and significant investment in Gwent police, which has been cut by 40% since 2010 by the previous Government. Operation Uplift will not even take us back to 2010 numbers.

Universal credit needs to be paused and fixed. Low pay and insecure work need to be tackled, as do cross-border transport issues. Last but definitely not least, we need urgent action on climate change and on the lasting impact of austerity on our communities. I will continue to hold Ministers to account on those and other issues on behalf of my constituents and continue to stand up for Newport East. Thank you, Mr Speaker, for the opportunity to take part in this debate.

Crispin Blunt: On a point of order, Mr Speaker. During the course of my remarks, I was drawn into a discussion about drugs policy, which was initiated by the hon. Member for Glasgow North East (Anne McLaughlin). I did not make a reference then to my declaration in the Register of Members' Financial Interests, which does involve the consideration of drug policy in an unremunerated way.

Mr Speaker: It is now on the record.

Ordered, That the debate be now adjourned.—(Marcus Jones.)

Debate to be resumed tomorrow.

Business of the House

8.48 pm

The Leader of the House of Commons (Mr Jacob Rees-Mogg): The business will be as follows:

FRIDAY 20 DECEMBER—Second Reading of the European Union (Withdrawal Agreement) Bill.

The business for the week commencing Monday 6 January 2020 will be:

MONDAY 6 JANUARY—The House will not be sitting.

TUESDAY 7 JANUARY—Proceedings on the European Union (Withdrawal Agreement) Bill.

WEDNESDAY 8 JANUARY—Continuation of proceedings on the European Union (Withdrawal Agreement) Bill, followed by: the House will be asked to consider motions relating to Section 2 of the European Union (Withdrawal) (No 2) Act 2019 and Section 13 of the European Union (Withdrawal) Act 2018, followed by the House will be asked to consider a motion under Section 3(2) of the Northern Ireland (Executive Formation etc) Act 2019.

THURSDAY 9 JANUARY—Conclusion of proceedings on the European Union (Withdrawal Agreement) Bill.

FRIDAY 10 JANUARY—The House will not be sitting.

I welcome all new and returning Members to the House and thank, on behalf of Her Majesty's Government and all right hon. and hon. Members, the staff of the House, Members' staff, security, the Doorkeepers—who always know everything—the civil servants and all those who are always here when we need them, and indeed, have been here at some particularly antisocial hours in recent months. I hope that they all, and we all, have a very happy and restful Christmas, and that we then look forward to a productive new year—a new year in which this House, this great institution of our democracy, will work for the people, delivering the Prime Minister's ambitious legislative agenda while conducting its work of scrutiny and accountability in the proper way. I wish everyone in this House a merry Christmas and a happy and prosperous new year.

8.50 pm

Valerie Vaz (Walsall South) (Lab): I welcome the Leader of the House back to his position. I am glad to see that he has emerged from North East Somerset—we were a bit worried because we had not seen him during the election, but it is good that he is around. I know that it is common sense for him to be hiding away, but it is good that he is back.

I thank the Leader of the House for the business for the next sitting week. Will he say when the further dates are for the Queen's Speech debate, or are we going to have another Queen's Speech? I hope not; we still have not finished the debate on this one. I note the motions on the appointment of temporary Deputy Speakers and the timing of the allocation of the Select Committee Chairs. If possible, will he set out a timetable for the election of the Deputy Speakers and the Select Committee Chairs?

Can the Leader of the House confirm the recess dates up to July 2020? We are now not in a hung Parliament and there is a bit more stability, so will he say when that motion is likely to be brought to the House? The staff of the House, to whom he has paid full tribute, need that certainty—obviously, they have to get the House ready—not to mention our staff and us.

It would be useful to know what the Government's intentions are for the length of this Session. Will the Leader of the House also ensure that the rights of Her Majesty's Opposition, the Backbench Business work and Private Members' Bills will be reflected in the intended length of the Session? It would also be helpful to right hon. and hon. Members if he set some Friday sitting dates.

I want to take this opportunity to welcome new Members to this remarkable place and to pay tribute to Members who lost their seats. We have seen the roll call. They made a fantastic contribution to public service and they will be missed—those who lost their seats and those who perhaps were not able to stand again. We Labour Members are pleased that we have more women than men in our group.

I also let new Members know that the normal business questions of the House are a very exciting time, as I am sure that the Leader of the House will agree. We have a fine time trying to work out what the business is for next week and we raise important issues for our constituencies. For new Members, there is a SuperHub in the Attlee Suite in Portcullis House, which is open until 10 January. Members will know that there are very, very good, efficient and kind staff who will help them to see their way through all the different processes. I want to point out to them the "MPs' Guide to Procedure", which is a handy book, written in 21st-century language. It is a wonderful resource and Joanna Dodd has to be thanked for pulling it together. She also knows how to do indicative votes—something we had never done before—so we are moving into the 21st century.

Finally, as far as I am concerned, I have always been elected by the people. This has always been a people's Parliament. It is not the people's Parliament for the first time; we are all democratically elected. I want to thank all the staff for bringing us back here, in time, and to thank them all for what will happen next year, because there are lots of challenges with the rebuilding and restoration and renewal. I wish all right hon. and hon. Members and all the staff of the House—every single person—a peaceful Christmas and a very happy 2020.

Mr Rees-Mogg: I thank the right hon. Lady for her generous-spirited words, as always. How nice it is that we are back facing each other, and what fun it is when we walk together down the corridor to various appointments, including when your appointment, Mr Speaker, was confirmed by Her Majesty. That was greatly enjoyed.

If I were Mr Ladbroke, I would not take bets on the debate on the Queen's Speech being resumed on the week beginning 13 January. That seems to me to be quite likely, but that is not a promise. It is merely an indication for those interested in placing bets.

The election of Deputy Speakers is a matter for Mr Speaker, and it therefore would not be right for me to give an indication on that. I am sure that Mr Speaker will keep us informed. The reason for the delay with the Select Committees is the Christmas recess, and it will be done as promptly as is reasonably possible.

I agree with the right hon. Lady that it would be extremely helpful to set out recess dates as early as possible. I think that is an advantage to the staff of the House and to Members, and in particular to new Members, in understanding how the year will work through. Discussions on that are going on at the moment and I

hope that they can be announced reasonably early, and that obviously ties in with the length of the Session. The number of Bills and the considerable amount of business proposed in the Queen's Speech means that we hope that there will not be a Queen's Speech in another six weeks or so. It will be after a rather longer period; I certainly would be astonished if it was less than the normal year.

I absolutely understand the right hon. Lady's point about Backbench Business days, Opposition days and sitting Fridays. Dare I make the rather obvious point that when the Government have a majority it is much easier to be generous in the allocation of time than when the Government do not have a majority, because the Government can continue to get their business through. I hope that we will find a great outpouring of consensus on finding dates for these matters and I hope that even the Scottish National party will be happy when that happens, although hoping that the SNP will be happy is sometimes a rather forlorn thought.

I was very impressed by what the right hon. Lady said in tribute to those who lost their seats. One is always in an odd position as an MP for a particular party when one looks at the Opposition Benches and thinks of wonderful people who have gone, people whom one liked and admired. Nic Dakin and I made our maiden speeches on the same day, and I am very sorry that he is no longer in this House, but I am glad that the Conservatives have won a seat. There are those mixed emotions that I think we all feel, and I echo her tribute to the many Members who lost their seats who have been great servants of this House, including, of course, the former Member for Bolsover, who had become an institution in so many ways and whose absence is noted whenever Black Rod appears. None the less, I am very glad that Bolsover is a Conservative seat. I am sure Members will understand the mixed feelings that one has.

The right hon. Lady said that the staff are here to help, and that is absolutely right. If I may praise the Clerks, the great thing was that from the day I arrived in 2010 and wanted to tweak the tail of the coalition Government by putting down difficult amendments to various things, the Clerks were invariably thoughtful, helpful and kindly. They are there to help all right hon. and hon. Members, which they do with extraordinary discretion, goodwill and wisdom. That is of particular benefit to new Members. They are not just there to help the Front Benchers; they are there to help everybody. I note what the right hon. Lady said about the "MPs' Guide to Procedure" being written in 21st-century English. If any new hon. Member would like me to translate it into 18th-century English they need only apply to my office and I will do my very best.

Pete Wishart (Perth and North Perthshire) (SNP): I thank the Leader of the House for announcing the business for when we return, and I join his full tributes to the staff. They have put in a remarkable shift in the course of the past few months, ensuring that we have been properly served during what must have been a very difficult period for them. They deserve all the accolades and praise they get.

I have to say that, like the right hon. Member for Walsall South (Valerie Vaz), I was concerned about the Leader of the House in the course of the election campaign. I thought that he had become one of the great disappeared, but here he is back in all his Victorian

dad splendour. We are absolutely delighted to see him back in his place and taking an active role in the House. I hope that he retains his position as Leader of the House, because we are looking forward to our weekly exchanges—or, as it was towards the end of the last Parliament, daily exchanges. We could all live without them for at least a few months, if not a parliamentary Session.

I also pay tribute to Members who lost their seats. We did not experience that same type of issue, but we did lose one very dear colleague, a great friend of mine and of all those on these Benches, Stephen Gethins. We wish him all the best.

It was a particularly good night for the Scottish National party, and we are delighted to see so many new SNP Members here. I know that they will be coming to the Leader of the House, who will be very generous in affording some of his time for various briefings of new Members, and I know that he will encourage our new Members to take up that opportunity.

It is no surprise that the first week back will be all about the withdrawal agreement Bill. We presumed that that would be the case, given the hurry that the Government are now in to pursue and finish off their disastrous, dismal Brexit, as I called it earlier today. I do not think it will surprise the Leader of the House to know that we will oppose the Bill, because our nation overwhelmingly rejected this Brexit, and I think that that was reaffirmed in the general election last week.

The right hon. Gentleman may have devastated the "red wall" of the Labour party, but he will find that over that tartan border, he has lost half his Scottish colleagues. He will find a Scottish National party with 45% of the share of the vote in Scotland and 80% of its Members of Parliament. We stand dead set against the Government's Brexit, and we demand the right to ensure that we determine our future on the back of that result. What we want to see from the right hon. Gentleman is a means whereby Scotland can determine and decide its own future, because the days of an unwanted Westminster Conservative Government deciding our future are coming to a close. I think that he and I sense that we are playing out the end of this game, so let me say to him, ever so gently, that the sooner he comes up with a mechanism and a means to allow Scotland to determine its own future, the better it will be for all of us.

Let me wish you, Mr Speaker, the very merriest of Brexitmases, as we might call it this year. I hope that you will have a relaxing and great time. Of course, I extend that to all Members, old and new, but particularly to the staff of the House, who have put in an enormous effort on our behalf this year. They deserve a break, and let us make sure that we can give it to them.

Mr Rees-Mogg: I am touched by the hon. Gentleman's concern for my whereabouts during the election campaign. Had he paid attention to Twitter and other such things, he might have noticed that I was in Stanton Drew briefly. The Wurzels sang a wonderful song called "When the Common Market Comes to Stanton Drew". I said that, at last, the common market would be leaving Stanton Drew, to the great pleasure of one and all. It is a particularly terrific song, Mr Speaker, because it mentions so many parts of my constituency, and my constituency and popular music may not necessarily be things that people put together in their minds instantly.

[Mr Rees-Mogg]

I share the hon. Gentleman's desire not to return to daily business questions—much as I enjoy responding to them, I think that they were beginning to pall in the House—but the weekly sessions will, I hope, continue in the normal way. As for the briefings, I am delighted that members of the SNP have accepted my invitation to come to the roundtables that I am hoping to arrange with members of all parties to talk about the role of the Leader of the House and how, from the point of view of the Leader of the House, the Chamber operates. They are informal sessions to which people are very welcome. Let me add that any Member who wishes to come and see me is always welcome to do so. One of the roles of the Leader of the House is to serve as an interface between Parliament and the Government, and these sessions often lead to my telling Ministers that an hon. Member has not received a response to something and trying to chase it up. I am always willing to do that.

The hon. Gentleman then raised his favourite issue, the Scottish independence or separatist question. I think that the issue is that there was a referendum, and I seem to remember that Mr Cameron, Mr Salmond and Miss Sturgeon reached an agreement about how the referendum would be carried out, and that it would be a one-off event. Mr Salmond, the then leader of the Scottish National party—not to be mistakenly called the Scottish Nationalist party, which should only be done if one wishes to tease them, because they get quite upset by it—said that it was a generational thing. When I look at the Benches opposite and at the hon. Ladies and hon. Gentlemen who are sitting there, I see that they are not fruit flies, and that therefore the generation we are talking about is one of many years and not just a short period of months. So I think that there is no reasonable reason for a second referendum, and I think that we should stick to what people said before the referendum was held. I seem to remember that Miss Sturgeon spoke of the gold standard of referendums, and I do not think that gold has tarnished.

Mr Speaker: I am sure that the Leader of the House will be getting a combine harvester from The Wurzels.

I wish Members all the best for Christmas. Let us hope for a peaceful new year. I reiterate that I cannot thank the staff of the House—not only those who work for us, but those who keep us safe—enough. I really appreciate what they have done. I say to hon. Members: please, bear with the staff. Do not take it out on them if you have got frustrations. They are here to help, not hinder any of us. They also need a good Christmas, so let us all have a good break.

Electoral Practices

Motion made, and Question proposed, That this House do now adjourn.—(Maggie Throup.)

9.5 pm

Mr Steve Baker (Wycombe) (Con): It is a privilege to lead the first Adjournment debate of this Parliament, on electoral practices, especially with so much time stretching before us—something I have long dreamed of. I am sure that the Minister will not mind my saying that. I am especially grateful to you, Mr Speaker, for selecting the debate, because I have sought it for some time.

On 26 September, I intervened in a general debate on the principles of democracy and the rights of the electorate after a number of my constituents had contacted me about plans to introduce voter ID, which they believed to be unnecessary. I am afraid that I fundamentally disagree and am pleased with the commitments that the Conservative party made in our manifesto. In my intervention, I talked about the scale of unlawful electoral practice in Wycombe and I promised to apply for this Adjournment debate to elaborate and to ask what the Government will do to combat abuses of our electoral system. I subsequently published an article, on which this speech expands.

My objective is to ensure that free and fair, open and lawful elections take place in the UK without cheating. It is about upholding the principle that every entitled voter should have one vote and cast it freely. It is to ensure the proper functioning of our democracy. There can be no question of disenfranchising anyone, or of constraining legitimate political discourse. However, it is a sad reality that systems of rules are always gamed. It is a sad reality that the rules of general and council elections are being gamed today. Evidently, some are happy to cheat to win.

Since the legitimacy of political power rests on the consent of the public, expressed at the ballot box, action is required. Since I have already had some foolish and vexatious reactions to my article, I wish to make it clear, up front, that the fundamental reason for this debate is to stand with the law-abiding majority across all sections of my diverse constituency, including EU nationals and people of Asian descent, against the corruption perpetrated against them by certain individuals. I seek to advance justice and equality for all.

Furthermore, I am confident that the agents of the main political parties in Wycombe conduct their campaigns with an unimpeachable commitment to the integrity of the democratic process. However, despite their integrity, I am clear that rules are being broken by or on behalf of particular individuals.

I pay tribute at this point to the indefatigable zeal of my agent, Mrs Susan Hynard, who, over some 30 years, has worked harder than anyone I could name, and possibly as hard as anyone in the country, to ensure not only cross-community politics, but that our elections are conducted in a proper, fair and decent manner of which we can all be proud. I am very grateful.

I am sure of the account I give tonight. I could easily identify persons involved under the privileges of the House, but I do not intend tonight to use that privilege unnecessarily. I am aware that by the time evidence has

reached me, it is often hearsay. However, what I am going to say is sourced to a high level of confidence, including, in some cases, to the standard required to make referrals to the police. That has been done.

I believe that the overwhelming majority of my constituents and people across the country would be shocked if they knew the extent of corrupt election practices and voter fraud, which happen every time there is an election. In Wycombe, we have reason to believe that an important council seat, which the Conservatives held, was lost as a result of corrupt election practices. We think that the extent of corrupt practice could be material in parliamentary elections.

So what do we find is being done? I know of people who register to vote at different addresses in our town and then cast a vote in the same election more than once. In one instance, we have evidence that a man voted once in person and once by postal vote in the same election. My constituents tell me, astonishingly, that people living outside the area will register to vote using friends' and families' addresses in order to support a particular candidate. I can understand that some people would want to vote against me, the Conservative candidate, but I object to people being shipped in to do it. In one case, private data held for legitimate purposes was used to apply for postal votes without the consent of the elector, and those postal votes were then intercepted before the electors had a chance to discover and complete them. That is a premeditated theft of votes, but the victims would not make a formal complaint for fear of retribution. I am disgusted to think that today's system of postal voting should facilitate something so redolent of the old rotten boroughs.

We also know of landlords who register to vote at properties that they own, but where they do not reside. When we look at the register, we need not be presumptuous about these people and the relations they have with the occupants of the same property, because when we look at the names we often know the people involved. I am well aware that it is not an offence to be registered at two addresses and in specimen cases where people can be shown to have voted twice, we have reported them, but no prosecutions have followed.

Jim Shannon (Strangford) (DUP): It is always a pleasure to be involved in an Adjournment debate, and as this is the first one of the season, I was obviously keen to come along and support the hon. Member for Wycombe (Mr Baker), who wants to uphold the honesty and integrity of the electoral practices. Does he agree that the scheme that allows students in some cases to vote at university and in some cases to vote at home must be reassessed and reviewed? One person, one vote was democracy in the past, and one person, one vote is democracy today.

Mr Baker: I am extremely grateful to my hon. Friend, and I hope he will not mind me teasing him a bit when I say I am delighted that he has intervened in the Adjournment debate and that normal service has therefore been resumed. He is absolutely right, and he knows that I agree with him. One person, one vote cast freely—that is the principle of our democracy. I am slightly reluctant to single out students, although I agree with him that there is a potential problem with students voting in two locations. The crucial point here is to ensure that people

vote only once and that they are prosecuted if they vote twice, but our system should prohibit that. Whether we should rule out students and others from registering in two locations is something to which I would be glad to hear the Minister's response.

Jim Shannon: In Northern Ireland, we have had a number of examples of well-orchestrated, well-detailed and witnessed instances of illegal voting taking place. The Electoral Commission in Northern Ireland has taken many steps to try to change that and to make the process more accountable, but there are still examples across Northern Ireland of things going wrong. Does the hon. Gentleman agree that the Minister could perhaps look at some of the practices that we have introduced in Northern Ireland to stop illegal voting, and that this might also help the hon. Gentleman's efforts to stop it?

Mr Baker: I absolutely agree, and I think that the Government should certainly look extremely closely at the precedent established within the United Kingdom in Northern Ireland. Certainly, if it is good enough for Northern Ireland on this subject, I would think that as a starting premise, it is good enough for the rest of the nations of the United Kingdom.

We have found foreign nationals on the electoral roll living legally in the United Kingdom, but who are neither nationals of the UK or the Commonwealth nor citizens of the Republic of Ireland or another EU country. Nevertheless, they are on our register to vote. In one case, we were able to establish a man's nationality via Companies House. From his correspondence, it was clear that he was on the electoral roll with the intention of voting in this general election, but without any entitlement to do so. I have received accounts of candidates visiting electors' homes, demanding that postal votes are completed in front of them and then taking them away. I am sorry to say that we cannot assume that voters enjoy secrecy and freedom when marking a ballot paper at home.

Only last week, my agent reported to the police evidence we have received regarding the harvesting of postal votes in favour of a particular candidate. I have testimony of one young woman's unmarked postal vote being taken from her under duress by a relative and handed to a candidate. We learned about that because she told another candidate that she wanted to cancel the postal vote, so that she could cast it again herself in a different way. What a tragic situation to have descended into. It is an abuse that we must not tolerate.

There are instances of people impersonating others and voting at polling stations in their place. Again, we know of some of these cases being reported to the police without prosecutions following. We have received reports from electors in Wycombe that activists working on behalf of particular candidates have sought to procure votes for as little as £10, a free taxi ride or a free pizza. This simply cannot go on.

As I have previously mentioned in this place, in 2015 my agent and I personally reported one of my own party's council candidates to the police. We told our candidates that we would hold them to the highest standards and that we would be the first to report them to the police if we received evidence of corrupt practice, because we will not tolerate it. Though it gave us no pleasure, we did what we said we would do. My agent

[Mr Steve Baker]

has on other occasions raised specific instances of electoral abuse with both the police and the Electoral Commission. Sadly, prosecutions have not followed. It is a theme that comes up time and again. I am keen to hear from my hon. Friend the Minister, if she can tell me, why prosecutions are not taking place.

In summary, votes are being cast which ought not to be cast, votes which ought to be cast are being cast by those who ought not to be casting them, votes are being cast in particular ways as a result of treating and intimidation and, for various reasons, prosecutions are not forthcoming. That is to say nothing of the truth that votes have significantly different weights in different constituencies, so I say only in passing that constituency sizes must be equalised, as near as we can, if people's votes are to have political equality.

When individual voter registration was introduced, it was expected that it would remove the abuse of people registering at addresses where they were not entitled to do so, but it seems not to be working. What is to be done? The law is often very clear. One may not, for example, offer a pizza in return for a vote. However, it is not clear that appropriate importance is always attributed to each and every vote and to prosecuting offences. I am clear that when one vote is stolen, or otherwise corrupted away, it is not just a pencil mark on a piece of paper but the inheritance of a tradition of liberty and equality fought for at great cost and handed down over centuries. If we fail to understand the magnitude of the corruption of even a single vote, we are a politically bankrupt nation.

Our current electoral system has not caught up with population growth and the realities of modern life. Our procedures have become somewhat quaint, a point which struck me when I looked at the rules for candidates entering polling stations. They say that we can go there to check for personation. While I know many of my constituents, I do not know a sufficient number that I can go into every polling station and have any chance of spotting personation. The rules seem inadequate for the modern age. However, even as a software engineer who has looked into the matter, I would not support the introduction of electronic voting machines because they, too, are dangerously corruptible.

I would like my hon. Friend the Minister to set out what plans and procedures, perhaps drawing on our manifesto commitments, she intends to put in place to strengthen the integrity of elections and, in particular, to ensure that the electoral roll is an accurate reflection of people's entitlement to vote. What steps will she take to ensure that people vote only once, that if they vote more than once, they are prosecuted, and that that prosecution carries meaningful penalties? What steps will the Government take to stamp out treating? What steps will the Government take to reduce intimidation, in particular in relation to postal votes, even though that may involve curtailing access to postal votes for the law-abiding majority—people who I believe would be shocked and appalled by the things I have set out? I know from my constituents and others that there are objections to voter ID, with a suggestion that people might be disenfranchised. We must not disenfranchise anyone and the Government must take appropriate steps, but what will the Government do to ensure there is no restriction of the franchise while ensuring that people identify themselves properly?

Jim Shannon: Will the hon. Gentleman give way?

Mr Baker: Of course. Northern Ireland has relevant experience.

Jim Shannon: I thank the hon. Gentleman for being so gracious in allowing interventions.

Northern Ireland already has voter ID, and it is successful. People find that it works. Although there may have been some initial objections or concerns, the scheme works well. The Government have suggested that they will commit themselves to voter ID, which is a good idea. We have done it in Northern Ireland, and it is working.

Mr Baker: I am grateful to the hon. Gentleman.

Before I conclude, I will briefly touch on two practices that are not fair game and that the law needs to address more fully. The first is third-party unregistered campaigners who produce sometimes slanderous campaign material with no imprint and no oversight, and without the approval of legitimate campaigns and their agents. The ability to circulate bold, misleading and slanderous statements on social media, often in private and securely, means messages can circulate quickly and widely. As reported by the Guido Fawkes website, a particularly egregious campaign was run in my constituency in support of the Labour candidate, despite the campaigner not being registered as a third party. Others are independently pursuing that campaigner, and I wish them Godspeed, but what will the Government do on unregistered third-party campaigners?

Secondly, it seems quite unjust that we should tolerate candidates with no obvious platform who stand in an election with no apparent aim beyond increasing the total budget available to oppose a particular candidate, with access to free delivery of literature by Royal Mail, a copy of the electoral roll and other privileges available to legitimate candidates. If this principle of standing candidates simply to expand the budget available to oppose another candidate—possibly the incumbent, as at least one of my colleagues would attest—is allowed, the trajectory towards every candidate running one or more shadow candidates in their support is both obvious and undesirable.

There are other practices that I find extremely distasteful, particularly in relation to the general standard of political campaigning, but I will not go on about them tonight because they should not be objects of the law. I will leave them for another day. I have raised the matters I wish to focus on tonight.

John Stuart Mill, that great beacon of liberal thinkers on political and social theory and, most famously, on liberty, said in 1867:

“Let not any one pacify his conscience by the delusion that he can do no harm if he takes no part, and forms no opinion. Bad men need nothing more to compass their ends, than that good men should look on and do nothing.”

Tonight I am looking on and doing something. I am saying to my hon. Friend the Minister, who I hope and expect agrees with me on all these issues, that in a peaceful society, one governed by the rule of law, the ultimate tool we have to restrain the use of power in our lives and to give consent to it is our vote. Political equality and a free and fair ballot are fundamental prerequisites to living in a free society. That is what is at

stake in this debate. A great deal was said in my constituency during the general election campaign about cleaning up politics. A good place to start is ensuring that, as the hon. Member for Strangford (Jim Shannon) said earlier, one entitled person casts one vote freely and in secrecy.

9.23 pm

The Parliamentary Secretary, Cabinet Office (Chloe Smith):

It is a pleasure to speak for the first time under your speakership, Mr Speaker. I wish you many happy years in your role, as well as the merry Christmas you have wished to all in this Chamber and all who work here.

I welcome the work of my hon. Friend the Member for Wycombe (Mr Baker) in coming here tonight to speak on this vital issue, and he is right that I largely agree with him. I hope to be helpful to him in setting out what the Government are doing to address these important matters.

My hon. Friend has given a clear account of the unacceptable behaviour he has observed, and I pay tribute to his work and that of his team in taking the right action by reporting his and his constituents' concerns to the right authorities for investigation. With his actions, he rightly seeks to support the law-abiding majority. So do I and so do the Government.

I will talk chiefly about the problem of electoral fraud, although I will touch on two of the matters my hon. Friend raised toward the end of his remarks: the relatively new issues of unregistered third-party campaigning and of shadow candidacy, to borrow his phrase. I have heard about the second issue in relation to the election just past, and I would welcome hearing from any hon. Member in any part of the House who believes they saw or experienced something untoward. I will consider what can be done. On the subject of unregistered third-party campaigners, I direct my hon. Friend to the work emerging on so-called digital imprints, which, as the name suggests, is a way of transferring what we do on paper literature to online literature. It rather does what it says on the tin. It is important because, quite understandably, online is where nowadays we put across and receive messages. Voters rightly expect to have political interaction online, but it should be done in an accountable way. In that respect, we are seeking to extend to the online sphere the regulations covering identification of campaigners offline. The Government will shortly publish more detail on that, which I think will be of interest to my hon. Friend.

I entirely agree with my hon. Friend that electoral fraud is a pernicious crime that should not be ignored. Those who would ignore it are condoning it, and they are unwise to do so. People deserve to have confidence in our democracy and they expect crime to be punished. Victims of electoral fraud deserve support, too. There is no complacency in the Conservative party, nor in the Democratic Unionist party, represented tonight by the hon. Member for Strangford (Jim Shannon), about the importance of tackling the vulnerabilities to fraud in the electoral system, whether that involves those who vote in person or those who abuse the option of voting by post or by proxy. I assure my hon. Friend and his constituents in Wycombe that we will introduce measures to improve the integrity and security of each elector's vote, whether it is cast at a polling station or remotely. Those measures are part of a much wider initiative to improve our trust in the integrity of our democracy.

We want to maintain public confidence and, of course, support inclusivity and equality in our electoral system. My hon. Friend is right to draw on the ancient concept of equality in voting rights and in casting one's vote.

As part of that work, the Government are committed to introducing voter ID measures whereby voters are asked to show an approved form of photographic ID in order to vote in a UK parliamentary election at a polling station in Great Britain. Of course, voter ID has already been introduced in Northern Ireland. We have been piloting the measures in local elections in England to be ready in time for the next general election. These are common-sense measures. My hon. Friend described exactly the types of behaviour that expose the undeniable potential, not just in Wycombe but arguably anywhere in our democracy, for electoral fraud and the perception of such fraud, which in itself undermines confidence in our democracy. Showing an ID is something that people of all backgrounds do every day, whether they are taking out a library book, claiming benefits, or picking up a parcel from the post office. Proving who you are when you come to make a decision of huge importance at the ballot box should be no different. I have spoken extensively to people about this measure, and they agree that it is an entirely common-sense approach—indeed, many are surprised that we do not already have to do it.

Jim Shannon: The voter ID system in Northern Ireland requires photographic identification. Some people have licences, some have passports, and some have neither, but they may have a bus pass or a firearms certificate—something like that. The Government also set up a system whereby people are able to get a photographic ID through the responsible Government body. There are ways of making such a scheme work, even for those who might find it difficult.

Chloe Smith: The hon. Gentleman is absolutely correct. I can confirm that in the pilots we have run we have made sure that anybody who lacks the specified form of ID has been able to apply, free of charge, for local electoral ID from their local authority. Indeed, we have heard of cases where that has proved hugely valuable in individuals' lives for reasons other than elections, because they now have a form of official ID that it is possible to use. I can point to a really heart-warming example of a number of homeless individuals in Woking, during one of the pilots last year. That measure in itself ensures that everybody who is eligible to vote has the opportunity to do so, which is fundamental. While I am on this subject, I should also point out that other countries already require voter ID. If we look at Australia, Canada and the Netherlands, we can see clear examples from around the globe where ID is a normal part of the voting process.

The evaluation of the pilots we have done show that voter ID is a success for the public: there is higher public confidence in elections in the voter ID pilot areas, which is important. The Electoral Commission found a notable decrease in the number of people who were worried about the integrity of our elections when voter ID was in place. That returns us to the core point that if the public has confidence in our elections, they are more likely to take part, which is what we all want to see. Our evaluations also show that the huge majority of electors who came to vote did so with the right documents

[Chloe Smith]

and with confidence in knowing how to. Based on those evaluations, we can also say that there is no indication that any particular demographic was adversely affected by the voter ID models. I am sure that my hon. Friend the Member for Wycombe will use that to reassure any remaining constituents of his who might be interested in the details of how such a scheme works.

I reassure the House that that voter ID is backed by a range of third-party organisations: not only the Electoral Commission but international election observers such as the Organisation for Security and Co-operation in Europe and the Office for Democratic Institutions and Human Rights, which has repeatedly called for its introduction. That is important. As I have said, my hon. Friend is so right about the importance of tackling electoral fraud, and I am sad to hear that other parties in the House are not supportive of doing so. We will want to take up that argument again in this place another time.

The next steps here are that the Government will continue to work with local authorities throughout the UK, as well as with those that piloted voter ID at the local elections in 2018 and 2019, to make sure that the model works successfully for all voters. I would be delighted if Wycombe District Council wanted to take part in future.

Mr Baker: I assure my hon. Friend that I will give her all my support to make Wycombe a pilot area for voter ID. May I press her on another point? A voter might conceivably correctly identify themselves, yet still vote twice. I can think of ways—I will not elaborate now—to check that without establishing a single giant database. What steps will the Government take to make sure that people do not vote twice, and that if they do, they are prosecuted?

Chloe Smith: I thank my hon. Friend for sharpening the point about voting twice. There are a couple of things to which I was going to come later. First, I reassure my hon. Friend with regard to something we are doing that goes by the name of canvass reform. We are getting deep into the technicalities of how elections run, but everyone in this place values this. I ask my hon. Friend to take a look at canvass reform, because there he will find new data-matching practices used by local authorities to check people's entitlement to register to vote, which is of course preceded by working out who is in each household, which is the point of the annual canvass, as my hon. Friend will know. There are a number of steps in that process, which is being reformed, to make sure that we allow registration officers to focus their resources where they are needed most.

We think of that mostly in terms of helping those who are least easy to find to invite to apply to register to vote. It is about registration officers fulfilling their duty, which is to encourage everybody to register to vote. Of course it is right that they should focus their resources where they are most needed, instead of following cumbersome processes that are otherwise defined in the electoral law. For the purposes of this argument, there is also an extra merit here, which is that publicly held data sets can increasingly be used to better understand voters in a given area and perhaps to look into some of the issues that my hon. Friend is touching on in his arguments.

I should say that voter ID is not the only step that we are taking. Hon. Members might be aware of the Pickles report into electoral fraud. There is much to do to implement its recommendations. In fact, we are part way through doing so. It is here that Members will find the Government's commitment to working on matters such as undue influence and to updating the law, which again are relevant to some of the points that my hon. Friend made.

We will also be looking at postal and proxy voting as part of that. We intend to ban political campaigners from handling postal votes, and we will also establish a requirement on those who are registered for a postal vote to reapply every three years—currently, registration can last indefinitely. We will limit the number of proxy votes that a person may exercise to no more than two per elector regardless of their relationship with the voter for whom they are voting. On this point, may I highlight the Bill introduced by my hon. Friend the Member for Southport (Damien Moore) who did some very great work? I am not sure whether he is here with us tonight. I spoke to him only this afternoon on this matter. He introduced the Bill in the previous Session. It was an excellent piece of legislation because it made provision to ban political campaigners from handling another voter's postal vote, and to introduce a limit on the number of postal ballots that anybody may hand in on behalf of other voters at a polling station or to a returning officer on polling day. Those are all known vulnerabilities in the system that we seek to remove. I pay tribute to his work on that important issue. That Bill was not able to complete its parliamentary stages, but there is a lot more to do, and we in the Government are committed to building on that, particularly with regard to stopping the harvesting of postal votes at elections.

I want to come on to enforcement. This is, I think, the core part of the concern that my hon. Friend is articulating here tonight. He will understand that I will not be in a position to comment on the particular evidence in cases that he has referred to, but I can give him reassurance that there is much work going on to look at consistency and enforcement across the country. I want to do more of that, because evidently when an hon. Member comes to the House with stories as he has done tonight, it is clear that this work is not complete, so it must go on.

Regular meetings take place between myself, as the Minister for the Constitution, and the Electoral Commission and the National Police Chiefs Council. That is one forum that we have used to try to achieve consistency and the review of systemic issues. If there were any elements of my hon. Friend's presentation tonight that he thinks I should raise in that forum, I would be happy to hear them.

The Cabinet Office has also been working closely with the Electoral Commission to run a very large awareness campaign. [Interruption.] Please, excuse me, Mr Speaker. All of the activities this autumn have taken a toll on my voice. Thank goodness it is Christmas very shortly so that I can cease speaking.

Mr Baker: My hon. Friend mentioned awareness. One of our problems is that people are all too aware of the vulnerabilities in the system. One man I could name who, for the sake of clarity, is an Irishman. I will not name him any further than that. He is so obviously

guilty of voting once by postal vote and once in person that I could name him outside the House and be confident that I would not be sued, and yet he was not prosecuted when we put out the evidence. I am very keen that we fine people—gosh, jail them if they are really repeat offenders—because they know what the vulnerabilities are and they are exploiting them. I was shown evidence earlier today of somebody boasting in a WhatsApp group of having driven two and a half hours to vote against me from his home where he had already voted. This cannot go on.

Chloe Smith: Yes, I agree entirely with my hon. Friend about the gravity of the situation. I hear his point about the penalties that may follow when evidence is presented. None the less, it is also important to encourage the victims of this crime to speak up, so it is excellent that my hon. Friend and others are playing their part by raising such evidence. It is also important that we help other victims to do so. Even better, we should help them not to be a victim of such fraud in the first place by knowing that their vote is theirs alone; in fact, that was the strapline of the awareness campaign to which I have referred.

There is a lot more to do and much work that can be done to help the Electoral Commission, the police and local authorities to get on top of the issue when evidence is raised. I am keen to offer the commitment to the House that if any Member wishes to raise such issues with me, I will take those anecdotes and observations as a portfolio of evidence that I might be able to use to take this work forward. There are also some granular ways in which we can target such behaviour. For example, it is sensible that police community support officers are now allowed into polling stations by law, which means that police are available to tackle issues on polling day should they be identified.

Earlier I mentioned canvass reform and the ways in which registration officers are able to use data better than they were in the past. Let me also give my hon. Friend a pointer about the system of individual electoral registration. I do not know the dates of all the issues he has raised. It is possible that some of his points go back some years, which might predate the introduction of individual electoral registration; I am absolutely confident that my hon. Friend has looked into this carefully and

knows exactly what I am driving at. The point is that we value a system in which an individual should be responsible for their registration, as opposed to somebody being able to register for them—let alone register them without their consent, which was a further point made by my hon. Friend.

My hon. Friend also referred to double voting. Following the 2017 election, I heard concerns from hon. Members that there appeared to be some evidence that certain groups may have been engaging in double voting. My predecessor and I undertook to take all such allegations and seek for them to be investigated in a co-ordinated way through co-operation between the Electoral Commission and the National Police Chiefs Council. I am keen to do so again if there is a weight of such observations, perhaps running as high as allegations. As I said, I would be happy to hear such things from any colleagues if they perceive that something needs to be investigated at a systemic level.

The Government are committed to strengthening the integrity of our electoral system. This is vital, because the public ought to have confidence that our elections are secure and fit for the 21st century. If people are confident in our democracy, they are more likely to participate in it; all the benefits that my hon. Friend has laid out so meticulously will flow from there, and we will know that our democracy is doing its job.

The measures that we are looking to achieve, which will flow in this Parliament, we hope, will provide greater security for everybody, whether they vote in person, by post or by proxy. We think this is a job to be done on the side of voters, not on the side of those who wish to corrupt democracy. We also think very strongly that we should not be taking our democracy for granted in any way, so our work to protect, promote and strengthen our democracy is never done. People do deserve to have confidence in the system. As the Prime Minister said earlier in this place, this is a moment of great democratic importance—a moment to repay the trust of those who have sent us here, to deliver on their priorities, and to ensure that our democracy thrives from now onwards.

Question put and agreed to.

9.45 pm

House adjourned.

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