

PLYMSTOCK & DISTRICT U3A

DISCUSSION GROUP

RECORD OF PAST MEETINGS - 2020

2nd January 2020

Present :-

Dudley Tolkien (DT)

John Patch (JP)

Bob Chapman (BC)

Jo Sainsbury (JS)

Di Smart (DS)

Questions asked :-

DT – If you were in the Prime Minister’s position, what strategy would you adopt to safeguard the long term integrity of the United Kingdom?

BC – Should we have more referenda, not just on national issues, but also on more local ones?

DS – Would you join a women’s non-military organisation during a war, to do a traditionally man’s job?

DS – Since World War II, which prime ministers did you respect?

JS – Did the Liberal Democrats do badly in the General Election because people didn’t like Jo Swinson, and because they didn’t like the idea of defectors from other parties?

JP – A philanthropist has offered in his will a bursary to Dulwich and Wellington Colleges to disadvantaged white boys, but the colleges have turned this down on the basis of discrimination. Do you agree with their stance?

13th February 2020

Present :-

Dudley Tolkien (DT)

John Patch (JP)

Bob Chapman (BC)

Jo Sainsbury (JS)

Di Smart (DS)

Sue Clements (SC)

Margaret Connolly (MC)

Questions asked :-

DT – What will it take to shift the political will of the world’s leaders from endless economic growth and protecting powerful vested interests, to protecting humanity’s habitat from pollution and plunder? Has the recent sight of Australia on fire really changed anything?

JS - Is there conflict between the media and Downing Street?

MC – Should we have more long term mental hospitals, particularly for patients who pose a threat to society?

BC – There is considerable pressure from student groups to repatriate artistic treasures acquired during the days of empire. To what extent should this happen?

SC – Is celebrity culture out of control, and what does it say about our society?

DS – When people talk about their faith, why are they sometimes seen as ramming it down other people’s throats?

5th March 2020

Present :-

Dudley Tolkien (DT)

John Patch (JP)

Robin Gray (RG)

Jo Sainsbury (JS)

Di Smart (DS)

Sue Clements (SC)

Questions asked :-

DT – Labour leadership candidate Sir Keir Starmer recently said that it is a mistake to portray Boris Johnson as a clown, because he is a dangerous man. Do you agree?

JS – Which of the 3 Labour leadership candidates would you like to see emerge as the leader?

JP – Should a government be judge and jury over its own conduct?

DS – How do we balance being environmentally friendly and keeping people employed?

SC – Why does Greta Thunberg arouse so much vitriolic reaction from mostly older people?

RG – Do you believe privatised industries should be re-nationalised?

21st April 2020 – via Zoom video-conferencing

Present :-

Dudley Tolkien (DT)

Robin Gray (RG)

Sue Clements (SC)

Attempted to join with limited success:-

Bob Chapman (BC)

John Patch (JP)

Questions asked :-

DT – There seems to be general certainty that things will be very different after COVID-19 has played out, but uncertainty about how. What are your predictions, hopes and fears?

RG – How is the UK Government going to move forward on COVID-19?

SC – Has Priti Patel's position on 'low-skilled' immigrants become obsolete to UK's needs, particularly in view of recent events?

7th May 2020 – via Zoom video-conferencing

Present :-

Dudley Tolkien (DT)

John Patch (JP)

Sue Clements (SC)

Lorna McConnell (LM)

Questions asked :-

DT – What are you most missing during lock-down, and when do you realistically anticipate resuming these activities?

LM – How do you view the media's reporting of the pandemic?

JP – After VE75 and the end of Covid-19, what social changes would you like to see come about?

SC – Is it time that we plan more for future world-wide disasters?

4th June 2020 - via Zoom video-conferencing

Present :-

Dudley Tolkien (DT)

John Patch (JP)

Sue Clements (SC)

Questions asked :-

DT – How should the west manage its relationship with China?

SC – Why are people willing to queue for hours to purchase something?

JP – Which service do you most welcome returning after lockdown?

JP – Who in authority can I now trust?

2nd July 2020 - via Zoom video-conferencing

Present :-

Dudley Tolkien (DT)

John Patch (JP)

Sue Clements (SC)

Questions asked :-

DT – What impact are the Government's past and intended actions having on Britain's international image?

SC – Has the pandemic been the catalyst for tackling our complacent attitude to the 'wonderful NHS'?

JP – Is there one rule for Government personnel and their close connections, and another rule for the rest of us?

DT – When your time is finally up, what do you want to be your legacy, in terms of how you are remembered?

18th August 2020 - via Zoom video-conferencing

Present :-

Dudley Tolkien (DT)

John Patch (JP)

Sue Clements (SC)

Lorna McConnell (LM)

Robin Gray (RG)

Margaret Thompson (MT)

Questions asked :-

DT – Regarding the presence of statues in public places, what is appropriate, and what is inappropriate?

LM – Is free speech being curtailed in Britain?

MT – Do you think euthanasia will be on the cards soon?

JP – Is there a better way of appointing peers, or should we just abolish the House of Lords?

SC – Are Government ministers appointed because of their loyalty to Boris Johnson and Brexit, and not because of their ability?

15th September 2020 - via Zoom video-conferencing

Present :-

Dudley Tolkien (DT)

John Patch (JP)

Sue Clements (SC)

Questions asked :-

DT – Through the Internal Market Bill, the Government is knowingly trashing Britain's international reputation for decades to come, and is seriously risking a return to violent conflict in Ireland, overflowing to mainland Britain. Why is it acting so recklessly?

SC – Is it time this country stopped looking back to World War 2?

JP – Should the Government's slogan be changed from 'Test and Trace' to 'Trace the Test'?

1st October 2020 - via Zoom video-conferencing

Present :-

Dudley Tolkien (DT)

John Patch (JP)

Sue Clements (SC)

Questions asked :-

DT – With major democracies replacing integrity with moves towards the abuse of power and evasion of scrutiny, does this not pose an existential threat to our very way of life, if it continues unchecked?

SC – What do you make of this perceived obsession with pubs, clubs and alcohol?

SC – What do you think of a Government dictat requiring educational establishments not to stock literature opposing capitalism?

JP – How would you deal with the migrant situation?

5th November 2020 - via Zoom video-conferencing

Present :-

Dudley Tolkien (DT)

John Patch (JP)

Margaret Thompson (MT)

Di Smart (DS)

Margaret Connolly (MC)

Questions asked :-

DT – Will the increasingly dis-United Kingdom still be intact 10 years from now?

MT – How are older people with genuine difficulties best assimilated into computer use?

DS – Do fireworks have to be noisy, can't we just have pretty ones?

JP – A recent news item showed a case of a family member being arrested for removing her mother from a care home. Is this right?

MT – How should we, or can we, adapt to transgender people, and what is your attitude to that?

MC – What do you think of a proposed new law to criminalise making a racist remark in the privacy of your own home?

3rd December 2020 - via Zoom video-conferencing

Present :-

Dudley Tolkien (DT)

John Patch (JP)

Margaret Thompson (MT)

Di Smart (DS)

Sue Clements (SC)

Robin Gray (RG)

Questions asked :-

DT – Now that Britain has decided to go it alone in the world, for better or worse, should it not seek to get full benefit from areas where its reputation is good, rather than trash it, such as by pursuing the Internal Market Bill?

SC – Has UK benefited from overseas medical staff for too long, depriving the poorer countries who have trained them of their valuable skills?

JP – Do you agree with the precedence order for giving out the COVID-19 vaccines?

RG – Why are younger and more moderate people reluctant to go into politics?

DS – How do you compare the experiences of the 1963 big freeze with that of COVID-19?

MT – Is cooperation more important than competition? Is there a real value in competition?