

PLYMSTOCK & DISTRICT U3A

DISCUSSION GROUP

RECORD OF PAST MEETINGS – 2022

6th January 2022

Present :-

Dudley Tolkien (DT)

John Patch (JP)

Margaret Thompson (MT)

Sue Clements (SC)

Margaret Connolly (MC)

Tony Starkey (TS)

Bob Chapman (BC)

Jo Sainsbury (JS)

Di Smart (DS)

Robin Gray (RG) via Zoom

Questions asked :-

DT – A sizeable number of Parliamentarians take a libertarian view that puts the liberty of the individual before the interests of public health. Do they represent a significant body of British public opinion, or are they simply out of touch?

MC – There has been a lot of criticism of Government handling of the Covid pandemic, but if you were in charge, what would you have done differently?

TS – The four people charged with criminal damage for the removal of the Colston statue in Bristol were yesterday acquitted. If this had been Churchill's statue would the outcome have been the same, and if so would there have been a public outcry?

MT – Which book is our society more likely to head for, Brave New World or 1984?

JS – Would you feel safe in a driverless car?

SC – With the onset of more electric cars, how are the Government going to recoup the current income from fuel duty?

TS – Now that face coverings are mandatory in enclosed public spaces, why are the local police not enforcing this?

3rd February 2022

Present :-

Dudley Tolkien (DT)

John Patch (JP)

Margaret Thompson (MT)

Sue Clements (SC)

Bette Thomas (BT)

Tony Starkey (TS)

Bob Chapman (BC)

Jo Sainsbury (JS)

Di Smart (DS)

Robin Gray (RG)

Questions asked :-

DT – Multiple revelations have led to very serious questions about the Prime Minister's character, and therefore his fitness to hold the country's highest office. What is your position on this, and in the national interest, should he resign?

TS – Is foreign aid by richer countries tainted by hypocrisy in that they don't pay the poorer countries properly for their resources?

JS – Can it be right to use some of Britain's most fertile land for extensive solar panels?

DS – What do you think of everybody calling you by your Christian name?

BT – Is it right that court sentences should be concurrent, as this could be seen to mitigate the seriousness of the individual crimes?

RG – What should be done about the cavern that has been found under the Sherford estate?

JP – If you were Putin, would you think that the west was really being aggressive?

3rd March 2022

Present :-

Dudley Tolkien (DT)

John Patch (JP)

Margaret Thompson (MT)

Sue Clements (SC)

Bette Thomas (BT)

Tony Starkey (TS)

Jo Sainsbury (JS)

Di Smart (DS)

Robin Gray (RG)

Questions asked :-

DT – Can western democracies both retain their way of life, but also avoid World War 3? If so, how?

MT – If we were to pick somebody non-political to lead this country, who would you choose?

SC – Do you think the Ukraine crisis will change society's attitude to the source of money?

JP – Is it right that all Russian sports people should be banned?

7th April 2022

Present :-

Dudley Tolkien (DT)

John Patch (JP)

Margaret Connolly (MC)

Tony Starkey (TS)

Jo Sainsbury (JS)

Di Smart (DS)

Robin Gray (RG)

Questions asked :-

DT – Has recent news material from Ukraine prompted a major reset in how you now see the world, and if so, in what ways?

TS – In Wales 18 year-olds leaving care homes are paid about 50% more than the minimum wage, regardless of whether they work, for 2 years. Does this make sense?

MC – Is it right that trans-gender people should be allowed to compete in sport on equal terms with those who compete on the basis of their biological sex?

RG – How should the House of Lords be reformed?

JS – Why is there nobody available nowadays to pick Cornwall's daffodils?

5th May 2022

Present :-

Dudley Tolkien (DT)

John Patch (JP)

Margaret Connolly (MC)

Sue Clements (SC)

Jo Sainsbury (JS)

Di Smart (DS)

Robin Gray (RG)

Margaret Thompson (MT)

David Mayes (DM) – taster session

Bette Thomas (BT)

Questions asked :-

DT – As a result of the invasion of Ukraine, some individual Russian and Belarussian sportspeople have been banned from competitions, others not so. What do you consider to be the correct approach?

MC – Should manufacturers be made responsible for litter generated with their brand name on it?

MT – Why is the NHS struggling so much, and how can this be turned around?

BT – Do you talk to yourself when you're alone?

DM – How do you view Plymouth City Council's decision to dismantle 200 bus shelters?

SC – Who watches porn?

RG – Do you agree with the proposed Parliamentary Bill to allow people with terminal illness to end their lives?

9th June 2022

Present :-

Dudley Tolkien (DT)

John Patch (JP)

Margaret Connolly (MC)

Sue Clements (SC)

John Botterell (JB)

Di Smart (DS)

Tony Starkey (TS)

Margaret Thompson (MT)

Questions asked :-

DT – After the break-up of the Soviet Union, Ukraine was in possession of a massive nuclear stockpile, but agreed to give it up in the Budapest Agreement, 1994 in return for a non-aggression pact with Russia. Would the world now be much safer if they had not done so?

MC – Should there be a special trans-gender category in sport?

MT – Are we right to send long range weapons to Ukraine?

TS – If you invest in Premium Bonds, is your return better than other investments?

JB – Are you taking maximum advantage of your bus pass, and if not, why not?

SC – Are we witnessing the demise of cheap air travel?

7th July 2022

Present :-

Dudley Tolkien (DT)

John Patch (JP)

Robin Gray (RG)

Sue Clements (SC)

John Botterell (JB)

Di Smart (DS)

Tony Starkey (TS)

Margaret Thompson (MT)

David Mayes (DM)

Bette Thomas (BT)

Questions asked :-

DT – Boris Johnson is resigning as Prime Minister today. What should happen in the interim, until the Conservative Party elect his successor?

BT – Is it right that sitting local councillors reside far away from the council they represent?

JB – What does Plymouth Hoe offer nowadays, other than the view?

SC – Is the stability of USA in serious jeopardy?

DM – How viable is the possible future of nuclear fusion?

DS – Why is there so much racism in this country?

4th August 2022

Present :-

Dudley Tolkien (DT)

John Patch (JP)

Sue Clements (SC)

Di Smart (DS)

Margaret Thompson (MT)

David Mayes (DM)

Bette Thomas (BT)

Jo Sainsbury (JS)

Questions asked :-

DT – Is inter-dependent trade a recipe for lasting stable peace between partners (e.g. EU), or for vulnerability to an aggressor (e.g. Russia)?

JP – Are we moving ever closer to privatisation of the NHS, and if so, why?

JS – What was the point of Nancy Pelosi's visit to Taiwan?

SC – 6 years after the Brexit referendum, what benefits have been realised?

MT – Should the appalling conditions in Ukraine's asylums recently revealed, preclude them from their wish to join the EU and NATO?

DM – Should capital punishment be reintroduced for extreme crimes of violence?

1st September 2022

Present :-

Dudley Tolkien (DT)

Margaret Thompson (MT)

Robin Gray (RG)

Di Smart (DS)

John Patch (JP)

Bette Thomas (BT)

David Mayes (DM)

Jo Sainsbury (JS)

Tony Starkey (TS)

Margaret Connolly (MC)

John Botterell (JB)

Questions asked :-

DT – Do we currently have a functioning government, and if not, is this not a gross dereliction of duty?

JS – Are the police failing in their duty in not dealing with child assaults, so much so that parents are resorting to forming vigilante groups?

MC – Is there any benefit in a potential general strike?

MT – Should we all live in a world without borders between nation states?

JB – Are we happy with Plymouth Hoe as it is now, or would you prefer more emphasis on 'a playground for Plymouth'?

RG – Are you happy with the way the media is performing?

6th October 2022

Present :-

Dudley Tolkien (DT)

Margaret Thompson (MT)

Robin Gray (RG)

Di Smart (DS)

John Patch (JP)

Sue Clements (SC)

David Mayes (DM)

Jo Sainsbury (JS)

Tony Starkey (TS)

Margaret Connolly (MC)

John Botterell (JB)

Questions asked :-

DT – Should the nursery rhyme 'Jack and Jill' appropriately be renamed 'Kwasi and Liz'?

RG – Why should Liz Truss be allowed to tell the King not to go to COP27?

JB – How many of you have visited or studied the proposed plans for Armada Way?

TS – The Government £400 energy rebate is to be given to everybody. Is this right?

JS – Should benefits be in line with earnings or inflation?

3rd November 2022

Present :-

Dudley Tolkien (DT)

Margaret Thompson (MT)

Robin Gray (RG)

Di Smart (DS)

John Patch (JP)

Bette Thomas (BT)

David Mayes (DM)

Jo Sainsbury (JS)

Tony Starkey (TS)

Margaret Connolly (MC)

John Botterell (JB)

Questions asked :-

DT – Is our green and pleasant land seriously threatened by our government?

MC – Is it right that migrants are kept in inhumane conditions, rather than having their cases dealt with swiftly, and returned to their country of origin if unsuccessful?

TS – Martin's on Plymstock Broadway is closing next year, putting into question Plymstock Post Office. What is your reaction?

JB – Should we as individuals, and as a country, support our own industries better?

1st December 2022

Present :-

Dudley Tolkien (DT)

Margaret Thompson (MT)

Robin Gray (RG)

Di Smart (DS)

John Patch (JP)

Sue Clements (SC)

David Mayes (DM)

Jo Sainsbury (JS)

Tony Starkey (TS)

Margaret Connolly (MC)

John Botterell (JB)

Questions asked :-

DS- How appropriate do you consider the UK Citizenship test questions to be? [\(They were circulated in advance of the meeting.\)](#)

DT – Keir Starmer is trying to portray Rishi Sunak as weak. Is this a fair criticism?

TS – In 50 years' time it is predicted that the white population of UK will be in the minority. What effect will this have on our culture?

MC – Now that there is a general mood of doom and gloom, what 3 things would make you happy?

JS – Are we heading for mass industrial discontent, and if so, why?