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## Podcast interviews with women MPs

**April 2019 to November 2019** (not yet included in books or archives)

Subsequent to [www.parliamentaryradio.com](http://www.parliamentaryradio.com) making a deposit of its #Vote100 year 2018/2019 podcasts to the Churchill Archives Centre University of Cambridge we proceeded to conduct another 27 podcast interviews with women MPs of all parties which are all contained in MP3 and WAV files which we are also placing into the Boni Sones and associates archive there.

These podcasts were recorded at an historic time for the UK Parliament when the May European Elections saw success for the new Brexit Party and a Green surge too. The Prime Minister Theresa May MP survived a number of attempts to oust her but eventually she agreed to go hoping it would help to secure her fated Brexit Bill, but she failed again at her third attempt to get it through Parliament with the MV3 (Meaningful Vote). She stayed on while the former Foreign Secretary Boris Johnson MP and the then former Foreign Secretary Jeremy Hunt MP battled it out to succeed her with Johnson winning an overwhelming victory in July 2019. With new spin doctors accompanying Johnson into Number 10, including the former Vote Leave Director of Campaigns, Dominic Cummings, the rivalries and antagonisms between Remain and Leave voting MPs continued in and across the Conservative and Labour Party. With only the LDs agreeing that they are a Remain Party who want to Revoke Article 50. Only one of their MPs, Norman Lamb MP disagreed with this radical stance and later said he would stand down.

In July 2019 after the retirement of Sir Vince Cable MP Jo Swinson MP became the first female leader of the Liberal Democrats defeating Sir Ed Davey. Two days later Boris Johnson officially took over as the UK's new prime minister.

It came as a surprise when the first woman Secretary of State for Defence, the Leave supporting Conservative MP Penny Mordaunt lost her position in the Cabinet to be replaced by a more Leave supporting MP Ben Wallace. Johnson wanted all his Cabinet to support a no-deal Brexit if necessary and famously vowed to Leave the EU on the 31<sup>st</sup> October 2019 "Do or Die".

Johnson expelled 21 of his own MP Rebels from the Conservative whip, who voted for an amendment which allowed the Benn Bill to be brought in which ruled out a no-deal Brexit before an extension to the Leave date had been agreed. The Speaker of the House, John Bercow had allowed that amendment to be put under so called Standing Order 24 when others said he should not have allowed parliament to have control of the order paper. It included provisions which allowed the Bill to go through all Commons stages on 4 September. Bercow

has also now stood down from Parliament and a new speaker has been elected by MPs. Johnson's own brother Jo Johnson MP, subsequently stepped down from his Cabinet.

Johnson was then found to have illegally prorogued Parliament after another victory for campaigner Gina Miller in the Supreme Court, one of a number of court battles challenging Johnson's government. The Party Conference Season was cut short, MPs took up their seats in the Commons again, and Parliament was then again prorogued for just a few days before the new Queen's Speech was read out allowing the Conservatives to publicise their domestic agenda with increased spending on the police and the health service.

During these many acrimonious wrangles the debate in Parliament "coarsened" with Johnson himself coming under attack for using words like the "Surrender Bill", a term he used to describe the Benn Act and the word "humbug" when MP Paula Sherriff asked him a question about the abuse of MPs particularly women. The death of the MP Jo Cox was also referred to in these debates.

Doubters had not believed Johnson was serious about getting another deal with Europe and taunted him about wanting to take the UK out of the EU without a deal, on no-deal terms, when hey presto the EU relented, opened up May's Withdrawal Agreement again and changed the Northern Ireland backstop, a key sticking point, to what is now called the Northern Ireland front stop with a border down the Irish Sea. Despite securing a 30 majority in MV4 for this new Bill Johnson pulled it rather than letting MPs amend it at its Second Reading in the House and perhaps introduce a Customs Union which the majority of MPs in the House support. The EU also at the last minute agreed to extend the date on which the UK was set to leave the EU from the 31<sup>st</sup> October to the 31<sup>st</sup> January 2020 until which the Benn Act has ruled out a no-deal Brexit.

The new TIG (the Independent Group for Change that became Change UK) of rebel MPs who left their own parties, both Conservative and Labour, and crossed the floor of the House to establish a new centre ground political party found itself the subject of rebellion with its former joint leader Heidi Allen MP opting like some others to join the Liberal Democrats. She eventually decided to stand down from Parliament giving the personal abuse she had received on social media as the reason particularly as an abortion she had spoken about in the Commons was referenced in these abusive messages. There were tears in her eyes as she spoke movingly about her decision to go but she now fronts up the Unite to Remain campaign which is recommending tactical voting.

Eventually Johnson won the support of Labour, the Liberal Democrats and the SNP for another General Election, two years after the last one, to thwart the Fixed Term Parliament Act which says there should be five years between General Elections. "Get Brexit done" is a mantra of

the Conservative MPs who take to the airwaves including Johnson himself, but critics point out it takes years to negotiate a trade agreement and that it is unlikely Brexit will be done and the necessary agreements in place by the end of 2020 when it could well be no-deal is back on the table again which so called hard-line Brexiteers are pushing for.

Surprisingly while Brexit dominated the Parliamentary agenda and headlines, with little else making the news, there were other important events in Parliament where MPs of all parties raised individual constituency concerns through adjournment debates, amendments, and their cross party collaborations to de-stress these debates. Even so, not only was Theresa May's much prized Domestic Violence Bill delayed while Parliament was Prorogued it has been delayed again but it will be brought back after the General Election should Johnson and his government win.

The new General Election led to several well-known and high profile MPs standing down including the Conservative Nicholas Soames MP, and the former Chancellor Philip Hammond who had both lost the party whip for rebelling on the Benn Bill amendment, and Labour's Deputy Leader Tom Watson MP who supported a Second Referendum and Remain while his party leader Jeremy Corbyn said he did not "accept or agree with his deputy's view". Allegations of antisemitism and re-selection battles have dominated the headlines about Corbyn's Labour party and like the Conservative party high profile well known former party members are saying they can no longer vote for their party.

It had been thought that headlines about the abuse of MPs would put off candidates particularly women from standing for election but a record number of women candidates are standing for seats, but whether they are in safe seats remains a moot point. More than 1,100 women have registered as candidates, 34 per cent of the total, marking an increase from 29 per cent in 2017 and 26 per cent in 2015. The Labour party has become the first major political party in the UK to offer a majority of female candidates with 53 per cent of nominated candidate's women. An 11 per cent increase since the last election. While the Conservatives are up 1 per cent to 30 per cent, and the LDs up 2 per cent to 31 per cent. Greens are on 41 per cent and the Scottish National party at 34 per cent. Plaid Cymru have a quarter of women as candidates and the Brexit party 20 per cent. (Source The Guardian @GdnPolitics).

There were 211 female MPs, just over a third of the total, placing the UK 39<sup>th</sup> in the world for the number of women in the lower house of parliament. No-one is taking bets on whether the 2019 General Election will take a step forwards or backwards in these numbers and women's representation in Westminster.

Nearly 70 MPs are standing down and at least 18 are women. These figures hide the real scale of the female MP losses. Among Tory ranks, the female MPs stepping down are on

average 10 years younger and have spent a decade less in parliament than retiring male MPs and had reached senior positions in government including Nicky Morgan MP and Amber Rudd MP.

In these 27 podcast interviews [www.parliamentaryradio.com](http://www.parliamentaryradio.com) covers this turbulent time in British politics with exclusive interviews with female MPs, rebel MPs and academics to give you a side-ways look at events week by week. Most were recorded as live in Westminster either in Central Lobby or in the MPs own offices just after they may have spoken in debates or Wednesday's PMQs or over the phone down the line the next day. When campaigns are active Boni has recorded interviews in Cambridge at hustings events with all parties including the Brexit party. These interviews were conducted by Boni Sones or Jackie Ashley, with additional production by Deborah McGurran.

We always ensure our coverage is balanced across the parties as per BBC editorial guidelines. We have conducted: Cons 9; Labour 9; LD 3; SNP 1; Green 2; Change UK 1. Academic 2.

We would like to thank our Advisory Board members Conservative Caroline Spelman MP, who herself is standing down, Labour's Sharon Hodgson MP, who won her party's nomination to stand again, Jo Swinson MP who is now leader of her party the Liberal Democrats and the SNP MP Dr Lisa Cameron. The journalist Linda Fairbrother remains part of our team.

NB: Boni Sones has also archived over 16 hours of a significant number of other audio Brexit interviews and podcasts conducted before and since the June 2016 Brexit Referendum which are now held as four separate documentaries for each of these four commissioners: Professor Simon Deakin, Director, The Centre for Business Research, University of Cambridge; Professor Catherine Barnard, Director, the Centre for European Legal Studies, University of Cambridge; Professor Robert Tombs, Emeritus Historian, the University of Cambridge and the Briefings for Brexit web site and Vicky Pryce, author and Independent Economist. Cambridge has been at the centre of much of the Brexit debate.

**April 4<sup>th</sup> 2019**

### **Brexit - a Parliament in crisis but its business continues**

As MPs this week tried to secure through a series of indicative votes a way forward for Brexit, after voting down Theresa May's Withdrawal Agreement for a third time last week, (but not with the Political Declaration attached) no clear path emerged.

Yet again we did learn what Parliament doesn't want. While Theresa May held talks with Labour Leader Jeremy Corbyn, leading to yet more ministerial resignations, Labour's Yvette

Cooper MP and her allies managed to get a Bill through Parliament in one sitting ruling out a no-deal Brexit by just one vote.

But Parliamentary business did continue on other matters. In these three interviews we look at the week's events from all sides of the political divide.

### **1. Danielle Rowley MP and Paul Sweeney MP – Votes for 16-year-olds**

In Westminster Hall a debate was held to lower the voting age to 16, which did not get the support of the Minister Chloe Smith. Here we talk to two Scottish Labour MPs who backed it as in Scotland you can vote at 16, Danielle Rowley the MP for Midlothian and Paul Sweeney the MP for Glasgow North East and shadow Scotland Minister. They also react to May's #Brexit olive branch to Labour.

Rowley key quote: "In Scotland 16 and 17 year olds can vote for members of the Scottish Parliament and their councillors but they can't vote for their MP. Fostering that habit of voting from a younger age has great benefits to people and it has been a very positive engagement in Scotland."

Sweeney key quote: "We are seeing huge positive engagement from young people in Scotland. They vote for all sorts of parties so this idea that the Conservatives in Westminster have that they are scared of young people not voting for them is naked self-interest. Even their Scottish leader Ruth Davidson now supports votes at 16. Young people have the right to participate in our democracy."

### **2. Anne-Marie Morris MP #Brexit has the ERG blown it?**

Brexititeer and member of the ERG group Anne-Marie Morris the Conservative MP for Newton Abbot gives her reaction to May's latest shift towards a softer Brexit and a possible longer extension to the UK leaving the EU.

Morris key quote: "This is Groundhog Day and it is Groundhog Day again. We don't know what Corbyn or Europe will do. Will Labour play ball? And then we have the issue of whether or not any new agreement is actually going to get through Parliament and both Houses, it is a long journey so I wouldn't hold your breath. A softer Brexit is certainly not a done deal and Brexit is certainly still on the table and we will fight for it. If nothing is agreed at the end of the day there is always the option of no-deal and it remains on the table and that is the only way to deliver Brexit."

### **3. Dr Lisa Cameron MP - Brexit & the #SNP & #Lucy's Law & DumpTheScales**

We also managed to catch up with SNP MP Dr Lisa Cameron, whose party supports a People's Vote on Brexit and is putting down motions to Revoke Article 50. Cameron, who is a psychologist, is the MP for East Kilbride, Strathaven and Lesmahagow and Shadow Mental Health Minister. She has also been campaigning on issues of young people's cancer care, puppy smuggling and #Lucy'sLaw and women's body image - #DumpTheScales.

Cameron key quote: "I have tried to keep myself extremely busy, reminding myself every day that there is life beyond Brexit in Parliament and so many important issues to my constituents beyond Brexit. Puppy smuggling and Lucy's Law is coming in this spring and that will ban third party puppy sales. We have looked at the patient experience of young people with cancer to give them more support. With #DumpTheScales it is really important people with eating disorders do get referred in time. The SNP have adopted a very pragmatic approach to #Brexit. A no-deal would tip Scotland over the edge with independence and I don't think the Brexiteers have considered the impact of that."

**May 13<sup>th</sup>, 15<sup>th</sup> and 16<sup>th</sup> 2019**

#### **Anger on the Streets: The Green surge, #Brexit protestors outside parliament & an EU Hustings in Cambridge.**

As this Wednesday Theresa May conducted another #PMQs as an embattled Prime Minister with the Labour leader Jeremy Corbyn pointing out that even the Government's own Business department now had a food bank for employees, loyalty from her own side was distinctly lacking apart from when she mentioned the anniversary of Margaret Thatcher's rise to power 40 years ago, with yet again another of her own Conservative MPs asking her when she would stand down.

Outside parliament the mood on the streets was dark. Protestors for Remain and Leave, staying in a customs union and getting out or revoking Article 50 altogether, mingled with police waiting for Theresa May to be chauffeur driven away from Parliament so that they could wave their home made placards and shout their disapproval at her. The protests were happening yards from the perimeter fence of New Palace Yard where an attacker stabbed and killed a policeman two years ago trying to enter parliament before he was shot and killed.

With a week to go before voting in the European Elections, an election that was not supposed to happen, given the UK was due to leave the EU on March 29<sup>th</sup> 2019, Nigel Farage's new Brexit party is leading the polls ahead of both the Conservative and Labour party, who both committed to leaving the EU in their manifesto's in the 2017 General Election. The more fragmented Remain parties, the Liberal Democrat's, the Greens and the new Change UK are

picking up votes and enjoying a resurgence too. UKIP, the SNP and Plaid Cymru are now all polling below 5 per cent.

It is still hoped Theresa May will get her Withdrawal Agreement through, even though cross party talks with Labour have now broken up, when she again presents it to parliament in early June for a fourth time, although this time it will be in the form of a Bill, after which she has announced she will stand down as PM.

The new date for the UK leaving the EU is set for October 3<sup>rd</sup> 2019 after the EU granted a six month extension.

Here we play three vox pops we conducted a week before those European Elections.

#### **4. Monday: The Green surge**

Brexit and the recent high profile Extinction Rebellion protest has renewed the Greens popularity and even this week put them ahead of the Conservative Party in the European Elections.

The Green Party already has 3 MEPs, more than the Liberal Democrats, and are hoping to elect another MEP in the East.

Caroline Lucas the Green MP for Brighton Pavilion and a former leader of the party rallied the troops at Cambridge Guildhall on Monday alongside Dr Catherine Rowett, the Green MEP candidate for the East, and other activists including Naomi Bennett, who fought Abbey Ward, in Cambridge in the Locals and managed to increase her share of the vote to 23 per cent.

Rowett who is a Norwich resident and Professor of Philosophy at the University of East Anglia will be touring six counties to try and win votes, and if elected she will represent Bedfordshire and Hertfordshire in the European Parliament.

It's not climate change and Brexit that worries voters, but poverty too, says Bennett with Cambridge's six food banks being oversubscribed. The Greens support a national basic wage.

#### **5. Wednesday: Anger outside Westminster**

In the second we captured the noise and views and anger of the protestors outside Westminster as PMQs took place inside. First we speak to Nicola, Garth and Ruth who want the UK to Remain and then we spoke to Carol and Hazel who ardently support Leave.

#### **6. Thursday: The Cambridge European Hustings**

In the third, a day later we attended the European Elections Hustings in Cambridge at Great St Mary's Church organised by Cambridge Stays where all parties were invited to attend.

Those who put up a candidate were: Change UK (Neil Carmichael); Conservatives (Tom McLaren); Greens (Catherine Rowett); Independent (Attila Csordas); Labour (Alvin Shum); Lib Dems (Lucy Nethsingha); UKIP (Stuart Agnew) (Brexit Party) Edmund Fordham.

As voters left the hustings we asked them their views on Brexit.

**May 27th 2019**

## **7. & 7b. Baroness Julie Smith and Professor Catherine Barnard**

### **Bollocks to Brexit but the Brexit party comes out top**

#### **Baroness Julie Smith, [#Bollocks](#) to Brexit and the LD surge**

The LD Peer Baroness Julie Smith tells Boni Sones of [www.parliamentaryradio.com](http://www.parliamentaryradio.com) of her reaction to last night's European Election 2019 results where her Remain supporting party came second to Nigel Farage's new Brexit Party.

The LD left the voters with no questions as to where they stood on [#Brexit](#) coining the slogan "Bollocks to Brexit", and it attracted high profile voters to the party including the Conservative's Michael Heseltine and Labour's Alistair Campbell.

Here Baroness Smith gives her reaction to the stunning results for her party nationally and in the East where she campaigned. The Greens too picked up a seat in the East and where another Remain party that saw a resurgence of its popularity. This led some commentators to add up the total of Remain voters against the Brexit ones, including UKIP, and to conclude that Remain had won overall.

Smith said: "It looks as if on balance there is a majority in favour of Remain versus hard Brexit. What I think the results show us very clearly is that the Country remains very divided in three ways. The hard Brexiteers are only about a third of the population, the passionate Remainers are probably about a third, and there is still about a third of the electorate to play for. If there was another Referendum with a choice of hard Brexit or Remain we might well see a different outcome but at the moment we are still seeing a Country that is very divided which is exactly the way Parliament looks and which is why Parliament is finding it so difficult to get any agreement."

## **Professor Catherine Barnard [#Brexit](#) & the EU Election Results**

Catherine Barnard, Professor of EU Law at the University of Cambridge and Senior Fellow of UK in a Changing Europe looks at the options for Brexit now following the European Election results.

Nigel Farage's new Brexit Party clocked up a convincing win, but with the Remain supporting parties, the Liberal Democrats and the Greens also enjoying a surge. It was the two big parties both Conservative and Labour who lost votes to the others including the new Change UK party with Farage's former UKIP party not even gaining a seat. There is speculation now, following Theresa May's resignation, that any new leader of the Tory Party will stand on a hard no-deal Brexit platform. Barnard concludes: "The whole point about the no-deal Brexit is that we will have shredded the Withdrawal Agreement and we will be nowhere near negotiating a free trade agreement. WTO and article 24 of the General Agreement on Tariffs and Trade is not the solution. For those who want to leave without any deal at all and who see the UK as an independent trading Nation they will be very happy with that position but for many people in business they are deeply concerned about the huge uncertainty that lies ahead."

### **May 22nd 2019**

#### **8. Vicky Ford MP tells Jackie Ashley what Theresa May's legacy for women will be**

Vicky Ford the Conservative MP for Chelmsford and Chair of the APPG (All-Party Parliamentary Group) on women tells journalist Jackie Ashley how she views Theresa May's legacy for women.

The Prime Ministers own MPs today escalated their plot to remove her as all parties and her own supporters seemed unable to give their votes to her fourth attempt to get her newly amended Withdrawal Agreement through Parliament. Indeed she appears to be losing those supporters she once had having watered down her opposition to a Customs Union and a Second Referendum.

Was this to be May's last PMQs or will she survive to present her Withdrawal Agreement to the House again in early June? Whatever happens, Theresa May has been at the forefront of the drive to get more women into Parliament through her Women to Win campaign and there are now 67 Conservative women MPs, compared to 13 in 1997 when she was first elected. May has also driven the agenda to implement World first initiatives such as the Modern Day Slavery Act 2015, and introducing the first UK Race Disparity Audits and report in 2017. The new Domestic Violence Bill 2019 is another government initiative May has pushed forward.

Ford also tells Ashley May does have her lighter moments and is good company, and that those trade mark leopard skin shoes show the lighter more glamorous side of her personality.

Ford said: "We also have more women in work than we have had before, and more opportunities, and making sure Universal Credit is paid to the main carer has been massively important to women. Her Bill on Modern Day slavery, where you are three times more likely to be a victim of modern day slavery as a woman than a man, these are issues that affect men as well as women but they affect women more and she has led and championed on those issues. The Modern Day Slavery not just in the UK but across the globe so she has made a global difference to that."

### **9. Rupa Huq MP: Did Theresa May tackle those burning injustices?**

The Labour MP for Ealing Central and Acton, Rupa Huq gives her verdict on Theresa May's premiership. With European Elections tomorrow Huq realises her own Labour party is unpopular too being accused of both supporting Leave and Remain, but she says May's new Agreement has not done enough to appease her own party as it doesn't deliver a Customs Union or a Second Referendum.

When she asked May a question during a new debate on the new Bill following today's PMQs about the cost of Brexit May didn't address the issue at all instead talking about her new DV Bill and her Race Disparity Audits.

On women's rights though Huq says May has clocked up a few important changes and recently new funding for Women's Refuges was announced, but overall her promise outside No 10 as she began her term in office to tackle "Society's burning injustices" has amounted to very little with all her government's energy being taken up with Brexit and said it was a "sorry end" to her Premiership.

Huq did get a face to face meeting with May a few weeks ago to discuss Brexit, after asking her a PMQ, but concluded May wasn't listening and instead tried to sell her Withdrawal Agreement to her.

Huq explained: "Compromise requires two people with different views meeting in the middle and she hasn't done that. One person trying to brow beat everybody else into her record breaking failed deal. If she had not had those red lines at the beginning to box herself in it could have been a different story."

**June 7<sup>th</sup> 2019**

**10. Maria Miller MP & Chair of the Equalities Select on Theresa May's "courageous" legacy as PM**

Maria Miller the Conservative MP for Basingstoke and Chair of the influential Equalities Select Committee has recently put forward her own Ten Minute Rule Bill to strengthen maternity rights at work and has been leading the review of the government's new Domestic Violence Bill as it goes through Parliament.

If that wasn't a big enough workload Miller's Committee this week has been hearing evidence about enforcing the Equalities Act 2010 and the European Human Rights Act. It recently published its review of the ground breaking piece of legislation the Modern Day Slavery Act 2015 and also reported on the need to ban the use of NDAs Non-Disclosure Agreements which allow employers to sweep allegations of abuse under the carpet. Miller has been an outspoken critic of the Speaker of the House John Bercow MP who has faced allegations of bullying and sexism towards Commons staff but who has stayed on to steer the Brexit legislation through the Commons.

Miller has cross-party support for her 10 Minute Rule bill which would make it illegal for pregnant women and new mums to be made redundant and she supports "use it or lose" it paid paternity leave for dads and second parents. In 2016 her own Select Committee report had called on the government to make these changes.

The new DV Bill for the first time gives a statutory definition of domestic violence, allows for the appointment of a new DV Commissioner and establishes the use of new DV Protection Orders.

Miller is a fan of her Prime Minister Theresa May MP, and has been at her side as many of these laws and reviews were first enacted first as Home Secretary and then as Prime Minister. She believes May's legacy has been misunderstood by the media and that she did indeed confront those "burning injustices" she spoke of on the steps of number Ten when she became Prime Minister in July 2016.

Miller said: "We have had huge support from the Prime Minister in supporting more women to be elected within our Party to Westminster, supporting policies that directly improve the lives of women, and this is at the heart of what Theresa May is all about. Her focus particularly on Modern Day Slavery, particularly on Domestic Abuse, I think really shows the courageous politician she is. She has taken these issues up when others haven't. Others on the Labour Party haven't taken them up. But she is a courageous woman and that is why, in many ways, I think she has been able to take on the role of trying to get the exiting the EU Bill through

parliament because she has the courage and the tenacity and a forbearing that really is uncommon in Members of Parliament.”

She added: “In the Party we don’t need to reappraise her. We know what she has delivered, perhaps the people who need to reappraise her are the media who have not always been as kind to her as they may have been because of the issues she has championed.”

Miller said she didn’t think equality rights would be rowed back when May departs, and that she supported Dominic Raab to become the next leader of the Conservative Party and PM partly because she had worked on delivering new maternity rights with him.

She said: “We need to get on with it (Brexit) and whoever takes over needs to deliver it, and I speak as a Remainer, well before the 31<sup>st</sup> October to give back faith in politics. Equality is a hygiene factor in British politics and we have to all be doing everything we can to make sure we have a more equal society. The vast majority of leadership candidates are talking about making Britain a fairer place. I worked with Raab on changing the three month rule on pregnancy to make it easier for women to get access to justice. I shall remain as outspoken as I need to be. “

Miller ended by giving her soundbite on May as Prime Minister. “Theresa May has been courageous in taking on issues other people didn’t want to. She talked about burning injustices on the steps of Downing Street and she was absolutely right and we have to continue to address those burning injustices.”

**June 20<sup>th</sup> 2019**

### **11. Sharon Hodgson MP Standing up for just causes**

Sharon Hodgson the Labour MP for Washington and Sunderland West regularly tweets about the many causes she personally champions and those she is fighting in her post as Shadow Health Minister. NICE and access to life saving drugs is one, and compensation for medical drug company failures of the past are another. She is also looking again at the plight of children with special educational needs, and fingers crossed Theresa May could even allocate much needed funding to this cause, as part of her "give away" legacy. Who knows? It's on Hodgson's wish list at least!

Hodgson also has the Nissan plant in her constituency which voted 62 per cent in favour of Leave in the June 2016 Referendum but at the same time knows Brexit will lead and is leading already to a loss of some of those 7000 jobs and the many more that rely on the car industry supply chain.

Here Hodgson tells Boni Sones, Executive Producer of [www.parliamentaryradio.com](http://www.parliamentaryradio.com) about these just causes she is championing and how she would support Jeremy Corbyn, the Labour Leader if he changed cause to make Labour a Remain party.

She also wants to see Labour to do more to fight Anti-Semitism.

Hodgson ends by speculating that Theresa May, the Prime Minister, could become a "sister" if she actually got IPSA, the Independent Parliamentary Standards Authority, to act upon her colleague Stella Creasy's moving plea to give MPs additional administrative assistance when they take maternity leave.

**June 27<sup>th</sup> 2019**

**12. Suella Braverman MP #ProxyVoting #Park&Stride #StandUp4Brexit #BackBoris**

Suella Braverman the Conservative MP for Fareham discusses her PMQ to Theresa May on Wednesday.

She thanked Mrs May for helping to set up a new system of Proxy Voting for MPs who take maternity leave, as she is about to do. She didn't go as far as to ask the Prime Minister to ask IPSA, the Parliamentary Standards Authority, to pay additional costs to cover her workload while she is away as others such as Stella Creasy MP and Harriet Harman MP are doing. This is an ongoing campaign by some members of the House. However Braverman did also raise an important issue in her own constituency the new Park and Stride campaign that is being organised by 11-year-old Ruby Lloyd to get a new crossing outside her school to improve the air quality locally and to stop parents driving their children to school. Mrs May said she approved.

In this exclusive interview for [www.parliamentaryradio.com](http://www.parliamentaryradio.com) journalist Boni Sones asked Mrs Braverman about both of the issues she raised in her PMQ and also why she is supporting Boris Johnson in his bid to become the next Conservative Prime Minister. Braverman is a leading Brexiteer and has been a member of the campaign group #StandUp4Brexit. She says she has no worries about Johnson' character, an issue raised by a number of his critics, and she says that he has set the leadership race "on fire" as he tours the country and talks to Conservative Party members. He had just visited her area that morning.

She is also a supporter of Free Schools and would like the next Prime Minister to roll out more of them across the Country, an issue she has been writing about.

Braverman key quote: "He's on fire. He is very much enjoying this campaign and the members are revelling in meeting him. He has a unique way of lifting spirits and restoring everybody's

morale and I think it is lovely to see that in a room. Boris is an energetic and unique politician of our time and I think he will be a great Prime Minister.”

**July 17<sup>th</sup> 2019**

### **13. Gavin Shuker MP Why Tom Watson should act now to challenge Jeremy Corbyn**

#### **#Brexit and Antisemitism in the Labour Party**

The former Labour MP for Luton South Gavin Shuker, now an Independent, has written an article for the Guardian in which he urged his former Labour colleagues to try again to ditch their Leader Jeremy Corbyn. Antisemitism and unease about Labour's Brexit stance have created much division amongst Labour MPs.

At PMQs today, her last but one, the Conservative Prime Minister, Theresa May launched a full out assault on Corbyn for not properly tackling the problem of Antisemitism in his party highlighted in a recent BBC Panorama programme and also in a letter that Labour Peers highlighted in a paid for advertisement in the Guardian today. Corbyn responded by asking May to account for Islamophobia in her own party. Jibes about who was the most racist continued between them.

Shuker tells [www.parliamentaryradio.com](http://www.parliamentaryradio.com) why he wrote his article and what was behind his call to action to get rid of Corbyn now before the summer recess.

We also ask him about Stella Creasy's amendment which passed giving women in NI abortion rights for the first time and another historic amendment put down by another former Labour colleague Conor McGinn allowing gay marriage in NI for the first time. Shuker had been a prominent member of the Equalities Select Committee when he served as a Labour MP.

Shuker admits that as one of the founding eleven members of the Change UK party that in retrospect setting up a new party from scratch was bound to fail but that attempt should not deter others from breaking away from Labour or challenging its leadership.

Shuker key quote: “Unless he (Tom Watson) wants to go into an election campaigning for Jeremy Corbyn to be Prime Minister he needs to reach his own moment and state very clearly he is not willing to do that which obviously would lead, I hope, to people leaving the Labour party”.

**September 4th 2019**

**14. Helen Goodman MP No to a No-deal Brexit and Commons Procedures**

Helen Goodman MP gives [www.parliamentaryradio.com](http://www.parliamentaryradio.com) her verdict on Boris Johnson's first PMQs as Prime Minister. The Labour MP for Bishop Auckland is also a member of the House of Commons Procedure Committee and says she would support a written constitution for the UK.

Goodman is supportive of Speaker John Bercow's decision to allow an emergency debate on Monday to give MPs the right to take control of the order paper to put down a Bill to prevent a No-Deal Brexit, which passed all three stages in one day on Tuesday this week. But the 21 Tory Rebels who supported it and defied their Whip were then expelled from the Conservative party. These included the Father of the House Ken Clarke MP and Nicholas Soames MP Churchill's grandson.

Goodman said: "I think it was significant last night because the government lost by 27, six months ago we managed to defeat them by one or two, so this is a BIG change in the political landscape now. It is very odd that two people who've been Chancellor of the Exchequer and four people who've been Secretaries of State, are being kicked out of the Tory party. In the end there's a very good case for saying that the Country needs to compromise over Brexit. Treating members of Parliament in that way isn't really setting a very good example for how we should be behaving. "

She added: "If 40 people stand up and the request is within the rules the Speaker can grant it, but he hurried it up because the government was proroguing parliament. The government brought that on itself I would say. We could do with a written constitution, but we need to sort Brexit first and then let's come back to a written constitution which I think personally would be a good idea."

**September 10th 2019**

**15. Dame Caroline Spelman MP stands down & highlights the abuse MPs receive and the straw that broke the camel's back**

For 22 years Dame Caroline Spelman has served her constituency of Meriden in the East Midlands for the Conservative Party. She has climbed the political ladder to become a Secretary of State for the Environment and she has served as Chair of the Conservative Party.

While her constituency voted to leave in the 2016 Referendum she has fought to prevent a no-deal #Brexit with neighbouring MP Labour's Jack Dromey, and subsequently has received much personal abuse on social media, including rape threats, and has recently gone to work wearing a panic button around her neck.

Jaguar Land rover is a major employer in the Midlands and there are fears of further job losses in the car industry more generally when the UK leaves the EU.

She says the abuse has been fuelled by media headlines that speak of treason, and she says how much she "loves my country", but to be termed a collaborator for working across party to try to find a #Brexit solution had led to another wave of social media abuse and it was the "straw that broke the camel's back".

"Lying awake at night worrying about our safety, my family and my staff, we should not have to go about our work with that fear hanging over us," she said.

Her male colleagues receive abuse too she said, but that they did not get the same level of "sexual abuse" as female MPs do.

When she announced her decision to leave Parliament at the next election, she chose to speak out about the personal abuse and to plead for a more tolerant society one in which people are allowed to disagree without abuse.

She is going to serve on Justin Welby's the Archbishop of Canterbury's Citizen's Forum when she does step down, and hopes to work across society to promote more tolerance at all levels in society.

More recently Caroline was asked by David Cameron the then Prime Minister to serve as a Second Estate Church Commissioner where she has spoken in debates about the Church's new social media guidelines and the persecution of Christians internationally. She says her faith has helped her.

Caroline tells Boni Sones of [www.parliamentaryradio.com](http://www.parliamentaryradio.com), which she has supported for 15 years, that dealing with 1,000 cases a year in her constituency and being able to "be there for people" has given her great satisfaction.

As Secretary of State she said she was doing a job she "loved" but that when problems did arise saying "sorry" was an important part of accepting high office.

She points out that in recent #Brexit votes last week in Parliament, although she did support the cross-party Bill to rule out no-deal she did not vote against her government to facilitate that debate and therefore did not lose the whip although she would like to see the so called 21 Conservative rebels who did be allowed to re-join the party. "I'm not a natural rebel I'm a former Party Chairman", she said.

When Caroline came into Parliament in 1997, 92 per cent of her party were male, but that even though she has been part of the W2W campaign to get more Conservative women into Parliament, she says being an MP is highly "unpredictable" for men and women, and that things have only changed "a bit", although she would recommend it.

Caroline ends by saying how much she has enjoyed singing in Parliament's choir which is 80 per cent staff and only 20 per cent MPs allowing the two groups to meet up and get to know one-another better.

On last night's uproar in Parliament as it was controversially prorogued by Boris Johnson the Prime Minister and the Speaker John Bercow announced his decision to stand down she said: "I think this has been an incredible challenging time and I don't think I would have anticipated 22 years ago that I would find myself in such a fiery furnace as the last couple of year and in the end you don't get to choose your time you can only do your best."

She says she would support another woman speaker and that Betty Boothroyd had given her some very good advice to keep questions to ministers "short"!

**September 12th 2019**

### **16. Professor David Howarth & why PM Boris Johnson should have already gone**

David Howarth, the Professor of law and public policy University of Cambridge and a former LD MP, tells [www.parliamentaryradio.com](http://www.parliamentaryradio.com) why there are good reasons to suggest that the Prime Minister, Boris Johnson should have already stepped down regardless of whether or not he is found to have "misled" the Queen.

Howarth key Quote: "The Commons on Monday again turned down the request for a dissolution of parliament a second time. It is now clear the PM can't get a dissolution. On that

basis he should resign. It doesn't matter if he has misled the Queen. That is the icing on the cake. At that time he should have resigned and become a caretaker PM and in that time the Cabinet Minister and the Queen's Private Secretary liaise to see if anyone else can form a government."

Howarth argues that Parliament is not now prorogued and there is an order from the Scottish courts that says the prorogation has no effect, so under Standing Order 9 then Parliament should have met, they should just go into work in the normal way at 9.30 am. You can't explain why the House is not meeting".

He says even if Johnson did agree a deal with the EU, there may not be a majority for it in Parliament, and that the WAB would not get through, but if it did have a majority then the Lords may filibuster it just as Conservatives tried last week with the Benn Bill. "If there is a stable majority you can get a Bill through in a few days, the less stable its majority the longer it takes."

He goes on to say that there is a serious threat to the "institutions" of the United Kingdom and that if Johnson and his government don't respect the law, or continue to attack the judiciary, then it will compromise the civil service, the police and the army as they will have to choose which to obey the rule of law or the government.

"This is a threat of the most serious kind, the current PM is playing with something he plainly doesn't understand. If the government doesn't obey the law why should anybody else? If it threatens not to abide by legal standards and rules, then in the sovereign bond market it will have to pay a premium - the premium that is paid in a banana republic - because government's not committed to the rule of law are obviously a greater threat risk of default."

Professor Howarth is interviewed by journalist Boni Sones.

**September 17th 2019**

### **17. Rupa Huq MP & the [#Prorogation](#) of Parliament**

Rupa Huq is the Labour MP for Ealing Central and Acton and a member of the Public Administration and Constitutional Affairs Committee in Parliament.

She is an outspoken Remainer and campaigner for a Peoples Vote, but the Committee itself is Chaired by the Conservative MP & Brexiteer Sir Bernard Jenkin. Although it has powers to hold the government to account and recently looked into the role of the Civil Service. Its reports take time to produce and its interventions are unlikely to be an adequate check on an executive that oversteps its role.

This week the Supreme Court is considering two appeals against recent ruling on whether or not Boris Johnson's government misled the Queen in the Prorogation of Parliament for five weeks this Autumn. The Scottish Courts say yes it did but the English Courts threw out a case brought by the campaigner Gina Miller, as they said it was a political decision not a judicial one. Both judgments are being appealed one by Miller herself and the other by the government.

Given the uncertain and unprecedented times in which post the Brexit Referendum in 2016 we are now living in Huq concludes that she would support a proper Written Constitution, and that the Executive should be held to account.

Key quote Huq: "There is a code that says that the civil service can't break the law. And also the Get Ready for Brexit advertising campaign is blatantly electioneering which is what the PM has been doing for the whole of August. This stuff is so unforeseeable. A week is a long time in politics it changes by the hour, it is difficult for committees to keep up. We think of the UK as a mature stable democracy and a model of how to do this thing we send election observers in to other countries, and now you would think we are a tin pot dictatorship. And also the attacks on the judiciary are very disturbing."

Huq continued: "I am coming to the conclusion that it would not be a bad thing to codify some of these powers. I used to think it was an organic and evolutionary system that worked very well and if it ain't broke don't fix it, but we just have a government that is behaving as if it is a medieval monarchy, and with not majority. They have lost their majority of one and they have lost six out of six votes against the government now and yes I worry and some sort of more codified constitution would be a good start."

We also ask Huq about twitter abuse and who she supports to be the new speaker, man or woman.

**September 24<sup>th</sup> 2019**

### **18. 2903cb podcast number 17 #SupremeCourtJudgement**

Catherine Barnard, Professor of EU Law at the University of Cambridge and Senior Fellow of UK in a Changing Europe resumes her @2903cb series with podcast number 17 looking at today's #SupremeCourtJudgement on the #Prorogation of Parliament ruling it "unlawful".

Professor Barnard gives her reaction to what she terms a "robust" judgement that was clearly written and delivered by Lady Hale, the President of the Supreme Court, for "public consumption". She goes on to discuss the role of the Attorney General, Geoffrey Cox, and whether or not the "architecture" of the UK constitution has been changed forever now. She

then continues by looking at the legality of such judgements by the courts historically, the “good chap” theory of our unwritten constitution and conventions and whether the UK should now have a written constitution. She also gives her reaction to what the EU will make of it and whether or not Boris Johnson the Prime Minister can still insist on a “do or die” #Brexit on the 31<sup>st</sup> October 2019 and ignore the so called Benn Bill that has ruled out a no-deal Brexit. If he does Prof Barnard warns one of the campaigners who brought this case against the government, Gina Miller, may “well be back before the courts sooner than we might think”.

Professor Barnard is interviewed by Boni Sones, journalist.

## **September 26<sup>th</sup> 2019**

### **19. Baroness Anne Jenkin asks Boris Johnson the Prime Minister to “reflect” on his language**

Baroness Anne Jenkin, a co-founder of Women to Win, W2W, which campaigns to get more Conservative women into Parliament, has told [www.parliamentaryradio.com](http://www.parliamentaryradio.com) that she hopes Boris Johnson the Prime Minister will “reflect” on the language he used in the Commons last night and will be “a little more careful” in the future.

She is interviewed by Boni Sones.

Johnson had replied to an emotional question from the Labour MP Paula Sheriff about the abuse of female MPs and a plea for him and the ERG (European Research Group) to tone down their rhetoric by saying “humbug” to her and then in a reply to her colleague Tracy Brabin MP went on to mention her murdered colleague Jo Cox by saying it would have benefitted her to get Brexit done when Cox had campaigned for Remain while alive.

Baroness Jenkin said Johnson had been under pressure and that he had “obviously misspoke” and that she hoped that he “very much regretted it” but that it was his “spontaneity” that makes him appeal to the electorate.

“I don’t like it and I don’t think women like it. He was under enormously pressure and tired and possibly wasn’t thinking straight. I genuinely don’t believe him to be a sexist or misogynist but obviously we are living through extreme days and people are saying things that we couldn’t have imagined two or three years ago. There couldn’t be anybody under greater pressure and I hope that he misspoke and will be more careful with his language in the future. His use of language makes him appealing to large numbers of people in the country and this is obviously a mistake and I hope he will reflect very carefully on it for the future”, she said.

Johnson is due to speak at a W2W meeting at the Conservative Party Conference in Manchester on Sunday and Baroness Jenkin hopes that he will give his support to the

selection of more women Prospective Parliamentary Candidates in the lead up to the next General Election, which could be soon.

She said she knew him and would “cut him some slack” and that she was looking forward to hearing what he would have to say on Sunday.

“I hope he will confirm at our conference party this is a top priority for him that he wants more Conservative women in parliament and I look forward to hearing him articulate that in our conference on Sunday, she said.

The Conservative Party now has fewer women MPs in Parliament, after reaching a high, after a hand full of women MPs crossed the floor of the House and either became Independent or left to join another party. It has 64 women MPs now it was 67 after the 2017 General Election.

Baroness Jenkin said she was heartened by the fact the party had chosen a women candidate in Stafford last night, but that there was still a “Blokeish” culture in the party and in Westminster at large, where there was a tendency for the “selectorate” to select in their own image of older, white, male men. The defection of some women MPs to other parties had not helped either creating suspicion about whether or not women would stick with the Party. Sarah Wollaston MP, Heidi Allen MP and Anna Soubry MP had all left.

Baroness Jenkin said that women MPs were treated differently to men and that when male MPs or Peers were involved in serious errors of their ways, such as drug use, or sex scandals, people don't say they wouldn't select another man, but they do when something happens with a woman. She goes on to praise the former PM David Cameron for his support of getting more Conservative women into Westminster. Theresa May had been co-founder of W2W.

“David Cameron was fantastic because he looked at the parliamentary party and thought it didn't reflect the Country at large. Even 20 per cent of women MPs means 4 out of 5 are men. It matters because women's life experiences are different to men. Conservative male MPs too have given us tremendous support. They look at the benches opposite and see our benches and there is a graphic difference. It needs a foot on the pedal and a sustained effort, the Party Chair is supportive and we just want the best candidate to win,” she said.

**October 8<sup>th</sup> 2019**

## **20. Seema Malhotra MP shows parliament at its best #RareDiseasesDebate**

Seema Malhotra the Labour MP for Feltham and Heston won plaudits recently for her debate in Parliament on a rare disease called Natalizumab-induced progressive multifocal leukoencephalopathy.

In a passionate speech she asked the new Conservative Health Minister Jo Churchill to ask NHS England to overturn a decision they made to fund the drug Maraviroc for her constituent Ms Amarjit Rai.

She said: “This is an urgent matter and I believe it is important to put this issue on public record and to seek greater flexibility in NHS policy on the commissioning of the drug Maraviroc to treat Natalizumab-induced progressive multifocal leukoencephalopathy, and in [NHS England](#)’s approach to individual funding requests”.

The cost would be £480 a month. Jo Churchill MP thanked her for the “positive effect of bringing the issue to the Chamber.”

Malhotra pointed out that since Parliament had returned following the Supreme Courts’ decision to rule the Proroguing of parliament by the government “unlawful” not only her debate but the Second Reading of the new Domestic Violence Bill and the moving speech by the Labour MP Rosie Duffield on her own coercive control by her partner, had shown Parliament working across party at its best.

“I tweeted to thank Boris Johnson for staying away. I do think the Country needs a functioning parliament it also needs parliamentarians with courage to stand up to what’s coming from the Prime Minister because if we allow that kind of bullying culture to dominate it won’t just be in #Brexit it dominates but in every part of our policy and legislation.”

Parliament today goes into recess until next Monday when the government will present its Queen’s Speech and new legislative programme.

**October 8<sup>th</sup> 2019**

### **21. MPs are asked to plant a tree and cut carbon emissions**

The Basingstoke MP Maria Miller, who Charis the influential Equalities Select Committee stepped outside Westminster today to search for her Extinction Rebellion Oak Tree, one of 650 the environmental activists had placed in old palace yard to get every MP to take them back to their constituencies to plant in order to cut greenhouse gas emissions.

We spoke to Maria as she searched for her tree and then asked one ER activist Jose from Scotland to interview her about the need to do more to reach our carbon emissions by 2025 not 2050 as the UK government plans.

Maria key quote: “I shall take my oak tree back to my constituency to a plant at a community project run for children and disabled people. It will go with me on the train today and I think it is a wonderful thing to do and we did the Queen’s Canopy earlier in the year and we planted a number of trees throughout the Country to show how important trees are to creating a healthy

environment and not just the air we breathe but how we feel and just showing we have a healthy place to live.”

Jose said: “What we are trying to do is raise awareness that the government is not planting enough trees to cut carbon emissions, and we want to reach the UK emissions targets by 2025 not 2050.”

**October 24<sup>th</sup> 2019**

## **22. Lucy Allan MP**

### **@NHSFutureFit Health & the next General Election**

As the Conservative Government ramps up speculation over whether it will call another General Election after withdrawing the 2<sup>nd</sup> Reading of its Withdrawal Agreement Bill from Parliament even after it won the #4MV by 30 votes when opposition parties said they would amend the time table motion for the Bill, we speak to the Conservative MP Lucy Allan about her #PMQ on health to the Prime Minister, Boris Johnson this Wednesday.

Ms Allan has been campaigning to keep the A & E Unit of her local Princess Royal Hospital open and with a slender majority in the 2017 General Election and representing a majority Leave voting constituency and one that has poor health outcomes she knows how important the issue is to her constituents. Telford was a former mining town and it is a New Town where there is acknowledged under privilege and deprivation, something Johnson said he would tackle in his speech to the Conservative Party conference in October.

Over the past year Allan has put forward 79 publicly recorded actions in her @NHSFutureFit campaign including debates, PQs, Meetings with the Health Secretary Matt Hancock and the Chancellor Sajid Javid. She wants the government to get on with #Brexit so that local issues like health can come to the fore again and Ministers have more time to understand them.

Not only did Allan secure a #PMQ to the Prime Minister yesterday but she also put a question to the Health Secretary in the debate on the Queen’s Speech about the closure of a local Women’s and Children’s Centre. Both Johnson and Hancock said they would look again at these two issues.

Allan key quote: “Health is a massive issue in Telford. It is all about health inequalities because in leafy Shrewsbury where they plan to build a new hospital and transfer Telford’s services we see fantastic health outcomes. And it seems to me the duty of the NHS and the Minister is to narrow health outcomes, it is all about inequality and this is what Johnson has talked about, and the lack of inequality unevenly spread across the country and that applies to health. Your quality of life is going to be far worse and so we have to address these inequalities in health

outcomes and I am passionate about this, and I think Boris Johnson is too. Telford is an area of need with significant pockets of disadvantage.

“They do love Boris in Telford that is a good start and they want to see #Brexit done even those who voted Remain. It looks a bit indulgent to have an Election, however what it looks like in Parliament there is no prospect of getting Brexit done with this Parliament and an Election will be the quickest route to delivering Brexit and it will give business certainty. I would like to see an early election which would deliver Brexit at the earliest opportunity.”

**October 24<sup>th</sup> 2019**

### **23. Sharon Hodgson MP Voting down the new #Brexit Bill in a Leave voting constituency**

#### **#Brexit & Second Reading of the new Withdrawal Amendment Bill**

Sharon Hodgson, the Labour MP for Washington and Sunderland West in the North East, tells us why she voted with her Party and against Boris Johnson’s new Withdrawal Amendment Bill at its Second Reading this week which got through #MV4 by 30 votes and why she also voted against the government’s Programme Time Table motion, leading to the Prime Minister withdrawing the Bill, even though she represents a Leave voting constituency.

The NE which will be one of the worst impacted areas in the UK in the event of a no-deal #Brexit, and despite representing a Leave Parliamentary seat Hodgson says she couldn’t support a Bill that would make her constituents worse off and that offered a worse deal on worker’s rights and environmental improvements than the former PM Theresa May’s deal did.

Hodgson key quote: “People do use the rhetoric of Boris Johnson and Dominic Cummings, and shout at me “get Brexit done” and “Surrender Bill”. My correspondence is about 50/50 in favour and against this Bill so I have to use my judgement on which way to vote. The NE is the worst affected area according to the Treasury’s own forecasts and we would be 11 per cent worse off in the event of a no-deal Brexit. We have Nissan and the car manufacturers here and Universities too with students and academics and the NE Chamber of Commerce has said how bad a no-deal Brexit will be for people living here.”

Hodgson has also been a fierce campaigner on food poverty and said the falling value of the pound and inflation was pushing up the price of food and that food poverty in the NE was as bad as in “Victorian times”. She says many of her constituents have never “seen good times” particularly following the Cameron government’s austerity agenda since 2010 and in the 2016 Brexit Referendum wanted to send a message to the government so voted Leave.

She supports a PV and a General Election but in line with her party leadership and not until no-deal has been ruled out and the EU grants the Brexit extension until the end of January 2020.

Hodgson has faced re-selection in her constituency by the Labour party and six of the 8 area votes have opted for her with the others voting this weekend. In some areas local Labour MPs have lost that vote but Hodgson feels it is part of the “democratic process” combined with an Election itself and that his is a “double test to pass”.

“At the moment I feel what is being offered is going to make my constituents lives worse and so I hope if the General Election comes before Brexit is sorted I hope my constituents will stick with me and stick with Labour and the other issues we will be campaigning on like Health and the NHS.”

**November 5<sup>th</sup> 2019**

**24. Nicky Morgan MP, Secretary of State for Culture Media and Sport steps down but encourages other women to stand**

Nicky Morgan MP, the Secretary of State for Culture Media and Sport is standing down from Parliament and won't be fighting the December 2019 General Election. She had only recently returned to the Cabinet in the new Prime Minister Boris Johnson Conservative Government but said that she wanted to spend more time with her family and was concerned about the level of abuse she regularly received as an MP and the impact it was having on her family and members of staff.

Morgan hasn't ruled out a return to Westminster at some time but while returning back to her Loughborough Constituency after the super Saturday vote on Johnson's new Withdrawal Agreement last month when hundreds of thousand Remain voters marched on Parliament she had been advised by a guard to move to the front of the train because of fears about her safety. There have already been two successful prosecutions over threats she has received.

Morgan had been in David Cameron's government as Secretary of State for Education but Theresa May had sacked her when she formed her new government shortly after the 2016 Referendum when Cameron resigned. She then went on to Chair the Treasury Select Committee. Johnson was said to be impressed by her ability to “compromise” as a Remain MP in a Leave voting constituency so gave her a Cabinet position again where she has worked on a new duty of care for social media companies which she would have liked to have seen implemented.

She has been the MP for Loughborough since 2010 where she has got a new road built and helped charities and local campaign groups achieve their goals. Nationally she cites special needs education, broadband and the gender pay gap as areas of public policy she has worked on and helped to advance.

She calls this a “miserable parliament” because it hasn’t compromised but despite the abuse she would recommend being an MP to other women wanting to stand, saying it is a “vocation” and that she has had “much fun” doing the job even though it is harder for MPs like her to go into public spaces and local market squares to campaign without being “shouted at and abused”.

“I think all of us standing down really reflected on the messages we were sending out and what we were talking about and I have always been a bit hesitant talking about all the abuse because then people focus on that and they don’t focus on other things as well and it sends out the wrong messages but this is a broader question for the next Parliament. Women make decisions about what they are going to invest their time on. If you want somebody to work hard and invest their time and energy in something they have got to see there is a purpose to doing it. Just sitting around in a building with wood panels and people to open doors is not going to get people involved but if we are helping to make it a better country for our children and grandchildren women will want to get involved in droves.”

Morgan says Johnson is a one-nation “socially liberal” Conservative and she has no concerns about the Party drifting to the right, as others claim. She will definitely be voting Conservative in December.

She is interviewed by Boni Sones of [www.parliamentaryradio.com](http://www.parliamentaryradio.com)

**November 5<sup>th</sup> 2019**

## **25. Labour’s Meg Hillier MP stands for Speaker and highlights bullying in Parliament**

Meg Hillier the Labour MP for Hackney South and Shoreditch and Chair of the Public Accounts Committee got knocked out in the first round of voting for the new Speaker of the House of Commons yesterday but her five minute speech left a mark on those who heard it.

Hillier chose to highlight the abuse members of staff in Parliament face and the fact that although there have been two committees of enquiry into it and recommendations made to improve reporting processes for staff these have not so far been implemented. She hopes the new Speaker Lindsay Hoyle MP will ensure the issue of bullying in Parliament is addressed in the new Parliament elected in December.

Hillier points out that it is a “paradox” that while MPs are standing down as a result of abuse MPs staff are sometimes on the receiving end of abuse from those they work for, and often feel fearful of reporting it. Dame Laura Cox and Gemma White have set out a number of recommendations to improve reporting processes. Hillier says MPs should “lead by example” and that staff have a list of which MPs are good to work for and which are not.

“We need to have an implementation plan now taking on board what the Cox report said and taking on board what Gemma White said and making sure we have a proper plan in place. We could pilot a different way of working. The reaction to my speech was interesting a lot of people said ‘I am glad you said that’. I didn’t expect to win. This could be the next expenses scandal I really believe that.”

She said Bercow had been a modernising Speaker but that there had been allegations of bullying against him. She said “We need a process in place that allows someone to be called out”. “We are Honourable members and we should behave honourably if not we should be called out.”

Hillier is interviewed by Boni Sones.

**November 14th 2019**

### **26. Women VS Capitalism - why women don't have it all**

We talk to leading public sector Economist and LD supporter Vicky Pryce, the Chief Economic Advisor at CEBR, and a former joint head of the government's economic service, about her new book Women VS Capitalism. Her book was launched fittingly on [#EqualPayDay2019](#). Vicky is interviewed by Boni Sones, Executive Producer of [www.parliamentaryradio.com](http://www.parliamentaryradio.com)

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