

Report to our Advisory Board for our meeting February 12th 2019

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To: Jackie Ashley, Jo Swinson, Dame Caroline Spelman, Sharon Hodgson, Dr Lisa Cameron, Deborah McGurran, Linda Fairbrother. Anastasia de Waal.

Cc Paul Seward The History, Daniel Zeichner.

Dear All,

Thanks for your support over what Jackie Ashley has pointed out is 15 years of working together in parliament now.

Our 4th book on Women MPs is to be published next week and I will bring copies of it to this meeting. It focuses on our 70 plus interviews in Vote 100 year from January 2018 and January 2019. It has been a privilege to conduct these.

You have all as women contributed to the foreword, preface and commendations pages as journalists and MPs at the beginning of the book "When There's A Woman in the Room #Vote 100 year", for which I thank you.

Our focus last year was to capture the Vote 100 events and also to cover the grass-roots up debates in Westminster Hall soon after they happened and the Wednesday Questions to the Prime Minister, Theresa May as well as considerable Brexit coverage on all sides of the debate and with all parties.

Surprisingly the new book is quite a good read and record for future generations. We work hard to balance our content across party and take pride in having conducted 70 interviews in 2018/19 with UK parliamentarians. This year we have interviewed: Conservative 28; Labour 33 and 4 councillors; LD 6 and 1 councillor and 1 other; SNP 2; Green party co-leader 1; other: 1 cross bencher in the Lords. 1 historian on #Vote 100. 1 professor of modern political history, 2 female Bishops and 2 Lobby correspondent and 1 economist.

Like our three other books (and one revised edition) over 15 years it will go into all the major libraries of the UK. The British Library, the Bodleian Library Oxford University,

The Cambridge University Library, National Library of Scotland, National Library of Wales and Trinity College Dublin.

I hope and will attempt to get all these Vote 100 year audio interviews into a national accessible archive somewhere in the next few months. We had planned to create one with Jackie at Lucy Cavendish College and the well-known Churchill College Cambridge archives but funding was not forthcoming for this. However, I think we have proved ourselves to be worth investing in as we managed to do 70 plus interviews nationally with parliamentarians across party without funding and on what Linda has described as our shoe-string budget. We also covered the local election results in Cambridgeshire and the new elected women to council seats, in one case with Labour using AWS.

I mention accessibility as our national audio archives at the BL, the LSE, and The History of Parliament Trust are not highly visible or accessible and I would like our content in Vote 100 year to be more so in order to promote the #AskHerToStand agenda across party.

At least after 15 years of working together we have remained steadfast and kept the trust of women across party in Westminster and survived the technological revolution that is threatening so much in journalism today. Our impartiality and cross party work is likely to be holding us back from attracting funding. Partisan projects are more popular particularly if social media is involved too as are partisan tweets. Meanwhile I am happy to cover these marginal costs – apart from my labour - until our model truly has other support from other sources.

We keep copyright to our work which is significant and you will see the three audio archives all acknowledge this on our behalf. In truth the Archive world has been tricky to deal with, but Dr Paul Seward of the History has more recently given us much encouragement.

- History of Parliament 2017: <http://historyofparliamentonline.org/news/womens-parliamentary-radio-archive-deposited-history-parliament>
- LSE 2014: Our LSE audio archive can be accessed <https://archives.lse.ac.uk/Record.aspx?src=CalmView.Catalog&id=SONES&pos=1>

- BL site from our Archive British Library

2010: http://cadensa.bl.uk/uhtbin/cgiirsi/x/0/0/5?searchdata1=CKEY7012165&library=ALL&_ga=2.199944493.2027657279.1547552803-609625345.1547552803

Sharon Hodgson for Labour is joining us on the Advisory Board as we regularly interview her and she does RT us too and is familiar with our work.

This year we could, if you agree, conduct regular round table debates with our advisory board MPs to tweet out through SoundCloud as we do now. The abuse MPs receive would be a good theme for us to pursue.

It would be good to reach a younger audience by teaming up with another portal of some kind. Although we did try to get our work into Schools the focus of the curriculum seems to be stuck in some kind of dark-age and covering the issues that contemporary women in parliament face and promote has not been a priority for teachers. Parliament itself works well with schools and we don't need to duplicate its work here.

Meanwhile all suggestions and comments welcome. I suggest we discuss.

- A new accessible Vote 100 year national audio archive
- Regular round table discussions
- Covering further the abuse women MPs receive
- Reaching a younger audience.
- Repackaging our 4 books and interviews (600 in all) over 15 years into one new one and getting sponsorship for this perhaps working with a government agency to do this.
- Giving further support to the #AskHerToStand agenda across party.
- Entering our Vote 100 year content for the Orwell Prize for journalism collectively (if allowed!) We have one international award under our belt, and were originally in 2015 shortlisted for the Orwell. Or we could create our own prize for coverage of women in politics. Now that's a thought.

End.