

PLYMSTOCK & DISTRICT U3A

DISCUSSION GROUP

RECORD OF PAST MEETINGS – 2016

7th January 2016

Present :-

Dudley Tolkien (DT)

Barbara Marlow (BM)

Margaret Connolly (MC)

Jo Sainsbury (JS)

Chris Brennan (CB)

Sue Clements (SC)

Questions asked :-

DT – What do you see as the main factors that make somebody feel close to another person?

BM – Is Christmas like marmite, some people love it, and others hate it?

CB – A new non-invasive test for Down Syndrome is expected to result in an additional 90 terminated pregnancies annually in UK. Do you fear for the eradication of the condition, as some do?

JS – Children's teeth are still decaying, resulting in 25,000 hospital admissions per year in UK. Do mothers need an education campaign on the cleaning of teeth?

SC – Is the world especially lacking at this time in good leadership?

MC – Should the right to strike for doctors, nurses, police, fire, and armed forces personnel be totally illegal?

4th February 2016

Present :-

Dudley Tolkien (DT)

Barbara Marlow (BM)

Margaret Connolly (MC)

Jo Sainsbury (JS)

Chris Brennan (CB)

Sue Clements (SC)

Questions asked :-

DT – Is democracy an aid or a hindrance to good decision making by governments?

MC – Should Turkey be allowed to join the EU?

CB – Emigration from UK has the disadvantage of leaving it behind. If you could relocate UK for a better life, where would you choose? And would you just opt for relocating England?

BM – In our lifetime, what invention has influenced us most?

SC – Why are we so enthralled by the United States?

JS – Is it right for the families of registered organ donors to block the use of their organs, against the donor's certified wishes?

3rd March 2016

Present :-

Bette Thomas (BT)

Barbara Marlow (BM)

Margaret Connolly (MC)

Jo Sainsbury (JS)

Chris Brennan (CB)

Sue Clements (SC)

Questions asked :-

BM – First there was the United States of America, then the European Union: will there ever be a United States of Asia?

CB – Should there be a separate health tax for the NHS? If so, would that perhaps see the abolition of National Insurance, replaced by a flat rate of income tax?

JS – A survey of 521 doctors resulted in half of them stating that treatment for drunkards, for weight loss surgery, and time lost to missed appointments should be paid for by the patient. Do you agree?

BT – Should cyclists be forced to use the newly opened Laira Bridge cycleway, rather than the main road cycle lane?

SC – Scientists have isolated a gene which could slow the ageing process by delaying the onset of grey hair, wrinkles, etc. Is this a good idea?

1st April 2016

Present :-

Dudley Tolkien (DT)

Barbara Marlow (BM)

Margaret Connolly (MC)

Jo Sainsbury (JS)

Sue Clements (SC)

Questions asked :-

DT – If the result of the EU Referendum on 23 June is to leave, but one or more of Wales, Northern Ireland, and in particular Scotland, vote to remain, is the subsequent break up of the UK inevitable?

JS – If we vote to leave the EU, will this prompt another fishing war?

SC – Has anybody firmed up or changed their mind on how to vote at the EU Referendum, based on the arguments they have heard so far?

BM – Will the internet replace the high street?

MC – Should it be illegal for motorcyclists to drive between lanes, and on the inside?

JS – TV broadcasts are to be trialled in the High Court. Do we really need this?

5th May 2016

Present :-

Dudley Tolkien (DT)

Barbara Marlow (BM)

Bette Thomas (BT)

Jo Sainsbury (JS)

Sue Clements (SC)

Questions asked :-

DT – By general agreement, the British welfare system is an expensive, disjointed mess. Arguably the two best political minds on the subject, Frank Field and Iain Duncan-Smith, were given ministerial responsibility to sort it out, only to be marginalised by the short term politics of their superiors. Will the mess now be eternal?

BM – Are politics boring?

BT – Should there be more security of fields to prevent unauthorised occupation by travellers?

JS – Was it right for parents to encourage their 6 and 7 year-olds to strike over SATS tests?

SC – Do you have a favourite quotation, and what is it?

DT Should political parties be publicly funded?

2nd June 2016

Present :-

Dudley Tolkien (DT)

Barbara Marlow (BM)

Bette Thomas (BT)

Margaret Connolly (MC)

Questions asked :-

DT – Germany **elected** Hitler as its leader in 1933. Do you believe such an event could be repeated today in a modern western democracy, and if not, why not?

BT – Is it right that parents should be fined for taking their children out of school for family holidays in term time?

BM – Has society changed old age?

MC – What is your definition of freedom?

DT – What do you consider to be the main ingredients of compatibility in romantic relationships, assuming the physical side of things is not problematic?

7th July 2016

Present :-

Dudley Tolkien (DT)

Barbara Marlow (BM)

Bette Thomas (BT)

Margaret Connolly (MC)

Jo Sainsbury (JS)

Questions asked :-

DT – When should Article 50 be triggered to start the 2 year process of Brexit, and how easy or difficult will it be for the necessary legislation to be voted through Parliament?

BM – When Brexit is completed, will the public notice any difference?

MC – Should footpaths in England be opened up to cyclists?

BT – Should Tony Blair be tried for war crimes?

DT – When should referenda be used, and not be used, to make important national decisions?

4th August 2016

Present :-

Dudley Tolkien (DT)

Barbara Marlow (BM)

Bette Thomas (BT)

Margaret Connolly (MC)

Jo Sainsbury (JS)

Sue Clements (SC)

Questions asked :-

DT – Is positive discrimination ever justified, and if so, in what circumstances, and should limitations be put on its application?

BM – Are women beginning to rule the world?

MC – Is the reporting in the news of ambulance call percentages for elderly people having falls, and for mental health related incidents, discriminatory against these categories?

JS – There has been a big increase in home schooling. Is this a healthy development or not?

BT – Should parents who have paid fines for taking their children on holiday in term time, now be entitled to a refund?

SC – Is the proposed new Hinkley Point C power station viable?

DT – Should our National Anthem be changed to something more modern and stimulating?
Any suggestions?

1st September 2016

Present :-

Dudley Tolkien (DT)

Barbara Marlow (BM)

Bette Thomas (BT)

Margaret Connolly (MC)

Nops Shotton (NS)

Bob Chapman (BC)

Questions asked :-

DT – Chairing the Independent Inquiry into Child Sexual Abuse appears to have become an unfillable poisoned chalice. Is a radical new approach needed, to learn from historical mistakes for present and future, but not for the purposes of retribution?

BM – Will we notice any difference in the longer term from Brexit?

BT – How can a lot of top level pay be justified?

MC – Should we ban swimming on all beaches which don't have a lifeguard?

BC – Should we have compulsory driving tests for over 80s?

NS – Should we use troops to guard the coastline for border control?

6th October 2016

Present :-

Dudley Tolkien (DT)

Barbara Marlow (BM)

Sue Clements (SC)

Nops Shotton (NS)

Bob Chapman (BC)

Questions asked :-

DT – Arguably Churchill's greatest peacetime achievement was founding the European Convention on Human Rights. The Government is seeking to supercede this with a British Bill of Rights. Is this not only a betrayal of Churchill's legacy, but also dangerous?

BM – Are current British politics a mess?

BC – Does the explosion of social media and computer games pose a threat to social cohesion?

SC – Can anyone envisage our roads with driver-less cars?

NS – Are you concerned that fracking could pose dangers of subsidence?

3rd November 2016

Present :-

Dudley Tolkien (DT)

Barbara Marlow (BM)

Sue Clements (SC)

Nops Shotton (NS)

Bette Thomas (BT)

Margaret Connolly (MC)

Jo Sainsbury (JS)

Questions asked :-

DT – The Government tells us that its secrecy over its Brexit strategy is so as not to reveal its negotiating hand. Do you buy that, or is it more a smoke-screen to cover up its lack of a clear plan, plus perhaps disunity amongst its main players?

BT – Should the Duke of York's daughters be brought into a greater public role at the taxpayer's expense?

BM – Will we all be physically beautiful at some time in the future?

SC – Do we send too many people to prison?

JS – Do we need a gigantic statue of a woman (Bianca) outside the Theatre Royal?

NS – Should there be a maximum prize for lottery jackpots, perhaps £2 million?

1st December 2016

Present :-

Dudley Tolkien (DT)

Barbara Marlow (BM)

Sue Clements (SC)

Nops Shotton (NS)

Bette Thomas (BT)

Jo Sainsbury (JS)

Questions asked :-

DT – After the events of 2016, is democracy stronger or weaker?

BM – Will Donald Trump surprise us by being a much better president than we envisage now?

SC – Should we be talking about an east / west divide in UK, rather than north / south?

BT – Is there a widespread mood of disillusionment amongst the Plymouth public about the way the city is going, and without sufficient public consultation?

JS – Why can't we crack down on mobile phone and drug use in prisons? Are we too soft?