

**Working Together
For The People
Politicians Forgot**



**General Election
POLICY DOCUMENT**

The Jury Team

"A jury is the lamp that shows that freedom lives"

~ Lord Devlin

During the last eight centuries we have developed and kept faith in the jury system. This is based on the view that regular people are able to make decisions about complex problems and that the integrity and lack of vested interests of those involved is more important than the experience of members of an establishment.

In a jury system lay people are selected to come to a decision on behalf of the community, choosing between two competing arguments. People in juries are trusted to make decisions which can have profound impacts on people's lives. There is no reason why similar people cannot choose between political alternatives.

The philosophy of the "wisdom of crowds" demonstrates that a group of independent people can usually make a sensible decision through combining their independent assessments. In contrast, people in a like minded group tend to amplify extremes.

The concept of proper representation of the community is at the core of the proposals by the Jury Team which links this basic concept of fairness with a practical way of achieving significant change through the established UK constitution. In the same way that people can form effective juries, they can be elected to Parliament as a much more diverse and yet more local group than is the current case with career MPs. They can also be trusted to decide major issues through referendums.

The Jury Team therefore proposes that, in the same way as a jury, people from a wide range of backgrounds should be encouraged to become MPs and on major issues it should be the people and not the politicians who decide. Gilbert and Sullivan described this in their 1875 opera *Trial by Jury*:

Now, Jurymen, hear my advice--

All kinds of vulgar prejudice

I pray you set aside:

With stern, judicial frame of mind

From bias free of every kind,

This trial must be tried.

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Proposals and Handbook

By The

**JURY
TEAM**



Extracts from Magna Carta – 1215 A.D.

JOHN, by the grace of God, King of England, Lord of Ireland, Duke of Normandy and Aquitaine, and Count of Anjou, to his archbishops, bishops, abbots, earls, barons, justices, foresters, sheriffs, stewards, servants, and to all his officials and loyal subjects, Greetings.

TO ALL FREE MEN OF OUR KINGDOM we have granted, for us and our heirs for ever, all the liberties written out below, to have and to keep for them and their heirs, of us and our heirs:

No free man shall be seized or imprisoned, or stripped of his rights or possessions, or outlawed or exiled, or deprived of his standing in any other way, nor will we proceed with force against him, or send others to do so, except by the **lawful judgement of his equals** or by the law of the land.

To no one will we sell, to no one deny or delay, right or justice.

In future no official shall place a man on trial upon his own unsupported statement, without producing credible witnesses to the truth of it.

No constable or other royal official shall take corn or other movable goods from any man without immediate payment, unless the seller voluntarily offers postponement of this. No sheriff, royal official, or other person shall take horses or carts for transport from any free man, without his consent.

All merchants may enter or leave England unharmed and without fear, and may stay or travel within it, by land or water, for purposes of trade, free from all illegal exactions, in accordance with ancient and lawful customs.

We will appoint as justices, constables, sheriffs, or other officials, only men that know the law of the realm and are minded to keep it well.

Given by our hand in the meadow that is called Runnymede,
between Windsor and Staines,
on the fifteenth day of June in the seventeenth year of our reign.

**This Proposal and Handbook is designed for everyone involved with the Jury Team,
especially its candidates and members.**

Preface

The jury is our oldest established institution which stands up for the individual. In a jury, lay people are selected to come to a decision on behalf of the community, choosing between two competing arguments. People in juries are trusted to make decisions which can have profound impacts on people's lives and there is no reason why similar people cannot choose between political alternatives. This is the basis for the name of the Jury Team.

The Jury Team was founded to "clean up and open up" politics. It has four sets of proposals:

- Defining questions on which the Jury Team will hold authorising referendums, after preparing the necessary legislation, so allowing the people, as the ultimate jury, to decide.
- Reforming our democracy so that people are properly represented and can influence their elected representatives
- Strengthening and cleaning up Parliament so that it can diligently decide whether to approve new legislation and can actively hold the Government to account
- Ensuring that Government is run in the national rather than party political interest

The Preface to the first Jury Team Proposal and Handbook, published in March 2009 for the European Parliament Election, presciently began as follows:

"The Jury Team, launched in mid March 2009, was founded for those people who believe in democracy but who have observed how the current party political system has turned the United Kingdom's Parliament and Government into the creatures of a small and increasingly distant group of oligarchical politicians.

The arrogance that has developed in these party cultures has led to personal behaviours and attitudes on issues such as expenses and conflicts of interest which would be unacceptable in any other walk of life. Politicians are seen as more interested in winning elections than in improving the lot of the people or the state of the nation. Many manipulate rather than respect their electorate. MPs are now largely in Parliament as their primary career rather than to provide objective oversight of the Government."

The Parliamentary expenses scandal started in April 2009 with the publication by the Daily Telegraph of MPs' claimed expenditure. This showed the truth of the above comments and generated even greater public resentment of the political system than previously existed.

The First Edition Preface continued:

"The party whipping system has generally reduced the House of Commons to a talking shop which overwhelmingly accepts the Government's proposals with little scrutiny. The UK Government is run by ministers appointed for party political reasons who have little background in their subject or in management and are anyway moved elsewhere before they can implement their proposals."

These problems are linked by the common thread of the self-destructing nature of party politics and have been identified previously by many observers. This document brings them together to provide all those who want to work towards change at Westminster with the necessary information about how they can make a difference.

This is however not simply a work of analysis. The distinguishing feature of an entrepreneur is that he or she does not just have a good idea but also expends effort and resources in actually implementing it. This Proposal and Handbook therefore not only sets out the key issues facing the UK and its governance but also how we can now restore proper democracy and integrity to our democratic institutions.

Background

The Jury Team used the European Parliament elections held in June 2009 as a form of "test market" for its ideas. The Jury Team supported 59 candidates in all 11 electoral regions of Great Britain. Candidates were able to benefit from the Jury Team co-ordination which resulted in a nationally televised Party Election Broadcast, a national poster campaign and a national email and mobile phone

messaging programme. The advantages of providing a national platform were therefore endorsed and the Jury Team was able to build up a national network of supporters. In 10 weeks from launch it achieved considerable recognition, gained 80,000 voters and was more successful than the other main new party, Libertas.

The Jury Team also fought the Glasgow North East by-election in November 2009. The result was disappointing. The turnout was the lowest ever in a Scottish by-election. The constituency is probably the most deprived in the United Kingdom. There is strong tribal support for the Labour Party. However we again learnt a number of useful lessons about the issues which are important to the electorate.

The need to move away from career politicians and lobby fodder in the House of Commons is still vital. Our vision continues to be to bring in people of experience to deal with the career politician issue and independently minded people to deal with the "lobby fodder" point.

However party allegiance, as a short cut to decide who should be supported, seems inherited just as religion or rooting for a football team and remains the most important factor in people's voting decisions. They are generally not that interested in electoral politics and therefore see their candidate and their party as a "brand" which they support as they vote for him or her.

The British public will not now generally vote for Independents (unless with huge publicity like ex-BBC Martin Bell or people very well locally known like Dr Richard Taylor). We need to have a very strong national brand to defeat the inherited brands of the traditional parties. Therefore if we are to achieve the electoral success which could lead to real change, we have to bring together our aspiration to have MPs who can form their own judgements with our need for our brand to represent what we will do.

This is possible by combining a requirement for candidates to support the proposals in this document, as this is the manifesto on which they will be standing, with their being free to vote on any other issues. However as I said in the first Jury Team book: *"The world changes so quickly that no party political manifesto can hope to cover all of the issues which are likely to arise even in the term of a five year Government."* This means that any manifesto must be limited and not pretend to deal with everything that might occur in the next five years. Our campaign needs to stress the quality of our people and that such people are more likely to react sensibly to whatever may occur.

Independents with a Mission

Traditional parties write their manifesto as a result of years and decades of internal positioning, edging one way or the other from leader to leader and from conference to conference depending on what their own supporters and vested interests want.

The Jury Team believe that politics should be driven by the people and that the electorate should be the ultimate jury. We have therefore researched ten issues which people want to see legislated for but where the vested interests and attitudes of the traditional parties mean that they will not introduce the legislation.

Although we have chosen only ten issues, they have the potential to make a more substantial change to the life of the people of the United Kingdom than has been achieved in any recent five year Parliament. They cover a referendum on our membership of the EU, government borrowing, protecting banking deposits, limiting social security benefits, increasing punishment for violent criminals, reducing our troop deployment in Afghanistan, making UK citizenship more difficult to get, requiring non-UK citizens to pay for their medical care, letting schools opt-out from local authority control and making stores take back excess packaging.

The Jury Team will legislate for all of these Proposals as set out in Section B of this document. However this will be on the basis that before coming law they will each be put to the electorate in a series of authorising referendums: the people will decide.

Candidates for the Jury Team must agree to support this process. Their position on these Proposals is therefore that they will agree to help them to become law but subject always to an authorising referendum. They are therefore facilitating the writing of the necessary laws with all the detail they need to contain but on the basis that the electorate will have the final say.

This emphasises that we believe in the sovereignty of the people but also gives us specific areas of concentration as examples of our approach. We are saying that we have looked at what the British people seem to want and are prepared to make Parliament respond to this but, not just relying on opinion polls, would then put this to a referendum.

We also still very much want to be a political reform party. There are therefore three sections of this document dealing with this. The national governance issues are in the Democratic Reform (Section C) part of the document. These are all matters, such as an English parliament and a more settled devolution settlement, number of MPs, proportional representation, Citizens' Initiative referendums and reducing the "nanny state" which are close to people's view of how politics should work for them. They will also only become law if approved in an authorising referendum.

This approach to the ideas in Sections B and C really delivers "Politics for the People". Current politics does not respond to real concerns because the political class does not wish to discuss them as they pander to the floating voters to get elected. We have the opportunity to do what we have said on the can: let the people become the jury and decide whether proposals should become law.

Other aspects of our previous policies relating to the structure and operation of Westminster and Whitehall are still vital. These areas are set out in this document in the Strengthening Parliament (Section D) and Improving Government (Section E) chapters. We believe that these are important elements for our democracy and certainly that we have the most coherent and indeed radical solutions for fixing what is clearly a broken system of Parliament and Government.

On other issues not in this manifesto candidates will be free to vote as they wish. Other new legislation will therefore only become law if a majority of such independent people support it after proper scrutiny, with a referendum to endorse the proposal if required.

Candidates

We are now about to begin recruiting candidates for the general election and the Jury Team website will be open for this from early February.

As set out in the second edition of the Jury Team book (for the Glasgow North East by-election) we are also in discussion with other non-traditional non-discriminatory parties about ensuring that we do not compete against each other in individual constituencies. As I said in that Edition: *"The Jury Team will co-operate with other non-traditional but non-discriminatory parties for the general election as this is the only way in which many common objectives are likely to be achieved. Fragmented parties will not be able to achieve sufficient votes to win in the current "first-past-the-post" (FPTP) electoral system."*

For instance, following the July 2009 Norwich North by-election The Times commented in an Editorial:

"The final cause of the large Conservative majority was the failure of the defectors from two-party politics — particularly those enraged by the allowances scandal — to coalesce around a single alternative. The Greens missed their moment by choosing too militant a candidate, UKIP did well but has limited appeal, and none of the independents who were so vocal a few weeks ago was ready to try his luck. This was a stroke of good fortune for the Tories. As they celebrate a good result, they should remember that there is still public anger that they need to address and many that they still need to convince."

We are therefore working with other political parties to form an "Alliance for Democracy" which will make arrangements to minimise competition between those non-traditional non-discriminatory parties whose policies include the aim of reducing the country's democratic deficit.

The Jury Team will work within the established constitution which however, without asking the people, has been changed over the last two centuries to give a concentration of power to self-serving and elite political parties. This has led to institutional corruption as the original checks and balances have been eroded. In this respect the Jury Team has the same approach as did Martin Luther to the church of the 15th Century. He revered the ecclesiastical philosophy but was determined to remove what he saw as the modern corruptions of what had once been a noble calling.

The need for reform of our political system is now seen as urgent by the public and by the political class. However just changing one group of career politicians for another group is unlikely to transform our country.

In January 2010, Julie Walters told Yours magazine:

"Politicians? They are slippery, evasive, irresponsible liars in the main. We've got a general election coming up quite soon, and it's got to the point where I don't want to vote for any of them. I really don't"

We now have the opportunity to rebuild our Parliament with people whose prime responsibility is to their constituents and to the country and not to themselves or to their party political leadership. Combined with the other Jury Team changes there is a real possibility of the UK again leading the world in the way in which parliament and government operate. We must all seize this opportunity now or otherwise wait another five years during which the situation is likely further to deteriorate.

The next three months are the time for real change.

Sir Paul Judge

6th February 2010

