

UKIP's success

Never forget that the referendum was held because of UKIP. Nobody in their heart of hearts believes we would have had the referendum if it weren't for UKIP and nobody truly believes we would have won it without UKIP. We achieved this because we were brave enough to raise the issues that were bothering people, but which the other parties tried to stop. This has never been a racist party but it has taken courage to speak out about immigration because we have been attacked falsely for this being a bigoted position. It never was; it was always about the numbers and regaining control of our borders.

Some members are now concerned about the integration agenda in our manifesto. We need to have courage again with this and stand up for what we believe is right, particularly on the subject of FGM. Can we allow young girls to go on being abused in this horrific way just because we may be called names for raising it? I am proud of my party for—once again—being the only one prepared to get this difficult and sensitive issue on to the agenda. If we turn a blind eye, it will continue. However, we need to be well informed if we are to be asked about this. It is nothing to do with Islam, it is not a religious issue. It occurs in societies with various religions. It is cultural and is illegal in this country. We must be clear that we believe in one law for all in this country. We cannot have different laws for different groups of people and most people agree with this.

I wonder if members of other parties are looking at our manifesto to check what their party's policies will be in a few years' time. We don't need UKIP MPs. We just bring policies forward and leave it to others to introduce them.

In 2015, ours was the only manifesto that was independently costed and verified. Now they are all at it. It is worth remembering that the following were all put forward first by UKIP: No income tax on minimum wage, reduce foreign aid, abolish hospital parking charges, waive tuition fees for students taking 'STEM*' subjects, build homes for homeless veterans, control immigration, control access to welfare and the NHS, bring back grammar schools if requested by parents, create new apprenticeships, end ATOS style assessments, remove the barriers to cleaning up brownfield sites for housing, scrap HS2, regain control of our territorial waters and many more.

We're good, aren't we?

* STEM = Science, Technology, Engineering, Maths or Medicine

Where next?

Many people are asking what the point of UKIP is now. Firstly, we aren't out of the EU yet and the nonsense about a hard or soft Brexit is worrying. Theresa May is saying all the right things but many are not convinced. As soon as the backsliding starts, we'll see a bounce back and we need to be ready to react.

We have had a terrible time since the referendum. We really are hopeless at dealing with success. It was entirely understandable that Nigel Farage needed a break afterwards. Whatever flak the rest of us have taken is nothing compared with the impact on him, and it has been going on for years. The leadership fiasco did us no favours, but we can now move forward under Paul Nuttall. I cannot think of anybody else who could lead this party and not be threatened by Nigel as a continuing spokesman.

Because Paul has been Nigel's deputy for so long, he knows him well enough to be able to work with him and make full use of him.

Much of our future may depend on what happens to the Labour Party. It is hard to see how it is going to reconcile its two branches—the Corbynistas and the Blairites—so I do believe Paul is correct and we can become the alternative for former Labour voters in the north. Party politics is fracturing. The old Tory/Labour, blue/red, two-party system is over.

I was pleased to hear that our leadership team are working on a new structure, constitution and rule book. There are plans to give better support to our branches and be better prepared with well-trained candidates and agents. I truly think our best days are still ahead of us and we need to be prepared. It won't just happen. We will need to work for it, but we have done it before and we will do it again.

Different members have different ideas about what our USP (Unique Selling Point) will be in the future. I think it will be to see policies implemented that ensure never again can our politicians forget that they work for us—not the other way round. Policies like recall of elected representatives that have let the people down, binding local and national referenda, especially for ethical and moral issues. We also need a change in the voting system. The referendum in 2011 was the choice between keeping the status quo or changing to the only other system that absolutely nobody wanted. So no to AV but yes to PR—proportional representation. We have a multi-party political system now and it needs a different way of electing our MPs in the future. We forced the referendum. We can do this too, can't we?

The Editor