

# News from the Brexit Cliff Edge

## 25th Apr 2019

---

### News Highlights

---

## Welcome to the Brexit Cliff Edge

### Lord Adonis becomes a Labour Party European Election candidate - issues a statement which sounds like he has been taken hostage

- [Andrew Adonis has had a leading role](#) in promoting the 'Remain in the EU' cause over the last two years, with both frequent public and media appearances, during which he argued passionately for a second referendum. Now, as a newly-minted Labour Party European Election candidate, he's made a grovelling apology and kowtowed to the Corbynista line, calling the Labour approach to Brexit 'sensible,' leaving his supporters bewildered

### Sturgeon - give residents a choice between Brexit and a future for Scotland

- [Five years ago Scotland voted against independence in a referendum](#). It also voted to Remain in the EU by a strong margin in 2016. It cannot do both if Brexit occurs. So Nicola Sturgeon is proposing to introduce legislation in Scotland to ensure a second independence referendum is held before the end of the life of this Parliament in 2021

### The ERG coup d'etat to remove May failed again

- [Local Conservative Party association were said to have got around 65 party chairs](#) to sign a resolution calling for a General Meeting, at which, there were plans to introduce a rule change that would allow Conservative MPs to have a leadership election more than once a year - the mechanism to unseat her. The Parliamentary Conservative Party ruling body, The 1922 Committee, met to consider the request and voted against it, thereby, removing the threat to Theresa May's tenure as PM for now

### Boris Johnson's rivals are trying to destroy his leadership bid by keeping Theresa May in power

- [Insiders told the Express that the longer any leadership](#) election is delayed by Theresa May remains in office, the better the chance of stopping Boris Johnson from succeeding her

### Secretive hard-Brexit Facebook campaign has got 1m responses

- [Information Commissioner Elizabeth Denham](#) told MPs that her investigation into the Mainstream Network Facebook campaign group, has raised concerns about how valuable voter data was being collected by under-the-radar campaigns on the platform, potentially in breach of data protection rules. The group setting up supposedly independent pro-Brexit Facebook pages is being overseen by political guru Sir Lynton Crosby's company CTF Partners, with £1m in online advertising funding the campaign, paid for by unknown sources

### Farage is chasing after the Over 40 vote

- [Nigel Farage's Brexit Party is outspending rivals on Facebook](#) in a push to target voters over 40. The

Brexit Party has spent around £20,000 on Facebook targetting in the 2 weeks since it formed. The Brexit Party has also done well organically with an article written by Farage for the launch of the party receiving more than 110,000 engagements on social media, making it the fourth most shared politics story of last month

## **The Labour Party set to climb down off the fence they've been sitting on for 2 years**

- [ITV's Robert Peston says Labour's ruling NEC](#) met Tuesday to decide whether the Labour Party European Election manifesto will contain a commitment for any Brexit deal to be submitted to a confirmatory referendum of the people. The outcome of the meeting should be known soon, possibly on Thursday, and this news has big ramifications for the whole European election campaign

## **Brexit Talks drawing to a close**

- Both parties agree they can only disagree so a Brexit deal looks unlikely
- [Theresa May has been persuaded not to immediately resubmit](#) her Brexit Withdrawal Agreement but to wait for the outcome of next week's Local Elections before resubmitting it to Parliament

## **A No-Deal Conservative Party has no future**

- [Daniel Finkelstein, former advisor to PM John Major](#), argued that dumping Theresa May for a more working-class coalition of voters was superficially appealing but doomed to fail. An angrier, whiter, more working class and northern Conservative Party would fail in cities, struggle to win with ethnic minorities and be hit hard by younger voters and by women.
- [Theresa May's former aide, Nick Timothy](#), disagrees with Finkelstein. He calls for the Conservative Party to reinvent itself as the 'national party' or risk being eclipsed by Nigel Farage's Brexit Party

## **Former Conservative MP Ann Widicombe returns to politics as a Farage recruit**

- [The 71 year old said her return is to 'fire a very](#) loud warning shot across the bows of the established parties'

## **Change UK under fire as candidates withdraw and a strategic memo leak**

- Change UK lost [Jan Rostowski](#) and [Joseph Russo](#), both candidates for the European Elections, less than a day after Change UK announced candidates at its launch.
- [The Daily Mail published a leaked Change UK](#) strategy memo which said the party's goal was to wipe out the Lib Dems and replace them as a party. It said Change UK plans to directly target Lib Dem voters and donors and compete with the party on its own issues. Thus ruling out mergers, pacts or alliances

## **UK is not handling its Brexit fishery policy well - says UK Fisheries**

- [The no deal trade continuity arrangement](#) which have been signed with Norway, Iceland and the Faroes have the UK granting access to UK markets for these nations to export fish to British consumers. However, the negotiators have failed to demand reciprocal access to fishing grounds in return

## **UK-US Trade Deal will become harder to achieve with the UK signed up to a customs union**

- [The U.S. Ambassador to the UK said negotiating a trade deal](#) post-Brexit would be more difficult if the UK is tied to a customs union with the EU. Woody Johnson said this meant it would be very harder for the UK to get control of its own trade policy

## **Administrative Fall Out**

---

### **The best place to build a life in English? The Netherlands**

If Brexit happens, the Netherlands will probably have the EU's largest English-language university system. Dutch offices, too, have become the most anglophone in continental European history. Are you a foreign bank or media company moving to Amsterdam? File your documents with the regulator in English. Settle your disputes in the brand-new, English-speaking Netherlands Commercial Court. Hire Dutch staff who will happily speak English even among themselves. The Netherlands is finding a new role: as the English-language economy in the EU that the world needs after Brexit. (Ireland will get some of the pickings, but it's less populous, in the wrong place and has inferior infrastructure.)

<https://www.ft.com/content/9566f2ea-6620-11e9-a79d-04f350474d62>

### **Paris Is Going All Out for London's Brexit Exiles**

The French capital hasn't always been seen as welcoming, but its government, schools and businesses are determined to make new residents feel at home.

<https://www.bloomberg.com/news/articles/2019-04-23/paris-is-going-all-out-for-london-s-brexit-exiles?srnd=premium-europe>

## **Political Shenanigans**

---

### **The Tories must reinvent themselves as the National Party - or be eclipsed by Nigel Farage**

Delivering Brexit and embracing cultural conservatism are key. At the 2015 election, I helped to run the Conservative campaign that stopped Nigel Farage getting into Parliament. Four years on, I wonder if we made a terrible mistake. Back then, Farage forced the Tories to listen to millions of ignored voters. So they promised the Brexit referendum, and said they'd cut immigration. Now, without Farage breathing down their necks, they are breaking both promises. Like many other Brexit supporters, Farage seemed to believe that the will of the people would be implemented by the Government and Parliament. But we were wrong

<https://www.telegraph.co.uk/politics/2019/04/24/tories-must-reinvent-national-party-eclipsed-nigel-farage/>

### **Lord Adonis praises Jeremy Corbyn's 'sensible' Brexit plan**

Adonis said on Facebook that Labour wanted to unite Remain and Leave voters. He has previously demanded a second referendum to 'save Britain from Brexit'. Pro-Europe MPs were left bewildered and said it 'read like a hostage statement.'

<https://www.dailymail.co.uk/news/article-6956655/Lord-Adonis-praises-Jeremy-Corbyns-sensible-Brexit-plan.html>

### **Theresa May rejects Nicola Sturgeon indyref2 demand and insists UK must 'pull together'**

Theresa May has rejected Nicola Sturgeon's demand for a second Scottish referendum, insisting now is the time for the UK to "pull together". The First Minister announced that she wants to have another poll before the next Scottish Parliament elections in two years' time, so long as the UK has left the European Union. In a statement to MSPs, Ms Sturgeon said she would bring forward legislation before the end of this year outlining the rules for another referendum.

<https://www.politicshome.com/news/uk/political-parties/conservative-party/theresa-may/news/103429/theresa-may-rejects-nicola>

Additional sources: ([The Independent](#)) ([The Sun](#)) ([Myrtle Beach Online](#))

## **Nicola Sturgeon calls for a second referendum on Scottish independence by 2021 to give residents 'a choice between Brexit and a future for Scotland'**

Scots should be given the opportunity to vote again on independence before the next Holyrood elections in 2021 - if Brexit goes ahead, First Minister Nicola Sturgeon said today. The SNP leader said she would try to pass plans for a second referendum into law by the end of the year - and dared Theresa May to stop Scotland voting on it again. Speaking in Edinburgh today Mrs Sturgeon argued the current Brexit deadlock at Westminster makes IndyRef2 necessary, five years after she lost the last one. She said: 'A choice between Brexit and a future for Scotland as an independent European nation should be offered in the lifetime of this Parliament.'

<https://www.dailymail.co.uk/news/article-6955115/Nicola-Sturgeon-calls-second-referendum-Scottish-independence.html>

## **Sturgeon wants Scottish independence referendum by 2021**

Nicola Sturgeon has said she wants to hold a second referendum on Scottish independence by 2021 if the country is taken out of the EU. The first minister told Holyrood that she would introduce legislation soon to set the rules for another vote. But she indicated that she would need the agreement of the UK government before actually holding a referendum. Downing Street has previously said it will not grant a new Section 30 order, which underpinned the 2014 referendum. Ms Sturgeon claimed this position was "unsustainable" and challenged her party to increase support and demand for independence. But the prime minister's official spokesman said: "As we have been repeatedly clear, Scotland has already had an independence referendum in 2014 and voted decisively to remain in the United Kingdom. This should be respected. Our position hasn't changed."

<https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/uk-scotland-scotland-politics-48026430>

## **@BBCPolitics Scotland's First Minister Nicola Sturgeon says #IndyRef2 should happen before end of current parliament in 2021**

Scotland's First Minister Nicola Sturgeon says #IndyRef2 should happen before end of current parliament in 2021, saying it is "our route to avoiding the worst of the damage #Brexit will do"

<https://twitter.com/BBCPolitics/status/1121035233208557568>

## **Theresa May is safe until December as party chiefs refuse to change rules so she can be kicked out earlier**

Theresa May is safe from a Brexiteer challenge after Tory bosses refused to change party rules so she can be forced out. Conservative grandees tonight voted against allowing a fresh bid to oust the PM to take place within weeks. But Mrs May will have to lay out a "clear timetable" for leaving 10 Downing Street, backbench boss Sir Graham Brady warned. Under Tory party rules, the leader can't be subjected to a no-confidence vote until December after seeing off the last bid to unseat her four months ago.

<https://www.thesun.co.uk/news/8931618/theresa-may-leadership-challenge-sir-graham-brady/>

## **Secretive hard-Brexit Facebook campaign got 1m responses**

A million Britons responded to a secretive Facebook campaign for a hard Brexit overseen by Lynton Crosby's company, according to the information commissioner, who said the respondents' email addresses may have been harvested for future use. Elizabeth Denham told MPs her investigation into the Mainstream Network campaign group had raised concerns about how valuable voter data was being collected by the under-the-radar campaign, potentially in breach of data protection rules. Mainstream Network was designed to look like a grassroots campaign and give the impression that the British public was rising up in support of a no-deal exit from the European Union, by encouraging the public to flood MPs' inboxes with emails demanding one. However, the Guardian has revealed that the supposedly independent pro-Brexit Facebook pages were part of a series overseen by

Crosby's company, CTF Partners. They were backed by up to £1m in online advertising, paid for by an unknown source in a bid to push MPs to reject Theresa May's Brexit deal.

<https://www.theguardian.com/politics/2019/apr/23/secretive-hard-brexit-facebook-campaign-got-1m-responses>

### **Tory MPs decide not to change leadership rules to allow fresh bid to oust Theresa May**

Tory MPs have rejected the idea of changing the party's leadership rules in order to allow sooner a fresh bid to oust Theresa May, Sir Graham Brady has confirmed.

<https://www.telegraph.co.uk/politics/2019/04/24/brexit-latest-news-theresa-may-warned-against-holding-crunch/>

*Additional sources: ([Politics Home](#))*

### **Nigel Farage's Brexit Party Is Outspending Bigger Rivals On Facebook In A Push For Voters Over 40**

Nigel Farage's Brexit party was the top-spending political campaign on Facebook in Britain last week as it ramped up a push for the support of over-40 voters in the European elections. Widely perceived as a serious threat to Theresa May's Conservatives, Farage's new party spent £11,523 pushing its pro-Brexit messages on the UK's most widely used social network, according to Facebook data — nearly twice as much as that of the main parties, Labour and the Tories. In total, the Brexit party has spent around £20,000 since it formally launched two weeks ago. In contrast, the Remain-supporting Change UK, another new party with big ambitions for next month's European ballot, only just started its Facebook push today. Separate data reviewed by BuzzFeed News reveal that Farage's new party has been given a significant publicity boost by Facebook users organically sharing news articles relating to the launch, without the Brexit party having to pay anything for it. A column written by Farage for the Daily Telegraph newspaper on the morning of the Brexit party launch on April 11 received more than 110,000 engagements on social media, making it the fourth-most-shared UK politics story of the last month, according to BuzzFeed News' analysis of data from BuzzSumo, a company that tracks social sharing.

<https://www.buzzfeed.com/alexspence/nigel-farages-brexit-party-is-outspending-bigger-rivals-on>

### **As Theresa May's Brexit talks with Jeremy Corbyn face collapse, all sides have massive choices to make**

There were no political decisions of any substance taken over Easter. The PM, ministers, all politicians were seemingly too exhausted to do anything but roll the Brexit egg down the hill. So all the political news is about process, after the Cabinet and shadow made no Brexit decisions on Tuesday, and the 1922 executive (guardian of Tory party rules) could not agree whether to expedite a new procedure to evict Theresa May.

<https://www.itv.com/news/2019-04-24/as-theresa-mays-brexit-talks-with-jeremy-corbyn-face-collapse-all-sides-face-massive-choices/>

### **European elections: Rachel Johnson will stand for Change UK**

Boris Johnson's sister, a former BBC broadcaster and John Major's health secretary will all stand for Change UK in next month's European elections, but the party's launch yesterday was marred when one of its candidates was forced to stand down within hours over comments about Romanians. The pro-Remain party announced its MEP hopefuls from almost 4,000 applicants at a campaign launch in Bristol yesterday. Rachel Johnson, Gavin Esler, a former Newsnight presenter, and Stephen Dorrell, a cabinet minister from 1994 to 1997, were among dozens of candidates on the stage. Heidi Allen, 44, the interim leader, described them as coming from "every corner of the UK" and from "all walks of life", adding: "These elections are a chance to send the clearest possible message: we demand a People's Vote and the right to campaign to remain in the European Union." Ali Sadjady, one of the candidates, rapidly came under scrutiny for a comment he posted on Twitter in 2017: "When I hear that 70 per cent of pickpockets caught on the [London Underground] are Romanian it kind [of] makes me want #Brexit". The tweet was uncovered by The Independent, prompting the former

Conservative supporter, who was running in London, to say that he would stand down “so as not to tarnish” Change UK’s reputation.

<https://www.thetimes.co.uk/article/european-elections-rachel-johnson-will-stand-for-change-uk-77qsktzv8>

Additional sources: ([Coventry Telegraph](#))

### **As Theresa May's Brexit talks with Jeremy Corbyn face collapse, all sides have massive choices to make**

There were no political decisions of any substance taken over Easter. The PM, ministers, all politicians were seemingly too exhausted to do anything but roll the Brexit egg down the hill. So all the political news is about process, after the Cabinet and shadow made no Brexit decisions on Tuesday, and the 1922 executive (guardian of Tory party rules) could not agree whether to expedite a new procedure to evict Theresa May.

<https://www.itv.com/news/2019-04-24/as-theresa-mays-brexit-talks-with-jeremy-corbyn-face-collapse-all-sides-face-massive-choices/>

### **Senior Tories demand Theresa May sets a 'clear roadmap' for her departure as Brexiteer coup against her fizzles out**

Another Brexiteer coup against Theresa May fizzled out as the party’s senior backbenchers decided not to change the party’s rules to allow an early leadership challenge against her. However, Sir Graham Brady, the chairman of the party’s 1922 committee, said that it was time Mrs May set a date for her departure by giving a “clear roadmap” for her exit from 10 Downing Street. Under the party's rules, Mrs May cannot be challenged until December after winning a no confidence vote last December by 200 votes to 117. Some members the party’s ruling 1922 committee had sought to change the rules to allow another vote after just six months.

<https://www.telegraph.co.uk/politics/2019/04/24/senior-tories-demand-theresa-may-set-clear-roadmap-departure/>

### **John Bercow confirms voters to be given chance to unseat convicted Tory MP**

Tory MP Chris Davies was fined £1,500 and ordered to carry out 50 hours' community service at Southwark Crown Court on Tuesday. The Commons Speaker told MPs that a recall petition will now be held in his Brecon and Radnorshire constituency.

<https://www.politicshome.com/news/uk/politics/news/103421/john-bercow-confirms-voters-be-given-chance-unseat-convicted-tory-mp>

### **Boris Johnson’s rivals trying to destroy Tory leadership bid by keeping May in power**

Boris Johnson’s rivals are desperately trying to keep Theresa May in power for as long as possible - because it is the only way to destroy his bid to become Conservative Party leader, insiders have claimed.

<https://www.express.co.uk/news/politics/1118452/brexit-news-theresa-may-conservative-party-leadership-contest-boris-johnson>

### **Labour can stop the poisonous Brexit Party winning if we back a People’s Vote**

Farage has no real interest in the deep-seated problems people face — insecure jobs and wages, crumbling public services, poverty, inequality and lack of opportunity. He has no ideas for how to address the real challenges facing our country. Just bigoted politics and empty slogans. The antidote to the poison Farage is pushing is the same as it has always been — a strong dose of progressive values, the championing of international solidarity and a willingness to face down the hatred that he represents directly and without fear. That’s what I’ve always tried to do in my role as an MEP, and it’s what I will continue to do if I’m re-elected in the upcoming European parliament elections.

<https://www.thetimes.co.uk/edition/news/labour-can-stop-the-poisonous-brexit-party-winning-if-we-back-a-people-s-vote-nftz2t26h>

### **Boris Johnson’s rivals trying to DESTROY Tory leadership bid by KEEPING May in power**

The former Foreign Secretary is surging ahead in the popularity stakes in the race to become the next Prime Minister. In a further blow to Theresa May, several Brexiteers today sought to change the party's rules to enable MPs to force her out within a matter of weeks. However, the executive of the 1922 committee rejected the rule change but indicated they want a clearer timetable for her departure.

<https://www.express.co.uk/news/politics/1118452/brexit-news-theresa-may-conservative-party-leadership-contest-boris-johnson>

### **Support for Extinction Rebellion soars after Easter protests**

Support for Extinction Rebellion in the UK has quadrupled in the past nine days as public concern about the scale of the ecological crisis grows. Since the wave of protests began more than a week ago, 30,000 new backers or volunteers have offered their support to the environmental activist group. In the same period it has raised almost £200,000 – mostly in donations of between £10 and £50 – reaching a total of £365,000 since January. The group said the figures showed the public was waking up to the scale of the crisis, adding that pressure was growing on politicians to act.

<https://www.theguardian.com/environment/2019/apr/24/support-for-extinction-rebellion-soars-in-wake-of-easter-protests>

### **Could the tragedy of Lyra McKee unite a divided Northern Ireland?**

There have been many dreadful murders followed by high-profile funerals over the years in Northern Ireland. Several during the Troubles were themselves targets for bombings and shootings. Others became opportunities for paramilitary parades which merely deepened community enmities and exacerbated personal animosities. Funerals too often were not salutary moments from which people concluded that violence was destructive and futile; they were the warp and woof of the province's tragic sectarianism. The funeral of Lyra McKee in St Anne's Cathedral, Belfast, was as far removed from that grisly past as can be. An author and journalist, she was killed last week when a terrorist claiming allegiance to the new IRA opened fire on police and a bullet hit poor Lyra

<https://www.telegraph.co.uk/opinion/2019/04/24/could-tragedy-lyra-mckee-unite-divided-northern-ireland/>

### **A no-deal Conservative Party has no future**

Dumping May and building a new angrier, more working-class coalition is superficially appealing but doomed to fail. No-dealers would not come away empty handed. For they would still have that most valuable political commodity: a sense of resentment. Around this a new Conservative coalition can be built – angrier, whiter, more working class, more northern. This no-deal Conservative Party would have chosen new allies, new champions and new seats to win. It's a plausible political strategy, but will it produce a new majority? And if it did, would it be a majority the right would want? The no-deal Conservative Party will struggle in cities, struggle to win over ethnic minorities, struggle to persuade younger voters. Maybe there is a protest European election victory in that, maybe at a pinch even one solid general election performance, but there isn't a sustainable new majority.

<https://www.thetimes.co.uk/article/f221314e-65da-11e9-877f-447086620e98>

### **'Scots voted to stay in the UK and Europe but cannot do both' - Keating**

The United Kingdom and Scotland are both caught in their own constitutional deadlocks. Westminster is caught in a Brexit bind, with no majority for anything. Both Conservative and Labour leaderships seem to accept that the voters gave Parliament a mandate in June 2016 – but nobody can explain what the mandate was for, given the multiple versions of Brexit on offer. So the critical decision is constantly postponed. Scotland voted to stay in the UK in 2014 and to stay in the EU in 2016 but has been told that it cannot do both. The Scottish Parliament has a pro-independence majority but in the nation at large there is no combination of Yes/No and Remain/leave commands majority support.

<https://www.scotsman.com/news/politics/scots-voted-to-stay-in-the-uk-and-europe-but-cannot-do-both-keating-1-4914754>

## **Political Setbacks**

---

### **MP Johnny Mercer's salary funded by failed bond scheme marketing agent**

A company that marketed a failed bond scheme that lost savers £236m has been funding an MP's private salary. Johnny Mercer receives £85,000 from Crucial Academy, a company ultimately funded by Surge Financial Limited. Surge Financial Limited took 25% commission for marketing bonds by London Capital and Finance (LCF), which is now in administration. Mr Mercer - who is facing calls from investors to quit as an MP - said he had done nothing wrong. The Conservative MP for Plymouth Moor View is a non-executive director of Crucial Academy, which trains military veterans and aims to find them employment. Mr Mercer, himself a former Army officer, is contracted to work 20 hours per month, a rate of more than £350 per hour.

<https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/uk-england-devon-47884273>

Additional sources: ([Shropshire Star](#))

### **Phones4u founder vows to leave UK if Corbyn brings in higher taxes**

John Caudwell, the billionaire founder of Phones4u, has vowed to leave the UK for tax-free Monaco if Jeremy Corbyn becomes prime minister to avoid higher taxes. With an £1.6bn fortune, Caudwell, 66, is the UK's 87th richest person, according to the Sunday Times Rich List. He said he and other wealthy Britons would emigrate to escape Corbyn's proposed wealth tax. Caudwell, who built his fortune importing and selling mobile phones in the late 80s and early 90s, said a Corbyn-led government would be "a complete fiasco". "If Corbyn wanted to start taxing more extensively than already, my appetite or tolerance to pay much more than I'm already paying is not very big," Caudwell said.

<https://www.theguardian.com/business/2019/apr/24/phones4u-founder-john-caudwell-vows-to-leave-uk-to-avoid-higher-taxes>

### **Trump's visit to the UK should be a wake-up call for Britain's declinist, complacent elite**

Donald Trump's state visit in June could not come at a better time. The US President may be just the man to break the Brexit deadlock. He offers an uncompromisingly positive outlook on Britain's exit from the European Union at a moment when the UK could badly do with a confidence boost and a bit of direction. As the leader of the free world, Trump's views matter. When he sets foot in London he can outline exactly what Brexit offers the British people. A free trade deal with the world's largest economy, even closer defence and intelligence ties with the United States, and the enthusiastic backing of the world's superpower. He will also deliver the heartfelt support of the American people.

<https://www.telegraph.co.uk/news/2019/04/24/trumps-visit-uk-should-wake-up-call-britains-declinist-complacent/>

### **Ann Widdecombe: Former Tory MP to stand for Brexit Party**

Former Conservative MP Ann Widdecombe has announced she is set to return to politics - for the Brexit Party. Ms Widdecombe, 71, said she would still vote Conservative in the upcoming local elections but would stand as a candidate for Nigel Farage's new party in the European elections. She said she wanted to "fire a very loud warning shot across the bows" of the established parties. The former shadow home secretary has been retired since 2010. Ms Widdecombe told BBC News she was standing out of "total frustration" and to show Parliament to "get on with it" or see their seats "in danger".

<https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/uk-politics-48034732>

Additional sources: ([GQ Magazine](#)) ([GQ Magazine](#)) ([Daily Mail](#))

### **Ann Widdecombe Says She's Now Been EXPELLED From The Conservative Party**

Lifelong Conservative Ann Widdecombe says she has now been kicked out of the party after she

announced she was standing for the Brexit party in next month's European elections. The former shadow home secretary, 71, served as a Tory MP for over a decade before retiring in 2010. But, she's now been kicked out of the party after joining Nigel Farage's new outfit to fight next month's EU elections. "I received a letter from [Conservative] headquarters today," she told Iain Dale of her expulsion.

<https://www.lbc.co.uk/radio/presenters/iain-dale/ann-widdecombe-brexit-party-expelled-tory/>

### **Change UK group plots to destroy the Lib Dems and hoover up their members, MPs and donors, leaked memo reveals**

The Independent Group of defector MPs is planning to wipe out the Liberal Democrats and replace them as a party, a leaked strategy document reveals. The group of former Labour and Tory MPs, known as TIGgers, states that its objective is to defeat the Lib Dems so there is just a 'single party... for progressive politics at the next General Election'. It plans to directly target Lib Dem voters and donors and to compete with the party on its own issues. It also rules out working with the party, saying: 'No mergers, pacts or alliances.'

<https://www.dailymail.co.uk/news/article-6954283/Change-UK-group-plots-destroy-Lib-Dems.html>

### **Change UK candidate Jan Rostowski backs down on anti-gay comments**

Jan Rostowski, who is running for the European elections with the pro-EU Change UK party, has backed down on past anti-gay comments he made. Rostowski—who is a former minister for finance in Poland—was announced as a candidate for Change UK yesterday. However, it wasn't long before an interview from 2011 resurfaced in which he said "a stable society is based on heterosexual relations." He has since backed down on the comments, according to BuzzFeed political correspondent Alex Wickham.

<https://www.pinknews.co.uk/2019/04/24/jan-rostowski-change-uk-anti-gay/>

### **Second Change UK candidate Joseph Russo quits after offensive tweets emerge**

Change UK lost another candidate today over offensive tweets including one about being 'scared of black women' after a chase through Amsterdam 'by a crazed black whore'. Joseph Russo also called new party colleague Anna Soubry 'Thatcher 2.0' before she quit the Tories and branded the arrest of paedophile Gary Glitter 'low hanging fruit' for police. Yesterday Ali Sadjady, a former Tory standing for the new pro-Remain party, was forced to resign hours after he was unveiled when it emerged he said Romanian pickpockets in London 'kind of makes me want Brexit'.

<https://www.dailymail.co.uk/news/article-6954779/Second-Change-UK-candidate-quits-offensive-tweets-crazy-black-w-h-Gary-Glitter.html>

### **Since I announced my Change UK candidacy I've been accused of Islamophobia - it's nothing short of a smear campaign**

Ever since the announcement yesterday of my candidacy as a London MEP for Change UK - The Independent Group, I have been subjected to an online campaign of false allegations of racism, including an accusation by the Muslim Council of Britain (MCB) that I am Islamophobic. I have never - not once - expressed anti-Muslim hatred or bigotry. I have always been clear that any criticisms I may make are about Islamism, and conservative Islamic cultures or beliefs; never Muslims. I am horrified, appalled and deeply upset to have been targeted by what appears to be an active campaign of smears and lies from hard-left activists and the MCB.

<https://www.independent.co.uk/voices/change-uk-nora-mulready-islamophobia-twitter-labour-muslim-council-of-britain-a8885026.html>

### **Get set for higher taxes as Hammond warns on cost of ageing population**

Taxes will keep rising for years to come to cover the cost of caring for Britain's ageing population, Philip Hammond has warned. Despite success in the long battle to defeat the budget deficit, the Chancellor said the tax burden - already its highest in more than 30 years - will rise further. Higher

earners in particular should brace for a bigger bill to HM Revenue and Customs as Mr Hammond said “grumbling” from the rich should be taken as a sign of success. “The trick in any tax system is to get the balance right. If taxpayers who are paying large amount of tax weren’t grumbling we wouldn’t have got it right,” he told MPs on the Treasury Committee on Wednesday.

<https://www.telegraph.co.uk/business/2019/04/24/get-set-higher-taxes-hammond-warns-cost-ageing-population/>

### **Why does Nigel Farage keep coming back to Clacton? Because it is nothing like Britain**

Nigel Farage is talking the language of betrayal, but the only thing he and the rest of the Brexiteers have been betrayed by is reality

<https://www.independent.co.uk/voices/nigel-farage-brexit-party-clacton-ann-widdecombe-european-elections-theresa-may-latest-a8884601.html>

### **Change UK's lead MEP candidate in Scotland quits**

The candidate who had topped Change UK's Scottish list for the European Parliament elections has withdrawn from the race after one day. Joseph Russo was selected as the lead candidate for the new party in the Scottish constituency, should the UK take part in the elections in May. However he has now announced on Twitter that he will not stand for election. He said he was "not fully prepared" for the "personal scrutiny" he faced after "offensive" online posts came to light. One of the new party's prospective London candidates, Ali Sadjady, also quit the race on Tuesday - hours after the party's lists were announced - over comments he had previously made on social media. Change UK - which stems from the Independent Group of MPs who quit Labour and the Conservatives earlier this year - launched its campaign for the elections on Tuesday.

<https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/uk-scotland-scotland-politics-48039047>

### **Fox breaks cover**

Nigel Farage's Brexit party is leading the polls for the EU elections and, given the party has no manifesto, policies or coherent strategy for leaving the EU, that's some achievement. It seems that our political discourse is now so irredeemably f\*cked that voting for a party with no actual policies in order to elect MEPs to a parliament they don't believe in is just fine and dandy. Fox is currently director of the 'think tank' the Institute of Ideas, but for two decades she was a core figure in the Revolutionary Communist Party and the co-publisher of its in-house magazine, Living Marxism. Neither Fox nor the Brexit Party attempted to deny that, but I wonder whether rank-and-file Brexiteers planning to vote for Ms Fox know quite what they are getting.

<https://bylinetimes.com/2019/04/24/fox-breaks-cover-from-revolutionary-communist-to-farages-right-hand-woman/>

### **Nigel Farage - The New Nasty Party**

Bill “Viagra Golliwog” Etheridge, apart from the Viagra and the Golliwogs, is more recently known as a pal of the so-called White Pendragons, who were behind the interruption of a speech by London Mayor Sadiq Khan. They told those present that they were there to effect a citizen's arrest. And outside the venue, they had brought a scaffold. As in the kind used to hang people. He's part of the new Farage fringe. Also joining Mr Thirsty, and announced as an MEP hopeful this week, has been businessman Lance Forman, who had previously been a supporter of Turning Point UK, the group whose US parent had been linked with all manner of extremism. For him, the charge is one of straightforward hypocrisy: having told “I can't think of one area in which [the EU] has helped our business”, his company's website proclaimed the virtues of achieving PGI status for its London Cure Smoked Salmon. Awarded by the EU.

[https://zelo-street.blogspot.com/2019/04/nigel-farage-new-nasty-party.html?utm\\_source=dlvr.it&utm\\_medium=twitter](https://zelo-street.blogspot.com/2019/04/nigel-farage-new-nasty-party.html?utm_source=dlvr.it&utm_medium=twitter)

### **Ministers in a froth amid Huawei row**

There have been fears inside government about allowing the Chinese telecoms firm Huawei to get involved in the construction of the UK's 5G telecoms network for some time. Yet the government

under Theresa May believes the risks can be controlled and is proceeding

<https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/uk-politics-48044017>

Additional sources: (*Daily Telegraph*)

## **Trade Deals/Negotiations**

---

### **UK's biggest fishing trawler sails up Thames in Brexit warning**

"Brexit has huge advantages for fishing if it is properly handled," said Sir Barney White-Spunner, the chairman of the advisory board of UK Fisheries, which owns the Kirkella. "Our concern is that it is not being properly handled." He is concerned that in the no-deal continuity arrangements that have been signed with Norway, Iceland and the Faeroes, the UK has granted access to UK markets for these nations to export their fish to British consumers, without demanding reciprocal access to fishing grounds in return.

<https://www.theguardian.com/business/2019/apr/23/uks-biggest-fishing-trawler-sails-up-thames-in-brexit-warning>

### **MPs campaign to have Donald Trump's UK state visit cancelled**

Emily Thornberry, the shadow foreign secretary, issued a strongly worded statement against the visit. "It beggars belief that on the very same day Donald Trump is threatening to veto a UN resolution against the use of rape as a weapon of war, Theresa May is pressing ahead with her plans to honour him with a state visit to the UK," she said. The Scottish government said in a pointed statement that it had not been consulted about the trip. A spokeswoman added: "We will not compromise our fundamental values of equality, diversity and human rights, and we expect these values to be made clear during the president's visit to the UK."

<https://www.theguardian.com/us-news/2019/apr/23/donald-trump-plans-state-visit-to-uk-in-june>

### **US-UK trade deal 'more difficult' with a customs union**

The US Ambassador to the UK says negotiating a trade deal post-Brexit would be "much more difficult" if the UK is in a customs union with the EU. Woody Johnson also said it would be "more challenging" for the UK "to get control of [its] own trade policy". But he said President Donald Trump is still hopeful doing a "robust, big, very generous trade deal" with the UK after Brexit. President Trump will come to the UK for a state visit in June.

<https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/uk-politics-48042524>