

Twitter Thread by The Neglectful Gardener: @RebootGB #BLM



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Welcome to 2022: Reasons to be optimistic, a thread.

Due to the length this comes thread in 2 parts.

It is necessarily a personal view, and I'm sure lots of people will disagree.

1. I found myself on 1 Jan feeling more optimistic than I might have expected. This thread sets out why. Some of you who follow me will recognise elements, but this is the first time I have brought them together.

2. Since the referendum in 2016, many of us have lived with a sense of loss. It has been clear from immediately after the referendum that the policy of the Tory govt, starting with Theresa May, has been to crush opposition rather than open a dialogue to seek unity.

3. Those who voted to remain were to be cast as "out of touch" with public mood, and if they continued to hold to their beliefs, "nutty" and "Anti-democratic". I have reason to believe this was a deliberate policy decision taken at the highest level in the Tory party.

4. The policy was adopted because the outcome of the referendum was so close it was questionable whether it could be a sound basis for a massive constitutional change. If opposition continued, or grew, it would become a serious threat.

5. In the immediate aftermath of the referendum, I believed this policy might succeed. I underestimated the strength of pro EU sentiment, and the determination of those who saw the referendum for the fraud it undoubtedly was.

6. Now, in 2022, the country remains deeply divided on this issue; see this excellent thread by [@mafevema](#)
<https://t.co/NPXclqP9Rz>

on recent polling. That is a testament to the strength of the pro EU side, and the basis of real hope.

Almost six out of 10 (57 per cent) believe Boris Johnson lied to them about what Brexit would be like during the bitter referendum campaign of 2016.

7. May was continually pushed by the right in her party, until she lost the leadership and they installed someone they considered “one of their own”. The Brexit to be delivered became harder and harder, and almost became “no deal”.
8. I've always thought a less precipitate approach to the negotiation, with a “softer” deal, could have formed the basis for a Brexit “successful” in economic terms, with slow divergence from the EU, as new economic capabilities were developed.
9. Driven by their greed and desperation to achieve a "clean break" because anything less was not "success", that approach was rejected by the hardliners. And by doing so, they created the circumstances of their own downfall. Those are playing out now.
10. The wider population is tiring of perpetual war with the EU; they begin to see the inevitable downsides of introducing massive friction into trading arrangements with our closest market. They were told brexit was done. They want to move on.
11. They also begin to see the consequences of brexit with specific reference to Scotland and Northern Ireland have proved to be every bit as dangerous as many of us predicted they would.
12. There has been no immediate economic collapse, which was never likely, or predicted by anyone serious, though right wing commentators love to pretend it was. Instead, as others have said, and the stats show, there has been the beginning of a slow deflation of the balloon.
13. 2022 will accelerate the deflation and it will become more obvious, as customs controls are introduced, staged (because the govt. realised that to bring them in in one hit might be catastrophic), now, and later in the year.
14. The govt. has no answer to this; only “boosterism” the triumphant declaration of successive “victories” which melt away like snow within a few days.
15. Key promises, particularly "taking control of our borders" have failed and with degraded relationships with countries across a short stretch of water are seen to be harder, not easier, to achieve. "Levelling up" now means repairing the drive of a Tory supporting Aristo.
16. At the same time the pandemic has tested the govt's ability to manage crises, rather than just do populist politics. And it is becoming too obvious to ignore that they have no ability to manage.
17. They stumble from crisis to crisis, ignoring the advice of experts, choosing risk rather than the precautionary principle, and basing policy on what they think is politically acceptable to their supporters.
18. They gamble, because they need the big win; but the odds are stacked against them, as they usually are against the individual punter. The result is the unpopularity of the populist leader, the Shropshire North by election, and the beginning of a slide in the polls.

19. They may try to stem this by changing the leader. This will be a moment of serious danger for them; the fracturing of the party can't be ruled out. And if they manage this dangerous transition, would the gamble succeed this time?

20. Beyond a possible short term bounce in the polls, I can't see it making any difference. It is still the same divided party, grappling with the same intractable problems, subject to the same centrifugal forces, and the vagaries of unforeseen events.

21. They may limp on, but it increasingly looks as though they will be limping on to ultimate defeat. So, at some point a new govt. is elected to face the problems. How does it ease them?

22. Several things will need to be done, but looming large in any assessment will be the relationship with the EU. Any improvement in the practical consequences of Brexit will help, and is likely to prove difficult to argue against.

23. Leave was always a simple message; the answer to a supposedly major issue which didn't really exist. It could capture the imagination of those who did not understand the complexities.

24. There are many ways things could be improved. I'd start with an SPS agreement which would ease the problems face by agricultural exporters, and help with the Irish border issue.

25. Beyond that, improved Customs Arrangements with the EU. Not an immediate rejoining of the Customs Union (which please note, is the step before any thought of the Single Market).

26. And while this is going on, a new government will have to focus on how to reintroduce and implement long term policies in a number of areas (education, housing, energy, you name it) that will not become a political football for future governments.

27. Short termism and the see saw of British politics is what has created a lot of our problems. This will be obvious to any incoming non-Tory govt. Achieving it will be difficult and it will be a matter of small steps.

28. There are several possible paths to take, but constitutional reform is essential, to re-establish checks and balances prevent incoming govts. Immediately undoing what their predecessors have achieved.

29. We cannot immediately rejoin the EU. First because the EU would not simply welcome back a country which might decide again 5 years time, when it elects a new govt. that it wants to leave. As a wise former EU diplomatic colleague told me "We cannot operate a revolving door".

30. Second because the country is still too deeply divided. But small steps, such as those described above are unlikely to raise convincing opposition. The road back is long and hard.

31. But the last five years have convinced me that the likelihood of rejoining the EU is increasing all the time. Nothing is certain, but the probability will steadily increase.

32. Of course, the govt, and its media apologists, will tell you it is impossible. Because they desperately want you to believe that. It is their only defence against cold, hard economic reality and logic.

33. All the current political players on the stage today will be gone relatively soon, in the scale of things. They cannot bind their successors. They cannot bind future generations; they may even decide they need a full blooded revolution to achieve a world that works for them.

34. Future generations have the right. We cannot dictate to them how they govern themselves. We do not know what problems they may face, though we know they will be grappling with global problems such as climate change.

35. International cooperation, involving accepting international legal obligations will be inescapable. The dream of unfettered sovereignty is just that. A fantasy.

36. I start 2022 with a quiet optimism, and increased determination to endure whatever idiocy the govt. tries to impose as it passes through the door of defeat.and becomes an unpleasant memory. The endurance of its opponents is what it set out to destroy; it has already failed.