

Re-booting our political system

By Niall Warry, Director of The Harrogate Agenda

In a recent post-mortem on the EU referendum on BBC Radio 4 entitled *Two Rooms*, remainers from Brixton and leavers from Boston shared their thoughts on the vote and its aftermath. There were obviously differences of opinion, but one common aspiration for both groups was to take advantage of the opening provided by Brexit to bring power closer to the people.

The Harrogate Agenda (THA) was founded in 2012 for precisely this purpose and on Saturday 1st October seven established and eight new supporters met in Warwick, in a workshop environment, to discuss the 'Way Ahead'. A few months ago, The Harrogate Agenda became involved, with full consent of our supporters, in the referendum campaign and along with the Campaign for an Independent Britain and several other groups, we became part of The Leave Alliance (TLA) which supported and promoted Dr Richard North's Flexcit plan to leave the EU.

The Harrogate Agenda (THA) has six demands which, when enacted, will revolutionise the way we are governed in this country. These demands all evolve from the principle that 'we the people' must be recognised as sovereign. It is essential that our six demands are met to ensure we will remain outside the EU once we finally leave. At the moment, there is nothing stopping any future government taking us back in, without even consulting us. This is because sovereignty – or power – currently resides in Parliament. This makes a travesty of the claim that we currently live in a democracy, for *demos* means 'people' and *kratos* 'power'. Without *demos* there is no democracy, but people without power is not democracy either.

The origins and location of sovereignty are rarely understood fully. In the beginning, people had power in their own hands but over time this power was eroded by sovereign monarchs whose decrees were absolute. Later, in this country, sovereignty was wrestled from the monarch to Parliament where it resides to this day.

The past and present incumbents in Westminster feel that the criteria for democracy are met because at General Elections power is temporarily handed back to 'us' to vote in the next government. However, our politicians conveniently overlook that they promise us the earth before an election and then happily ignore us once in power. We have little scope to hold them to account. In other words, our supposed "Representative Democracy" is a sham. The referendum result, where we voted against our government and the leaders of the Labour, SNP and Lib Dem parties, shows why things must change, with the recognition that sovereignty – and thus power – ultimately resides with 'us' the people. Our twenty-nine-page pamphlet which you can request from our website [here](#) explains how we believe this would work out in practise.

Our workshop last Saturday confirmed the importance of communicating our message on two established and one new fronts. First, there is the 'bottom up' approach consisting of any one of many possible types of meeting that can be set up at a local level. These range from organising a meeting with your own MP to giving a talk at schools or even organising meetings in village halls and similar venues. The second way of spreading the word is via the internet, including our new Blogspot, which can be accessed from our website. Also covered under this heading is the use of Social Media, especially Twitter. Third and lastly we considered the importance of working from the 'top down' which is currently an area that we had not previously considered. It is now our intention to create a think tank to explore the whole area of political power. This sounds ambitious and we are under no illusions

that working from the 'top down' will take us a few years to become established and thus recognised. In the meantime, we will continue to develop our bottom up approach, using grassroots activists and the Internet to promote our cause.

So if anyone shares our desire to re-boot our country's political system and see real power returned to the people, please get in touch with us [here](#).