

# Club



# Comment

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## April 2012

### Broken Promises or

### Trust me I'm the Prime Minister

**T**hey say that an elephant never forgets and elephants are said to be very intelligent animals. The late Attorney General of the United States, Robert Kennedy, once said, "I forgive my enemies but I remember their names." One wonders whether Britain's pensioners may well be remembering these quotations when assessing the implications of Chancellor George Osborne's recent stealth tax on pensioners.

Pensioner groups and politicians of all parties condemned the latest "granny tax" whereby age related income allowances will cease. Lord Tebbit described it as an assault on pensioners. "The freezing and gradual abolition of the age-related tax allowance is an error. It hurts those who have saved enough for modest pensions. It is unfair and lousy politics."

How many pensioners are there in the country that may be "**hurt**" by the chancellor's changes to the pension income allowances?

Since 1982, the number of over 85s has more than doubled to 1.3 million and is set to double again to 3.1 million in the next 25 years.

In 2007, over 65s numbered 9.8 million and this is set to rise to 16.1 million by 2032 - almost one in four of the population.

About 40% of NHS spending goes on over 65s who currently comprise 16% of the population. Prior to the recent budget, pensioners received in total £60 billion in cash and benefits.

Apart from the obvious considerations of how these ever-increasing numbers of pensioners are to be funded in the future, one would assume that the 16% of the population who are aged over 65 also have the right to vote and are quite capable of deciding which government they would wish to see elected at the next general election. If one were running a business dedicated to excellent customer service, I would be extremely worried that 16% of my customer base was dissatisfied with the level of service they were receiving and that they could easily express their dissatisfaction by purchasing elsewhere.

I put the question of the Chancellor's blunder over the treatment of pensioners to a friend of mine who has studied politics and politicians for many decades and asked him what he felt about the actions of the Chancellor and his treatment of pensioners.

He agreed that there was a demographic "time-bomb" regarding the state funding of pensions and that it had serious implications for the resources of the NHS to provide care for the elderly, notwithstanding that many of the over 65s were in much better health than their parents had been when over 65. More importantly, politically he felt that you ignore this large group at your peril as they have the time to assess whether the present government is fulfilling the promises it made to the electorate before coming into office.

His main thrust was the fact that the Prime Minister, David Cameron, had reneged on almost every one of his promises made prior to the election.

I asked him, "in what particular areas?"

Firstly, he believed that Mr Cameron lacked leadership and had abandoned true conservative values; being more interested in being seen as friendly to everyone, whether it is the Liberal Democrats or the "hoodie" on the street.

More specifically, he believed that Mr Cameron has not reassured the public in areas such as law and order - one of the major tenets of conservative policy; the immigration and border controls were in a shambolic mess, with more immigrants entering the country and even less illegal immigrants being caught and then deported. A report stated that the immigration level had increased during the lifetime of this government.

The Human Rights Act was actually putting the public at risk - with the state's inability to deport terrorists. He asked why - for the sake of possibly infringing a terrorist's liberty and human rights, we wait until another bomb outrage - what about the human rights of our citizens and the duty of the government to protect us against such outrages. The Human Rights Act should immediately be amended as promised by Mr Cameron.

The cost of the war in Afghanistan is a continual drain on the economy of this country together with the resultant horrific loss of life and injuries to members of the armed forces. My friend predicted that once the United States and

Britain together with all other coalition forces left Afghanistan, the country would again be in turmoil with a civil war. It would revert to what it was before the coalition's entry into that country - tribal fiefdoms and even more production of opium. On this last matter, the production of opium has increased three-fold since the West's intervention in that country despite the army's best efforts to eradicate the cultivation of poppy crops.

We briefly touched on the petrol crisis, or rather crisis self-inflicted by the ludicrous statements emanating from various government ministers. What with a continuing demeaning debate as to whether sausage rolls are liable to VAT if they are purchased when hot and what is the legal definition of "hot" if the sausage roll had actually cooled down by the time it was purchased. He called it shooting yourself in not one foot but in both feet.

Mr Cameron has broken another of his pre-election promises by failing to reduce in total the number of public service employees and to cut their enormous wage and pension bill and administration costs. In fact, in certain sectors of government, the number of people employed has actually grown in number. This makes the Prime Minister appear to be weak and foppish, like his Deputy Mr Nick Clegg.

This inability to tackle this critical issue during such an economic crisis, demonstrates a complete lack of the dynamic leadership he promised us.

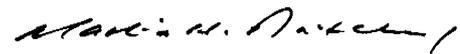
He wondered whether Mr Cameron, apparently so divorced from the realities of daily life; unlike the millions of pensioners and cash-strapped families, even knew the cost of a pint of milk.

Towards the end of our long and interesting conversation regarding the current performance of this government and in particular the Prime Minister David Cameron, I asked if he felt Mr Cameron had any redeeming attributes. After a long pause, he replied that he believed that Mr Cameron would only be in office for one term as he had completely failed to understand the ambitions and hopes of the ordinary voter. If he had stuck to his word and proved to the electorate that he had strong convictions - had delivered upon his election promises - at least the majority - if not all - he may have had more respect and the confidence of the electorate.

My friend also believes that most conservative supporters are totally frustrated and feel alienated by the present actions; or lack of them, by the Conservative leadership team.

I suggested that if the Prime Minister; who says he is a conservative, had perhaps endorsed the Aims and Ambitions of the Conservative Monday Club, he would be in a better position today than he is.

My friend replied, "You need someone with the strength and convictions of Winston Churchill or Maggie Thatcher to put over the Aims of The Conservative Monday Club as they are true conservative values. I don't even know if Cameron is a Conservative or even if he knows what true Conservatism really stands for."



**Martin H Pritchard**  
Publications Editor

# The *Conservative Monday* Club

## *Aims*

The Conservative Monday Club is a group of members and supporters formed to promote traditional conservative values and is dedicated to:-

- \* **The Monarchy.**
- \* **The Sovereignty of a British Parliament under the Crown.**
- \* **Maintaining the United Kingdom as an independent country.**
- \* **Supporting our cultural and historical heritage.**
- \* **One United Kingdom of Great Britain & Northern Ireland.**
- \* **A strong and efficient defence capability.**
- \* **The strengthening and maintenance of law and order.**
- \* **A sound economy.**

Full details of the Aims are available on request