

If only we'd known then what we know now

Josephine Hanney sent the following letter to the Slough papers in early Oct 2018, but unlike her earlier letters calling for a Vote on the Deal they were not published.

Many factors influenced how different people voted in the EU referendum, but there is increasing evidence, from Slough and elsewhere, that some who voted Leave are moving away from supporting Brexit. This is perfectly understandable, and could be seen in the recent debate in Slough Council on a Peoples Vote on the deal.

Yet the Tory Government is still refusing to let the people vote on whether to accept the final deal (or no deal), or reject it and remain in the EU. After its recent conference the Labour party is still not definitely committed to letting 'the many' decide. Brexit supporters seemed scared to let the people have the final say on the deal. Presumably this is because they realise some who voted Leave would not do so again.

There are many reasons why increasing numbers of people are saying: 'If only we'd known then what we know now.' We now know that Brexit is so far costing the UK economy about £500 million a week because it is growing less strongly, with lower investment, than all the evidence suggests it would have done had the UK voted to Remain in the EU. This comes on top of the earlier statement from the chair of the independent UK Statistics Authority that the claim by Vote Leave that leaving the EU would free up £350 million a week was 'misleading.'

We now know as well that the staff shortages in the NHS and social care are being made worse as more EU nationals contributing to these vital services in Slough and elsewhere are leaving, and fewer are being recruited. We also now know that in any post-Brexit trade deal with President Trump the US Government would insist that the NHS be opened up to exploitation by private US healthcare companies. In such trade deals, the UK would additionally be pressed to accept imported agricultural products that do not meet current EU standards, most notoriously, chlorine-washed chickens.

Finally, as again confirmed by the recent Tory conference, we now know that there are major and continuous splits in the Tory party over what Brexit actually means. This is all so damaging for our country.

The principles embedded into the EU were that countries should try to work together to maintain the peace and improve standards of living after the devastation of the two world wars. The Lib Dems believe these principles are still worth fighting for. During October we will be taking to the streets of Slough, listening to what the people are saying about Brexit now, and asking if they believe there should be a Peoples Vote on the deal.