

## Fixing Broken Politics and Society – from the Bottom-Up

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### **‘TOGETHER’ building healthy communities and workplace for the greater good**

Politicians and ‘top-down’ approaches are not going to sort out our broken politics, economy and society any time soon. Renewing mainstream politics will take years. We need a twin track approach that enables us to safeguard and prosper our society at community level irrespective of political track developments. We citizens must produce a rescue plan.

‘Together’ is a simple but genuinely radical idea and umbrella movement for those seeking to rescue our society and do their duty for the next and successor generations. It seeks to get a critical mass of citizens and organisations committing to work for the greater good, to deliver a diverse but unified 21st century British society.

#### **The ‘Together’ pledge:**

‘Together’ is a non-political, non-partisan movement of individuals and organisations who seek to engage with others to transform our communities and work for the greater good.

I/we commit:

**T**ogether... to work collaboratively with others to make a real impact.

**O**ppose... to oppose injustice, oppression, division and poverty.

**G**oodwill... to help others and my community to the wider good.

**E**ngage... to engage constructively with others seeking to build healthy communities and workplaces.

**T**olerant... to be a team player for tolerant, civil, and cohesive communities.

**H**elp... to help others in need and in crisis and to share some of my skills, energy, and time with them.

**E**ncourage... to encourage others to become team players building together vibrant and healthy communities.

**R**espect... to respect fellow citizens contributing to society and to protect and support the poor, the marginalised, and voiceless.

Our country is dangerously divided. Many citizens live in closed and self-restricting identity bubbles. A majority of us may be thriving, but according to the social mobility commission ‘whole tracts of the country have been left behind’. 21st century British society – however one looks at it - is not the benchmark cohesive, fair and just society that it should be.

Hard times are not the issue. It is the lack of vision and hope that really hurts. Crony capitalism, big business, big state, dysfunctional politics and flawed leadership. How on earth can we turn these supertankers even a few degrees?

Carrying on as we have for the past half century with everyone incentivised by state and commerce to focus on themselves has caused untold harm. This is not just a moral issue. It has been highly destructive to individual, family, and society.

Our representative democratic system is stoking partisanship and no longer works well for the whole. Today's politicians are too self-absorbed in party politics and constrained by party tribalism to pull together on even the most critical issues such as education or health.

It is time for "we the people" to demonstrate a different way. When we get to a tipping point where a few million more citizens have signed up to help their neighbour, community and country we can infuse more collaborative and joined-up leadership models and approaches from the bottom-up.

We need a critical mass of good people doing good things for the greater good. This will provide personal and collective purpose and morale, and make our communities and workplaces more cohesive and resilient. It will demonstrate viable alternatives to nasty politics and extremism, 'them and us' division and tribalism.

Parliament's focus on establishing new rights in past decades, however commendable, has emphasised division and separateness. If only equivalent effort and leadership had gone into facilitating healthy relationships too our society would be far more cohesive today. Good relationships take commitment, time and team effort. Trust cannot be imposed top-down, it builds on relationships and working together.

Yes Big Society failed, but things look different now. Lessons have been learnt. It was the implementation that was wrong before, not the theory. The need for 'state power to people power' and decision making on local issues being better made at the local level has grown, not diminished.

Originally a single party initiative, Big Society was badly sold by a coalition government which failed to prioritise and resource it, and soon alienated its major partner, civil society.

A vastly higher national debt today and an ageing population mean that future governments will not have the money required to do all they do now. Business and civil society will have to plug the gaps.

We must establish a new consensus around state and individual roles, obligations, rights and duties. We should thank and honour our church and faith groups, progressive business, social enterprises and wealthy philanthropists who quietly challenge the 'selfie' fixation and deliver billions of pounds worth of social action for others and the greater good. We should follow their example and sign up to our collective responsibility to make our communities better.

The choice of community, social action and environment projects to join is huge. There is a team to suit everyone's interests and talents. With a critical mass of us giving just a couple of hours of our time, empathy and energy to others - each month or when we can - we can transform our communities.

By prioritising the greater good at community level we can 'together' help forge a diverse but unified British society more at peace with itself. Upon this so much of our wellbeing and potential rest.

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