

The People's Constitution



So here it is, LSE's "People's Constitution". We are enormously proud of it, though we claim credit only as midwives to the efforts of others rather than writers in our own right. For what you see here is truly the work of a "crowd", a knowledgeable community from all over the United Kingdom who availed of the chance we gave them to knuckle down as constitutional players at www.constitutionuk.com and suggest, argue for, persuade and promote any parts of the country's new proposed constitutional order that meant the most to them. The thousands who participated took what was not only an open book but a blank one too and over two exciting years they filled it with what mattered to them.

Initially the public chose the values that should govern the project, at a packed open meeting at LSE in October 2013. After a period of deliberation and reflection we pushed our thinking forward at our Carnival in Summer 2014 – it was here that we agreed the preamble that you see set out right at the top of our final document. Then last autumn, we put in place planning for the main project activity, the drafting via our web site of the actual constitution itself. Thousands of inputs on each and every aspect of our subject being finally translated into proper text by our Community Champions with the support and assistance of facilitators and experts at a specially convened constitutional convention held at LSE on 22 April 2015. With this completed and reports from the Convention compiled I had

the easy task of drawing together the various provisions and introducing some transitional clauses – and a Constitution was born.

As I write the new United Kingdom government looks set fair for another five years of uninterrupted rule. But appearances can be deceptive and in this case I would say they are. The constitutional questions which provoked our project in the first place have not been answered; they are merely being reframed. What is the right relationship between the various bits that make up the current United Kingdom? Where (if anywhere) does Europe fit? Should the country have rights at all and if so of what sort? Can we continue with an unelected second chamber, or for that matter an unelected head of state? Crisis is around the corner, and with crisis comes the opportunity as well as need for change.

Parliament may be sovereign but it cannot order us to destroy our critical faculties. Magna Carta's 800th anniversary is a reminder to us all that the responsibility for proper governance rests with each of us. The issue is moral as well as constitutional. The People's Constitution offered here is a reminder that we all matter, in return for which we have an obligation – each of us – to think about the organisation of the world we find ourselves in.

Conor Gearty
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