

## Contribution from Rob Windstrel Watson

This country needs a nationally funded, subject threaded political discussion forum and needs it now! It would give ordinary people a voice they do not currently have and encourage intelligent analysis of issues without party and vested interest funded bias which apparently currently corrupts all Westminster parliamentary activity.

The present system of MPs representing their constituents views just doesn't work. You know why. Most MPs have safe seats. For example, in the Bridgwater and West Somerset constituency where I live, the MP is never ever going to represent my views however many times I write to him. As a devout supporter of the government, he will continue to toe the government and party line. The local 'tribal' vote for his party will continue to vote the same way however ineffective the local MP is in representing the rest of us, mainly, apparently, because they can't face voting for 'the other lot'.

A national people's forum would have main headings covering all the policy areas with subdivisions to enable constituents to identify the detailed arguments in favour or against particular policies. This would prevent duplication. If somebody had already contributed a particular point, it wouldn't need repeating (but could be 'liked'). Constituents could then be able to add to the arguments in favour or refute the arguments with evidence provided from their own experience or analysis. With the many and varied areas of expertise amongst the population, the forums would inevitably provide an enormous pool of knowledge and experience from a multitude of expert sources that individual MPs could never hope to emulate (especially as so many MPs are these days narrow career politicians).

The forum would provide a vital and growing knowledge base on public policy and the reasons for public policy, available to anybody at a single click.

(By the way, I have recommended a national forum of this type on many occasions to the MP for Bridgwater and West Somerset and I have no evidence whatsoever that he has ever taken up and furthered my point of view in parliament ... which rather proves my point doesn't it?)

As a (poor) alternative, after each debate in the Commons, duly reported in Hansard, ordinary people could be invited to have their say and this would also be reported in Hansard. In other words, a people's discussion forum could be attached digitally and as an integral part of national parliamentary political debate.

Of course, none of this will ever happen. Why not? Because parliament is a comfortable club where power is kept in the hands of a small number of, mainly wealthy people, who work in tandem with other powerful vested interests in the economy to ensure the country works to their own ends of money and power.

Which means I'm wasting my time on this Sunday morning submitting this comment... which makes me very sad.

If I am not wasting my time, I look forward to seeing the People's Democratic Forum online as soon as is possible. How about next week?