

**2010
VOTE for...**

Brendan Murphy

**THE Macclesfield
INDEPENDENT**



MY PRIORITIES

"GUIDED BY PRINCIPLE, KNOWLEDGE AND COMMON SENSE!"

- **ECONOMIC RECOVERY** is clearly the top priority for every Member of Parliament. And the recovery has to be led by tax incentives, innovation, investment and wider opportunities for enterprise and success
- **Slash the NATIONAL DEBT** now! It should not be left for our grandchildren to pay off!
- **Low TAX - Fair TAX - Right TAX!** Raise more tax by stimulating more jobs. Cut Income tax. Raise tax-free threshold to £10/£15K
- **Restore full EMPLOYMENT** through tax incentives for new jobs and less red tape. Abolish business rates on small owner-run businesses
- **Curb PUBLIC SPENDING** — freeze top salaries, cut the £64Bn quangocracy, end public-sector bonus pay
- **Maintain public spending on CHILD PROTECTION and ANTI-TERRORISM**
- **EUROPE** — EU Referendum "In or Out". Restore British sovereignty. Repeal Lisbon Treaty
- **AFGHAN War** — Give them the tools to do the job or **BRING THEM BACK HOME**, safe and alive!
- **BANKING REFORMS** — protect investors from "corporate embezzlement and hold Directors criminally responsible for reckless losses
- **IMMIGRATION** should be tightly regulated to meet British needs, qualifications tightened (eg ability to speak English etc) and stricter Deportation laws
- **Tackle POVERTY** by creating opportunities for social mobility, ending benefit dependency and rewarding enterprise
- **ENERGY SUPPLIES** — develop alternative energy sources. Low energy tariffs for low users
- **Protect the countryside and support BRITISH FARMING**
- **CLIMATE CHANGE** is a serious matter but should not be an excuse for punitive "green taxes" or self-defeating counter measures
- **PARLIAMENTARY and Political Party reforms** to eliminate corruption, curb bureaucratic power and widen public accountability
- **ENGLISH LAW** must be set by English MPs only
- **"NO2ID"** — maintain traditional civil liberties for law abiding citizens
- **ANIMAL WELFARE** — domestic pets, wildlife and endangered species
- **FAIR TRADE** with undeveloped countries. Apart from the moral imperative, it will lessen the impetus for migration
- **The NHS governance** should be reformed with a view to securing greater harmony between professional judgements and patients
- **EDUCATION** — priorities and targets should be set from the ground up, rather than from the top down
- **Inspectorates and target setting** should be reviewed drastically.

CURB PUBLIC SPENDING

The public sector should share the benefits of economic growth BUT it must also share the pain of recession and debt. There is no time for protracted "debate and dither"

Instant measures to curb public spending should include:

- A freeze on public sector recruitment, except for "life and death" jobs
- Culling the 1,100 quangos (currently costing £64Bn)
- Ending index-linked pensions for councillors
- Banning public sector bonus schemes for top managers
- Cutting the ministerial pay roll by 50%
- MPs' expenses should be the same as for 2nd or 3rd tier civil servants
- Surplus embassies should be closed (why, for example, have we just opened a brand new embassy in Malmo?)
- Whitehall spending should be cut evenly across the board — the only exemptions should be anti-terrorism activity, capital spending on economic infrastructure and child protection services.

OUR ECONOMIC PROSPERITY depends on work and the number of people in work. And how productive they are at work. We need to be able to make things and provide services that people want at a price they can afford or are willing to pay.

We must trade goods and services competitively in global markets. This requires a modern-skilled workforce, the latest technology and an efficient system of finance. The funding of public services and public investment depends on tax from income and profits from manufacturing and commerce.

PARLIAMENTARY REFORM

Great Britain is slipping into a dictatorial system of government with the Prime Minister assuming powers that exceed even those of Presidents in the US or Western Europe. This has come about principally because of the weakness of cabinet ministers and the sheep-like obedience of most backbench MPs.

With one-third of the governing Party receiving ministerial salaries and allowances, and the rest of the parliamentary party hankering to join the gravy train, blind obedience is the by-word. It is a reflection on the moral corruption of many MPs, the power of the party machine and the naked career ambitions of younger Members of Parliament.

The House of Commons has been sidelined with increasingly fewer opportunities to influence legislation or challenge the power of "The Government", i.e. the Prime Minister and his circle of unelected advisers. Parliamentary power needs to be re-established and MPs must re-assert the authority of the House of Commons.

Other necessary reforms include:

- Elections should be based on constituencies using the Alternative Voting

system

- Regretfully, the House of Lords should be re-constituted as an elected second chamber revising legislation
- Secretaries of State must be Members of the House of Commons
- Select Committees should be strengthened as independent scrutiny committees
- Sovereign powers surrendered to the EU should be repatriated
- Scottish, Welsh and Northern Irish MPs should not be allowed to vote on English matters
- Constituents should have a power to recall their MP if there is obvious and overwhelming dissatisfaction with the MP
- MPs should not be eligible for appointment to the House of Lords after losing their seat in the Commons
- MP cheats should be punished and deductions taken from their pay. We have laws to deal with benefit cheats but none to deal with MP cheats. The worst cases should be prosecuted and all unwarranted claims should be repaid with interest

10% PAY CUT FOR MPs

If Parliament intends to impose a regime of pay-cuts and pay-freezes, then it must sample some of its own economic medicine. If it is going to insist on imposing targets and performance indicators on public servants, it must set an example.

A TEN PERCENT levy should be imposed on MPs' salaries, refundable *IF*, at the end of their period of office, the economy has surpassed a specific indicator, such as a 10% rise in GDP.

It will concentrate their minds and make them immediately responsible for their decisions. It will encourage opposition groups to act more constructively and co-operatively. It will set an example of good leadership.

LOW TAX / FAIR TAX / RIGHT TAX

Low tax economies are more resilient than high tax regimes. With a greater incentive to work, they yield a greater tax receipt to fund public services.

Raising taxes to fund infrastructure for economic recovery is right. But raising taxes to pay people not to work is not!

I WOULD SUPPORT:-

- Raising the tax-free allowance to £12,000 rising to £15,000 pa
- Eliminating pay-roll taxes, certainly for small businesses
- Freezing the council tax for 2 years
- Abolishing business rates on small owner-operated businesses
- Restoring the tax concession on pension funds

THE EUROPEAN ISSUE

It's time the EU debate was concluded with a once-and-for-all "In or Out" REFERENDUM. I have always supported a common or single market but I am opposed to a political union. Without a single language (never mind the single currency), a political union will end in blood and tears as happened to the Soviet Union, Yugoslavia and many other contrived unions.

As someone who grew up in the wake of the second world war and having lived my politically-formative years in the era of the Cold War with the continual threat of nuclear devastation, I have a fundamental commitment to a unification of the world through a truly democratic United Nations, and the stepping stones to such an ideal include regional and continental amalgamations.

I attach importance to "Diversity" as an essential requirement not just for the survival of the species but equally so for the enrichment of life for all species. Diversity gives opportunity for innovation and excellence to emerge and spread and migration is a positive element in that process. (Hitherto, migration has been constrained by natural barriers — knowledge, distance, apprehension. Those barriers having been removed, there is a need now for orderly regulation instead).

The unification of nation states cannot rely on the fear of war or love of trade to sustain unity. From Roman and Assyrian Empires via the Mayan and Aztec to the British and American, they were all unions lacking universal consent and they eventually collapsed. In recent times we have seen the disintegration of the Soviet Union, break-up of African states (such as Somalia) and the bloody destruction of Yugoslavia.

I believe it will not be long before we see the break-up of the Russian Federation and, longer term, China (Outer Manchuria, Inner Mongolia, Tibet, and numerous large ethnic states such as the Uyghurs, Zhuang etc). Small unions such as Belgium and even our own long standing UK are under threat. And I do not discount the possibility of the USA splitting between a predominant Hispanic south west and WASP north-east — and the dynamic for destruction will be language and culture. And therein lies the problem that I see with a precipitate drive to create a single European super-state

A single language is far, far more important than a single currency whether it be in relation to commerce, culture or politics. The problem with a single language, however, is its threat to diversity. And we can see the cultural importance of language diversity not only in the enormous richness of the English language but also, no matter the passage of time, people still yearn for the language of their forebears, the classic example "locally" can be seen in Wales, the Isle of Man and, maybe, Cornwall.

A standardised, homogenised Europe, without a single language and with a yawning democratic deficit, is doomed to fail. That is why European unity needs to evolve organically, not bureaucratically or contrived by politicians' lust for power or political "ego".

We are quintessentially European (as, indeed, are most Americans, with whom we have far greater cultural and economic ties); we cannot help but be part of Europe.

However, for the immediate future, we should be working to achieve a European community of independent sovereign states trading with one another on equal terms (in which we establish rules governing labour rights, animal welfare, pollution control, cross-border financial regulation, health and safety standards), sharing and exchanging culture and learning.

At the same time, we should maintain the English speaking union with America and the Commonwealth.

At this point in time, our relationship with Europe is bedevilled by the perpetual argument about our EU membership and much of that argument is sustained by the failure to give people the opportunity to vote on the issue. That is why I would argue for a once-and-for-all referendum on whether we stay in or get out.

I recognise whatever the outcome, there will still be argument but it would be at a much lower volume because the government would have a clear and unchallengeable mandate.

We can then work, within and without, for the kind of community I described above.

CUT IMMIGRATION

It is nothing other than common sense that immigration should be tightly controlled.

- A strict points system for entry visa
- Five years "good citizen" record and gainful employment before eligibility for social security
- No asylum seekers except from officially declared "disaster areas"
- No family member admission unless qualified under the points system
- Effective deportation regulations should be in place
- Immigrants will not qualify for full citizen rights unless they speak/learn English

I recognize that our strength as a nation is built on the immigrant experience in America. I welcome legal immigration to this country. However, we are also a nation of laws and government, and we should not adopt policies that encourage illegal immigration.

Providing driver's licenses and in-state tuition to illegal immigrant families will act as a magnet, drawing more people here in violation of the law and it will impose new costs on taxpayers.

I oppose amnesty, and I believe we ought to strengthen our border enforcement and institute an employment verification system with penalties for companies that hire illegal immigrants.

WELFARE BALLOON

Welfare benefits are ballooning to £170Bn a year and with income tax receipts running £50Bn lower and about £4 Billion/year lost through fraud and admin errors, a re-appraisal is needed.

Sound social welfare is a hallmark of a civilised democracy. Nobody should be allowed to starve, be homeless, endure ill health or be deprived of opportunity, through no fault of their own. Equally, nobody should be allowed to abuse welfare provisions.

BANKING REFORM

No business should be deemed "too big to fail". Barings, the Queen's personal bank and Britain's oldest, was allowed to crash and the world carried on. So too with the BCCI bank, Lehman Brothers and non-banks like Enron and British Leyland.

It is a major disgrace - and reflects a serious flaw in the legislation governing the fiduciary responsibilities of company Directors - that Bank chiefs were able to oversee the ruination of their business at the expense of investors and shareholders and yet those same chiefs were able to emerge from the ruination with a lifetime's reward of wealth beyond the dreams of ordinary people.

If a bank is judged to be too big or too important to fail, it should be the bank and its owners, not taxpayers, who pay the price for saving it.

The Law must require those who take charge of the lifetime savings of others should act responsibly, efficiently and competently and must bear a criminal liability for failure to do so. I would not support laws to prohibit enterprise and innovation but we must ensure that pay and bonus policies incentivise smart - decisions, not reckless risk-taking.

It is the duty of the government to do everything it can to make sure that, in the future, banks are much less likely to fail in the first place.

By international agreement, we should force banks to hold more capital and offer higher quality service than they have in the past.

We should also require them to hold a greater proportion of liquid assets, so they can access cash when they find themselves under pressure, and implement leverage caps to ensure they are living within their means.

THE NATIONAL DEBT IS £1.4 TRILLION...

... that's £90,000 per family of 4 people and the government is still racking up the debt by £80 BILLION per year.

Debt for investing in the nation's wealth creating capacity is one thing. Debt for bailing out deadbeats and to keep people doing nothing is something else.

It would be immoral to land future generations with this debt. Young people will have enough to pay for student loan and credit card debts without being saddled with the £1,400,000,000,000, national debt left over from the "good times" of their parents and grandparents.

"QUANTITATIVE EASING and FISCAL STIMULUS"

Quantitative Easing and Fiscal Stimulus are buzz words spun around as if they are magic wands that will wave away all our economic woes.

QE is a fancy term for "printing money and when Government prints money to pay its bills, inflation is sure to come soon afterwards. And with runaway inflation, the country's credit worthiness plunges further still.

Fiscal Stimulus is a fancy term for jacking up public spending. For the past 13 years, the government has raised public spending to record levels. So we have had all the fiscal stimulus we need

JUSTICE MUST BE SEEN TO DONE

Public confidence in the judicial system must be restored. Redemption and rehabilitation are always a desired outcome but public protection from serial criminals is more important.

Offenders with pathological issues (paedophilia, infanticide, extreme violence, rape, child cruelty, extreme animal cruelty) should serve full term jail sentences. Instead of remission for good behaviour, the rule should be extra time for bad behaviour. If an offence warrants "life", it should be literally "for life".

If it does not warrant literally "imprisonment for life", the sentence should not be called "Life".

Sentencing guidelines for Judges and Magistrates should be widely publicised and reviewed with full public consultation. It is not a matter solely for judges.

The politicisation of police (aka political correctness), a process being encouraged by some Chief Constables, should stop.

PRIMARY, SECONDARY, & HIGHER EDUCATION

■ *A Better deal for students*

I do not believe that everyone should go to University.

Young people should not be lured into taking on huge debts for entry to tin-pot universities with little prospect of getting a commensurate job afterwards.

HIGHER EDUCATION SHOULD CATER FOR ALL APTITUDES

■ *Priority for primary education*

All sectors of Education between birth and eighteen (or thereabouts) should be treated as equally important. Nevertheless, nursery and primary is the foundation.

As the Jesuits used to say, "Give me the child and I will give you the adult."

There is a serious problem growing with young white males now failing behind in early years schooling.

This must be addressed as a matter of urgency

■ *Support SureStart for children*

SureStart is one of Labour's few successful initiatives.

It has the potential not only to get socially deprived children onto the right tracks for education but also to assist young mothers to get control of their lives and help sustain family stability.

■ *Protect 'family life'*

There are all kinds of families, not all good.

We must support the best of them and encourage the worst to raise their sights.

ENERGY SUPPLIES

Security of energy supply is a vital requirement. Total dependency on one or two sources of energy and secure a spread of suppliers. Energy costs to consumers must be kept to a minimum.

The practice of charging a premium rate of the first level of supply should be reversed. That is, the premium should kick in only when consumption exceeds a minimum level. This will ease the cost on small households and will encourage energy conservation.

Energy suppliers should not be allowed to dictate terms any more than Russia was allowed to use its market control to dictate terms.

ENERGY AND ENVIRONMENT

I support common-sense environment policy that will help to reduce pollution and preserve our precious open spaces. I realize that without action now, future generations will be left to clean up the mess we leave.

In order to reduce our dependence on foreign oil, I support reasonable and appropriate development of alternative energy sources such as wind, solar, nuclear, geothermal and improved hydroelectric facilities.

I oppose a national cap and trade program because of the higher costs that families and businesses would incur.

CLIMATE CHANGE

Of course the climate is changing – always has, always will – and we cannot stop it. We can only (and must) adapt to it. The extent to which man contributes to it is a moot point. I support anti-pollution measures but I am against Green Taxes. They favour the rich and add to the living costs of the poor.

RURAL CONSERVATION

Green Belt and National Parkland are national treasures, literally and must be maintained. I strongly support the Farm stewardship scheme to protect rural landscapes and wildlife habitats.

JOBS, JOBS, JOBS

The small/medium business sector is the backbone of the economy and can create jobs quickly PROVIDED red tape and tax burdens on jobs are eased. Innovation and enterprise have to be fast-tracked and encouraged.

INNOVATION & ENTERPRISE

Small business is the mainstay of free-market economies. But under the present mass of business regulation, starting up a sandwich shop in London means complying with 2,500 pages of regulations, most of them useless and irrelevant.

AFGHANISTAN: “In it to Win it” OR Get Out!

I understand the well founded argument that the Taliban, unchecked, could get access to Pakistan’s nuclear arsenal – and then ‘hell’ would be let loose. But that is an argument to “take the kid gloves off “ and make sure our fighting forces have all the resources and protection they need to win. If we are not willing to do that, we should pull out and STOP WASTING THE PRECIOUS LIVES OF OUR YOUNG MEN AND WOMEN.

In the meantime, we should ask our supposed allies in NATO and Europe (particularly France, Germany and Ireland [sic]) are they with or against us. MPs and Ministers should be barred from using visits to the front line as PR photo opportunities.

All Defence Ministers, Foreign Ministers who support the war should be required to spend two weeks, without cameras present, with troops on patrol

on the front lines with the same weaponry and protection given to our soldiers. It is called 'walking the walk' and is common practice for senior managers in major companies – getting onto the factory floor. (BTW, the Princes have done it)

NHS & HEALTH

Health should be a “sacred cow”, not the NHS itself. The NHS is a ‘means to an end’, albeit the most valuable and effective ‘means’ we have.

Billions has been poured into the NHS and yet still there is widespread anxiety about the quality of healthcare available and "Postcode Lotteries".

NO MORE POINTLESS REORGANIZATIONS

The three perpetrated by New Labour have brought the NHS back towards the starting point in 1997 and wasted BILLIONS of pounds of taxpayers' cash.

CUT NHS BUREAUCRACY

The Whitehall “one size fits all “ approach should cease. Service priorities should be set locally and there should be a more effective arrangement for public involvement. Macclesfield’s health services are managed by five separate quangos! So remote are they from the public that most people do not know they exist!

STRONG DEFENCE

Sadly, the World will never be free from war and evil. We must maintain our Defence capabilities in line with our status and obligations.

WAR & PEACE

On the related issue of War, I subscribe to the Augustinian/Aquinas "jus ad bellum" precepts for a *Just War* – except, I would include provision for preventative war subject to the same caveats.

Incidentally, I regard the UN as having pragmatic authority rather than moral authority.

MARRIAGE, CHILDREN & CIVIL PARTNERSHIPS

I believe the word "marriage" should be used to describe the unique relationship between man and woman, the primary purpose of which is a life-long partnership and the procreation of children. It is the concept of the nuclear family which has served mankind well from time immemorial.

The welfare of children should be one of the highest priorities in our political agenda but a happy stable, childhood with loving parents is one gift the State cannot give. However, it can encourage and facilitate caring home environments.

Labour's *SureStart* with Children's Centres has been the most effective programme to help home environments, especially in deprived areas. I would

support that programme fully and would seek further improvements to it.

One particular improvement should be the availability of free marriage guidance/counselling provided by a non-governmental organisation (such as *Relate*) within the *SureStart* programme.

I believe current divorce law requires review, particularly with regard to matters such as parental rights and children's well being.

Ironically, the Civil Partnership Act is one of the most blatant (and hypocritically) discriminatory pieces of legislation in recent years. In effect, it was a cynical ploy to placate homosexual activists and win over the "pink vote".

Civil partnerships do not have the same primary purpose as marriage (as defined above) and should be available to all couples – regardless of sexual orientation or familial relationship – who wish to enter a contract of sharing possessions in a permanent co-habitation relationship.

This would include couples such as mother/daughter, siblings and indeed polygamous arrangements where sanctioned by law.

Civil Partnerships should not be regarded as State recognition or approval of sexual relationships. Those are essentially private matters between the individuals and their "maker".

Civil Partnerships are about financial and social rights. I have in mind the case of the two sisters, who rightly sought the same inheritance rights that have been given to homosexual couples.

I would seek amendment to the Act to secure equality of treatment whilst at the same time maintaining current law relating to incest and polygamy.

ABORTION, RIGHTS OF FATHERS, MEDICAL/NURSING STAFF

I believe human life starts at the moment of conception. Any other determination can only be arbitrary and/or pragmatic and that opens the way for moral chaos.

My starting point is, therefore, that abortion is wrong except where there is an over-riding moral precept such as the life of the mother and/or the 'in utero' viability of the child's life and such instances, on account of the medical/scientific dimensions, must be considered on a case-by-case basis.

Based on the preceding principle, I would seek drastic reform of the Abortion Act. In the meantime, I would support amendments which outlaw abortion-on-demand and/or restrict the availability of abortion for social reasons. In all cases, judgements must be made with compassion and understanding why abortion is being sought and, needless to say, there has to full material and counselling support, especially for young unmarried or "abandoned" mothers.

Fathers should have the right within the current state of law to petition courts for a hearing on social or "on demand" abortion requests. We rightly impose financial responsibilities on fathers; they should have accompanying rights.

Medical/nursing/ancillary staff should have a clearly recognised right not to participate or assist in an abortion process (save for exceptions detailed above). This 'protection' should cover their right to seek employment/career advancement. (When I worked in the NHS, I did witness the trauma caused to nursing staff when a living foetus had been thrown into a sluice to die and the nurses were instructed to dispose 'it'.

VOLUNTARY EUTHANASIA/ASSISTED SUICIDE

I subscribe to the basic principle of "the sanctity of life". I am opposed to current proposal to change the law. No body can enter the mind of another and know or understand or reach their 'soul'. At the same time, we can and should assist the alleviation of suffering - emotional, physical or spiritual. Whilst I oppose assisted suicide, I do not consider voluntary suicide to be morally reprehensible. Cases of assisted suicide should be left to the courts to determine within the existing law and in doing so, I expect the courts to show compassion and understanding.

I do not believe we have a moral duty to prolong life through artificial means where the life is clearly at its end. Indeed to do so may be morally wrong.

STEM CELL RESEARCH

This is difficult for me because, currently, I am not sufficiently versed in the scientific dimensions to be able to reach a definitive conclusion. However, in principle, I am totally opposed to the breeding of human beings for spare parts. I am not opposed to transplanting human parts (and this might include embryonic cells) provided it does not result in the disablement of the living donor [obviously, there is no such problem if the donor is deceased and the next of kin has agreed].

Likewise, and with the same proviso, I would support parents who decide to create a child in order to obtain, say bone marrow, to help another of their children with the additional proviso that there is a genuine desire to cherish and love the new child per se.

CAPITAL PUNISHMENT

This issue is even more problematic and it is closely related to the moral justification for War.

Whilst I hold to the "sanctity of life", I do not believe that contradicts the forfeiture of life for a higher moral value such as the protection of the innocent, self-defence or self-sacrifice to save someone else.

Theoretically, I support the imposition of the death penalty for extreme offences (genocide, mass murder, terrorism, child killing or deliberate, ruthless and cold blooded killing of any other person in pursuit of violent sexual or other predatory reason (which would include armed robbery/burglary).

However, its imposition must be safe, guarded by strict and robust caveats to prevent injustice, miscarriage of justice, false evidence, dubious evidence, irrelevant evidence, public hysteria and such like.

The case for a capital conviction would be required to meet such stringent standards of proof and justification that in practice it would be rarely realised.

Human Rights conventions outlaw cruel and inhumane punishment. However, many people would regard incarceration for life (cf Brady and others) as inhumane and cruel – far more so than capital punishment. It is not a view I hold, but it is arguable.