

BEYOND THE BALLOT: TEN YEARS OF BREXIT

TUESDAY, 23 JUNE 2026, ST HELEN'S SCHOOL, LONDON.

09:45 **Bridget Ward, Headteacher, St. Helen's School.**
Welcome.

09:50 **James Nichols, Director, *Political Education For Students*.**
Inheriting Brexit: Why A Decade Of Change Matters.

The 2016 European Union referendum sparked a decade of intense negotiations, political compromises, pivotal elections, and fierce debates. The resulting changes have redefined our place in the world, shifted our perceptions of politics, and altered how we live, work, study, and collaborate with European partners. This talk explores why Brexit matters deeply to the next generation. As young people take their next steps into a rapidly changing global landscape, this session highlights the critical realities they face and the urgent questions they must now begin to ask.

10:20 **Hannah Fearn, Broadcaster, Commentator, Journalist.**
Beyond The Headlines: The Media, Democracy & Brexit.

As comment editor of a national newspaper during the Brexit vote and negotiations that followed, Hannah Fearn watched how the media responded to this radical shift in British politics at the time. She will discuss how the media attempted (and often failed) to capture the breadth of perspectives in the run-up to the June 2016 vote, and the clamour to analyse the impact of the result afterwards. She will also look at how attitudes to power, democracy and the limits of the British political system have all been changed and shaped by the media in by the post-Brexit era.

11:00 **Break**

11.20 **Dr. Max Stafford, Former Cabinet Political Advisor, Academic & Author.**
The EU Referendum: The Mechanics of a Decision.

This talk will outline the story of why we had a referendum from the insider's perspective. Examining the process David Cameron undertook between 2013 and 2016 to attempt to secure concessions from Europe, it moves on to the story of the the campaign itself and considers how perceptions of different leaders and their messages, on both sides, influenced the outcome. It will also explore the political psychology behind crucial decisions made in both the Remain and Leave camp, and how these impacted the result. We begin in January 2013 and end as the results come in on June 23rd 2016."

12:00 **Andrew Threadgould, Economist, Author and former Deputy Head of *Dulwich College*.**
The Economics of Leaving Europe.

This session provides a comprehensive analysis of the United Kingdom's evolving economic relationship with the European project, from the 1951 Treaty of Paris to the pivotal 2016 referendum. By examining the tension between economic integration and political sovereignty, we interrogate the competing narratives of stability, risk, and labour market dynamics that defined the campaign. The discussion concludes with an evidence-based assessment of the post-Brexit economic landscape, considering transitional disruptions and long-term structural shifts in trade, investment, and productivity, offering a rigorous examination of the most significant geopolitical realignment in modern British history.

12:50 Lunch

13:30 Dr. Max Stafford, Former Cabinet Political Advisor, Academic & Author.
[Beyond The Vote: The Fallout In Government \(2016–2024\)](#)

In his second talk, Dr. Stafford continues the story after the referendum result. This talk sets the scene of the result and its implications behind the scenes inside Westminster and Whitehall, taking in the broad political and historical parameters that surround the fallout and uncertainty after June 24th 2016. It covers the impact of the post-referendum fallout on the Conservative Party and the May, Johnson, Truss and Sunak governments (2016-2024); the wider political implications for other parties and where that left the UK come the eventual collapse of Tory rule at the end of the 2019-2024 Parliament. It uses anecdotes, insider gossip and historical facts to illuminate a timeline of events that continue to confound historians!

14:20 Satvir Kaur MP, Member of Parliament & Cabinet Office Minister.
[Local Impact to National Response: Managing The Brexit Decade from Inside Labour.](#)

From the front lines of Southampton's docks to the inside of the Cabinet Office, Satvir Kaur has witnessed the Brexit decade from every level of power. As the former leader of Southampton Council, one of the largest unitary governing bodies in the UK, she navigated the immediate consequences on trade and identity; now, as a Minister of State at the government department responsible for the operations and logistics of state, she helps steer the national response. This is a candid reflection of a personal and political journey through the evolution of the Labour Party— from the Corbyn era to the recent statements by Starmer of placing Britain back at the "heart of Europe", this is a rare look at the reality of governing in a redefined Britain. It is the story of a decade of upheaval, told by a politician tasked with making the new system work.

15:20 James Nichols, Director of Political Education For Students.
[Closing Remarks.](#)