

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*.**
The Inevitable Earthquake? Why 2016 Shouldn't Have Been A Surprise.

The 2016 referendum result wasn't, or shouldn't have been, the surprise it was later labelled. It was, in reality, a decades-long historical fault line between the UK and the continent finally rupturing. This talk explores how a politically astute Leave campaign weaponised a deep-seated national identity crisis during the 2016 referendum. Understanding the perfect storm of events in 2016 is crucial for any assessment of the Brexit years and modern politics, and the lessons it provides for future generations.

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 by the post-Brexit era.

11:00 **Break**

11:20 **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.

12:00 **Dr. Max Stafford, Former Cabinet Political Advisor, Academic & Author.**
Beyond The Vote: The Fallout In Government (2016–2024)

This talk sets the scene of the result and its implications behind the scenes, taking in the broad political and historical parameters that surround the Brexit debate. It covers: why David Cameron called the referendum; the impact of the post-referendum fallout on the Conservative Party and 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!

12:50 Lunch

13:30 Teresa Song, Strategic Consultant, Director of *Nova Scholars* & Former Banker.
How A Country Decided Its Future And What It Teaches You About Yours: Same Patterns, Different Scale.

This is an autopsy of how Brexit decisions were actually made. Stripping away the headlines to reveal decision-making under pressure where psychological blind spots and identity-driven narratives outweighed every policy argument. Using expert frameworks, Teresa dissects the thinking traps that ensnared both sides: David Cameron's overconfidence to the Remain campaign's failure to persuade, and Leave's grasp of narrative. Whether you're choosing a career, a degree, or a life path, the same patterns of risk and cognitive bias apply. Learn to navigate the traps that reshaped a nation so you don't also fall into them.

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.