



Monday 5th November 2018
The Lion Hotel

Summary

o Introduction

There were 16 members of the Café Society group present at this meeting with one visiting prospective member. No apologies were announced.

The mandatory contribution scheme of £1.50 per attending member is running smoothly and the money and drinks order were kindly collected and organised by Margaret H.

Coordinator Vivienne gave an update about the situation of group member Libby P. Members who travel to Café Society by private vehicle were asked if they would be willing to collect Libby from Bicton Heath and bring her to a meeting. Vivienne has contact details for Libby at Bicton Heath.

Despite recent retirements from the group, the prospective member was informed that the group could not accommodate additional members.

A summary of the meeting's discussions follows.

Mike S

o Discussion Topics

Has the BBC lost its way?

- The group felt that it was important to clarify what the aims of the BBC were, and believed them to be:
 - o To educate
 - o To entertain
 - o To inform
- The group was somewhat split in its opinion of whether the BBC was balanced with its content and presentation. Some regarded the BBC as quite biased with others believing it to be fairly impartial
- Some members felt that the BBC's television and radio services addressed very different markets and should be governed more separately
- The BBC's World Service was highly recommended as quality radio
- The group generally felt that times had changed significantly since the introduction of the BBC and that its model of organisation probably doesn't match the modern era

Where is our nation now, politically speaking?

- Viv S introduced this topic to discuss parties and governance and to ask if the group felt the country was becoming more left or right-wing oriented
- A number of group members felt that the political system was completely out of date and riddled with historic traditions. One group member labelled the political system as being stuck in the Thirteen Century:
 - Still totally dominated by privilege and class
 - Depressingly strong
 - Intertwined with monarchy
 - Culturally archaic
 - Disrespectful towards the people of the country and unduly deferential towards those in the higher echelons of society
- Many group members felt that the politic parties are all much of the same thing and that the control, power and manipulation is in the hands of the corporate financial world
- There was a general feeling that the politic parties have a short-term view of governance and an inability to deal with difficult issues

Should we have a people's vote on Brexit?

- It was noted that two years have elapsed since the referendum about the United Kingdom leaving or remaining in the European Union and the group felt that the voting demographic had changed somewhat in that period
- The group were not particularly enthralled by this topic and believed that everything would turn out alright in the end

Should the next Labour leader be a female?

- The group immediately questioned the word 'should'. Nobody thought that the Labour Party should be required to place a particular gender in the role
- It was noted that the Labour Party had made good progress to improve female representation over recent years

Should our country keep apologising for its actions in the past?

- Some group members thought that if any historic apology was necessary, it should come from those who were guilty of the wrongdoing
- Some group members thought that historic apologies play an important role in learning from the past
- The Australian government's apology to the Aborigines was cited:
 - www.news.bbc.co.uk/1/hi/7241965.stm
- The distinction was made between apologies for recent conduct (e.g. police corruption) and historical behaviour (e.g. colonialism)
- The group felt that reparation and getting things right was more important than apologies

Should we be re-wilding parts of our country?

- Not all members of the group were aware of the term rewilding. According to Wikipedia:
 - *Rewilding is large-scale conservation aimed at restoring and protecting natural processes and core wilderness areas, providing connectivity between such areas, and protecting or reintroducing apex predators and keystone species*
- Some group members suggested that many areas of greenery, currently maintained by the local councils, could be left to go wild
- The Woodland Trust's Northern Forest project was cited as an interesting rewilding project:
 - www.woodlandtrust.org.uk/blog/2018/01/new-northern-forest

Are we being pressurised into paying online?

- The group interpreted this topic as being 'pressurised into *doing things* online' rather than just paying for things online and the general feeling was 'yes'
- Some members of the group believed that shipping and delivery services were currently being heavily subsidised and that consumer costs would rise drastically in the future
- The inconvenience and stress of returning items was mentioned as major deterrent in purchasing goods by mail order
- Some group members believed that the balance and demand between online and high-street shops was delicate and wondered how long the market could adequately sustain both options
- It was noted that the Universal Credit benefit can only be claimed using online methods and the 2016 film *I, Daniel Blake* was highly recommended for those who may not have watched it:
 - www.imdb.com/title/tt5168192

○ Future Topics

The group spent the last 10 minutes of the session agreeing upon questions for discussion at the next meeting. Below is the list of topics that have been chosen. Hot topical issues should be emailed to the [group coordinator](#) prior to the next meeting.

- Is lying ever justified?
- How should the town of Shrewsbury promote itself with regards to tourism? (Ken C)
- What subjects should ideally be included in a junior school curriculum? (Denise M)
- If you could rid the world of one thing, what would it be? (Harold B)
- Do you agree with the NHS axing and restricting surgical procedures? (Margaret T)
- Can anything be done about the pollution in Shrewsbury? (Pam P)
- Is the Smart Phone the opium of the people? (Pam P)

○ Next Meeting

The next Café Society meeting will be on **Monday 3rd December 2018** at 10.00am at The Lion Hotel (Tudor Bar room).

