

People's Jury for the British Public Interest

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I am pleased to be one of the signatories to the campaign launched today for 'public juries' intended to help take power away from the tiny elite who control it in the UK.

The campaign [is explained in the Guardian](#), and [laid out in detail as follows](#):

Something is unraveling before our eyes. From bankers to media-barons, private interests have bankrupted and corrupted the public realm. Power, for so long hidden in the pockets of a cosy elite, has been exposed. Those who wield it have been found wanting — in scruples, in morals and in decency.

Things are now in flux, but will not stay so for long.

Without decisive and sustained action, power will fall back into the hands of a small elite who have their own, and not the public's interest at heart.

They want to prevent public revulsion turning into public action. But, it's time for real change. Things cannot be allowed to turn back to business as usual.

Britain can no longer be just the plaything of a handful of powerful, remote interest groups treating the wider public with contempt.

The current press and political scandal is not an isolated event.

It's the third crisis in quick succession.

First, the bankers and their bonuses, then some politicians and their expenses and now there is the press, profiting from peoples' pain, grief and private lives.

These crises share common origins.

Left to their own devices politicians, bankers and media moguls could not regulate themselves.

They share a common culture in which greed is good, everyone takes their turn at the trough, and private interest takes precedence over the public good. They have protected each other and left the British people with a financial and political crisis.

They do what they can get away with, not seeming to care for the common life of our country. And, they are scared of only one thing. Us. The public. If public organisations and citizens are vigilant, that elite won't be able to get away with it again. With the right checks and balances we can put the public interest back into the heart of the system.

Only we, the public, can hold power truly to account by testing whether what happens is in the public interest.

To work out how to do it we call for a new Public Jury for the British public interest to propose reforms of banking, politics, media and the [police](#).

The Jury would be made up of 1,000 citizens drawn as a random sample of the electorate. It will be a jury of our peers. We do not need yet another inquiry in which one elite asks another elite to tell them what cannot be done.

The Jury will be funded out of the public purse, with a paid secretariat with the resources to commission research and call witnesses.

It will have the power to require attendance where persons will be asked by the public to explain themselves.

Reporting within a year of its launch the convention will study and report on:

- Media ownership and the public interest*
- The role of the financial sector in the crash*
- MP selections and accountability*
- Policing and public interest*
- How to apply a 'public interest first' test more generally to British political and corporate life*

Signed by:

Greg Dyke

Henry Porter

Lord Stewart Wood

Lord Smith of Clifton

Baroness Helena Kennedy QC

John Kampfner, Index on Censorship

Philip Pullman, author

Gordon Roddick

Caroline Lucas MP, leader of the Green Party

Professor Zygmunt Bauman, Leeds University

Professor Francesca Klug OBE

Professor David Marquand, Mansfield College, Oxford University

Professor Kate Pickett, University of York

Professor Richard Grayson, University of London

Ann Pettifor, Prime Economics

Peter Facey, Unlock Democracy

Deborah Doane, World Development Movement

John Christenson, Tax Justice Network

Richard Murphy, Tax Research LLP

Charlie McConnell, Schumacher College

Professor Tim Jackson, University of Surrey

Guy Shrubsole, Public Interest Research Centre

Richard Hawkins, Public Interest Research Centre

Alan Mac Dougall, PIRC

Neal Lawson, Compass

Martin Mclvor, Renewal

Gavin Hayes, Compass

Andrew Simms, nef fellow

Will Straw, founder of Left Foot Forward

Clifford Singer, Other Taxpayers Alliance

Dave Prentis, General Secretary, Unison

Heather Wakefield, Unison

Polly Toynbee, The Guardian

Madeleine Bunting, The Guardian

Laurie Penny, journalist

Heather Savigny, UEA

Professor Judith Marquand, Wolfson College, Oxford University

Professor Alan Finlayson, University of Swansea

Professor Jonathan Rutherford, Middlesex University

Professor Danny Dorling, University of Sheffield

Professor George Irvin, University of London, SOAS

Professor Prem Sikka, University of Essex

Professor Richard Wilkinson, Emeritus Professor of Social Epidemiology

Professor Stefano Harney, QMUL

Professor Peter Case, Bristol Business School

Owen Jones, author of Chavs

Howard Reed, Landman Economics

Stewart Lansley, research fellow, University of Bristol

Professor John Weeks, SOAS

Jenny Jones AM, Green Party

Jeremy Leggett, founder and CEO, Solar Century

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Professor Victoria Chick, UCL

Ruth Potts, The Great Transition, New Economics Foundation

Stewart Wallis, executive director, New Economics Foundation

Rajesh Makwana, director, Share The World's Resources

***To support the call for a People's Jury for the British Public Interest go to
www.compassonline.org.uk***