

Mayâ€™s can has been crushed

Published: January 13, 2026, 5:28 am

For two years Theresa May has sought to kick the Brexit can down the road, hoping rather than expecting that something might come up that might resolve the irreconcilable demands of the various parties she faces.

Nothing has come up.

The Chequers Deal felt like her last gasp attempt to solve this problem and appease all parties.

It has failed. It has not appeased the Tory right and now, entirely predictably, it has been resoundingly rejected by the EU.

So now May goes on a walking holiday knowing she faces a decision.

She could, of course, resign, saying she has done her best and now others must have a go. She would go down miserably in history, but she may get her life back. She will be tempted.

She could call an election. It is hard to see how that helps her beleaguered party. I don't think she will choose that option. Others may yet do it for her.

She could say we will go over the cliff. Forty MPs could drive the country to Hard Brexit and the now appreciated almost unimaginable difficulties that will create.

Or she could say she accepts the EU's offer of a customs union. They say it is on the table. Labour will support it.

Her life expectancy as PM is limited in this case. Many Tories will hate her for it. The country would not forgive her for reaching this position. Her legacy will still be grim in political terms. But the country would gain. And for that her party might just gain.

You could argue there are more options. At this juncture I don't think there are many more in reality.

And there is only one viable one.

Will May see the true path whilst walking in the Alps? Time will tell. But for now May has to realise her Can has been crushed. She's out of road. She has to decide. That is what PM's are paid to do. And in reality she really has only one viable choice. She has to finally tell the Tory right that they cannot have their way. But that does not mean she will, based on past precedent.

Supposedly politics now goes into its summer break. I can't see that happening this year. Not entirely. There's far too much to do. And far too much that can still go wrong for that to happen.