

Real politics cannot be driven by narrow-mindedÂ beli...

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The greatest political trait on display in 2018 was procrastination. Call it dithering if you like.

Theresa May was master of the art.

Jeremy Corbyn gave her a tremendous run for the title.

Jacob Rees-Mogg pursued the same strategy from a position of total political irresponsibility.

And almost everyone else (with honourable pardons for the SNP, Plaid and the Greens) pretended that it is dogma and not the pragmatic ability to decide in a fashion consistent with principles that really matters in politics. Almost all the cabinet and I think the entirety of the shadow cabinet fell into that trap.

It was, then, what might best be described as a dismal year for UK politics.

But that was 2018. If the act is repeated in 2019 we leave the EU without a deal in the biggest act of wilful national self-destruction witnessed in living memory in what might be, optimistically, called the developed world. It will take an extraordinary act of collective neglect of duty by Westminster's politicians to achieve this goal, but if May and Corbyn continue as they have for the last year it is entirely possible it will happen. Only the desire or back benches acting with wisdom and courage seemingly almost entirely absent in 2018 can prevent this now.

Will such courage be found outside the smaller parties? I have no idea. None at all. But some in them surely know that dogmatic belief is not enough to make a politician? Dogma is the stuff of academics. Real politics, like real business, cannot be driven by narrow-minded belief alone. That's largely because few such beliefs are widely shared and successful politics is a wide tent seeking to fulfil the needs of many, if not most in a population. We seem to have forgotten that. It would be very good if this understanding was rediscovered in 2019. For all our sakes.