

The Progressive Conservative - an oxymoron for the Tory...

Published: January 13, 2026, 10:39 am

Charles Adams has published an article on Progressive Pulse (of which I am the director) which I think worth sharing here, precisely because of the challenges it poses to those standing for the Tory leadership. Under the headline '[The Progressive Conservative](#)' he says:

Like everyone else I am thinking about declaring my candidacy for the Conservative leadership. A good friend, of long standing, said I should 'go for it' and I thought, "Well, why not?" After all, I fancy myself as a bit of a comedian and have an overinflated opinion of my intelligence, but more than that I offer someone that no one else can, a BIG VISION!

We find ourselves at the crossroads of history. Either we become frozen by indecision while other nations move forward, or we unite behind a bold new vision that puts us back on the World stage, as leaders not followers. Now is the time for the Conservatives to move into the 21st century, and offer that vision.

When elected, my first task will be to solve the Brexit crisis, and I have a solution. We know that the country is divided and compromise is not an option, so we are left having to offer everyone a bit of what they want. So I am going to let people have their 'No deal' Brexit. We will leave the EU at 20.20 on the 20th day of the 20th month in 2020, a time and a date in the history of our great nation that no school child or historian will ever forget, our independence day! After we have left I will call a general election to be held on the 1st Thursday in May, 2020. During the election, I will campaign to rejoin the EU in order to give those that regret leaving, or did not want to leave in the first place, the chance to rejoin.

Brexit and the EU are important but more important is how we rekindle our desire and spirit as a nation.

I recognise that [Conservatism has lost its way](#). We became too wedded to a neoliberalist dogma where the market was allowed to destroy our communities, our environment, and our soul. I want to offer a conservatism like the philosopher John Gray

describes,

“a conservatism that protects the things that the market threatens, without being illiberal”

I want to offer [the kind of conservatism of the environmentalist Bill McGibben](#)

“preserving a world that bears some resemblance to the past: a world with some ice at the top and bottom and the odd coral reef in between; a world where people are connected to the past and future (and to one another)”

So in my manifesto I will offer a Green New Deal that will put the UK at the forefront of the Green Transition. Just as Britain led the World into the industrial revolution, we will lead the world into the Green revolution. We will invest in green technologies with a focus on the left behind regions such that no one is left behind on our new journey. Our economy will receive the kind of fiscal stimulus not seen since the middle of the 20th century and with that investment will come cheap clean energy for everyone, free public transport, a revolution in AI allowing a higher standard of living and a shorter working week!

We will base our success on new metrics. Rather than GDP that does not help everyone, we will focus on wellbeing that will include health, community and access. In this Green Conservative revolution, no person, no community, no region will be left behind. And in 10 years when we are living well, on zero carbon, the World will come to us to ask, How did you do it? How did the UK go from basket case to leader in such a short time? And I will tell them, the people did it, it was their spirit, their desire, their togetherness. It was there all alone. It just needed to be set free. So vote for me, and I will set you free. Free to live your dreams in a new clean, healthy and happy land. Free to smell the flowers. Free to listen to the birds. Free to spend time with your loved ones. This is the kind of future I can offer you. A Progressive Conservative Future.

I can't see it happening. And yet that is, quite logically, what modern Conservatism should be. And yet the reality is so far removed from it.