

The UK elections: sense is fighting back

Published: January 13, 2026, 1:00 am

I tweeted at around midnight last night:

These are the stories tonight.

- 1. Scottish and Welsh nationalists are gaining.*
- 2. The Brexit Party's replaced UKIP.*
- 3. Tories are being wiped out.*
- 4. Labour is floundering.*
- 5. Pro-Remain parties are flourishing, except Change UK.*
- 6. The world has woken up to Greens.*

This morning, having seen the main result then missing, and knowing pretty much what will happen in Scotland but acknowledging that it is not yet confirmed, my opinion still holds.

Stunning as the election result was last night it is, for once, not hard to interpret.

The Tories set out to deliver Brexit, which is not possible, at least in any of the ways that they tried. The result is that they have been treated as the failures that they are.

Labour have dithered, and the electorate have had more than enough of a party wholly unable to tell the truth about what it thinks, led by people who very clearly want something that its membership is opposed to. So people, including, I suspect, large numbers of its members, abandoned it last night. It is, quite simply, untrusted and I completely understand why.

In Wales and Scotland Labour's loss was nationalists' gain. And who can blame those making that choice?

Tory losses were by and large Brexit Party gains. There is little obvious sign Labour voters went that way, at all.

The LibDems and Greens both won heavily from Labour.

Change UK succeeded in losing LibDems a seat in the North East, which is annoying.

And let's be honest about the Brexit Party: it did not sweep in from nowhere. Farage changed his colours and carried on taking Tory votes as before. There is really nothing more to say there.

It was an extraordinary night for everyone but the Brexit Party then, in whose case remarkably little happened and the vote share was not as big as forecast.

The Tories cannot recover from this in a general election. The disaffection is far too great for that. Those aspiring to lead them reflect the utter incompetence the electorate have now sensed in them.

Labour had a dismal night. Again, the chance of doing well in a general election after this is very limited, unless the leadership cohort finally get off their Lexit fence and do what the membership and electorate wants, which is to see them opposing the government and Brexit.

And will the boost for the LibDems, Greens, SNP and Plaid last? Previous evidence suggests maybe not. But previous evidence is little guide in a situation like this. People will see the chance of really changing their MPs, even under first past the post now. That's a thought that is very hard to put away again. I do think things may change radically as a result.

I also expect that the fact that a new prime minister will so obviously lack a mandate means that their chance of survival in office is very limited indeed. A general election to test all this is likely sooner rather than later.

And if so? What then?

First it would greatly help if Change UK departed the scene.

Second the LibDems, Greens and nationalists may need to do some serious talking, but most especially the first two.

Third, if I was a Labour or Tory I would consider alternative employment prospects.

And fourth, by then the Brexit Party will have had to say something about policy, and that is never going to help it.

But, the good news is actually rather simple. This is much less depressing than I

expected. As has also been seen across Europe, the fight against the populists and right is happening, and succeeding. And maybe, just maybe, we have a chance of sense breaking out after all. I am cheered.