

Johnson, and his chums

Published: January 13, 2026, 12:53 pm

As Tories go Justine Greening is on the decent end of the scale. That's why she quit Parliament. But she's still a Tory, and she just does not get what that party is really all about. There's evidence for that in [The Observer](#) this morning, where she says in an article clearly timed to coincide with the Tory party conference:

The Conservative party must decide if it is the party of privilege and chumocracy or the party of effort and reward. It cannot be both.

Prime ministers don't get to choose the crises that define them. But they do get to choose if those crises push them off their wider agenda.

For voters, levelling up is much more than government just making life less bad after Covid-19. That is simply not good enough. Levelling up is about making lives demonstrably better and, crucially, fair in terms of who has access to what opportunities in our country. It is about eradicating the chumocracy, not entrenching it.

It baffles me that Greening can have spent years in the Conservative Party, and risen to Cabinet rank, and not noticed that it was all about the chumocracy, of which she, as a lesbian woman, was never going to be a part.

The Conservative party has always been about who you know, rather than what you know.

It is always been about reinforcing privilege, including that of wealth.

And, if that is the case, then to believe that the Conservatives can now be anything else is to also believe that, somehow, they can be abolished, and then reformed as something entirely different, made up of wholly different people, none of whom believe in, or enjoy, the privilege that the party has always existed to promote. The problem is, that this would still leave those who are now the Conservatives in exactly the same place.

Greening is intensely useful to her party. She continues to suggest to some in the

electorate that there is an impossible dream of a reasonable Conservative government. She does, however, face an insurmountable obstacle, which is that Johnson and his chums are determined to prove her wrong.