

Of course the Tories have to lie: their beliefs and act...

Published: January 15, 2026, 7:22 am

I posted [this thread on Twitter](#) this morning:

We know we have a government that lies. We know it is corrupt. And its big new idea is bringing back pounds and ounces, which few in the UK now understand. But the biggest failure is to pretend low-tax, small-state government is still possible. It isn't. A thread....

Until methods to measure national income were created, largely as a consequence of central planning during World War 2, growth was not an issue in politics. And then, when the war was over it became everything: the one thing every politician had to deliver.

Tories delivered with indifference as to how the resulting wealth was distributed (by and large). Labour did so whilst worrying about inequality and access to services. But growth was the common goal.

There was also a common blind-spot in this strategy. That was the planet. Economics taught politicians that there were 'free gifts of nature' for us humans to exploit, and we went in for that exploitation in a big way.

We dug up the planet, built on it, dumped on it and poisoned it. As a result we warmed it. And all this in the name of finance. And when the planet could not, despite all that abuse, deliver fast enough, finance just turned inward and used the same techniques on itself.

Then came the warnings. I read about the dangers to the planet created by growth in the 1970s. The warnings were not heeded.

In 2008 the world's financial system tottered as it was discovered that finance could not, after all, pollute its own systems with hierarchies of false lending and still make money.

And then came Covid, the worst pandemic for centuries, whose impact is a very long way from being over as yet, not least because the next, and potentially more serious wave, is now emerging.

The reality is that the planet is finite, money cannot ultimately be made by financial exploitation, and if we abuse the planet it has the potential to harm our health. None should be very surprising, but for over 75 years we have been in denial about all three.

No one has been in greater denial on this issue than the Tories. Their 'small state, low tax, the markets know best' approach to politics is built on three assumptions.

They are that the planet remains infinite, finance can solve everything by simply pursuing profit and that problems are individual, and not at the level of society, meaning government cannot and should not address them.

These core assumptions that underpin the modern Conservative's thinking are all wrong, and they know that. They have committed to tackling climate change. They had to use government-created money via QE to solve the problems in finance post-2008. And they spent a fortune on Covid.

But, and this is the paradox, although all their actions say that they know that an active state is required, that's not what they are saying. So whilst taxes reach highs, QE funds are still there, and climate change goes on many Tories still demand small state solutions.

It's hardly surprising that Tory messaging is a mess in that case. What they say and what they do are totally inconsistent. They don't have the conviction to deliver policies they are forced to adopt. And their claims as to what they believe in clearly don't stack.

Of course they are a mess. And of course they are lying. They are literally living a lie every day they are in office, always fighting what they know they have to do, and pretending otherwise. No wonder they all look so worn out.

It does not help that Labour shares the lie, as does the SNP, and the LibDems. All are committed to growth that cannot be delivered. None has yet to appreciate, or talk about, that. Instead they still offer prospects like green growth, which is still based on despoiling our earth.

What do we need? The lies have to end. The planet has to be respected. Finance has to be constrained. The common solution to the common problem has to be sought, and delivered. The needs of all have to be met, and markets have never known how to do that.

This is possible. We can feed everyone, house everyone, keep everyone warm, educate everyone, and keep them healthy. People could have leisure, holidays, pleasure and more too. All of this could be done and respect the planet.

But this can only be done communally. I am not suggesting that means differences need be suppressed. They are part of what it is to be human. But the key problem we all face is the one the Tories are now face-to-face with, which is that their core assumptions are false.

We have to assume the planet must be respected, that finance can help us but can never solve our problems, and that we must act for the common good in the face of common threats. Adopt those three assumptions and we have a chance.

Stick to the existing scenario and it's not just the Tories living a lie; we all are.

We have a choice, but I suggest that only one is viable.