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NEW EVERY WEEK

# ISSUE

CHANGE IS BREWING



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# BIG

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## The Big Election Interviews

Starmer, Sunak, Davey and Swinney take our vendors' questions. Will they pledge to end poverty?

**Exclusive**  
From page 24



A HAND UP, NOT A HANDOUT

NEW EVERY WEEK

# ISSUE



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# THIS WEEK'S BIG ISSUE

## GENERAL ELECTION 2024

**With help from vendors, we put the big questions to the UK's major party leaders.** Page 24

## LETTER TO MY YOUNGER SELF

**Martin Compston was advised by Ken Loach to stick to football. He's glad he ignored him.** Page 30



**It's been seven years since the Grenfell tragedy, and residents are still seeking justice.** Page 14

## INTERVIEW

**Zoë Wanamaker has struggled with depression – now the actor is doing her best to help others escape cycles of poverty, criminality and trauma.** Page 38

## TV

***The Bear* and REM: what happens when two cultural phenomenons meet.** Page 40



## MY PITCH

**Ian sells the magazine in Wetherby. He thinks that the next government needs to make solving the homelessness issue a priority.** Page 46



## HOW THE BIG ISSUE WORKS

● Our vendors buy magazines for £2 and sell them for £4, keeping the proceeds and working their way out of poverty. Every vendor has a unique story – they may be homeless, at risk of losing their home, long-term unemployed or dealing with mental health issues.

What they all have in common is they are earning a legitimate income while gaining valuable social and transferable skills.

Every single sale matters. We're proud to be here.

If you cannot buy from a vendor, take a subscription via [SUBS.BIGISSUE.COM](http://SUBS.BIGISSUE.COM) or through The Big Issue UK app.

Retailers including the Co-op and Sainsbury's also stock the magazine in many branches.

**EVERY COPY BOUGHT MAKES A DIFFERENCE. IT'S A HAND UP, NOT A HANDOUT.**



PHOTO: YAN DOBRONOSOV / GLOBAL IMAGES UKRAINE / GETTY



## Support in time of need

As the men's Euros continue in Germany, much more serious battles continue to be fought. These Ukrainian soldiers of the 108th Separate Mountain Assault Battalion were watching their country play Romania on the frontline in Donetsk Oblast on 17 June. Ukraine lost their opening match 3-0, but support for the country and its cause remains high.

The G7 heads of state pledged assistance (even though a few of them may not be in power by the end of next month, let alone the end of the year) with \$50 billion of interest payments from frozen Russian assets being diverted to Ukraine.

On the other side, Russian ships made a symbolic visit to Cuba and Vladimir Putin renewed his friendship with North Korean leader Kim Jong-un. The duo of dictators signed a defence pact last week, promising one will come to the other's aid if attacked.

The ongoing war in Ukraine, conflict in other parts of the world and threat of escalation puts a football tournament in perspective.

# THE DISPATCH

News, views & miscellany

## GENERAL ELECTION 2024

# Benefits, bills and safe routes for refugees – all the things the major parties aren't talking about that would help make Britain better

● Britain needs change. That's why Big Issue put together a comprehensive plan for political leaders standing on 4 July detailing just what they should do to end poverty with our Blueprint for Change.

They have their own plans, of course. We've combed through the manifestos to see what's missing from the conversation and the campaign trail ahead of the general election.

### Reform the energy price cap

 Our blueprint argued that the energy price cap is unfit for purpose for low-income households and pensioners. The cap, which reflects the typical price paid, fell to £1,568 in July but remains £300 more than in 2022. There was no sign of the Ofgem cap being scrapped in the major manifestos, with the Tories instead vowing to maintain it.

### Local housing allowance to remain unfrozen

 The crisis facing low-income renters saw Jeremy Hunt announce in last year's autumn statement that local housing

allowance rates would be unfrozen for the first time since 2020 in April. Housing benefits are supposed to help renters cover the bottom 30 per cent of market rates, but fall behind rising rents when they are frozen. The freeze is set to return next year despite private rents rising 8.9% in the last year on average. Plaid Cymru have pledged to keep local housing allowance permanently unfrozen to keep up with rents, while the SNP were alone in calling for an annual uplift.

### Outlaw high-cost credit

 Our Blueprint for Change called for high-cost credit to be outlawed in the first 12 months of the next government to prevent predatory lenders from taking advantage of people struggling during the cost of living crisis. We want lenders to commit to making loans and credit sources equitable and fair. But there was silence in manifestos.

Simon Dukes, chief executive of the Fair Credit Charity, said: "While the sub-prime lending sector has contracted in recent years there are still exploitative lenders who cause misery with their disingenuous, inflexible

practices. We are disappointed to see that the main parties' manifestos do not commit to tackling the issue."

### Safe immigration routes

 With both the prime minister and opposition promising to 'stop the boats', alongside a rejuvenated Reform UK, immigration is one of the hot topics of this election. Neither Labour or Conservative manifestos pledged to offer safe routes for those fleeing danger, persecution and war. That was left to the Liberal Democrats, Plaid Cymru and Greens.

### Two-child benefit cap

 The two-child benefit cap limits universal credit and child tax credit to a family's first two children, costing an estimated £3,000 for each additional child. The End Child Poverty Coalition's research shows that scrapping the policy would lift 300,000 children out of poverty. Despite that, the Conservatives and Labour declined to commit to scrapping it, leaving the pledge to the SNP, the Lib Dems and Greens. Labour's silence attracted criticism as even populists Suella Braverman and Nigel Farage have supported axing it.

### Housing First

 Plaid Cymru was also the only party to mention Housing First in its manifesto despite speculation Labour would commit to a national programme rolling the model out further in England. Housing First is widely credited with having a big impact on ending street homelessness in Finland, and sees rough sleepers given a home alongside wraparound support for as long as they need. Three Westminster government pilots in England have been running for seven years but face an uncertain future beyond funding through to 2025.

### Disability benefits

 Big Issue has extensively covered the harrowing experiences faced by people navigating the disability benefits system. Nothing in the Labour or Conservative manifestos promised to deal with the scandal. The Greens pledged to raise disability benefits by 5% and stop unfair personal independence payment (PIP) tests. The Lib Dems – whose leader Ed Davey has spoken about the issues facing carers, citing his experiences with his disabled son John – pledged to reform PIP assessments.

## IN NUMBERS: GENERAL ELECTION MANIFESTOS

Only Labour and the Greens referenced the climate target of limiting temperature rises to

# 1.5°C

The word 'homelessness' was used

# 13

times across six manifestos – Greens, Labour, Lib Dems, Tories, Plaid Cymru, SNP – and didn't feature in three

The word 'poverty' appears

# 52

times across five manifestos – but only once in the Conservatives' policy statement:

Labour	14
Plaid Cymru	12
Lib Dems	9
SNP	9
Green	7
Conservatives	1

THEN AND NOW



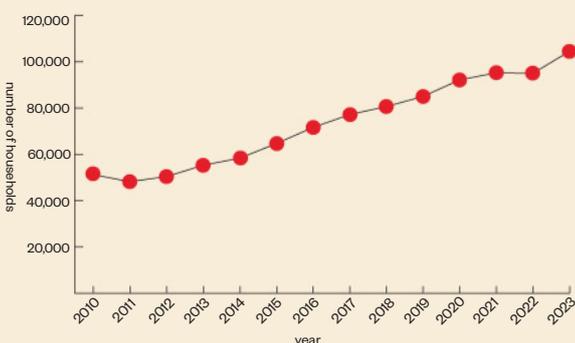
# Why we need urgent change this general election

● Labour has long been the frontrunner for the general election but, for whoever ends up in Downing Street, change is needed. Our Blueprint for Change is calling on the next government to end poverty off the back of a few years that have seen a pandemic, a cost of living crisis and public services slashed.

## Temporary accommodation

The number of households living in temporary accommodation has soared to record highs in recent times, even pushing some households to the brink of bankruptcy. The unprecedented crisis is one of the reasons why the Big Issue's Blueprint for Change is calling for more social and affordable housing.

Number of households living in temporary accommodation



## Libraries

There were **4,482** public libraries in the UK in 2010 (CIPFA)

Since 2010 nearly **800** libraries have closed

## Sure Start centres

There were approximately **3,631** Sure Start children's centres operating in the UK in 2010

By 2022, over **1,340** centres had closed

Libraries and Sure Start centres have been ripped from the heart of communities. Sure Start centres have been replaced in some areas by family hubs, offering a broader range of services with less funding.

The Big Issue's Blueprint for Change called for Sure Start centres to be reinstated and a national programme for libraries, as well as a pledge to keep them open.

## Rough sleeping

Rough sleeping in England has more than doubled since 2010, despite promises to end it. Encouragingly, several parties have spoken of a cross-government approach, including Labour, who made progress when last in power.



## Unemployment

Unemployment has dropped sharply since 2010. However, work is needed to ensure jobs are secure and sustainable. That's why our Blueprint for Change urged the next government to reform zero-hour contracts, and provide employment rights from day one in a job.



## Food banks

There are more food banks than McDonald's in the UK, and that shift happened in the last 14 years. The next government will face a challenge to reverse the normalisation of food banks if it is to end poverty.



## NHS waiting lists

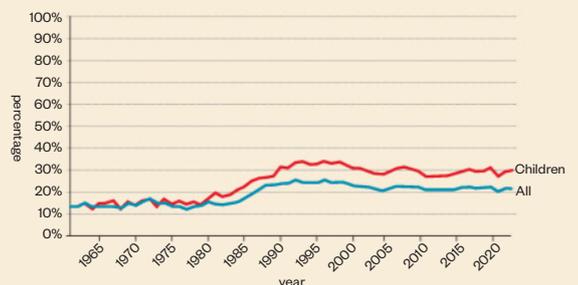
The combination of rising demand, the pandemic and underfunding has seen NHS waiting lists skyrocket. That is why our Blueprint for Change is calling for greater investment in the NHS and social care workforce.



## Poverty

Relative poverty rates have remained broadly stable at just over 20%, though the impact of the cost of living crisis is still being felt. However, policies like the two-child benefit cap have seen poverty among children rise from 27% in 2010 to 30% in 2022.

Relative poverty rates (after deducting housing costs)



## GENERAL ELECTION 2024: HEALTH AND WELLBEING



## OPINION

## Poor pay makes social care workers feel like second-class citizens – the next government must fix this

**Katherine Chapman**

Director of the Living Wage Foundation



● Though the Covid pandemic highlighted the vital importance of care workers, social care remains one of the most precarious and poorly paid sectors in the UK. The next government has an opportunity to change this.

Despite the demanding nature of care work, administering medicine and dealing with patients with complex needs, new analysis by the Institute for Public Policy Research (IPPR) found that over 400,000 adult social care workers in England are paid below the real living wage – currently £12 in the UK and £13.15 in London. This means that 43% of adult social care workers in England are earning less than they need to live, rising to 80% in London.

I have too frequently heard care workers talk about feeling like second-class citizens. In recent polling of 2,000 workers earning below the real living wage, more than half said they regularly visit food banks and skipped meals. How can we expect care workers to look after others when they're not paid enough to properly feed themselves?

The main barrier to better pay is the limited public funding for social care services. These services are primarily

commissioned by local governments but delivered by private and third-sector employers. Years of budget cuts have trapped care workers in a cycle of low pay and high stress, and caused a recruitment and retention crisis.

However, change is within reach. Devolved governments in Scotland and Wales have taken steps to ensure that hundreds of thousands of care workers receive the real living wage. We would like to see the next government commit to paying at least the real living wage to all adult social care workers in England too, for every hour worked, including sleep-in shifts and in-work travel time.

The IPPR estimates that implementing this policy in England would require a relatively modest investment of £415 million. After accounting for additional income tax and national insurance from higher wages, the net cost would fall to £330m – less than 2% of the social care budget for the coming year.

The next government has a chance to create lasting change. It starts ensuring all adult social care workers are paid at least the real living wage.

@LivingWageUK

## HEALTH

## Some patients can't afford their medicines. It's why England must join the rest of the UK and make prescriptions free

● Picking up your prescription in England will set you back almost a tenner these days. And that's assuming you're just collecting one lot of medication.

Last month the cost of one NHS prescription increased from £9.65 to £9.90 per item. Even before the latest rise, a study found almost one in 10 people had skipped medication in the previous year due to the cost.

The survey, conducted by the Prescription Charges Coalition, also found around a third of those who had skipped medication then developed other physical or mental health problems. Over half had to take time off work, while one in 10 had halved their medication to make it last longer.

Big Issue's Blueprint for Change is calling on the next government to increase the provision of free sight and hearing tests along with free prescriptions for all. This is already the case in Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland.

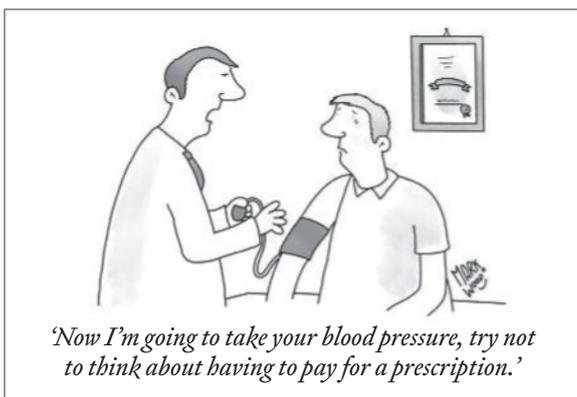
Paul Day of the Pharmacists' Defence Association said the choice to raise prescription charges again will negatively impact "some of the most vulnerable patients and families in the country" and lead to more people declining medicine.



Head to [bigissue.com](https://bigissue.com) to sign the open letter and demand a future free from poverty



## CARTOON



## IN NUMBERS

## The state of the UK's mental health

● Big Issue's Blueprint for Change is calling on the next government, in its first 12 months, to accelerate the spending and availability of mental health care; to properly invest in mental health care funding, especially for those under 30; and to decrease wait times and ensuring equitable access to free services. Here's why.

**1 in 4** people in the UK will experience a mental health problem each year, roughly 16 million people

LGBT+ people are between **2-3** times more likely than heterosexual people to report a mental health problem in England

**23%** of black or black British people will have a mental health problem in any given week

This compares to **17%** of white British people

Around **40%** of people in England who have overlapping problems, including homelessness

and substance misuse, also suffer from mental health problems<sup>1</sup>

**24%** with difficulty in paying energy bills had depressive symptoms, compared to 9% for those who could afford them

**27%** with difficulty in affording their rent or mortgage had depressive symptoms, compared to 15% for those who could afford it<sup>2</sup>

**949,000** were referred to Child and Adolescent Mental Health Services in 2022-23

but **270,300** are still waiting for support<sup>3</sup>

**EDITOR'S CHOICE**  
**5 PIECES YOU NEED TO READ ON BIGISSUE.COM**



**1** *Game of Thrones* star Emilia Clarke: 'Surviving brain injuries gave me a fire to keep going'

**2** Why is nobody talking about Brexit in the general election?

**3** 'We're in a planetary code red - we need hope': How Labour's manifesto has gone down with young voters

**4** Covid destroyed my mental health and I lost everything - but discovering boxing turned my life around

**5** John Cale on The Velvet Underground, teaching Bowie the viola and why drugs aren't the 'creative stimulant'

## FOOD POVERTY

## Why the next government must expand free school meals and save one million children from hunger

● We are calling on whoever wins the election to provide universal free school meals to all school-age children, including outside of term time, to tackle food poverty.

The issue has moved up the agenda in recent years, after Manchester United footballer Marcus Rashford forced ministers to act, but the next government is facing a ticking time bomb with nearly a million children set to fall into "the hunger trap", campaigners warn.

More than two million pupils in England - or nearly one-in-four (24.6%) state school students - qualify for the free school dinners. Yet around 200,000 eligible children are not registered, warns Andrew Forsey, from Feeding Britain, while restrictive eligibility requirements are preventing a further 900,000 children living in poverty from accessing the meals.

"No child living in poverty should be disqualified from free school meals, either during term time or during

school holidays," he said. "[Missing out] can be crippling to children's life chances."

To qualify for free lunches, a child's parents or carers must be receiving benefits and have an after-tax income below £7,400. The criteria should be "properly aligned" with the poverty threshold, Forsey says, and authorities should roll out an auto-enrolment scheme for eligible kids.

"I've read three manifestos which show progress. The Lib Dems, the Greens and Labour," said Forsey.

The Conservatives would not universalise free school meals, while the Lib Dems would offer all primary school children free school meals, funded by a new share buy-back tax.

Labour have not committed to universalising free school meals, but Forsey says Labour's manifesto does provide some hope, as it includes a commitment to end "mass dependence on emergency food parcels within Britain".

### Free school meals in numbers



**24.6%**  
the proportion of English state school pupils receiving free school meals



**75,000**  
the number of kids who have become eligible over the past year

**2,100,000**

the number of pupils in England receiving free school meals

**£7,400**

the maximum after-tax income in a household with children qualifying for free school meals



**900,000**

the number of children in poverty who are not eligible for the meals



**200,000**

the number of children, roughly, who are eligible but not registered



**It's wonderful to know that our grants genuinely help people, especially when they're at their lowest**

MIRIAM WILLMOTT  
Senior Grants Officer

# CHARITY OFFERS LIFELINE TO OLDER PEOPLE WHO ARE LONELY AND LIVING IN POVERTY

With around one in five pensioners struggling with the burden of financial hardship and loneliness, it is no wonder that charity Friends of the Elderly is inundated with pleas for support.

“Every day we receive grant applications from older people who are isolated, and often tell us they go for days without seeing – or even speaking – to anybody,” said Miriam Willmott, senior grants officer at Friends of the Elderly.

All year round, the Charity provides grants for older people for basic household essentials and repairs, mobility aids and disability adaptations.

The Charity helped 72-year-old Grace\*, who in recent years has

developed several health problems including lung disease, rheumatoid arthritis and chronic back pain, which have left her increasingly fragile. Grace's lack of mobility had made life increasingly tough.

“Often I couldn't walk very far at all before the pain would start in my back and legs, and then I'd have difficulty breathing,” explains Grace. “It made it very hard to leave home, which was really isolating.”

Friends of the Elderly gave a grant of £400 to help pay for a mobility scooter to give Grace her freedom back.

“It's made a huge difference. I feel 100% happier! I can get out and go shopping – I love getting out, getting fresh air and seeing life; it makes

me feel much more connected to the outside world now, and to other people,” Grace told us.

“Since receiving a grant, 81% of the older people we support feel less stressed and anxious. It's wonderful to know that our grants genuinely help people, especially when they're at their lowest,” Miriam added.

“I received a heartbreaking application from a gentleman in his 70s,” Miriam continued. “He had just been in hospital having cancer treatment. Upon returning home he found his flat had been burgled and his single bed had been urinated on and completely broken.

“He couldn't afford a new bed or bedding, so he was sleeping on the floor under a blanket while recovering from his treatment.

“Thanks to the kindness and generosity of the people who donate to our charity, we helped him purchase a new bed and bedding.

“We rely on donations to make this possible. We know everyone is being stretched to the limit right now, but any money you can spare, however big or small, really does make a huge difference to the older people who come to us, because they often have nowhere else to turn.”



100% of the grants that Friends of the Elderly award come from fundraised income. You can donate via [bit.ly/FoteSA24](https://bit.ly/FoteSA24) or simply scan the QR code above to help be a lifeline to older people who are struggling.



For more information, please call 020 7730 8263 or email [FundraisingTeam@fote.org.uk](mailto:FundraisingTeam@fote.org.uk). Alternatively, write to Friends of the Elderly, The Bradbury Centre, Smiles Place, Woking, Surrey, GU22 8BJ.

\*Independent Age: The Hidden Two Million June 2023

TRENDING



# How our Learning Disabilities Week special got people talking



● Last week's pioneering learning disability issue gained a lot of interest across the media. The magazine was the first to be created by and wholly feature people with learning disabilities.

ITV Lunchtime News visited our Finsbury Park, London, offices on Monday 17 June to film a piece, featuring an interview with our very own senior reporter Isabella McRae, while Channel 5 interviewed Mencap 'Myth Buster' and CBeebies presenter George Webster live on their evening news bulletin.

This world-first special edition was covered in over 200 publications, including *The Independent*, *Daily Mail*, *The Mirror*, *Indy100*, *Evening Standard* and *The i*.

CBBC Newsround also covered the story.

I love this. People with a #learningdisability should be seen and heard. Proud of George and his @mencap\_charity myth busters for curating the @BigIssue for #LearningDisability-Week2024 #CanYouSeeMe @NHS\_RobW, X

My 13-year-old son has Down's syndrome. He's very sociable and likes to say hello to strangers when we're out. He gets a huge range of responses – some people really engage with him while others completely ignore him!

Joanne Miles, Facebook

Love that they included easy-read features and bigger font sizes 🙌

@TypicallyDivya, X

We absolutely love this. Outstanding work @mencap\_charity @BigIssue. ❤️ #LearningDisabilityWeek

The Disability Policy Centre, @DisPolCentre, X

What an inspiration you are Jessica-Jane Applegate, speaking out and being so proud of all you have achieved with your unseen disability.

@hodsonandco, Instagram

Just because you can't see a disability doesn't mean the struggles and challenges are not there so well done for sharing the story 🙌

@aacr\_coaching96, Instagram

Am genuinely shocked that so many people who have access to what is a wealth of information could remain still ignorant of the simple fact that first and foremost a PERSON is a PERSON whether or not they have a learning disability 🙌 Guess our society still has a way to go 🙌

Karen Ellis Doney, Facebook

What an incredible way to showcase the voices of learning-disabled people!

@Hft, Facebook

Written by those who know. This is for everybody to gain a better understanding of those living with learning disabilities.

Sharon Davies, Facebook

Fantastic to see this! An excellent magazine that does so much good, giving a platform to a too-often marginalised group.

@donovox, X

Cannot wait to pick up my copy of the @BigIssue in this groundbreaking issue co-produced by people with a learning disability.

@moz\_matt\_dix, X

It's so great to see this Big Issue cover of people with learning disabilities.

@vijaypatel\_110, X



(Above) Channel 5 News presenter Katherine Nash speaks to George Webster



(Middle) Media reaction to our special issue; (bottom) Big Issue Senior Reporter Isabella McRae being interviewed by ITV Lunchtime News



Keep the conversation going at [letters@bigissue.com](mailto:letters@bigissue.com)

# Seven years after Grenfell no prosecutions have been brought. Residents fear they'll die before seeing justice

By Greg Barradale and Liam Geraghty



“I went through the largest national tragedy in this country since the Second World War. I watched 72 people perish in front of me,” says David O’Connell, who lives in a flat in Lancaster West estate, home to Grenfell Tower.

“I have to carry on living in the area. It’s traumatic for me and my partner. On top of that, I have to pay for something that’s more expensive and doesn’t necessarily work better than what we had before. I want to be trying to get my life back together.”

Seven years after the fire, residents speak of promises of change and justice unfulfilled. The Grenfell Inquiry’s final report won’t be delivered until September, while the Met admits charges won’t be brought for another year. It has left residents fearing many will die before seeing justice. Meanwhile, the refurbishment to transform the Lancaster West estate into a “model 21st century social housing estate” continues. Originally supposed to finish in 2020, it has dragged on, disrupting lives. Residents say they have been told the cost has ballooned to £80 million beyond the council’s capabilities.

The fire sparked promises of change from Westminster, as well as prompting a years-long dispute over work to fix dangerous cladding on buildings across the UK. “What is alarming is that nothing has changed for the residents of the estate and in fact things have got far, far worse,” said Kimia Zabihyan of the Grenfell Next of Kin campaign group.

“There is no advocacy for the residents who were abandoned and forgotten by this government, who blithely left the welfare of the citizens at the heart of this tragedy to the very same council that was under criminal investigation for the fire that killed their friends, neighbours and family.”

The original budget for the refurbishment was £120m. O’Connell says council representatives told residents at a meeting it will now be closer to £248m. Kensington and Chelsea Council said it did not recognise these figures, but acknowledged inflation and high borrowing costs had driven up budgets, and that the first block is due to be completed in early 2025. O’Connell doesn’t yet know what the final charges for the refurbishment will be, but expects at least £15,000 if he remains in his flat – or around £60,000 if he moves out. “It’s getting more and more expensive to live in a building site, with the remains of the tower,” he says.

“All people wanted after the fire was to have the basics working. There’s lots of good people, there’s been lots of good intentions, there was lots of money promised, but the management has been appalling.”



**There's good intentions, but the management has been appalling**

DAVID O'CONNELL

Building safety and cladding remediation work became one of the key political issues arising from Grenfell, with tens of thousands of UK residents discovering their homes were covered in unsafe materials. Promises from Westminster followed. The Conservatives' winning 2019 manifesto acknowledged that "no report or review can truly capture the heartache, sorrow, anger and grief that many people feel", promised to work with industry, housing associations and individuals to make homes safe and pledged to support residents with the removal of unsafe cladding.

In 2022, Conservatives passed the Building Safety Act into law, which protected leaseholders from some costs associated with fixing unsafe buildings – but only after many leaseholders described facing bankruptcy from post-Grenfell bills.

Their 2024 manifesto also mentions the tragedy, pledging to make developers fund remediation work on mid- and high-rise buildings.

Progress remains slow. As of April this year, 1,975 residential buildings have started or completed remediation of unsafe cladding, accounting for 46% of buildings where a fire risk has been identified, according to the Department for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities. A total of 2,361 buildings are still awaiting safety work.

The Department for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities won a landmark legal case last month to force freeholder Grey GR, owned by pension fund manager Railpen, into carrying

out works to fix defects at Vista Tower in Stevenage. It's the first time the government has used new powers under the Building Safety Act to speed up building safety work.

The wait goes on to see if anyone will face criminal charges for their part in the disaster. An update from the Metropolitan Police last month suggested survivors and bereaved families could be waiting beyond 2026 – almost a decade after the fire – before anyone is charged.

The force said it will take its investigation team at least 12 to 18 months to fully assess the Grenfell Inquiry's report and complete evidential files to present to the Crown Prosecution Service to make charging decisions. A team of 180 officers and staff have been dedicated to the investigation with detectives identifying 19 companies or organisations and 58 individuals as suspects.

"A lot of people will have died by the time they get round to doing anything with this. It's the same thing you saw with Hillsborough," says O'Connell. "It just seems to take forever to achieve any kind of justice in this country."

Those who have died include Virginia Sang, who Big Issue spoke to in 2023. In evidence given to the Grenfell Inquiry, Sang described spending the night of the fire outside "doing what I could to help people in the local area". At 6am she went home, had a bath, and went to work to open up a local GP surgery "in case the fire brigade might need something".

"People won't be here to be angry or to remember," says O'Connell.

In a statement to Big Issue ahead of the anniversary, Elizabeth Campbell, leader of Kensington and Chelsea Council, said: "Our thoughts will always be with the people who lost their lives, their loved ones and their homes on 14 June 2017. This council could and should have done more to keep our residents safe before the fire, and to care for them in the aftermath.

"We know how important the long-awaited Grenfell Inquiry report will be for the bereaved, survivors and the community. We are committed to learning from the report to ensure that a tragedy like Grenfell can never happen again. While the date is set for it to be published in September, we know that this is not the end of the road to justice for those affected.

"We will keep working to rebuild our relationship with our communities as we strive to meet the challenge the bereaved and survivors have set us – to become the best council for our residents and change the culture of our organisation for good, as a lasting legacy of the tragedy."

@GregBarradale @LGeraghty23

## Council charges Grenfell residents cleaning fee for memorial to victims: 'Who would think this was fair?'



Total amount of charges

**£618.09**

This included:

**£182.25**

for cleaning

**£37.46**

for hanging up lanterns

**£153.14**

for removing lanterns and disconnecting electrics

**£129.40**

for removing lanterns and dismantling a stage

Residents living in the shadow of Grenfell Tower were billed by their council for cleaning a memorial to the victims of the fire.

Kensington and Chelsea Council charged leaseholders on the Lancaster West estate a total of £618.09 for work around the fifth anniversary in 2022, Big Issue has learned, including hanging and removing lanterns, dismantling a stage and removing "excrement and other human debris" from a memorial.

The charges were only discovered after leaseholders requested to inspect their service charge invoices, and were then refunded in May 2024 when the residents complained to the council. The largest charge, of £182.25, was detailed as: "Brush to remove litter, excrement and other human debris, mould, moss growth algae and lichen and power wash all surfaces of hard surfaces at a minimum pressure of 1,500 psi, but not to exceed 2,000 psi, load up and remove waste and debris." Other charges include £37.46 for hanging up lanterns, and £129.40 for removing lanterns and dismantling a stage.

"We're very sorry for the mistake that led to residents being charged for some works in the run up the Grenfell anniversary for the 22-23 financial year. As soon as we became aware of this we refunded the money to the leaseholders who had been wrongly charged," a spokesperson for Kensington and Chelsea council told Big Issue. "We have a new assurance step for our service charge team to meet more frequently with the Lancaster West Neighbourhood Team to go through all transactions before leaseholders are billed."

Along with the anniversary work, leaseholders also discovered a total of £7,680 in wrongful service charges which have since been refunded.



# CHANGE IS BREWING

Since launching in 2015, Change Please coffee has supported thousands of people experiencing homelessness. This number is set to increase, thanks to a new £1 million partnership with Nespresso

By Laura Kelly

It's been almost a decade since Change Please coffee began their mission to use coffee to offer people a path out of homelessness. The idea is simple – and effective. Train people experiencing homelessness to become baristas and support them with everything they need to turn their lives around – a living wage job, access to housing and vital services, therapy, a bank account, onward employment.

Back in 2015, the team started with a single cart in Covent Garden but, with early backing from Big Issue, the

social enterprise grew and grew. Soon after, they opened the Change Please Training Academy in Peckham. Today, they have 10 coffee bars in London. In 2023 alone, they supported 1,550 people experiencing homelessness and numbers are growing this year. They have plans to expand to more cities in the UK and Ireland.

This week, they are taking another huge step forward with a brand-new £1 million partnership with Nespresso. From 28 June, Nespresso's customers will be able to support

Change Please to fight homelessness every day with their morning coffee, simply by choosing the new Nespresso for Change Please blend – available for Original, Vertuo and Nespresso Professional systems.

The coffee is “delicious” Change Please founder Cemal Ezel confirms, “but this partnership goes beyond simply selling great coffee. It is about using the power of business to drive social change and improve the lives of those most in need.”

The issue of homelessness is urgent in the UK. Due to the cost of living and housing crises, many more people are struggling. The latest government figures for England showed 112,660 households were living in temporary accommodation at the end of 2023 – a record high figure and up 12% in a year.

An estimated 3,898 people were counted as sleeping rough across England on a single night in autumn 2023. That latest official rough sleeping snapshot was up more than a quarter on the 3,069 people counted in 2022 and is more than double the 1,768 people on the streets in 2010.

According to the Museum of Homelessness charity, 1,313 people across the UK died while homeless in 2022 – an 85% increase since 2019.

“Our aim is to change the stigma around homelessness,” Ezel says. “People can experience homelessness for a variety of reasons, such as losing a job, bereavement or domestic abuse.

“We offer a platform for people to gain their confidence back and to get back on their feet. Everyone is unique and has a story to tell. Our role is to

(Above, l to r) skilled baristas Rob, Tiegan and Michelle are among Change Please Training Academy's alumni



**Everyone is unique and has a story to tell. Our role is to help people fulfil their potential**

**CEMAL EZEL**  
 Founder, Change Please

help people fulfil their potential, by helping them to unlock their amazing abilities and talent so they can turn their lives around for good.”

The first person to get that opportunity was Lucy. In 2015, Lucy was selling the Big Issue in Tooley Street near London Bridge, but she was ready to take the step into long term employment. After training with Change Please, she became a full-time barista, even going on to run their coffee van at Canary Wharf.

“The support from Big Issue was invaluable for us when we first started Change Please,” says Ezel. “Big Issue helped us source the right people who were ready for long term employment. But also, the reach and the reputation of the Big Issue brand really helped the awareness of our mission.”

Nespresso UK and Ireland CEO Anna Lundstrom says she could immediately see a connection between Change Please’s work and their own AAA Sustainable Quality Program, which supports coffee farmers in 18 countries including Colombia,

(Below) the Nespresso and Change Please pop up coffee bar will be open for business at Outernet in June and July



Indonesia and Uganda, to build strong and resilient communities, making coffee farming environmentally, socially and economically sustainable.

Everyone at the company is “very proud” of their impact, she adds. So far, the AAA Program has supported more than 150,000 independent farmers, created sustainable farming practices, restored coffee farming in communities where it had disappeared and planted more than six million trees.

“At Nespresso, we believe that coffee cultivates connections, communities, and creates positive change,” Lundstrom adds. “Change Please shares this belief, and the work they have done over the past decade to offer individuals experiencing homelessness opportunities through the power of coffee and onward employment is what resonated with and inspired us. We are proud to be a part of the next chapter in their story.”

In the first year of the partnership, Nespresso has committed at least £1 million to the Change Please Foundation. The money will help fuel

the company’s expansion, allowing them to reach more people that need them, as well as improve existing support for trainees. And that’s not all, says Ezel: “Beyond the commitment of over £1 million to support Change Please’s mission to end homelessness, Nespresso is committed to finding relevant onward employment opportunities for Change Please graduates within their business.”

Nespresso has also donated a new Nespresso for Change Please coffee van. From 28 June to 3 July and on 6 July, Londoners can visit a pop-up at Outernet in London’s West End.

“We aim for this space to build awareness and ignite conversations, leaving visitors eager to learn more, get involved, and join us in our mission,” says Ezel. All this is “very much the start” for the partnership, he adds – if lots of people choose the Nespresso for Change Please blend to perk up their day, the sky’s the limit.

Lundstrom, too, has a vision for “the positive impact we can achieve”.

It’s all about empowering people to make small decisions with a big impact. “Creating a positive impact can sometimes feel overwhelming, with countless causes and ways to get involved,” she says. “However, in the coffee-loving nations of the UK and Ireland, it’s inspiring to realise that a simple and small change – such as the coffee we choose – can significantly impact the lives of others.”

**We believe that coffee cultivates communities and creates positive change**

**ANNA LUNDSTROM**  
 CEO, Nespresso UK and Ireland

Nespresso for Change Please coffees and accessories are available from 28 June at [nespresso.com/uk](http://nespresso.com/uk)



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BSME British Editor of the Year 2022, 2016,

2013, PPA Scotland Editor of the Year 2019,

PPA Scotland Hall of Fame inductee 2021

Jane Graham PPA Scotland Writer of

the Year 2018

# EDITOR'S LETTER



## Kylian Mbappé has a nose for change

I've become a little obsessed with Kylian Mbappé's nose. And why wouldn't I be? The noble nose met the rather substantial shoulder of Austrian centre-back Kevin Danso during France's opening Euro 2024 match against Austria. And while the shoulder remained solid, the nose moved in several different directions.

Mbappé is the French national captain and a global superstar about to embark, next season, on a career-defining period with Real Madrid. Planets were aligning for him to be the talismanic player of the championship, the one who would become accepted as the world's best player.

But the impact of the collision has changed that. Associated Press ran frequent updates. Media around the world was on alert. *L'Équipe*, the huge French daily sports paper, carried Mbappé front pages on consecutive days. One, just two days in, said, darkly, life without Mbappé has begun.

Mbappé has always had an air of otherness about him. He won the World Cup when he was 19, and immediately donated his winnings, about £400,000, to a children's charity in Paris. He comes from the poor banlieues north of the city, has enjoyed huge success generating the wealth of Croesus (he's thought to earn around £400,000 a week) but has remained committed to offering kids from his background a way ahead. He walks, not just talks, a sense of social responsibility. Even ahead of the match against Austria, while other players were locked in their moments, Mbappé was surrounded by young mascots, all of whom wanted his autograph. He signed books and shirts until he could delay no longer and had to take to the pitch.

One of the other reasons he has become of major interest is because he speaks about things well beyond football.

Recently French president Emmanuel Macron stunned Europe by calling a snap parliamentary election in France. The far-right National Rally party, moulded by Marine Le Pen, won

a massive percentage of French votes in the European parliamentary election. Rather than appease, Macron decided to challenge. He dissolved parliament and called for the vote. It will run on 30 June and 7 July. They don't hang around, the French.

There is a chance centrist Macron's gamble won't pay off. A lot of the votes for National Rally came from younger people losing faith with what they see as a remote elite.

So Mbappé, the figurehead and child of immigrants, spoke up. He urged young voters to reject "extremists" who, he said, were at "the gates of power". He added: "We have an opportunity to choose the future of the country and we have to emphasise the importance of the task." He also warned against voter apathy. The French FA president Philippe Diallo backed Mbappé, and teammate Marcus Thuram, who also spoke out. "These are young men who have an opinion on social issues," he said.

The leader of Le Pen's party, Jordan Bardella, criticised Mbappé. It was not his place, he said.

How often the 'stay in your own lane' phrase, or variations, bubble up when people who aren't politicians speak on politics.

One person I heard defend Mbappé was, oddly, former England centre-back Matthew Upson, best known for his time at West Ham and now a football pundit. Why shouldn't Mbappé speak, said Upson, as everything, when you get down to it, is political.

He's right. Whether it's during a time of flux or a time of steadiness, why shouldn't we hear from those in positions to impact? They have as much right as anybody else to speak and it shows a great deal of responsibility beyond the selfish closed remote world we can sometimes accuse some successful stars of living in. I'd be very interested to hear just where Harry Kane or John McGinn stand on issues of the UK political future.

So allez Kylian, with your mangled schnozzle. Don't stop.



Mbappé walks, not just talks, a sense of social responsibility

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- An end to the cruel and ineffective badger cull
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- An end to all animal experiments once and for all
- Legal protection for fish and crustaceans
- Measures to stop puppy smuggling
- Ending the industrial breeding and release of birds for shooting
- A ban on the imports of fur, foie gras, and hunting trophies
- The vital appointment of an Animal Protection Commissioner

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# BIRD'S WORDS



## My manifesto for ending poverty awaits the next government

“No teacher, no doctor, no police officer is trained to get rid of poverty, but they have to deal with the problems thrown up by poverty,” reads the statement in the small but perfectly formed manifesto I published last week for the next government’s attention. It is an unhappy truth that our public servants are in the poverty firing line, but are capable only of responding to poverty’s toxic outcomes.

Would we expect a doctor, teacher or police officer to have the tools, the skills, the knowledge to reduce poverty? No, of course not. Rather, we expect other parts of society and its government to fund and run poverty prevention and cure programmes so that the doctor, the teacher and the law enforcement officer do not have too much on their hands. Rather we expect a reduction of poverty so that it no longer stymies the actions or distorts the working practices of these professionals. Yet poverty does distort their jobs – completely.

My manifesto is previous. It awaits the next government to give advice on how to reduce poverty and points out how the present structure of government is incapable of so doing. That we have to break through “Westminsterism”, a dreadful illness that has befallen politics, causing government to spend the public purse unwisely. And very little of it on poverty prevention and cure.

The creation of a Ministry of Poverty Prevention, to end the scattergun effect of government policy, is my main argument. That over 80% of government expenditure on people caught in the Bastille of poverty is spent on emergency and little on prevention or cure. Treading poverty water so to speak.

It is alarming how much poverty and need for emergency support there

is. And it increases, with apparently – depending on whose figures you use – one in three children living in need.

I was therefore pleased to be asked to debate this situation on BBC Radio 4 recently, putting forward my argument that even in the middle of an emergency, a crisis, we have to be aspiring, building the means of ending future emergencies. Because however good we are at responding to emergencies, it doesn’t actually help us get rid of the next one.

All the food banks and top-ups of social security will not bring us anywhere nearer the nirvana which is the cleansing of poverty from society, making it a social rarity.

So I went on the BBC pre-record apparatus for perhaps 10 minutes and had a very interesting discussion about child poverty, again apparently on the increase. It is a dire situation. I was pleased that I could advocate that even in the middle of this terrible crisis we must be ‘trying to turn the poverty tap off’ by investing in prevention and cure.

The interviewer vigorously questioned me about the apparently

### THIS WEEK JOHN WILL BE

#### Reading:

Chuck Berry:  
*The Autobiography*

#### Watching:

*The Sweeney*,  
2012 film with  
Ray Winstone

#### Listening:

Chuck Berry:  
*Greatest Hits*

#### Doing:

Drawing in the  
Lake District

high likelihood of a Ministry of Poverty Prevention being created. I got the chance to explain that, with eight government departments each having a finger in the poverty pie, the current scattergun effort is a waste of public resources.

That at the beginning of the Second World War and in the direst of circumstances, William Beveridge was commissioned to write up the report that would prepare for a better post-war world. Even in an emergency you have to be planning to eradicate the chance of a next emergency.

But when the interview was played, out the window had gone the Ministry of Poverty Prevention and most of my point that responding just to emergency was not enough. You have to be doing both at one and the same time. Giving the help needed now but planning to end poverty once and for all.

So I listened to an inept piece of radio journalism that told us the usual story but did not give us the hope that one day we will have rid the face of the Earth of the ravages of poverty. What a wasted opportunity.

Or perhaps (giving the BBC an out here) I was just not clear and concise and convincing enough.

So I’ve written this mini manifesto that gives advice for the next government to tackle poverty not simply as an emergency but as a deep and ever-occurring phenomenon. We have to turn the tap off; transfer resources to those early years to end the recurrence of people inheriting poverty from their parents.

The poverty problem for doctors, teachers and police officers is not of their making and it distorts their ability to function for the betterment of us all.

We will be putting my manifesto up on the Big Issue website. So do read it if you get the chance. Meanwhile, I will repeat that political thinking has yet to embrace the ending of poverty because they have yet to master the thinking necessary to make it history.

One thing we will do is create a simulated Ministry of Poverty Prevention and stuff it full of answers to poverty. Imagining an index of poverty solutions would be a good beginning.

Let’s hope that the next government helps us solve this problem of never getting to the root causes of poverty, always leaving us to deal with its appalling consequences.

Sir William Beveridge discusses his famous report at a press conference on 1 December 1942 at the Ministry of Information, London



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# LETTERS

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### A housing solution

On 18 June BBC One's *Morning Live* looked at what is being done to address the problem of the one million empty homes in the UK. The program looked at one charity in Leeds, LATCH (Leeds Action to Create Homes), which works with the local council to identify and purchase some of the 3,000 empty homes in the area and renovate them for affordable rent. This also benefits the community by training and using unemployed people to give them construction skills which will make them more employable in the future.

Politicians from all parties talk about building more new homes – many of which will be unaffordable for first-time buyers and lower-income renters, but they seldom mention the fact that there are all these long-term empty homes which could be bought up and renovated. Sadly, they never seem to put forward suggestions as to how government could speed up this process and support local authorities in this.

I think this would be a worthwhile topic for Big Issue to highlight and lobby politicians with during the run-up to the election. Also, it seems a worthwhile project for Big Issue Invest to look at – if this has not already been done.

**K Ward, Somerset**

### The borrowers

Over the past 70 years, Labour has borrowed much less than the Conservatives and repaid more of the national debt. In fact, Conservative governments have not made an annual budget surplus since 1904. I should add that Labour are the only party to have achieved this, on four occasions in six years from 2000 to 2006.

When Labour lost power in 2010 the national debt stood at a high £800,000,000. In 2018 the Tories had doubled this. That was before Covid. Now, after 14 years of Conservative government, it is more than three times the amount left by Labour. Why do the Tories have a reputation for being good with the economy? God alone knows.

**Tony B, Axminster**

### Libraries give us power

Wonderful piece by Brontë Schiltz [When prison libraries break down walls, Issue 1619, 10-16 June]. It is so important for prisoners to socialise in a safe and friendly way and to improve their education.

I did some prison visits years ago and the young men I visited were literate but didn't read much. One gave me three illuminated scrolls, two of which were done by a man who had achieved A level art. All three scrolls are well-crafted and beautiful and they are displayed in my home.

Libraries are vital everywhere, but perhaps particularly in environments where there is little opportunity for education. Mr Smith is to be congratulated on his valuable and productive work.

**Juliet Chaplin, Sutton**

### Lease of mind

I noticed in your requests to the next government [Blueprint for Change, Issue 1618, 03-09 June], you did not include leasehold reform under 'Housing' from the paltry 125 standard leases to the full effective ownership of 990 years PROMISED by Michael Gove until the Tories not once, but twice reneged on this promise. Properties with less than 80 years on a lease cannot secure a mortgage, so your investment loses a huge amount of value. Please also demand a cap on these service charge companies who charge what they like, aren't required to provide proof and most of the time do nothing.

**@Harriet Sadleir**

ISSUE 1620

I love this. This is so awesome.

@FloBrookes, X



### Use your vote

It's worrying how low election voting turnouts are in the Western democracies. We are fed up with politicians in general, but we must keep voting, concentrating on the individual rather than the party. The 80th D-Day anniversary commemorations must stir us to at least go and vote, even if we put 'none of the above'.

**Steve Brennan, West Yorkshire**

### Reading between the lines

I love books and I love reading, but I am very aware that this is in many ways a real luxury. Many people in this country and around the world are struggling with many different issues, debt, climate change, austerity, war and conflict, to name just a few.

It seems grotesque that books and our enjoyment of books should be at the cost of other people's safety and security. As Jane Graham rightly points out [Do our festivals have a future?, Issue 1619] these are difficult times for book festivals, but they are nowhere near the difficulties experienced by Palestinians in Gaza and the West Bank, or those people living on the front lines of climate chaos.

Maybe it is time for us to finally realise that we are all interconnected – far more than we may like to think.

While many companies will try to deny their role in what is happening in Gaza and the West Bank, or their involvement in climate change, maybe this is a good opportunity for them to think again about what they want to invest their clients' money in. Just a thought.

**Kate Taylor, South Gloucestershire**

Our Blueprint for Change calls on the next government to pledge to end poverty



# THE VETERANS PLEDGE



**We are calling on the next government to commit to supporting veterans and their families and end the ongoing injustices they face.**

We are asking all party leaders to sign the Veterans Pledge, committing to:

- **Keep the Office for Veterans' Affairs, led by a Cabinet attending minister.**
- **Commission an independent review of the medical discharge process.**
- **Ensure veterans get the benefits and compensations they deserve.**



**Ensure veterans like Darren, Vicki and Derek get the support they deserve. Show your support by joining us in telling the party leaders – and the next Prime Minister – to sign the Veterans Pledge.**

Visit [helpforheroes.org.uk](https://helpforheroes.org.uk) or scan the QR code:

# HELP for HEROES



SCAN ME

# Britain's future – who's got the answers?





Throughout this election period we have challenged party leaders to get to grips with the most insidious issue corroding Britain today – poverty.

In our Big Issue Blueprint for Change we set out key policies we believe will help lift millions out of the deep poverty trap they are in and help build to a better future.

In recent weeks over 12,000 Big Issue readers and backers have signed a petition to demand an end to poverty following the 4 July vote. This week our ambassadors Daniel Mays, Christopher Eccleston and George Clarke joined the push.

We have taken this call to the two men who are fighting to be the next prime minister, Rishi Sunak and Sir Keir Starmer, and to John Swinney and Sir Ed Davey, the two other leaders likely to see their parties command the next largest collection of seats in Westminster.

We also, among others, brought them questions posed by our Big Issue vendor colleagues.

This, then, is the state we will be in.



**Will you commit to investing in people affected by poverty so we can end poverty once and for all? And given that 14 million people are struggling to meet their most basic needs, including four million children, will you promise them that you will lift them out of poverty?**

### Keir Starmer Labour

Poverty is a moral stain on our society. The last Labour government lifted over half a million children out of poverty and the next Labour government will build on that legacy. We'll have an ambitious, wide-ranging child poverty strategy, we'll give all children in primary school free breakfast, protect renters from arbitrary eviction, slash fuel poverty and ensure work is decent and secure for all. We will deliver the change our country needs, with an ambitious agenda to bring hope and opportunity to the next generation, and ensure everyone is better off with Labour.

### Rishi Sunak Conservative

Work is the best way out of poverty, as Big Issue shows, and our welfare reforms have helped around four million more people move into work since 2010. We have brought child poverty down since 2010 and reduced the number of children living in workless households by around a third. As part of our clear plan, we have significantly expanded free childcare for working parents so that parents can go back to work or increase their hours. This is so important because children living in households where all adults work are around five times less likely to be in absolute poverty than those living in workless households. We have also provided a £108 billion cost of living support package over the last few years to help households through the period of high inflation caused by Putin's war, preventing 1.3 million people from falling into poverty.

### John Swinney SNP

I have made the mission to eradicate child poverty in

Scotland my top priority as First Minister and I use that term deliberately. I am under no illusions that this will be an easy task – it will not be – which is why I will always say it is a challenge, particularly under devolved powers only, but there can be no acceptable number of children living in poverty.

Despite the challenges of UK austerity, Brexit and the cost of living crisis, the SNP in government delivered an estimated £1.4bn to benefit children in low-income households in 2023-24. The Scottish government has made sure no one in Scotland has to pay for the Conservatives' bedroom tax and we will spend £90 million this year alone on that and support for people facing the Tories' benefit cap too. That is millions every year we could use to tackle poverty.

### Ed Davey Lib Dem

We really want to tackle poverty and our first big, costed proposal is on ending the two-child limit [on child benefit]. I think most commentators agree that's the fastest way of tackling some of the poverty you've got. It's not the only thing you can do, but I think it's a really big, important start.

Lifting the two-child limit will particularly help children. There are other groups I want to focus on. You've probably seen me doing a lot on carers. One of the main reasons we think we need to be more generous to carers – I'm talking about unpaid carers now – is because a lot of family carers are living in poverty. They often lose one or two incomes because someone becomes ill or disabled, and the £81.90 a week you get on the carer's allowance is a pittance, it's the lowest benefit. We want to increase that immediately by £20 a week – that's over £1,000 a year. We want to increase the earnings limit so that carers who do a little bit of part-time work alongside care don't get hit. ▶

## Keir Starmer

### 'I'll be as bold as Attlee'

**If you achieve the huge election mandate that polls are suggesting, will you be as bold as Clement Attlee in 1945 or be locked into austerity-lite?**

**KS:** I'll be as bold as Attlee. I ran a public service during austerity, I saw the impact of the Tories' decisions. There will be no return to austerity with a Labour government. We'll have a decade of national renewal instead, with ambitious investment and reform.

**Why is all debate on migration currently framed around a negative impact? Doesn't this simply play into a narrative that all those coming here are on the make and to be mistrusted?**

**KS:** People who come to the UK to work make a substantial contribution to our economy, our public services and our communities. But we do have to recognise that under the Tories businesses are too dependent on bringing people here to fill vacancies, rather than training up British workers. And we cannot continue with the appalling tragedy of people dying in the Channel, exploited by criminal gangs.

**The benefits system is punitive and causes distress for people who cannot work. The DWP assessment process is frequently dehumanising. How will you fix this and make sure help, rather than suspicion, is the motivating drive?**



Keir Starmer, leader of the Labour Party, unveils Labour's 2024 election manifesto with his shadow cabinet

**KS:** The system isn't working, and too many people are unable to access the support they need to live independent, fulfilling lives. We want to change this, so we'll tackle the backlog of Access to Work claims and give disabled people the confidence to start working – without the fear of an immediate benefit reassessment if it does not work out.

**If you came across a parent in a shop who was shoplifting baby formula to feed their child, what would you do?**

**KS:** I'd offer to pay for it. The desperation of families around the country should make the Tories feel nothing but shame. Of course, shoplifting is a problem for businesses, so we'd have 13,000 more neighbourhood police to provide reassurance on our high streets. But we'd also change the rules so people could use food bank vouchers and loyalty card points to buy baby formula. And we'd tackle poverty by making work pay, reforming the welfare system and stopping unfair evictions.

**Does it bug you that people insist you're dull? How do you protect yourself against being damaged by personal attacks?**

**KS:** I've been called much worse, and that's just on the football pitch! It's water off a duck's back. It won't stop me taking our argument for change to the public across this election campaign.

**Are you annoyed a general election was called just as a major international football competition was getting going?**

**KS:** We've been preparing for this for four years so I'm mostly glad we finally got the chance to take our campaign to the British people. It's great to be on the campaign trail and I can tell you that most people I speak to agree that Britain needs change. I'd have liked a bit more spare time to watch the other teams, but I'll definitely be making time on the campaign trail for England's games.

**Would you rather sit down for coffee with Rishi Sunak or Nigel Farage?**

"I'd get a takeaway and leave them at the coffee shop to argue over which of them should be leader of the Tory Party."

## Vendors' questions



**Would you consider a 1p tax rise that is ring-fenced for A&E in order to improve waiting times until GP appointments become more readily available?**

**George Anderson**

BBC Television Centre, London

**KS:** I want to invest in the health service right away, which is why one of my first steps would be to use funds raised by closing tax loopholes for the super-rich to fund 40,000 extra appointments a week. That will bring down waiting lists and get people the care they desperately need. We also know we can make big improvements to NHS services without raising taxes on working people – under the Tories, the tax burden is the highest it's been for 70 years.

**Why are you not turning empty and abandoned buildings into homes for homeless people?**

**Josh Clarke**

Co-op, Henleaze, Bristol

**KS:** We want to tackle the root causes of homelessness and the housing crisis. We'll never get the UK out of the housing crisis until we build more homes. We will deliver a transformational package of reform to build 1.5 million homes over the next five years. We also want to kickstart the next generation of 'new towns', work with mayors, and make it quicker to build on brownfield sites. As part of this we'll bring about the biggest boost in affordable homes for a generation. Labour will get Britain building again.

**When was the last time you bought a Big Issue? What did you like about it?**

**Paul Logan**

Oxford Circus, London

**KS:** I couldn't give you the exact date but it was certainly in the last year or two, and it was from a vendor on Kentish Town high street. I'm an admirer of Big Issue, not just for the employment opportunities it offers to vendors, but also the important campaigning it has done and continues to do.

## Rishi Sunak

### 'I'd rather have coffee with John Bird than Starmer or Farage'

#### What is your biggest regret as PM?

**RS:** I'm focused on fighting for every vote at this election so I can continue with our clear plan to grow the economy, cut taxes and build a more secure future for our children and grandchildren. Things haven't been easy since the pandemic and war in Ukraine, but we are now turning the corner and my only regret would be not being able to take the bold action this country needs for the next five years because Labour has no plan and would take us back to square one.

#### If you saw a parent, clearly in extreme need, stealing baby formula to feed their child, what would you do?

**RS:** Shoplifting is not a victimless crime, and we will always support shopkeepers to prevent theft. At the same time, we will continue to help parents with the cost of living. As well as the £108bn cost of living support package we've provided over the last few years to help households through the period of high inflation, we've also extended the Household Support Fund, giving local authorities an extra £500m to support families in their local area who are in particular need with the cost of essentials.

#### Would you rather have coffee with Keir Starmer or Nigel Farage?

**RS:** I don't know either of them very well. Keir Starmer hasn't kept the same position longer than it takes him to drink a coffee and I don't know Nigel Farage at all. I'd rather have a coffee with John Bird!

### Vendors' questions



**Why aren't you creating more social and realistically affordable housing? And why did you get rid of the increase in universal credit?**

**Kelvin Gregory**

Somerset House, London

**RS:** We want everyone to have access to an affordable

Prime Minister Rishi Sunak works on his passing skills at Wantage Town FC



home. We have a strong record, delivering almost 700,000 affordable homes since 2010, a quarter more than the last Labour government. The four highest annual rates of housing supply in 30 years have all been since 2018. And we will go further by renewing the Affordable Homes Programme to deliver homes of all kinds and focus on regenerating and improving housing estates. We remain committed to building many more affordable homes, and our new Infrastructure Levy will mean hundreds of thousands of homes will be built next parliament.

During the pandemic, we brought in a £20 uplift in universal credit to protect households and help families deal with the impact of lockdown. We've also provided unprecedented cost-of-living support over the last few years, worth £108bn. Analysis has shown this prevented 1.3 million people from falling into poverty during the period of high inflation caused by Putin's invasion of Ukraine. We uprated benefits by 6.7% this year and 10.1% last year, as well as raising Local Housing Allowance rates, which will benefit 1.2 million renters this year by £800 on average.

#### Would you consider a 1p tax rise that is ring-fenced

#### for A&E in order to improve waiting times until GP appointments become more readily available?

**George Anderson**

BBC Television Centre, London

**RS:** As the son of a GP and a pharmacist, I'm from an NHS family and as chancellor and prime minister I've always prioritised getting the health service the funding it needs. In the last five years, we've increased spending on the NHS in real terms by 13% to a record £164.9bn a year.

We invested more than £1bn extra last year in our plan to help urgent and emergency care services recover from the pandemic, and a further £1bn in our plan to help primary care services recover. This is having an impact – the last year saw the first year-on-year improvement in A&E waiting times outside the pandemic for over 10 years, and satisfaction with GP services is improving.

We know there is more to do, which is why our manifesto commits to investment in 250 new and modernised GP surgeries, and to further investment in Pharmacy First to free up 20 million GP appointments a year once fully scaled. We're also training record numbers of doctors and nurses through the Long-Term Workforce Plan, and by the end of the next parliament there will be 92,000 more nurses and 28,000 more doctors in the NHS. I will always take the bold action the NHS needs to care for patients and families.

#### When was the last time you bought a Big Issue. What did you like about it?

**Paul Logan**

Oxford Circus, London

**RS:** I bought one this week and found the stories of the people who overcome great challenges every day to succeed really inspiring, from Paralympians to people with learning difficulties to those with disabilities. I'm proud of our record helping everyone to fulfil their potential whatever their background and I hope to do much more in the next five years with our clear plan to build a better future for everyone.

## John Swinney

# 'My vision for an independent Scotland couldn't be further from how things are in the UK right now'

**The SNP have been in power for 17 years. What can you offer that is new and better for your nation considering that huge length of time? And if it is good, why hasn't it been done already?**

**JS:** The SNP is building a better Scotland within the limits of limited powers and budget, and will continue to do so: working to eradicate child poverty, grow the economy, tackle the climate emergency and improve public services.

However it is with full powers of independence we can see change we all want to see.

We in Scotland will always be fighting poverty with one arm tied behind our back while successive UK governments impose policies that result in the opposite outcome and continuing cuts to Scotland's budget – like the 9% cut to our capital budget which affects our housing budget.

Independent European countries comparable to Scotland are fairer, more equal nations with lower rates of child poverty than the UK. If they can do it, I ask – why not Scotland?

Since 2007, the SNP in government has completed over 128,000 affordable and social homes, delivered over 292,000 baby boxes, and is spending £3bn a year to support low-income households through the UK's cost of living crisis – lifting an estimated 100,000 children out of poverty this year.

That's a record I am proud to stand on and build upon.

**Free university education for Scottish students in Scottish universities is a helpful route to better lives and opportunity for many. But given financial pressures, how long is it sustainable?**

**JS:** I am absolutely committed to free tuition and there will never be tuition fees in Scotland as long as I am First Minister. Since this policy was put in place, the number of Scottish students entering university has increased by 31% and I think that's a really positive achievement.

Record numbers of young people secured a university place in Scotland in the most

First Minister John Swinney visits Capshard Primary School in Kirkcaldy



recent cycle. Scotland's student debt levels are also the lowest in the UK, almost three times lower than in England.

Our universities play a pivotal role in Scotland's economy and society – and despite facing the most challenging budget since devolution, the Scottish government will invest over £1bn on teaching and research, including an increase in funding for research and innovation. This will ensure our universities continue to play a pivotal role in Scotland's economic growth.

**If you came across a parent in a shop who was shoplifting baby formula to feed their child, what would you do?**

**JS:** I'd discretely offer to pay for the formula as no parent should ever have to face this situation. Sadly, this is no hypothetical – I meet with my constituents, and people across Scotland, every week who face this kind of hardship.

Fourteen years of Westminster austerity, Brexit's impact on our economy and the cost of living crisis – all products of Westminster – have made this situation even more common. My vision for an independent Scotland couldn't be further from how things are in the UK right now – and I am determined that we can deliver that better nation with independence.

**Would you rather have coffee with Keir Starmer or Nigel Farage?**

**JS:** Keir Starmer.

## Vendors' questions

**What support are you going to give homeless people?**

**Craig**

Cafe Nero, Argyle St, Glasgow

**JS:** Ending homelessness and rough sleeping is a national priority for my government and the pandemic showed us that when there is a strong enough will, we can make rapid change in a very short period of time.

The SNP Scottish government has a proven track record of tackling homelessness and it remains a vital issue. In addition to funding for homelessness and housing we give to councils, we have a £100m multi-year ending homelessness together fund to back our or specific action to prevent homelessness. And I am also proud of the action the SNP Scottish government has taken to support those experiencing homelessness to date.

In 2012, we ended priority needs tests, providing a right to settled housing for all homeless households and demonstrating that Scotland is serious about ending homelessness. In 2016, we abolished Right to Buy, protecting an estimated 15,500 council homes from being sold off.

**When was the last time you bought a Big Issue? What did you like about it?**

**Paul Logan**

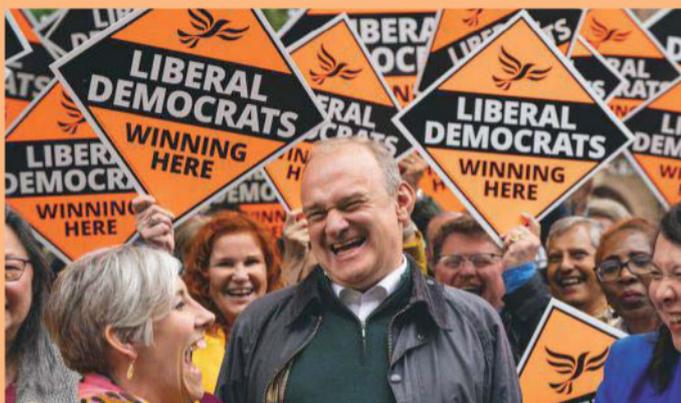
Oxford Circus, London

**JS:** A couple of weeks before I became First Minister as I got into the habit of buying a copy from a seller at Waverley station [in Edinburgh] when I got off the train for parliament.

For me, the real value of Big Issue is that it is a publication with a social conscience. From culture to news, it tackles these issues with an acute focus on what really matters to people. Big Issue takes time to consider the big political issues of the day, too. I've also been encouraged to see Big Issue picking up on Labour's shameful refusal to scrap the two-child benefit cap.

## Ed Davey

# 'I've fought the Conservatives all my life and I fought them in coalition'



Ed Davey, leader of the Liberal Democrats, meets party supporters in Berkhamsted, Hertfordshire

**What would you say to people who might have been turned away from voting Lib Dem by the coalition government, the idea that you voted Lib Dem, and ended up with a Tory government, austerity and tuition fees?**

**ED:** It might not be obvious but I've fought the Conservatives all my life and I fought them in coalition – we really were fighting them. What I've learned from that is that you've got to go into it not making promises you can't keep. I'm determined that our manifesto is extremely well-costed. We can deliver all those policies.

The other thing I've learned from it is the need to rebuild trust in the Liberal Democrats and politics more broadly actually. When I became leader I said we needed to wake up and smell the coffee, we needed

to engage with people, listen to people, communities that we wanted to represent and understand their concerns rather than talking to ourselves. I'd like to think that our manifesto is focused on health and care, focused on cost of living and things like free school meals, with our focus on environmental issues that really worry people like sewage. I'd like to think that we've produced a set of priorities and campaigns that almost have come from talking to people.

**You're in a shop, you see a parent, clearly in extreme need, stealing baby**

**formula to feed their child. What would you do?**

**ED:** I'd try and try persuade them not to, obviously. Try and find them other help, that'd be the best way of doing it.

**The benefit system, as Big Issue have reported, is punitive, it causes distress for people who can't work. The DWP assessment process is pretty dehumanising. How would you fix this and make sure help, rather than suspicion, is the motivating drive of Britain's safety net?**

**ED:** I think there are many aspects of reforming the assessment system. You've got various different things, obviously you've got the work capability assessment, I think we want to bring that in-house. Some of the contractors involved, they're very performance-related to get their payments, they're not that interested in individuals. I think we've got to get away from that, to where people are treated more fairly, and I think probably the only way of doing that is bringing that type of assessment back in-house.

You've then got disability assessments. I've got to put my cards on the table – I have a son who has profound disabilities. He's just switched from DLA to PIP. Although we haven't had problems with it, I know lots of constituents who have. Filling in the very long form, it just shows you why people have massive problems.

The thing that really irritates me, and it's irritated me for many years now, you get people with conditions that are life-long, that are never going to change, that are only going to get progressively worse, and the DWP knows that but it doesn't matter. The computer says, no, they've got to come in and be reassessed, all from scratch. It's very unnerving for people, they get very anxious, worried and ill, made ill by the fear around their benefits situation.

## Vendors' questions

**NHS is a mess, housing is a mess, where do we start to fix them?**

**Paddi**

Waterstones, Sauchiehall St, Glasgow

**ED:** On the NHS, we've got to start training GPs, we've got to start passing laws to make sure that people can afford care, we've got to increase wages for care workers by at least £2 an hour with a new minimum wage. Those are all key first steps for health and care.

On housing, I think you could ban no-fault evictions very, very quickly. That would be a big first step. Obviously building more homes is more challenging, but lots of Liberal Democrats are already building lots of homes. I don't know if you know, I met my wife at a housing policy working group. She's a social housing lawyer. She's done work with Shelter and councils training people, and she's now housing portfolio in Kingston, in my constituency. She's now heading up the largest programme of building council homes we've had for over 40 years. There are some authorities, including some Liberal Democrat ones, who are really going gangbusters on building social housing.

**When was the last time you bought a Big Issue, and what did you like about it?**

**Paul Logan**

Oxford Circus, London

**ED:** I think it was one covering Layla Moran's campaign on the Vagrancy Act. We've done a lot of work on trying to get rid of the Vagrancy Act. So I think I must have read this article. *[Lib Dem MP Layla Moran wrote for Big Issue in November 2023, warning about plans to replace the Vagrancy Act with the Criminal Justice Bill.]*

# MARTIN COMPSTON

*He started out as a professional footballer, but when Ken Loach advised him not to take up acting there was only one thing for it*



**When I was 16 it was looking like I was going to get a professional footballer contract at Greenock Morton.** So my mum was on my case. She was quite adamant that I wasn't going anywhere without my school qualifications, which would get me into uni later, just in case it didn't work out. I was playing so much football, it was actually quite an intense time. My dad used to go to all my games and was quite hard on me. At the time it felt rough. But looking back you realise that he travelled to every single game, away or at home, and you appreciate how much effort that must have taken.

**I got that professional contract at Greenock Morton, and I got offered another one when I left for about £100 a week.** It was lovely to get the opportunity to live my dream and go out and play professional football when I was 17 years old. The last game of the season we had about 15,000 in and running out there, in front of those fans, at the time it meant everything to me. But football in the lower divisions is probably a more unstable career than acting. I think you've got to know your limitations, because knowing your limitations can actually set you free. You can have a proper goal. I thought, look, I'm a pretty decent footballer, but I'm never going to get to the level of playing for Celtic or Scotland. I like to think I've got my wits about me and some ability as an actor. And I had a few people telling me I had some acting talent.

**I was obsessed with Indiana Jones growing up, I didn't answer to any name except Indy.** But being an actor never felt quite attainable. Then I saw *My Name is Joe* [a Ken Loach film about alcoholism starring Peter Mullan] when I was 15, which I sort of saw by accident, and it changed my mind about what cinema can be. I went, oh my god, you can talk like me and be on the big screen. Because until then I thought you had to be Indiana Jones or James Bond.

**Joe Harkins, our football coach, told me they'd had a memo round the school and someone was looking for this kid to cast in a film.** They wanted someone who had something about him, was wise beyond his years. He said, I think this is you. I said, I can't do an audition, the lads will take the piss. He said, I'll get a group to go with you 'cause I really think you can get this. It was a weird thing, to have someone with such confidence in you.

## 2000 THE YEAR MARTIN TURNS 16

Sony release the PlayStation 2

The first resident crew enters the International Space Station

Pope John Paul II apologises for the wrongdoings of the Catholic Church through the ages

**I would tell my younger self he made the right decision to leave football.** Though Ken Loach [who gave him his first role in the film *Sweet Sixteen*] actually advised me not to act because of how insecure it was. He was worried for me. He said, football is your passion, it's what you want to do. But he was also encouraging me as an actor, telling me I had some talent. I had a few auditions set up in London, just to see if I wanted to try, before I went back to the football. There was one particularly horrible audition where I wasn't properly prepared – they sent me the wrong stuff to learn. It was totally miserable and I remember thinking, this isn't for me. I just felt lost. I was in London, I didn't know anybody... and then I got offered that job. That was a massive wake-up for me, to think, actually, maybe I'm pretty good at this.

**If you met the teenage me you'd think I was a bit cocky.** If you grow up on the west coast of Scotland – my favourite Scottish word is gallus – you need to have something about you. Maybe it's just projecting insecurities. And me being a bit of a short-arse as well, you need to fight for every bit of space you get. So, another great Scottish word – I was a wee bit of a wide-o. But I don't think there was ever any malice. I always tend to get on with people. I don't think I was arrogant, I was a boy who was just thrown in a world that I didn't know anything about. I had a lot of pressure thrust upon me, and looking back, I think I handled it pretty well.

**I'd tell my younger self to believe in himself.** I think that's a good thing for any kid, to believe they're meant for something different. I always dreamed about doing something and I'm really happy for that kid that it came to fruition. I was always very aware of pressure after *Sweet Sixteen*. There was a lot of talk about me being the next big thing. I could have had that one hit then disappeared, and had a normal job and a normal happy life. That would have been great, but I would always have had people saying to me, you're that guy who was in that thing, what happened to you? So I'm really chuffed that didn't happen. Actually, I've been doing this for more than half my life. For 23 years. So I feel like I know what I'm doing.

**When I was offered *Line of Duty* I'd already been offered the film, *The Wee Man*.** And at that time my focus was really on *The Wee Man*,

because growing up on the west coast of Scotland, that story is so ingrained in the culture, it's like our version of *The Godfather*. So I was actually just panicking, trying to work out how I could do both jobs and the schedule at one point wasn't going to work. I was about to pull out of *Line of Duty*. So I'm forever grateful to my agent who said, you have to do this. I had no idea what a big success it would be. I just knew it had an amazing cast and a script. It was a BBC Two show – I had no idea it would be that big.

**I made a couple of mistakes.** I did a film called *A Guide to Recognising Your Saints* in 2006, with Channing Tatum, Shia LaBeouf and Robert Downey Jr, and we won Sundance. There were a lot of opportunities in America for me at that time, and I just didn't feel ready for that. I felt like I was gonna go into another world where I didn't feel comfortable – and like I could have really gone off the rails. That was daft. It made me not want to go back to America. But then again, if I had done that I would never have met my wife and had my wee boy. They live in Vegas and I spend half my year there now. So, you know, these things happen for a reason.

**I'm out covering the Euros on a BBC Scotland show with my pal Gordon Smart and we've got tickets for all the games.** If I told myself as a kid about this he'd be amazed. The last time Scotland qualified for an international tournament was France '98 [Scotland qualified for Euro 2020, but their games took place in Glasgow and London]. I was 14. I assumed the next one would come soon and me and my pals would be going round the world supporting Scotland for years to come. Well I'm 40 now. So I've been waiting for this my entire adult life.

**If I could live just one time in my life again it would be the year I went to T in the Park with my mates.** It was all the bands I adored – Arctic Monkeys, The Killers, Kasabian [in 2007]. I just remember all my mates had on Hazmat suits so we could find each other. It was just a point in time when everything felt perfect. The music was incredible and I just feel like we sang and laughed and drank for a whole weekend. It was just a special, special time.

*Late Night at The Euros with Compston and Smart* is on BBC Scotland and iPlayer  
Interview: Jane Graham @Janeannie

**AT ONE POINT I WAS ABOUT TO PULL OUT OF *LINE OF DUTY*. SO I'M FOREVER GRATEFUL TO MY AGENT WHO SAID, YOU HAVE TO DO THIS**

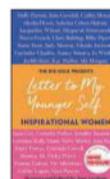


▲ 2002 In Ken Loach's *Sweet Sixteen* with co-star William Ruane



► 2018 Playing in the Match for Cancer at Celtic Park, opposite Dirk Kuyt for Liverpool

▼ 2021 As DI Steve Arnott in *Line of Duty* Season 6



Put our book of conversations with inspirational women on your reading pile. Bringing together some of the most insightful, revealing and entertaining interviews to have appeared in *The Big Issue* over the last 15 years, *Letter to My Younger Self: Inspirational Women* is edited by Jane Graham and out now.



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**FILM**

Film festivals pay lip service to capitalist critiques if it suits them  
**Rory Doherty**

**TV**

*The Bear* and REM return – and they've been good for each other  
**Adrian Lobb**

**ARTS**

We should be kinder to each other, pleads Zoë Wanamaker  
**Isabella McRae**

**MUSIC**

Back of the net or missing the target: Euro 2024 bangers rated  
**Malcolm Jack**

# CULTURE

**ART****REIMAGINE YOUR NEIGHBOURS**

Refugee Week, the world's largest arts festival celebrating the contributions, creativity and resilience of refugees, took place across the UK in June. Events included Reimagine Your Neighbours – featuring an installation called *Giant Dolls' House* in collaboration with the London Festival of Architecture.

A social arts project staged around the world since 2014, *Giant Dolls' House* engages participants to think about their home and environment by making miniature dolls houses in shoeboxes. It exists to raise awareness for homelessness and refugees. This latest installation was themed around neighbours – near and far,

friendly or annoying, often helpful in times of need. It featured work by students from OM Beketov National University of Urban Economy in Kharkiv, alongside dolls' houses by students, children and architects from London.

[giantdollshouse.org](http://giantdollshouse.org);  
[refugeeweek.org.uk](http://refugeeweek.org.uk)

# Books



By Doug Johnstone

## REVIEWS

### Transgressive vamps

I'm always interested in new voices in fiction, writers looking to push boundaries. The mainstream publishing industry is very conservative in its tastes, so it can be hard to find daring, transgressive authors. But this week we have two writers who are taking chances with thrilling results.

First up is **Deliver Me** by Elle Nash. The British-American author has had a couple of novels and a short story collection previously published by small presses, all of which were beautifully written and deliciously dark. *Deliver Me* follows in the footsteps of those books, while demonstrating an ever-improving sense of craft.

The book centres around Dee-Dee, a young woman living in a small town in the Ozarks. Dee-Dee has had a number of miscarriages already, so is thrilled to discover that she's pregnant again, though she is obviously anxious too. Dee-Dee works tough shifts at a meatpacking factory, slaughtering thousands of chickens in a viscerally described opening that promises much of the body horror mayhem that is to come. She also lives with ex-con boyfriend Daddy, who has an exotic insect fetish, and she's being pestered by her mother to return to the Pentecostal church she has abandoned.

Into this stressful melting pot comes Sloane, Dee-Dee's old friend from school, who moves in upstairs and reveals that she too is pregnant. This throws Dee-Dee's mind for a loop, and we get into unreliable narrator territory as the story

progresses into ever murkier psychological waters. There's no denying that Nash's writing and the things she writes about are on the fringes of the mainstream. This is a deeply unsettling book from the start, and there is a slowly creeping dread that builds as the narrative twists and turns to a satisfying and shocking climax.

Throughout, Nash feels like a writer completely in control of her story, her language precise and specific as she gets deeper and deeper into the complex subconsciouses and psyches of her cast of damaged characters.

Ploughing a similarly macabre furrow is Jane Flett's **Freakslaw**. Flett is a Scottish author based in Berlin, and this debut novel is set in a small Scottish town called Pitslaw in the 1990s, where a travelling circus of so-called 'freaks' arrive and turn the lives of the locals upside down. Most intrigued by these new arrivals are teenagers Ruth and Derek, who are drawn to the weird folk of the shows and the possibility of escape from their boring lives.

The conflict between locals and incomers is the backdrop here, and Flett does a great job of cranking up that tension as the story progresses. The author's prose style is effervescent and full of energy, even when she's eventually tackling some pretty weighty themes. Like *Deliver Me*, this is transgressive stuff that lives around the edges of the mainstream, but it has plenty of dark comedy running through its veins.

The juxtaposition of the dreary lives of the locals and the flamboyant exhibitionists of the circus is really well handled, and having grown up in a small Scottish town myself, I recognised the frustration and pettiness.

With a large cast of characters handled skilfully by the author, the overall feeling of *Freakslaw* is a picaresque, Day-Glo nightmare of a book, a modern slice of folk horror that shows heaps of promise for the future.

Doug Johnstone is an author and journalist @doug\_johnstone

Throughout, Nash feels like a writer completely in control of her story, her language precise and specific



*Deliver Me* by Elle Nash is out on 27 June (Verve Books, £9.99)



*Freakslaw* by Jane Flett is out now (Doubleday, £16.99)

## TOP 5

### Books on black British history

#### Selected by Atinuke

author of *Brilliant Black British History*

#### 1 **The Black History Book** by DK

This book is for both adults and children, and is both comprehensive and easy to read. It covers African, American and European black history.

#### 2 **Black Tudors** by Miranda Kaufmann

This adult book is one of my favourites on black British history. Each chapter is about a black Briton who lived during the Tudor period, brought to life by descriptions of the surprising world they lived in.

#### 3 **Black and British** by David Olusoga

There are three versions of this book – for adults, teenagers, and for children. The adult one is my favourite. My only problem with it? It's not long enough!

#### 4 **Black Britain** by Paul Gilroy and Stuart Hall

This is a book of photographs of black people in Britain. The photos are stunning, and the text is sharp and informative. It's for adults but I imagine children would pore over it as well.

#### 5 **The Black Curriculum**

This organisation publishes good children's books on black British history. They are well researched, and well presented, and frankly we cannot have enough of them!

And if you want more ... check out Stephen Bourne's books on black British people during the wars, and Catherine Johnson's children's historical fiction books.

*Brilliant Black British History* by Atinuke, illustrated by Kingsley Nebechi and winner



of The British Book Awards 2024 Children's Non-Fiction Book of the Year, is out now (Bloomsbury, £8.99)

## ESSAY

## My life through David Bailey's lens

By Penelope Tree

At the close of 1966, in my last year of high school, I was spotted by photographer Richard Avedon at Truman Capote's Black and White Ball in New York. Though I was an insecure, introverted 16-year-old, Avedon and *Vogue* editor-in-chief Diana Vreeland inspired me to come out of my shell. Within months I was modelling for *Vogue* and other American magazines.

That summer, having graduated from high school, I flew to London to work in a publisher's office as a reader. I was not a very diligent reader, seeing as I was out every night dancing at Sibylla's, or queuing for *Top of the Pops* where I encountered The Rolling Stones for the first time. In those days, London was a much smaller place; the class system seemed to be dissolving as actors, artists, pop stars, photographers and

the fashion crowd mixed freely with establishment figures and aristocrats. The synergy created by these different worlds intersecting for the first time was intoxicating.

When I first met David Bailey, he was sitting cross legged on the floor of a British *Vogue* office working on layouts. A few days later we were shooting a story for *Vogue* at his studio. The energy between us was cartoon-level electric. Nothing happened that day, but nine months later, I was living with Bailey in Primrose Hill. I was 18, he was 30. What could possibly go wrong?

Our first day together in London we went to meet the Kray twins in an East End pub called the Blind Beggar. I was escorted upstairs to the Ladies Lounge to drink shandies with the girls while Bailey talked to Ronnie and Reggie Kray about photographing them for *The Sunday Times*. As I had never heard of the Kray twins (being American), I had some misguided notion they were just two-bit thieves out of an early Peter Sellers film. When they were arrested a few months later, I freaked out when I read in the papers about their 'activities'.

We were happy together for a while. Bailey was magnetic and wherever we went, in nightclubs, on fashion shoots and in restaurants, women threw themselves at him and he did nothing to stop them. Feminism was just coming into its



*Piece of My Heart*, the debut novel from Penelope Tree, is out now (Moonflower Books, £18.99)



own, but when the most beautiful girls in the world are making a play for your partner, it is rather difficult to embrace the Sisterhood. It's impossible to imagine what a misogynistic time it was then and how men really had the upper hand.

There were models I liked. Jean Shrimpton was the most beautiful girl I have ever seen and she was so straightforward, never two-faced. She'd already done her time with Bailey, and had left him. As far as I was concerned she was safe. I also adored Veruschka, my all-time favourite model, along with Don-yale Luna. Not only for their elongated limbs and sublime features, but also their ability to metamorphose into whatever shape or form they desired.

As a model in the '60s, I was no one unless I was thin, and I was always on some kind of extreme diet. Then at 22, I suffered a bout of late-onset acne brought on by a hormonal imbalance caused by my eating disorder. The acne was so disfiguring it put a halt to my modelling career. I lost my self-confidence completely and it took a long time before I recovered from the depression caused by my 'loss of face'. My identity was completely caught up in being a model and what I looked like. Luckily I had a few friends who stuck by me. I also slowly learned how to be happy on my own, and to pursue my own interests.

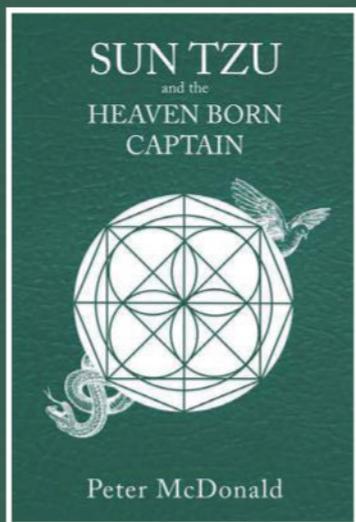
Now in my 70s and remembering those turbulent years, I decided to write a novel in the hopes of finding some degree of understanding around my early life and relationships. I chose to write fiction (rather than a memoir) because when it comes to looking back, memories are like shifting sands, constantly changing shape, whereas the imagination approaches truth more obliquely, through storytelling.

So for me the writing was also a process of discovery.

My novel, **Piece of My Heart**, is broadly about the trouble with appearances. Born into a world of great privilege, my protagonist Ari becomes a top model in the 1960s and the lover of a well-known photographer. Several years later, extreme circumstances compel her to look for a life that doesn't depend on wealth, image or the man she loves.

Penelope Tree photographed by David Bailey for *British Vogue* in 1967





Numerous books have been written about Sun Tzu and his masterpiece, Art of War. However, none have the scope and perspective of Peter McDonald's volume...

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## Human Writes

Human Writes is a long-established organisation founded for the purpose of befriending prisoners on Death Row in the United States through letter-writing. Based in the UK, with an experienced team of state co-ordinators, our organisation is well-known and internationally respected. Around 2300 prisoners are currently held in harsh, Death Row conditions in the US (many in total solitary confinement for 20-30 years or more). Letters from the outside world are often their only contact while awaiting their execution dates. Some states now permit correspondence using secure email systems for penfriends who prefer to communicate that way. In the words of a Death Row prisoner just prior to his execution *"My execution date has now been set and I know I will soon die at the hands of the State, but to have had someone reach out for all these years and take my spirit out of this grey concrete box through their letters has meant more than I can say."*

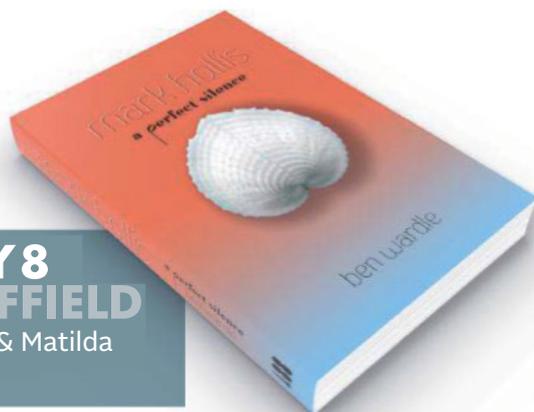
If you would like to know more about joining our organisation or becoming a penfriend, please contact **Human Writes** at

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# TALK TALK

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# Film

Rory Doberty

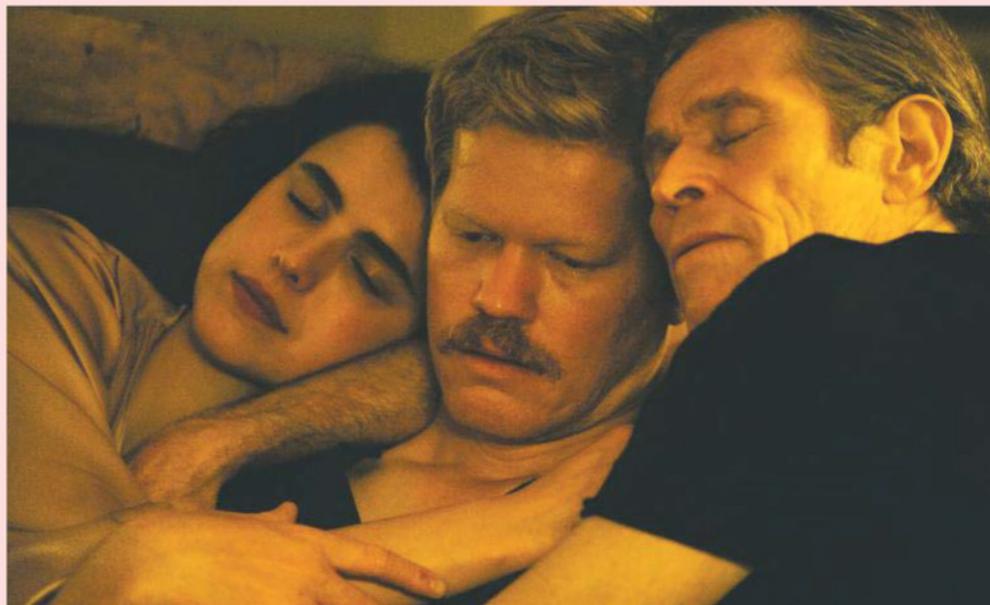
## REVIEW

### Audacious satire stands apart from virtue signalling festivals

In the first of the three loosely connected vignettes that make up Yorgos Lanthimos's *Kinds of Kindness*, a meek but devoted businessman crashes his car so he can spend a night at the hospital. This is to appease his boss, a Machiavellian puppeteer who directs every moment of his subordinate's life, in exchange for a great house, a loving wife and priceless sports memorabilia.

But Robert (Jesse Plemons) doesn't do everything Raymond (Willem Dafoe) wants just for these rewards. It's because he's drawn to Raymond's authority and has come to crave the dependence and validation that courses through their relationship.

The following two stories, which give more central roles to cast members Emma Stone, Margaret Qualley, Hong Chau and Mamoudou Athie, are also perverse looks at the need to be desired and approved, but only this opening chapter centres on emotional manipulation of capitalist hierarchies – that labourers become worthier by supplicating to their superiors and getting their blessing. Lanthimos's film satirises the idea that the greater wealth and influence someone has, the closer they seem to godliness.



*Kinds of Kindness* premiered at last month's Cannes Film Festival, to less fanfare than his triumphant, award-winning *Poor Things*, but many critics still responded to the Greek Weird Wave director returning to jet-black, cold-hearted satire of a sick society. This Cannes saw the launch of many films confronting the hollow, dangerous reality of pursuing capitalist success through its various late stages.

Ali Abbasi's uncanny Donald Trump biopic *The Apprentice* flirts with showing the former president fabricating a soul in order to sell it to the devil; David Cronenberg's exploration of grief and tech in *The Shrouds* finds a well of dry humour in the ways apps and AI invade our most personal pains; Francis Ford Coppola's self-funded *Megalopolis* is an epic and unwieldy narrative experiment of a virtuous intellectual never giving up on civil improvement.

Many of these films were conceived earlier than the usual two- or three-year film production cycle (Coppola has been brewing *Megalopolis* since the '70s) but the way they are in conversation with our current moment feels striking. Films like these explore large, collective ideas on a microcosmic dramatic scale.

We are encouraged to trust authority and convenience, because they promise to uncomplicate our lives, so long as faceless suits can profit from the process. We must deny that ruthless individualism hurts those around us, but even if we don't, there's nothing we can meaningfully do to resist it. Films like *Kinds of Kindness* show it's not enough to accept alienation under capitalism, we must love it too.

Perhaps the trend of late-stage capitalism films at Cannes would not be so noticeable if it weren't for the political status of international arts festivals being scrutinised in 2024. Cannes sports one of the heaviest armed police presences of any film festival, and there's

Margaret Qualley, Jesse Plemons and Willem Dafoe in *Kinds of Kindness*

an archive of racist microaggressions across the years. In this year's edition, protests were banned, labourers voiced their mistreatment, but the festival was quick to celebrate the radical voice of director Mohammad Rasoulof, whose film *The Seed of the Sacred Fig* earned him a lengthy prison sentence, prompting his escape from Iran to attend the premiere. There seem to be contradictions between the artistic voices Cannes wants to platform and the ways the festival functions, but you don't need much specialist knowledge to understand that nearly every festival operates on this very contradiction.

Festivals benefit from aligning themselves with valuable, articulate political voices, but not because they want to platform any specific message. Rather, politically minded art brings a prestige and urgency which festivals want to associate themselves with, as a festival's main priority is to stay viable until the next year. This means that urgent calls-to-action are discouraged, and unethical sponsors are defended until the last possible minute. It is not that every arts festival is equally guilty of hypocrisy, but that the dynamics of supporting radical art only when it is profitable can be found to some degree in all of them.

To Cannes, a film like *Kinds of Kindness* is perfect – the buzz generated by its star-studded cast and audacious style completely eclipses the volume of critiques of how capitalism makes us crave security and approval from the wealthy. When it releases this month, it may not resonate alongside *Megalopolis*, *The Apprentice* or *The Shrouds* like it did in Cannes, but it will be able to stand separate from arts institutions that water down its message. If art is always political, so are festivals, just not in the way they say they are.

*Kinds of Kindness* is in cinemas from 28 June @roryhasopinions

## INTERVIEW

## Zoë Wanamaker



# 'WE CAN'T PUT WALLS UP AGAIN'

Words: Isabella McRae

● Zoë Wanamaker is exasperated with politics. “Where do we get these people? Where do we get these politicians?”

I had asked the star of theatre, television and film for thoughts on the general election. But true to her US roots, she also has Donald Trump on her mind.

“The fact that America now will probably have Trump as a president, who is basically a television star and a bully... Language has disintegrated

completely. Mental health is probably struggling because of it. The licence to treat other people badly has spread so much.”

Wanamaker was born in New York, but her family fled to the UK when she was three. Her father Sam Wanamaker (who rebuilt Shakespeare’s Globe) was blacklisted in Hollywood because of his communist views, and she’s spent much of her career in Britain. She is best known for her roles in sitcom *My Family*

and as Madam Hooch in *Harry Potter and the Philosopher’s Stone*, and countless celebrated roles with the Royal Shakespeare Company and National Theatre.

Our conversation is about her work with charity Causeway, which is calling for an end to cycles of poverty, criminality and trauma – Big Issue has covered their work before. Yet she also talks about AI, the war in Gaza, the post office scandal, recycling and her childhood dream of becoming a nun.

Her thoughts tumble out, but they essentially all come back to one point: we need to be kinder to one another.

“Our society should be helping each other,” she tells me. “We can’t put walls up again. That is what is happening all over the world. It’s those right-wing assholes. I’m thinking of refugees coming in boats and being drowned. They’re running from horror and they’ve come to this country and we give them horror. The feeling of resentment that it brings to the country is really hard to take.”

Wanamaker’s parents came through the war and had to flee their home too. Her grandparents were émigré Russian Jews. “History keeps repeating itself,” she says. “Suddenly there are huge divisions, again. Again and again. I don’t understand it. People killing each other. For what? It’s greed. It’s greed and power.”

Wanamaker describes herself as Jewish. “We were never brought up with religion, because my parents thought it was the cause of war,” she says.

“I decided at one point I was going to be a nun. My mum and dad used to rent out a place in the country and there was a little local church. I decided that’s what I was going to be. It was all costumes for me really. It was theatre.”

Her dad took her to synagogue when she was a child – but as men and women were separated, he put ash on her face and put his hat on her and she sat with the men. “He just wanted me to see what other religions were like and he wanted me to learn from it,” she says. “I was lucky with my parents. They had an insatiable thirst for the arts.”

Wanamaker realises others are not so lucky. Causeway recently produced an animated video voiced by Wanamaker for its ‘Breaking Cycles: Building Lives’ campaign. The charity found that 80% of the UK prison population has experienced at least one adverse childhood experience.

Has Wanamaker’s childhood affected the course of her life? “Of course,” she says. “Everybody’s childhood is different. Some people survive it and some people don’t. But then there comes a point when you have to stop blaming your parents. It’s your turn now.

“Particularly when my parents died, one after the other, you realise it’s your

turn now to take over. You can change your attitude, but that takes a lot of energy, self-reflection and also help. You can't do things on your own sometimes. That is a strength that I don't personally have."

Wanamaker has needed help to break out of cycles of depression. "A long time ago, I had a wonderful shrink, who said to me: 'It's a habit. You get depressed because it is a safe place to be. It takes an incredible amount of energy and willpower to change your direction.'"

I ask Wanamaker how she is now. "Oh, I'm OK. I'm great. I mean, not great. But I'm fine. I've got a friend who says: 'Are you Zoë fine, or are you really fine?' I'm fine." It is "very easy" to slip back into depression, but she knows when it is happening, so she tries to stop it. "I go back into habits, getting down, miserable, self-deprecating too much, thinking that I can't do things. But you have to fight. That's the hardest bit. It's like crawling out of a hole."

Wanamaker tried a few different paths before she became an actor. She was not academic growing up – she only discovered she had dyslexia in 2004 – and she had a naughty streak. She was nicknamed 'Wannamakesometrouble'.

"The first job I got was correcting computers' mistakes. Now that's funny. Computers are fed by people and they make mistakes. We saw that with the post office. That's why I'm thinking AI is going to be a complete fuckup."

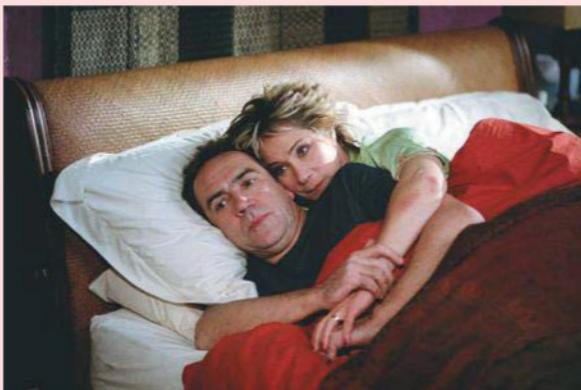
Wanamaker brings up her fear of AI multiple times. "Who's going to feed AI?" she asks. "Without humour, irony, without literature, language and humour..."

"Language can bring freedom. And I hate to say this, but Shakespeare is right next to God or is God because he was able to understand the human condition so deeply. And that's going to go."

But sometimes change is good. Wanamaker believes in a world that can change for the better. "Most of us have this fantasy of a multicoloured, multi-diverse universe. We need to respect each other and enjoy it. That's the key to humanity."

Wanamaker as Susan Harper with screen hubby Ben (Robert Lindsay) in *My Family*

wearecauseway.org.uk @isabellamcrae



## SAM DELANEY IS AT HOME



Most cultural eras are misrepresented in pretty clichéd ways. I never knew anyone who had a mullet or drove a Sinclair C5 in the '80s. I don't suppose the streets were rammed with hippies in the '60s or punks in the '70s. However, I was around in the '90s and can confirm that a lot of the familiar tropes of that particular decade ring true: we really did seem to be pissed most of the time.

I was a student between 1994 and 1997 so my perception is somewhat skewed, I guess. But in those particular years a great many young people really did wear anoraks and sunglasses indoors, swagger about flicking the Vs at all and sundry, talk almost exclusively about football and listen to Britpop. At least that's how I remember it. It was the era of the 'lad,' in which we resolved to live life out loud, with little concession to political correctness or any other form of seriousness. Boys and girls alike embraced a nihilistic design for life. It was a lot of fun for a while, but by the end of the decade it had run its course. It lacked the sort of depth required for a lasting movement. Being a lad was, ultimately, an unfulfilling load of old bollocks.

Last week I took a walk down memory lane by taking my family to watch Liam Gallagher perform the entirety of *Definitely Maybe* at the O2 in London. For my wife and I, it was quite romantic – these were the songs that soundtracked our early courtship. For my kids (aged 16 and 12) it was thrilling: the '90s seems as strange and oddly cool to them as the '60s did to my generation. Indeed, the gig was full of adolescents who had fallen for all that '90s folklore

and wanted a taste of the 'mad for it' scene. There were also a huge number of middle-aged men who had lived it the first time round but, apparently, never recovered. With their shaggy Liam hairstyles thinning on top and their expanded waistlines bursting from beneath their parkas, they waddled in and out of the O2 toilets, shovelling cocaine up their worn-out nostrils as if it was a Saturday in 1994 (as opposed to a Tuesday, 30 years later). In the stands, they guzzled lager from plastic pots and shouted profanities at the stage. They splayed out their arms like football hooligans confronting police in foreign piazzas. They snarled and staggered while some of the younger wannabes looked upon them with a disheartening admiration. The kiddies' eyes seemed to say: "Wow, you're the wankers we've heard about in all those documentaries!"

If I sound like a grumpy judgmental bastard then, well, guilty as charged. While I had the same daft hairstyle and narcotic proclivities back in the day, I'm pretty sure it wasn't quite as aggressive and yobbish as it seems to be now. Remember, Oasis (and all those other bands) were, ultimately, indie acts raised on

**A geezer sat in front of me at the Liam Gallagher gig got so excited during *Cigarettes & Alcohol* that he took his socks off and threw them into the crowd**

a love of thrift shop clothes and the whimsy of Morrissey's lyrics.

Look, I like a noisy day out at the football or a raucous gig as much as the next dickhead. But there is a very fine line between blowing off steam with your mates and being an anti-social prick. Understanding where that line is and observing it scrupulously is a really important obligation for any man. All of us have feelings, sensitivities, the capacity for love, the desire to dream and the ability to do good. That's a beautiful thing. But so many blokes seem ashamed of it.

A geezer sat in front of me at the gig got so excited during *Cigarettes & Alcohol* that he took his socks off and threw them into the crowd. He was in his thirties. He looked round at me beaming, in search of approval. I gave him a thumbs up because I didn't want any trouble. But, come on mate, that's no way to live your life.

Read more at [samdelaney.substack.com](http://samdelaney.substack.com)  
@DelaneyMan

## TV



Adrian Lobb

TV

## REM and The Bear necessities

● **The Bear** is returning for a third series. And earlier this month, REM were inducted into the Songwriters Hall of Fame, reunited as a four-piece to perform *Losing My Religion* at the induction ceremony, and Michael Stipe, Peter Buck, Mike Mills and Bill Berry gave a 41-minute interview to CBS News. [Who has been accessing my dreams? What's next? A new UK government maybe?]

Despite never existing at the same time, these two cultural phenomena are forever linked. And not just in my dreams. Because, when *The Bear* launched in 2022, 11 long years after REM disbanded, Christopher Storer's series used the band's music in such a stunning, heart-rending way it made even the longest of long-term fans listen anew.

In season one of *The Bear*, the entirety of *Ob My Heart*, a song from REM's 15th and final studio LP *Collapse into Now*, was used in episode three. This was the moment *The Bear* went from very good to one of the all-time greats.

"I came home to a city half erased / I came home to face what we faced," sings Stipe, the plaintive quality of his voice way to the fore, so unlike



their earliest releases. On screen, Jeremy Allen White as Carmen 'Carmy' Berzatto is shown in close-up, his face etched with sorrow. It's all there. His brother Mikey's death, new beginnings for himself and maybe the city of Chicago and the country too.

The song takes us deeper inside the emotions. The emotions take us deeper inside the song. It is TV magic.

The soundtrack to *The Bear* takes an already superlative drama to a level all its own. Songs from Wilco, Pearl Jam and Ethiopian jazzier Mulatu Astatke were chosen by series creator Storer and executive producer Josh Senior for maximum impact.

Each episode packs so much into sometimes as little as 20 minutes of screen time. The dialogue pings around Carmy's kitchen at astonishing speed, so the extended musical interludes offer a distinct change of pace and tone.

Radiohead's *Let Down* soundtracks the final scenes of series one. Carmy finds Mikey's hidden cache of cash in tins of tomatoes. He plans for the future of the restaurant – "Family style? Two tops, booths?" – with chef Sydney Adamu (Ayo Edebiri). He sits down to eat with the oddballs and misfits who will transition The Beef to The Bear in series two, and perhaps even finds peace with Mikey's death. All while Thom Yorke sings. "One day/I am gonna grow wings."

Again, the music is elevated by the show, the show elevated by the music.

In classic episode Forks from series two, we find new meaning in Taylor Swift's *Love Story (Taylor's Version)* when cousin Richie (Ebon Moss-Bachrach) sings along in his car, happy and hopeful at last, a renewed sense of purpose.

And there is more REM when *Strange Currents* soundtracks Carmy's romance with Claire (Molly Gordon) throughout series

(l-r) Bill Berry, Peter Buck, Mike Mills and Michael Stipe of REM photographed in Chicago – home of *The Bear* – in May 1983. Below: Jeremy Allen White as Carmen 'Carmy' Berzatto

two. It has never sounded better. The show was even given a previously unreleased demo because the band are fans: "*The Bear* is hands down my favourite show of last year," Stipe said.

The music for *Strange Currents* was primarily written by REM drummer Bill Berry. There is a moment in the new interview where they are asked whether they have regrets about ending the band. Stipe, Mills and Buck are quick to say no. Berry, who left in 1997, wells up and admits to second thoughts. To watch as an REM fan, well, it's like seeing your dad cry. Oh, my heart. This is a band of brothers. Family style. They always split royalties and songwriting credits, leaving the egos and lawyers to lesser groups.

If REM are the object lesson in retaining your integrity when accolades, awards and huge audiences could swell heads to stadium size, then *The Bear* is so far achieving a similar balance.

Series two was packed with the dizzying dialogue we initially fell for. Yet it furthered the exploration of family, death, food and community while also incorporating guest roles from Olivia Colman, Jamie Lee Curtis and *Better Call Saul's* Bob Odenkirk. Rather than taking focus away from the central story, they added new dimensions, augmenting rather than distracting, like John Paul Jones's string arrangements on *Automatic for The People*.

A whole episode dedicated to pastry chef Marcus (Lionel Boyce) travelling to Denmark? It shouldn't have worked. But like *New Orleans Instrumental No 1*, it was somehow perfect.

*The Bear* is a strange little show that somehow became huge, adapting to its new scale with integrity and authenticity fully intact. How very REM.

All episodes of series three of *The Bear* are available on Disney+ on June 27



# Music

Malcolm Jack

## FOOTBALL SONGS

### Which Euro 2024 anthems know the score?

Like Saint to Greavsie, pie to Bovril or a hooligan to a weaponised rattan bistro chair, football and music seem drawn to one another as if by some inexplicable force of nature. Despite the two often making strange bedfellows. Let's face it: no song ever written specifically about football is actually any good – and before you say it yes, I am aware of obnoxious dirge *Three Lions*. Live appearances by pop stars at major tournaments are always either pointless (seemingly Will Smith sang before the 2018 World Cup final?) or laughable (Diana Ross's penalty miss at USA '94) or pointless and laughable (Martin Garrix and The Edge with a creepy pixellated cyber-Bono at Euro 2020). And yet, when the beautiful game and beautiful song connect like a bullet header through an inch-perfect cross – think the Three Tenors doing *Nessun Dorma* at Italia '90 – the emotional alchemy can be exquisite.

With the men's UEFA European Championships in Germany upon us, a whole new set of would-be stadium anthems are here to try and cling to our ears tighter than a pair of pilsner-soaked lederhosen. Are there any surprise breakout stars among the crop of 2024? Or is it the usual mixture of fake rousing electro-pop paeans to pan-European unity, re-heated cheeseball anthems of yesteryear and other assorted novelty dross? No VAR checks were required in reaching a conclusion on some of the following.



The tartan cringe is unbearable as all the usual clichés about our “deep-fried nation” get rehashed to a wallop techno beat

#### Meduza, OneRepublic and Leony – Fire

The time-honoured tradition of chucking together a kind of songwriter's salad to focus-group a sporting event's official anthem sees UEFA pluck seemingly at random from the vegetable aisle of pop for this line-up. Italo-electro no-marks Meduza, German singer Leony and one-man US hit machine Ryan Tedder from OneRepublic meet on dispassionate EDM fist-pumper *Fire*, which burns about as bright as a dying pocket torch. It's a song UEFA say “embodies the fervour and spirit of football and music fans alike”. Which is exactly the sort of corporate nothing-speak you'd expect from an organisation renowned for treating supporters like fleshy ATMs.

#### The Caledonian Dream – Shot at Glory

I'm Scottish so I should probably like this one more than I do. But the tartan cringe is unbearable, as all the usual tired clichés about our “deep-fried nation... Bonnie, brave and built to rave” get rehashed to a wallop techno beat. It doesn't help that *Shot at Glory* bears a suspicious resemblance to another, far funnier song called *The Kingdom of Scotland* by Romeo Taylor, and even manages to run Andy Cameron's *Ally's Tartan*

(From left) Armin van Buuren, Chef'Special, Peter Schilling



*Army* close for wildly excessive optimism (“Not messing it up, we're lifting the cup!”). In its defence, it's very much in the “just a bit of fun” category of football song and if it gets the Tartan Army bouncing then fair play.

#### Armin Van Buuren and Chef'Special – Larger Than Life

The Oranje turn to the Johan Cruyff of Dutch trance in superstar DJ-producer Armin Van Buuren for their team anthem, which is a collaboration with Haarlem indie band Chef'Special. With a sugary, shiny electronic stomp and preponderance of massed-choir windy “woah-oh-oh” vocalising, it's fair to say everyone involved in making *Larger Than Life* has heard a Coldplay record or two in their time. There are vocals from the Dutch squad in there somewhere but they're hard to make out, for better or for worse.

#### Various artists – Sweet Caroline, techno remixes

At the last Euros, Neil Diamond's 1969 soft-rock ballad became an unlikely anthem among England fans (copying Northern Ireland, for whom it's been a terrace anthem for many years). The song has since spread throughout the football world like a very polite fever. But in a disconcerting development, a variety of donked-up electro reworkings have begun to gain traction, including Louie Devito's grim Techno Remix, DJ Ötzi's grimmer still Party Remix and Dr Rude & 2nd Bass's truly weapons-grade stinking Hardstyle Remix. The *Sweet Caroline* sensation is turning very sour.

#### Peter Schilling – Major Tom (Coming Home)

In one of the more charming bits of cultural archaeology to emerge, Neue Deutsche Welle star Schilling's David Bowie-homaging 1983 number one single has become the host nation's unofficial anthem. Already revived once before when it featured as the title music to the TV show *Deutschland 83* in 2015, *Major Tom (Coming Home)* has enjoyed another, even stronger third wind since its inclusion in Adidas's kit launch video for Germany's Euro 2024 jersey. Its upbeat, future-gazing feel chimes perfectly with the mood of cautious optimism surrounding the team going into the tournament. If it comes home for the Germans this summer, expect to hear this song again and again.

@MBJack

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## Independent Chair of Hub Cymru Africa

Hub Cymru Africa is seeking an independent Chair for its Partnership Board.

Hub Cymru Africa is Wales' leading international development and global solidarity organisation. We were formed in April 2015 to bring together the work of the Welsh Centre for International Affairs, Fair Trade Wales, Wales and Africa Health Links Network and the Sub-Saharan Advisory Panel.

Currently, the partnership board comprises two trustees from each participating organisation. It is responsible for the strategic leadership and oversight of a programme of activities supporting international development initiatives in Wales.

**How to apply**  
Applicants interested in this position should provide a CV and Cover letter outlining why they are applying for the role and, using the person specification, outlining the skills that they will bring. These should be sent to [enquiries@hubcymruafrica.wales](mailto:enquiries@hubcymruafrica.wales) by 09:00 BST on 12th of July 2024.

[hubcymruafrica.wales](http://hubcymruafrica.wales)

## Cadeirydd Annibynnol Hub Cymru Africa

Hub Cymru Africa yw prif sefydliad datblygu rhyngwladol ac undod byd-eang Cymru. Cawsom ein ffurfio ym mis Ebrill 2015 i ddod â gwaith Canolfan Materion Rhyngwladol Cymru, Cymru Masnach Deg, Rhwydwaith Cysylltiadau Iechyd Cymru ac Affrica a'r Panel Cyngori Is-Sahara ynghyd.

Ar hyn o bryd, mae bwrdd y bartneriaeth yn cynnwys dau ymddiriedolwr o bob sefydliad sy'n cymryd rhan. Mae'n gyfrifol am arweinyddiaeth strategol ac am ddarparu trosolwg o raglen o weithgareddau sy'n cefnogi mentrau datblygu rhyngwladol yng Nghymru.

**Sut i wneud cais**  
Dylai ymgeiswyr sydd â diddordeb yn y swydd hon ddarparu CV a llythyr eglurhaol yn amlinellu pam eu bod yn gwneud cais am y rôl a, gan ddefnyddio manyleb y person, amlinellu eu sgiliau. Dylid anfon y rhain at [enquiries@hubcymruafrica.wales](mailto:enquiries@hubcymruafrica.wales) erbyn 09:00 BST ar 12fed Gorffennaf 2024.

[hubcymruafrica.cymru](http://hubcymruafrica.cymru)



# Barnstomper Festival 2024!

## Cerne Abbas Brewery! DORSET!



This year for the first time this festival is now going to be held over 3 days with the extra Thursday hosting the might of US 7-piece Celtic punk band 'FLOGGING MOLLY' who have added Cerne Abbas as a stop off on their European tour.

Along with a host of other quality bands including, 'unbelievably' EMF, Pet Needs and of course Dorset's finest Cowpunk band, Pronghorn! Barnstomper will be a great way to finish off the summer festivals.

Free camping available right next to the action, a host of food outlets and some cracking beers/ales and ciders all brewed on site at reasonable prices.

Barnstomper Festival will take place from Thursday 29th August to Saturday 31st August 2024.

**For further info and tickets please visit [www.barnstomper.co.uk](http://www.barnstomper.co.uk)**

# WIN A PAIR OF FESTIVAL TICKETS!

**Win a pair of Barnstomper festival weekend tickets including a vehicle campervan/Live in pass and be our VIP guests for the whole event.** Just answer the following questions correctly from our website: [www.barnstomper.co.uk](http://www.barnstomper.co.uk)

- Who are the first 3 headliners on the Line Up 2024 page?
- How much is a standard weekend ticket – Thurs/Fri/Sat?
- Where is the festival held/what is the giant called?

**Share your answers on Instagram and Facebook**

- Tag Instagram: @barnstomperfestival @cerneabbasbrewery @bigissueuk @sheltercharity
- Facebook: @barnstomperfestival @cerneabbasbrewery @bigissueUK @shelter
- Use these hashtags - #barnstomperfestival #cerneabbasbrewery #grassrootsfestival #pronghornband #cowpunk #thebigissue #shelter

**A random post will be picked as a winner! Good Luck**

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News from the Intrepid Wool Lady

### Poo Pragmatism

It's taken me over 6 years of writing this blog to get around to the subject of poo. In short and, in general, I have no problem with poo. My farming years, when I shared space with sheep, dogs, cats, chickens, turkeys, guinea fowl and quails, as well as all the wild animals of the English countryside, organic waste was the norm. It never bothered me, with the possible exception of fox poo, especially after it had been rolled in by a dog and the dog had come into the house and tried to jump on the sofa. In fact, being aware of the state of the poo on my farm, especially that of my Southdown sheep, was an important lead indicator of their health.

Now 2 years off the farm, the subject has cropped up twice in as many weeks. The first was the piece in the Guardian (June 2) about George Frandsen's Poozeum in Arizona, an exhibit of over 10,000 coprolites. The idea of a museum dedicated to fossilized Diplodocus droppings and T Rex turds, et al, amused me no end. However, on a more serious note, the value of analysing this material for the clues it reveals about the diets, habits, and physiology of these long-gone creatures, is not lost on me.

This article appeared just as I have hopefully succeeded in house training my 14 week old puppy called Bear. The Maremma mountain dog appears to have read and understood the manure memo for which I am very grateful.

But this all reminded me of the ultimate urban legend which involved an outraged London cab driver who stormed into his local police station and furiously bellowed: "Come and see what a fare left on the back seat of my cab!" Apparently, the duty officer dutifully peered into the back of the cab, and then, with a deadpan expression on his face said: "Well, if no one has claimed it within 14 days, consider it yours."

Jessica



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# Puzzles

## Crossword

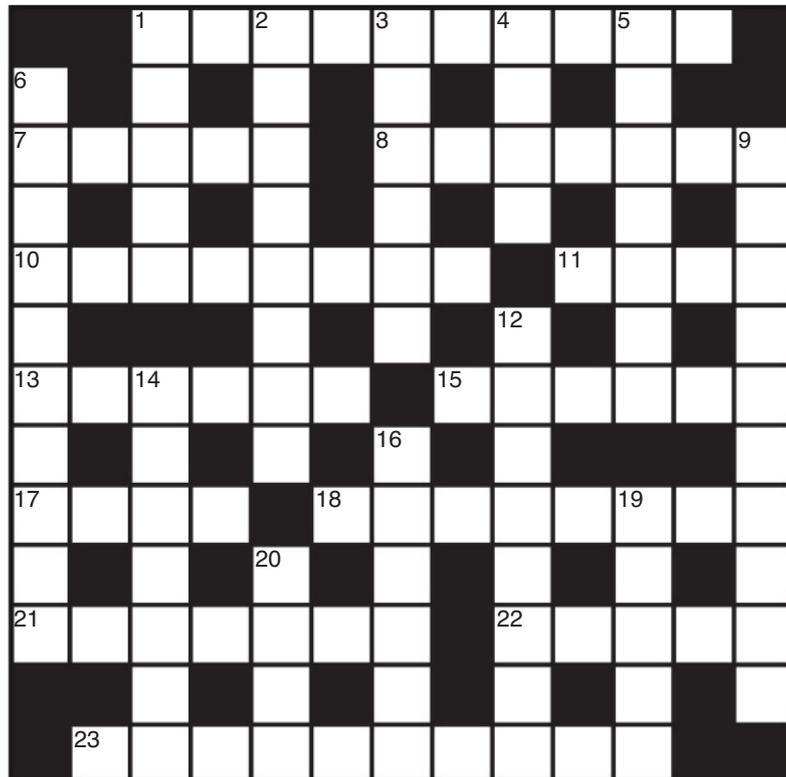
### CRYPTIC CLUES

#### Across

1. Easy for naval officer booked by Marrayat? (10)
7. Used by those dyeing to become attractive (5)
8. Last month no drink was in keeping (7)
10. Wrote fiction about man, 8 Across returned without hesitation (8)
11. Can be about right for a measure of herrings (4)
13. A grave mistake to lay waste (6)
15. Important person has a large hairpiece (6)
17. The lady is no artist (4)
18. Fungus to spring up rapidly (8)
21. Noteworthy pit surrounded by ten others (7)
22. Sound check is required, as a rule (5)
23. Song won't upset slum district (10)

#### Down

1. Note it comes up the same (5)
2. From a garden I removed waste water (8)
3. At the end of March dined out in a secret place (6)
4. Prepare to leave the crowd (4)
5. Flight personnel remove top of shaft from propeller (7)
6. Missile that is not designed to go the distance (5-5)
9. Male spy hides me in the administration (10)
12. Hello, it's been hotter out up to now (8)
14. Disappear, taking king in a glossy coat (7)
16. Bow that's rudely brief, heartless, say (6)
19. Hunter belted up above (5)
20. Medium base (4)



### QUICK CLUES

#### Across

1. Desire to travel (10)
7. Norwegian playwright (5)
8. Dry spell (7)
10. Scornful (8)
11. Metallic element (4)
13. Cotton fabric (6)
15. Norwegian port (6)
17. Diplomacy (4)
18. Unceremonious (8)
21. Old-style jacket (7)
22. Amid (5)
23. Came to light (10)

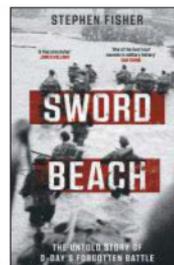
#### Down

1. German river (5)
2. Unique thing (8)
3. Salad vegetable (6)
4. Circuit (4)
5. Drooping (7)
6. Exonerated (10)
9. Applied science (10)
12. Elegant, suave (8)
14. Hairspray (7)
16. Spinet (anag.) (6)
19. Lowed (5)
20. Scheme (4)

## Sudoku

The second-toughest Sudoku in Britain

	4		9				5	
							6	
1					7			
				2			7	
	5	7					4	
6		9						
	9		8	2				
			5			1		8
	1					3		7



### ISSUE 1620 ANSWERS

#### CRYPTIC

- Across** - 1 Veracity; 5 Gamp; 8 Splinter; 9 Hair; 11 Estreat; 13 Norma; 14 Stately home; 18 Photo; 19 Tactful; 21 Gala; 22 Streamer; 24 Type; 25 Accredited.
- Down** - 1 Vessel; 2 Relit; 3 Conception; 4 Tie; 6 Anagram; 7 Pariah; 10 In the clear; 12 To let; 15 Trollup; 16 Spigot; 17 Claret; 20 Famed; 23 Tic.

## Win

The first correct drawn entry to the crossword will win a copy of this week's random book selection, *Sword Beach: The Untold Story of D-Day's Forgotten Battle* by Stephen Fisher

#### QUICK

- Across** - 1 Moderate; 5 Frau; 8 Delicate; 9 Ovum; 11 Feigned; 13 Paved; 14 Stringently; 18 Quire; 19 Sandbag; 21 Inky; 22 Opposite; 24 Mope; 25 Agitated.
- Down** - 1 Modify; 2 Delhi; 3 Reconsider; 4 Tot; 6 Revival; 7 Unmade; 10 Opening out; 12 Degas; 15 Think up; 16 Squirm; 17 Agreed; 20 Built; 23 Peg.

7	9	4	1	8	2	6	5	3
2	1	3	5	9	6	8	4	7
8	5	6	3	4	7	9	2	1
6	7	8	9	2	5	3	1	4
4	2	1	7	6	3	5	9	8
5	3	9	4	1	8	2	7	6
1	4	2	6	3	9	7	8	5
9	6	7	8	5	1	4	3	2
3	8	5	2	7	4	1	6	9

**Send entries to:**  
Crossword Competition,  
The Big Issue,  
43 Bath St,  
Glasgow, G2 1HW

# MY PITCH

*Morrisons, Wetherby  
Tuesday-Saturday, 8.30am-12pm*

## IAN, 58

I was 58 this month, and I've been selling the magazine for 18 years – 14 years in Wetherby, and before that, two years in Skipton and two years in Otley.

I started selling the magazine because I went through a divorce and lost my home, and things went from bad to worse. I thought, I've got to turn my life around; I'll sell the Big Issue, and I've been doing it ever since. Now I live in a flat in Beeston. I've been there for five years.

I got divorced because of drink. I used to drink a lot – it nearly killed me. I did an apprenticeship in painting, and then I was self-employed and used to do council house repaints, but when they brought PVC [windows and doors] out there was nowt for me to do. I'd been drinking since I was about 20, but it got worse then.

I started selling to get off my backside. I was just drinking all the time, and thought, I'm going to kill myself here. Selling helps me to meet people, and I've got a lot of friends because I've been on my pitch for 14 years – I know a lot of people. I've probably been selling for longer than anyone else at the Leeds office now. There were a few who'd been selling longer than me, but they've died. I've lost a few friends.

Lockdown was horrendous for me. The money was horrendous, because I got payments off the government because of being classed as self-employed – three payments of £500 – but I had to wait ages for the first one.

During that first lockdown, when you could only go out once a day, that was absolutely horrendous. Living just across from Asda, I'd go through a case of beer each day. That's what I'd do

**I don't bother voting. They're all as bad as each other. They're all full of promises until they get in**



– just sit and go through a case of beer. I couldn't do anything else. Once lockdown ended, my drinking went down again. It was just boredom – just sitting in the flat all the time. It wasn't good.

I went through a bad attack about seven years ago and ended up with staples and stitches in my head. I'm lucky to be living, really. I was just walking home from the pub with my dog, and these three blokes said, "Give us your money, give us your money," and I just carried on walking. Next thing, they had metal bars and baseball bats and were hitting me round the head. I had 47 staples and three stitches in my head. It still hurts now. I should've got criminal injuries compensation.

I've got about 10 or 11 tattoos. I've got Mike Tyson's name on my forehead. I was mad on him when he was world champion. I've had that a long time, that tattoo. I've also got 'I hate Man United' – I'm a Leeds fan!

I'm into all the old stuff, me – Blondie, all the punk rock greats. That

was my era. Horse racing, too. I like a bet.

I can't use computers. I can't even text. If there's something I have to do online, Nic in the Leeds office does it for me.

I don't bother voting. They're all as bad as each other. They're all full of promises until they get in. The amount of homelessness is absolutely scandalous. There shouldn't be people sleeping rough or using food banks. When I go out in the morning or come back in the evening, there are people everywhere in sleeping bags. They need to do something about it and get a good grip on it. It shouldn't be happening in this day and age – not when Rishi Sunak's got all those millions.

To my customers, I'd like to say thank you for supporting me all year round. You're there every week and you don't let me down.

Interview: Brontë Schiltz  
Photo: Exposure Photo Agency

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