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Doing the Right Thing? Gina Miller

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From Gina Miller PPC for the True and Fair Party in Epsom and Ewell.

Doing the right thing

By Gina Miller, Prospective Parliamentary Candidate for Epsom and Ewell, Leader of the True & Fair Party

Epsom and Ewell's Labour and Liberal Democrat branches must answer a simple question. Do they want to unseat Conservative Chris Grayling at the general election or would they prefer – yet again – to stand and lose?

The two parties have tried and failed to defeat Grayling across six general elections over 21 years. This is despite his record in the House of Commons, which includes, as transport secretary, bringing train delays and cancellations across the rail network affecting commuters right here in Epsom & Ewell. Despite Mr Grayling being told by the Supreme Court that he acted beyond his powers as Lord Chancellor, bypassing parliament and restricting legal aid to the most vulnerable in society. Despite two-thirds of residents feeling that Mr Grayling is not the strong advocate for their constituency that all MPs should and must be.

Neither party has come within 10,000 votes of the Conservative candidate since the seat was formed in 1974. That's 14 general elections, 28 failed attempts – and heavy losses – between them.

Rather than charging towards electoral doom for the 29th and 30th times, Labour and the Liberal Democrats must stand aside at the next election. Epsom and Ewell needs a candidate the majority of voters can coalesce around. Someone who has a record of success in business, who has successfully challenged ministers' abuse of power in court, and who will promote the potential we have in Epsom and Ewell.

My candidacy is not driven by right and left, but right and wrong. Straightforward political reforms to root out corruption at the heart of our democracy, such as banning paid lobbying by MPs, compulsory weekly surgeries to help residents and putting the ministerial code into law. I want to see stronger anti-corruption and ethics laws across central and local government, police, regulators, and the NHS. These types of reforms are backed by voters across the political spectrum, good people who are aghast at the sleaze and disregard for the law, honesty and integrity in parliament and our public institutions. Epsom and Ewell residents can vote for me knowing that I will represent them no matter their natural mainstream party affiliation.

Our voting system needs to change so that every vote counts, but, until then, political parties must be pragmatic. The Liberal Democrats will not win here. No one doubts the party's skills at by-elections, which date back to the early 1960s and Eric Lubbock's remarkable win in Orpington. But those successes have never been repeated on a national scale. Pouring resources into a single seat cannot be replicated 600-plus times all at once, as they have to be at a general election if you are a national party.

My True & Fair Party, which is concentrating its resources in a handful of seats, is pragmatic. We haven't stood in Esher and Walton against Dominic Raab, even though his actions in government make him a natural opponent for us. We respect that this is a constituency that the Lib Dems really can win, particularly with an impressive candidate in Monica Harding.

We ask the Lib Dems to extend us the same courtesy. They have failed to defeat Grayling six times. This is despite a political record of buying a Brexit boat from a firm with no ships and ditching mandatory housebuilding targets that would help young people, including right here in Epsom and Ewell.

No one doubts Labour's resurgence under Sir Keir Starmer. There is little doubt that his party will take back seats lost to the Conservatives under Jeremy Corbyn. Yet his predecessor failed so badly in 2019 that even a commanding polling lead will not translate into a huge majority.

The unfair quirks of our electoral system mean that, in many seats, all this lead will mean is the party might regain second place. That's certainly the case in Epsom & Ewell, where Labour was nearly 21,600 votes behind Grayling in 2019. That's a number Labour cannot overturn, particularly in a seat where the voters were savvy enough to never fall for even Tony Blair's electoral charm.

Labour has failed to defeat Grayling six times, despite outdated views about gay couples and banning books for prisoners that are completely out-of-kilter with the good natured people of Epsom and Ewell.

Conservative voters who admired Thatcher, Major or even Cameron, but have been let down by the scandals of the economic failures of the May, Johnson, Truss and Sunak years won't vote Labour or Liberal Democrat. They might, however, vote for a party not bogged down by any tribal history and a candidate who can actually win if only the Lib Dems and Labour stand aside.

Those parties have been given more than enough opportunities. We all know what will happen if they stand again – they will lose. It's time for the Lib Dems and Labour to answer my initial question and give someone else a chance to properly represent Epsom and Ewell.

Gina Miller.

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