

# Reform of the United Kingdom

The United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland is a sovereign nation state comprising four constituent countries: England, Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland. At present, there is a United Kingdom parliament at Westminster, a devolved Scottish parliament at Holyrood, a devolved Welsh Assembly at Cardiff, and a devolved Northern Ireland Assembly at Stormont. The Time Party seeks to further devolve power from Westminster, and the civil service based on Whitehall, by re-empowering the people of the varying and differing parts of the United Kingdom via a change to a fully federal constitutional structure.

## Distribution of Power

**Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland** have a considerable degree of autonomy already as a result of devolution. However, **England** has not. The Time Party believes that this anomaly should now be addressed.

Rationale: There are numerous federal countries in the world, including Australia, the United States of America, Germany, India, and Malaysia. Queensland and Tasmania are states of Australia, but few would claim that Queenslanders or Tasmanians are not Australians. Virginia, Iowa and Nevada are states of America, but few would claim that Virginians, Iowans or Nevadans are not Americans. Berlin, Bavaria and Saxony are states of Germany, but few would claim that Berliners, Bavarians or Saxons are not Germans. Gujarat and Rajasthan are states of India, but few would claim that Gujaratis or Rajasthanis are not Indians. Kelantan, Sarawak and Johor are states of Malaysia, but few would claim that the Kelantanese, Sarawakians or Johoreans are not Malaysians.

## England

Queen Elizabeth II is the Head of State of the United Kingdom, but she is also the Monarch of England. England is a country and has been so since its unification during the reign of King Æthelstan in 927 AD. England has a national football team, cricket team, rugby team, hockey teams and many other groups of players representing the country at international sporting events and games. England has a National Opera. There is an English National Symphony Orchestra and an English National Ballet. However, there is no English National Museum, and the Time Party would seek to ensure that one such institution is established. There is no English National Anthem, and the Time Party would establish a Royal Commission to invite submissions from composers of a National Anthem for England. On the Royal Commission's recommendation, the Time Party would introduce legislation to ensure that the new English National Anthem is played and sung at all sporting events held in England involving English teams. The patron Saint of England is Saint George and the country celebrates St George's Day each year on 23 April. However, there is no national holiday on St George's Day, and the Time Party would seek to ensure that this day becomes a national bank holiday in England alone. Similarly, we propose that St David's day (1<sup>st</sup> March) becomes a National Public holiday in Wales alone. We would retain the public holidays of St Andrew's day (30<sup>th</sup> November) and St Patrick's day (17<sup>th</sup> March) in Scotland and Northern Ireland respectively.

The Time Party believes that far too much decision-making power and influence rests with Westminster and Whitehall and that the United Kingdom should become fully federal, with the new states being called 'Lands'. The Lands will have tax-raising powers and control over many of the responsibilities held at present by Westminster and Whitehall. This will increase local accountability, empower the people of the United Kingdom and bring employment to all parts of the UK.

## **The Lands**

### **CORNWALL**

Comprising: Cornwall, the Isles of Scilly

Area: 1,375 sq miles

Capital: Truro

Population: 0.5 million

Demonym: Cornish

Airports: Newquay, Land's End

Ports include: St Ives, Penzance, Falmouth, Fowey, Padstow

Background: From 290 AD, Cornwall (originally Dumnonia) was ruled by chiefs, dukes, then kings, with the latter reigning autonomously until c.890 AD.

### **CUMBRIA**

Comprising: Cumbria

Area: 2,613 sq miles

Capital: Carlisle

Population: 0.5 million

Demonym: Cumbrian

Airport: Carlisle

Ports include: Barrow, Whitehaven, Workington, Silloth, Maryport, Harrington

Background: Cumbria was formed in 1974 from the historic counties of Cumberland and Westmoreland, and incorporated Sedbergh, which had formerly been part of the West Riding of Yorkshire, as well as Furness (including Barrow-in-Furness) formerly part of Lancashire.

### **EAST ANGLIA**

Comprising: Norfolk, Suffolk, Cambridgeshire

Area: 5,192 sq miles including the City of Peterborough

Capital: Ipswich

Population: 2.5 million

Demonym: East Anglian

Airports: Norwich, Cambridge

Ports include: King's Lynn, Great Yarmouth, Lowestoft, Felixtowe, Ipswich, Harwich, Southwold

Background: The Kingdom of East Anglia existed for almost 400 years from the 6<sup>th</sup> century AD until 918 AD. Its capitals at various times were Rendlesham, now a village in Suffolk, and Dommoc, probably in present-day Suffolk but the location of which is not known today.

## **ESSEX**

Comprising: Essex

Area: 1,420 sq miles

Capital: Chelmsford

Population: 1.8 million

Demonym: Essexan

Airports: Stansted, Southend

Ports include: Tilbury, London Gateway

Background: The Kingdom of Essex existed for almost 300 years from 527 AD and 825 AD. Interestingly, its legislature was called the Witenagemot, although the Time Party would not presuppose that the people of Essex would wish to call their Land parliament by that name.

## **GREATER BIRMINGHAM**

Comprising: the present metropolitan county of the West Midlands, excluding Coventry which the Time Party proposes should return to Warwickshire and thus be part of Mercia

Area: 310 sq miles

Capital: City of Birmingham

Population: 2.5 million

Demonym: Birminghamian

Airport: Birmingham

Background: Birmingham received city status in 1889. The West Midlands metropolitan county was created in 1974.

## **GREATER LIVERPOOL**

Comprising: the present economic and political area of Liverpool City Region

Area: 724 sq miles including Halton

Capital: City of Liverpool

Population: 1.5 million

Demonym: Liverpolitan

Airports: Liverpool,

Ports include: Liverpool, Garston, Birkenhead

Background: Liverpool received city status in 1880. The Liverpool City Region was established as a local enterprise partnership in 2010 and as a combined authority in 2014.

## **GREATER LONDON**

Comprising: the present area of Greater London including all existing 33 London Boroughs

Area: 607 sq miles

Capital: City of Westminster

Population: 10.5 million

Demonym: Londoner

Airports: Heathrow, London City, Biggin Hill

Background: Greater London was established in 1965.

## **GREATER MANCHESTER**

Comprising: the present metropolitan county of Greater Manchester

Area: 493 sq miles

Capital: City of Manchester

Population: 2.8 million

Demonym: Mancunian

Airport: Manchester, City Airport Manchester

Port: Salford

Background: Manchester received city status in 1853. Greater Manchester was established in 1974.

## **KENT**

Comprising: the historic and present ceremonial county of Kent

Area: 1,442 sq miles

Capital: Maidstone

Population: 1.8 million

Demonym: Kentish

Airport: Lydd

Ports include: Medway, Whitstable, Ramsgate, Dover, Folkestone

Background: The Kingdom of Kent existed for more than 400 years from 455 AD until 871 AD, although it was a vassal of Mercia from 764–769, 785–796, 798–825 and a vassal of Wessex from 825–871.

## **LANCASHIRE**

Comprising: Lancashire

Area: 1,189 sq miles

Capital: Lancaster

Population: 1.5 million

Demonym: Lancastrian

Airport: Blackpool, Preston

Ports include: Fleetwood, Heysham

Background: The county was established in 1182. The County Palatine of Lancaster is one of the two Royal Duchies in England.

## **MERCIA**

Comprising: Bedfordshire, Buckinghamshire, Cheshire, Derbyshire, Gloucestershire, Herefordshire, Hertfordshire, Leicestershire, Lincolnshire, Northamptonshire, Nottinghamshire, Rutland, Shropshire, Staffordshire, Warwickshire, Worcestershire

Area: 14,890 sq miles

Capital: Tamworth

Population: 12.8 million

Demonym: Mercian

Airports: Luton, East Midlands, Humberside

Ports include: Immingham, Boston

Background: The Kingdom of Mercia existed for almost 400 years from 527 AD until 918 AD. Its capital was Tamworth which is now in the county of Staffordshire. Interestingly, its legislature was called the Witenagemot, although the Time Party would not presuppose what Mercians today would seek to call their Land parliament by that name.

## **NORTHERN IRELAND**

Comprising: Northern Ireland

Area: 5,460 sq miles

Capital: Belfast

Population: 1.9 million

Airports: Belfast International, Belfast City

Ports include: Belfast, Larne, Londonderry, Warrenpoint, Kilkeel

Background: Governed as a separate entity since the early 1920s.

## **NORTHUMBRIA**

Comprising: Northumberland, Tyne & Wear, County Durham

Area: 3,195 sq miles

Capital: Durham

Population: 2.3 million

Demonym: Northumbrian

Airports: Newcastle, Durham Tees Valley

Ports include: Berwick, Tyne, Sunderland, Hartlepool

Background: The Kingdom of Northumbria existed for more than 300 years from 653 AD to 954 AD. It was extensive, and stretched into modern-day Yorkshire. Its northern capital was Bamburgh, now a village in Northumberland.

## **SCOTLAND**

Comprising: Scotland

Area: 30,090 sq miles

Capital: Edinburgh

Population: 5.4 million

Demonym: Scottish

Airports: 38, including Edinburgh, Glasgow, Prestwick, Inverness and Aberdeen

Ports, oil terminals and/or dockyards: 10, including Grangemouth, Leith, Aberdeen, Finnart and Rosyth

Background: Scotland has been a single country since 843 AD. The country merged with England via the Act of Union in 1707. It attained devolved powers in 1998.

## **SUSSEX**

Comprising: West Sussex, East Sussex including the City of Brighton & Hove

Area: 1,461 sq miles

Capital: Chichester

Population: 1.7 million

Demonym: Sussexan

Airports: Gatwick, Brighton City (at Shoreham)

Ports include: Shoreham, Newhaven

Background: The Kingdom of Sussex existed for almost 400 years from 477 AD until 860 AD, although it was a vassal of Wessex from 686–726 and again from 827–860 and a vassal of Mercia from 771–796.

## **WALES**

Comprising: Wales

Area: 8,023 sq miles

Capital: Cardiff

Population: 3.1 million

Demonym: Welsh

Airports: Cardiff, Swansea, Anglesey, Hawarden, Haverfordwest

Ports include: Milford Haven, Newport, Cardiff, Swansea, Pembroke, Fishguard

Background: The last king of Wales, who was monarch of all Wales, was Gruffyddap Llewelyn, reigning from 1055 until 1063. The country attained devolution in 1998.

## **WESSEX**

Comprising: Berkshire, Bristol, Devon, Dorset, Hampshire, Isle of Wight, Oxfordshire, Somerset, Surrey, Wiltshire

Area: 9,840 sq miles

Capital: Winchester

Population: 8.9 million

Demonym: Wessexan

Airports: Southampton, Oxford, Bristol, Exeter, Bournemouth

Ports include: Southampton, Portsmouth, Cowes, Lymington, Poole, Weymouth, Exmouth, Brixham, Dartmouth, Plymouth, Appledore, Bideford, Avonmouth, Bristol Royal Portbury Docks, Gloucester

Background: The Kingdom of Wessex existed for some 500 years from 519 AD until the 10<sup>th</sup> century AD.

## **YORKSHIRE**

Comprising: North Yorkshire, South Yorkshire, East Riding of Yorkshire, West Yorkshire

Area: 5,663 sq miles

Capital: York

Population: 5.4 million

Demonym: Yorkshire

Airports: Leeds Bradford, Doncaster Sheffield

Ports include: Goole, Kingston-upon-Hull, Teesport-Middlebrough, Redcar, Whitby, Scarborough, Bridlington

Background: Yorkshire is named for the Kingdom of Jórvík which existed during the period of the late 9<sup>th</sup> and first half of the 10<sup>th</sup> century AD.

## **Responsibilities of the Land Parliaments**

The Time Party proposes that the responsibilities of the Lands should be as follows:

Administration

Agriculture, Fisheries, Food

Business and Industry

Conservation, Natural Resources

Justice

Education

Employment, Training, Rehabilitation

Health and Care Services

Housing and Urban Development

Public Safety

Taxation

Tourism, Cultural Affairs

Trade

Transport

## **Responsibilities of the Federal Government**

The Time Party proposes that the federal parliament at Westminster in London should become unicameral, comprising a single chamber of 301 MPs: **The House of Commons**.

**The House of Lords** should be abolished and its oversight and amendment responsibilities replaced by enhanced Select Committees of the House of Commons advised by panels of experienced and expert advisors. There is a precedence for this within a Westminster-style democracy with a constitutional monarch as Head of State. New Zealand abolished its upper house of parliament, the Legislative Council, in 1951, and its functions were transferred to Select Committees of that country's lower house, the House of Representatives. New Zealand continues to this day to have a unicameral legislature which operates effectively.

The responsibilities of the **Federal Government** are envisaged as follows:

Agriculture, Fisheries and Food

Commerce

Defence

Education

Employment

Energy



Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs

Health and Human Resources

Home Affairs, including Territorial Waters, Immigration, National Border Security, Prisons

Trade

Justice

Pensions

Public Safety

Motor Vehicles

Security, including national intelligence and international intelligence

Social Security

Taxation

Tourism, Cultural Affairs

Transport

Treasury

Veterans Affairs

## **Electoral Reform**

The Time Party proposes that all elections to the Land Parliaments should be conducted under the proportional representation system known as Mixed Member Proportional (MMP). This system is virtually identical to the system currently in use in Scotland for elections to the Scottish Parliament, with one adjustment being the addition of an 'overhang' topping up or reducing the number of seats held in parliament to reflect precise proportionality of votes cast per party. The Time Party proposes the inclusion of a 5% qualification threshold upon all forms of proportional representation. Parties would need to reach this threshold before gaining representation in the legislature, unless that party has won any specific constituency seats.

The Time Party proposes that there should be a series of UK-wide referendums held to decide once-and-for-all whether or not to adopt a proportional representation system of elections for UK parliamentary elections. The referendums would be as follows:

### **Referendum 1.**

- 1) Retain First-Past-the-Post (FPTP)
- 2) Change to a type of Proportional Representation (PR).

### **Referendum 2.**

- 1) Mixed Member Proportional (MMP)
- 2) Single Transferable Vote (STV)

In the event that a proportional representation electoral system has been selected in Referendum 1, a further third referendum would be held following four UK general elections conducted under the selected PR system (X).

This third referendum would comprise of two ballot questions, i and ii, as follows:

**Referendum 3.**

- i) Do you want to retain (X) or change to another electoral system?
  - 1) Retain (X) voting system
  - 2) Change to an alternative system
- ii) If the UK votes to change electoral system, which do you select?
  - 1) First-Past-the-Post
  - 2) The previously unselected PR system (MMP or STV)

Throughout the development of this process of constitutional change, the Time Party has envisaged the development of a system that works for the people. We seek to facilitate effective delegation, via Land parliamentary representatives, empowered to deliver bespoke solutions appropriate to circumstances on the ground in each Land.

**Addendum - Explanation of voting systems**

**Mixed Member Proportional (MMP):** (known as the Additional Member System used in Scotland, Wales and Germany) in which roughly half of the seats are elected by FPTP; and the remainder are filled from party lists to top-up the local seats so as to ensure a proportional overall result.

**Single Transferable Vote (STV):** A proportional system used in Northern Ireland, the Republic of Ireland, Malta and for the Australian Senate; in which the country is divided into multimember constituencies; and voters rank candidates in declining order of preference.