

## **The new politics**

At Tony Blair's final Prime Minister's Questions he said that British politics 'is more often the place for the pursuit of noble causes', something which I wholeheartedly agree with. But no-one can deny that trust in politicians and faith in politics has been significantly diminished over the last few years.

Every politician has a responsibility to inspire the next generation.

We must also engage with and encourage people to become more involved in the political process. And this comes back to my original point: we must show that politics can be force for good. After all, politics can make a positive difference to the world and it is in everyone's interest to become involved. Because the more people that become involved in politics, the broader, stronger and more effective it becomes.

There are many misconceptions about politics. It isn't about parties always disagreeing, fighting their own battles in Westminster only, with no agenda other than self-interest. Active citizenship in our country is the key because everyone has a view, everyone can make a difference. Instead of retreating and saying "politics is not my thing" or that "it doesn't make any difference", become involved and voice your opinion.

So I welcome The Novas Scarman *Learning Power* Report. It contains innovative ideas not just for encouraging people to become involved in politics but it also raises one key point: interaction.

If a person's only experience of politics or a political institution is something detached and impersonal from a big, bloated, clunking, bureaucratic and centralised machine based in Whitehall then it is no wonder that individuals will become turned off from politics as a whole. By engaging with individuals, localising politics, showing how politics can make people's lives better, people can have their faith in politics restored. After all, that is the politics of the community-up. Where the state is there to protect and assist society but where individuals, families and communities are set free – free to flourish.

In the upcoming months, we will be publishing a Green Paper on the Third Sector which will cover many of these points which I've mentioned but also what a future Conservative Government will do to challenge aspects of social exclusion in our society.

David Cameron has made our Party the champions of society. Throughout the last decade, it's become evidently clearer that the state doesn't have all the answers. The social challenges which our country faces can only be tackled by community involvement and for the good of citizenship, Britain needs a healthy democracy.

After all, a nation is only as strong as its society.

**The Rt Hon Francis Maude MP**

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