

OPINION

Let's Talk

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Please keep letters to a maximum of 300 words. Letters cannot be published without a name and postal address. Also include a daytime phone number if possible. We reserve the right to edit any letter.

Maybe other motives?

If you want to vote in this year's elections in May, remember to take some official ID with you, otherwise they'll turn you away. The government says this is needed because of the risk of voter fraud.

The whole scheme is estimated to cost upwards of £180 million over 10 years. But in the 2019 election, out of 32 million votes cast, there were 33 allegations of possible fraud.

I do wonder whether the government is paying out millions of our money solely to get rid of a tiny number of possible voter irregularities. Or do they have other motives?

Apart from the official voter ID cards which we can apply for, what sort of ID will we have to show in order to vote?

Most documents with a photo will do the job. But whereas, a senior bus pass will be acceptable, a young person's student card, library card or National Rail Card will not.

In effect, voting is made more difficult for the 14 per cent who don't have passports, the 26 per cent who have no driving licence, students, young people, and those of us who have to use official letters as ID.

Surveys routinely show that all the above categories are people who are less likely to vote Conservative than older, wealthier, well-established people.

So, to be honest, I think the ID requirements are less about preventing voter fraud and much more about discouraging non-Tory voters from the ballot box.

It remains to be seen whether there is a drop in turnout or whether there is an increase in the number of applications for voter ID (only 10,000 in the whole country so far!).

Whatever the outcome and whatever our political persuasion, it is essential that we all make friends, family and contacts aware of the new rules and make sure they have ID.

And if not, that they apply for an election ID card. Or alternatively, move over to postal voting.

Otherwise, with large numbers unable to vote, our democracy would be

seriously and dangerously damaged.

Roy Morris
S10

Apply for a postal vote?

Re Forthcoming elections and voter ID.

The issue of voter ID has come up in the local press quite frequently recently and for good reason. It is likely that many people will be prevented from voting because they cannot produce an appropriate Voter ID.

The list of acceptable ID is long and not simple but a suitable ID is not too difficult to obtain. Sheffield City Council website has all the necessary information and advice: contact Electoral Services at the council, by phone, or email or in person and do it in good time. An alternative is to apply for a postal vote. Then no ID is needed.

A helpful website is: <https://content.govdelivery.com/accounts/UKSHEFFIELD/bulletins/3437c7e>

It is to be hoped that you can regularly publish this information until the election.

Andrew Manasse
S10


Does it ring any bells?

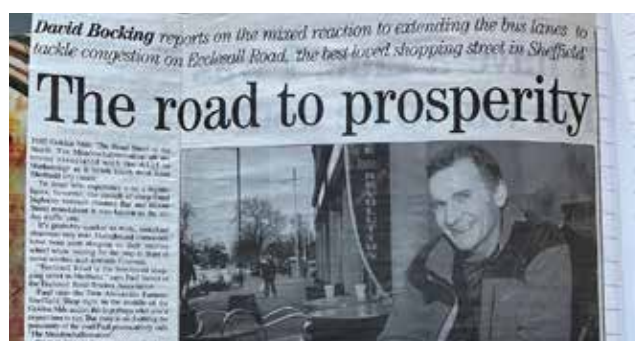
I came across this item from the Sheffield Telegraph in February 2006 worrying that the imminent arrival of bus lanes on Ecclesall Road would lead to the demise of traders. Ring bells?

Dr Mark Doel
S11

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Bus lanes on Ecclesall Road article from February 2006

Let down by the school

Thank you for covering the issues relating to King Edward VII School being forced to join an academy.

I am one of the parents who have been working together to try and demonstrate how opposed we are to this and created the petition to try and ascertain how many others shared these concerns.

The teaching staff at the school have been described by Ofsted as "passionate, engaging and expert teachers" yet they could be subjected to significant upheaval including poorer working conditions, which may well impact upon their

ability to provide passionate and engaging teaching.

Many of the families who chose King Ted's did it because they knew their children would not thrive in a school which cares more about expensive uniforms always worn as prescribed and focuses instead on

creativity and supporting "pupils to become responsible, respectful and active citizens" (words taken from Ofsted's framework of inspections).

I have been saddened to hear about examples where children and their families feel let down by the school.

I feel strongly the improvement is most likely to come from a school that is given time to make those changes, rather than a new regime which seeks to change much that is working.

Sign the petition at <https://www.change.org/p/stop-the-forced-academisation-of-king-edward-vii-school>

Julie Guihen
Sheffield

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