

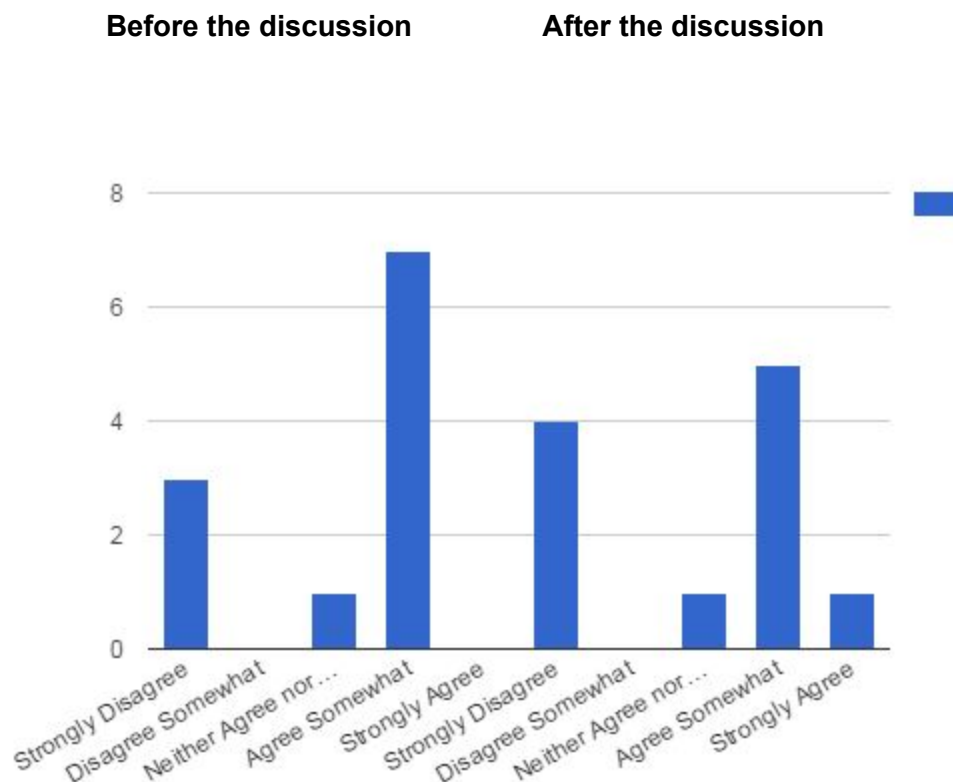
Pottery Room, Amersham Community Centre, 3rd Monday in month, 1000am -12 00 noon

Political Thinking

Meeting No 2.1

Topic “In Britain a referendum result should be binding.”

Participants opinions	Before discussion	55%	agreement,
	After discussion	48%	agreement.



Opinions changed by 7% towards disagreement as a result of the debate.
Opinions were polarised on strong disagreement and agree somewhat,

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Principal points made during the debate

By those tending to **agree** that **“In Britain a referendum result should be binding.”**

- The British people have spoken; their decision must be respected.
- MPs should note the referendum result and consider themselves bound by it.
- If the referendum result were ignored, that would be an incitement to riot.
- The turnout was relatively high, and this reinforces the case for the result to be binding.

By those tending to **disagree** that **“In Britain a referendum result should be binding.”**

- The referendum is legally advisory only
- Information provided to the voters by both sides was misleading
- In a Parliamentary democracy, Parliament is supreme.
- There was no definition of what was meant by “Leave,” so the result cannot be binding.
- The referendum was unfair as the alternatives were unclear.
- A substantial minority did not vote to leave; their views should be respected.

By those concerned with the consequences of the referendum result

- It is paradoxical that if Parliament is to regain its sovereignty, which would be one of the consequences of leaving the European Union, it will have to choose not to exercise its sovereignty over the Brexit vote

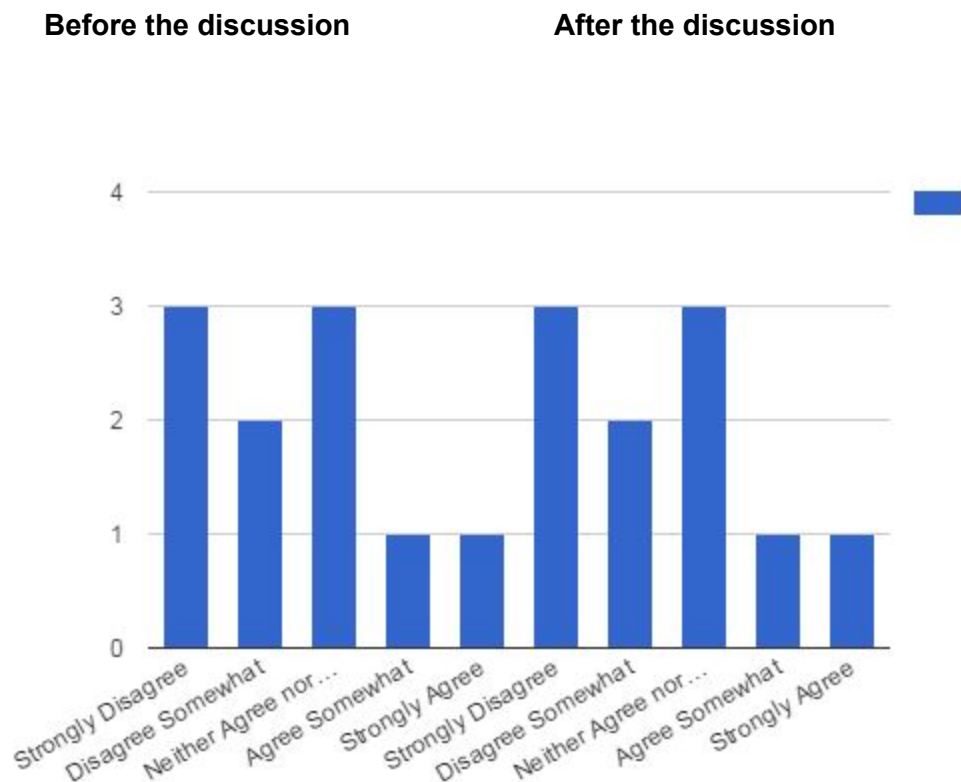
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Political Thinking

Meeting No 2.2

Topic “To be democratic Britain requires Proportional Representation.”

Participants opinions	Before debate	45%	agreement,
	After debate	45%	agreement.



Opinions were not changed as a result of the debate.

There was a wide spread of opinion from strongly disagree to strongly agree

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Principal points made during the debate

By those tending to **agree** that “To be democratic Britain requires Proportional Representation.”

- The mismatch between the result of the national vote and seats won in Parliament invalidates the voting system
- The House of Commons cannot claim to represent the nation when it is not representative.
- A Member of Parliament cannot claim to represent his/her constituency when most voters cast their vote for another candidate.
- Most voters do not vote for a winning candidate.
- The result of a General Election, that is the choice of government, is determined by a few hundred voters in each of the hundred or so marginal seats. This is fundamentally undemocratic.
- Because a General Election is decided in the marginal seats, there is little political activity or engagement in the political process in the large majority of seats which are not marginal, where one candidate is expected to have a large majority. This is a denial of democracy.
- Large political groups such as UKIP are denied a fair representation in Parliament.

By those tending to **disagree** that “To be democratic Britain requires Proportional Representation..”

- The link between a member of Parliament and his/her constituency is vital to democracy; this is lost in most PR systems
- The current voting system is simple and well understood
- The current voting system usually results in a strong and stable government able to govern; PR systems encourage small parties and lead to coalitions and unstable government.
- Voters have rejected the opportunity to change to a PR system; demonstrating that there is no appetite for such a change.

By those concerned with the consequences and practicalities of a change to Proportional Representation

- PR voting systems tend to be extremely complex, leading to a high risk of voters misunderstanding.
- Most modern democracies use some form of PR in their voting systems; Britain is increasingly out of line with international practice.