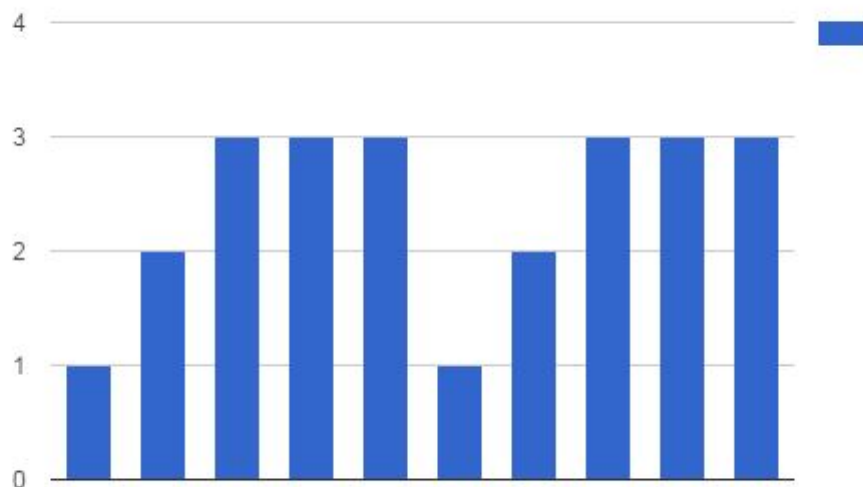


Political Thinking

Meeting No 8

Topic. “ The current UK political system of elected representatives in several Parliaments, unelected representatives and popular referenda in an unclear and ambiguous relationship is not an effective way to achieve a sovereign democracy.”

Participants opinions	Before discussion	60%	agreement,
	After discussion	60%	agreement



Before the discussion

After the discussion

Before the discussion opinion was diverse with half the group tending towards agreement, a significant minority tending towards disagreement and an undecided group.

As a result of the discussion, group opinions were unchanged.

The discussion was wide ranging with a broad spread of opinion expressed.

Principal points made during the debate

By those tending to agree that “The current UK political system of elected representatives in several Parliaments, unelected representatives and popular referenda in an unclear and ambiguous relationship is not an effective way to achieve a sovereign democracy.””

- The system gives a pretence of democracy, to conceal central control by Westminster
- The recent referendum was the first chance in a long time for the people to provide a genuine expression of their will.
- Proportional representation is essential for a democracy to function.
- Much more power should be dispersed to the regions to provide genuine Local Government.
- Local taxation should support local expenditure.
- Parliament should be modernised to use modern communication and voting systems.
- Elections provide no proper choice - “none of the above” should be a valid vote.
- Low and declining voter turnout is evidence of a disillusionment with politics and is a threat to democracy.

By those tending to **disagree** that “The current UK political system of elected representatives in several Parliaments, unelected representatives and popular referenda in an unclear and ambiguous relationship is not an effective way to achieve a sovereign democracy.”

- The system has produced stable government most of the time in the last two centuries, by contrast with other countries.
- Coalitions are the norm in European government and result in total inertia. .

Some of the changes proposed to the system were:

- The Second Chamber (House of Lords) should be composed of people selected for their expertise in the various fields in numbers approximately proportional to the importance of the field. Health, Manufacturing, Commerce, Law, Education are examples of fields and professional bodies or similar should select those to represent their field.
- Parliament should be relocated away from London to achieve a more balanced representation of different interests.