

Dear Resident

We're writing you this letter because we're worried about the decision we all have to make about Britain's future. We feel it's too important to be reduced to a few soundbites in a glossy leaflet with a grinning Cameron or Farage on the front. **We want to speak out with our own words.**

The EU's far from perfect. We all know that. Critics – ourselves included – of the Common Agricultural Policy or the workings of the EU institutions make good points. But to opt for Brexit would be to throw the baby out with the bath water.

EU “rules and regulations”, so often derided as red tape, benefit every one of us. They've led to:

- Improved **employment rights** including 4 weeks paid holiday, maternity and paternity leave, rights to equal pay and protection against discrimination
- Better deals and protection for **consumers**, including cheaper roaming phone tariffs, product safety standards and the right to fair contracts
- **Environmental protection**, ranging from cleaner beaches and bathing and drinking water to improved air quality and controls against harmful chemicals

All these things and many more benefits of “red tape” that we take for granted would be at risk were we to Brexit. So we should all pause to think before cheering when the likes of Boris promise a bonfire of the regulations.

The EU also helps us to **tackle the big challenges**: climate change, human trafficking, the migration crisis. None of these will disappear or be any less of an issue if we close the door on our continental neighbours. Europe is a beacon of peace, democracy and human rights. Brexit would threaten all that. Together we have more power to act on every issue that really matters.

Without free movement of people we will be worse off. Immigration has its pros and cons. Yet overall EU migrants pay far more in taxes than they receive in benefits and **EU doctors and nurses are vital to keeping the NHS running.**

It's also a two way street. **British citizens have the right to study, work and retire anywhere in the EU** – a right that about two million Brits are enjoying right now. What would the strain on public services be like if large numbers of them ended up having to come back to the UK?

In any case, Brexit would not be, as some claim, a magic solution to mass immigration. The majority of immigrants come from countries outside the EU. If we want to maintain our access to the free market the EU will demand we continue to accept free movement of people.

We also don't buy the promise that Brexit will save the NHS. We've all had leaflets through our doors saying "The EU costs us £350m a week". This ignores our £100m a week rebate - money that never leaves the UK – and the **money we receive from the EU to support everything from road building to food production to world-leading scientific research.**

Take account of all this and **the true cost to the UK amounts to about 36p per person per day**ⁱ. That's less than the cost of a pint of milk. So to say that Brexit would give the UK £350m a week to spend on the NHS is a simple lie.

Will leaving the EU save us money (even if it's only 36p per person per day)? Not if it leads to economic downturn as almost every respected economic institution and so many businesses predict it would. Do we really want to play a game of chance and bet that every one of them is wrong? An estimated 3 million jobs depend on trade with the EU. Are we ready to gamble with all those livelihoods?

Many people we've spoken to have expressed dismay at a referendum debate dominated by personalities rather than policies. This is our attempt to cut through that and help you make a decision based on the evidence in front of us.

Whatever your choice next Thursday, thank you for taking the time to read this.

CHILTERN REMAIN

Tim Starkey (Chalfont St Giles), Susanna Widenbar, Graham Gardner, Nina Dluzewska (Chesham), Bob Gryspeerdt (Amersham), Ben Davies (Great Missenden), Erica Neustadt and Hugh Stokes (Chalfont St Peter), Brian Gammage (Prestwood), Mihir Roy (Little Chalfont), Alan Booth (Chartridge)

ⁱ This is based on the Full Facts analysis of the cost of UK membership in 2015, see <https://fullfact.org/europe/our-eu-membership-fee-55-million/>

The net cost (after rebate and money we get back) was £8.5bn. If you divide this by 65million, then further divide it by 365 you come to 35.83p per person per day.