

BBC
RADIO



Commons Sense

A quick word from your employers

What BBC Radio 5 live listeners want from their MPs

Title chosen by 5 live listeners

Clive Bishop Pete Wilson Mike Wainwright

Other listener suggestions included:

Good Housekeeping

MPs' A to Z: The People's Route Map

Great Expectations

Stand And Deliver

Be Upstanding

The Honourable Member

What Real People Want: a 5 live Listeners' Guide for Politicians

Are We Being Served?

The People's Directive

How to Win Votes and Influence People

No Sleaze Please, We're British

The MPs' Uneven Coffee Table Repair Kit

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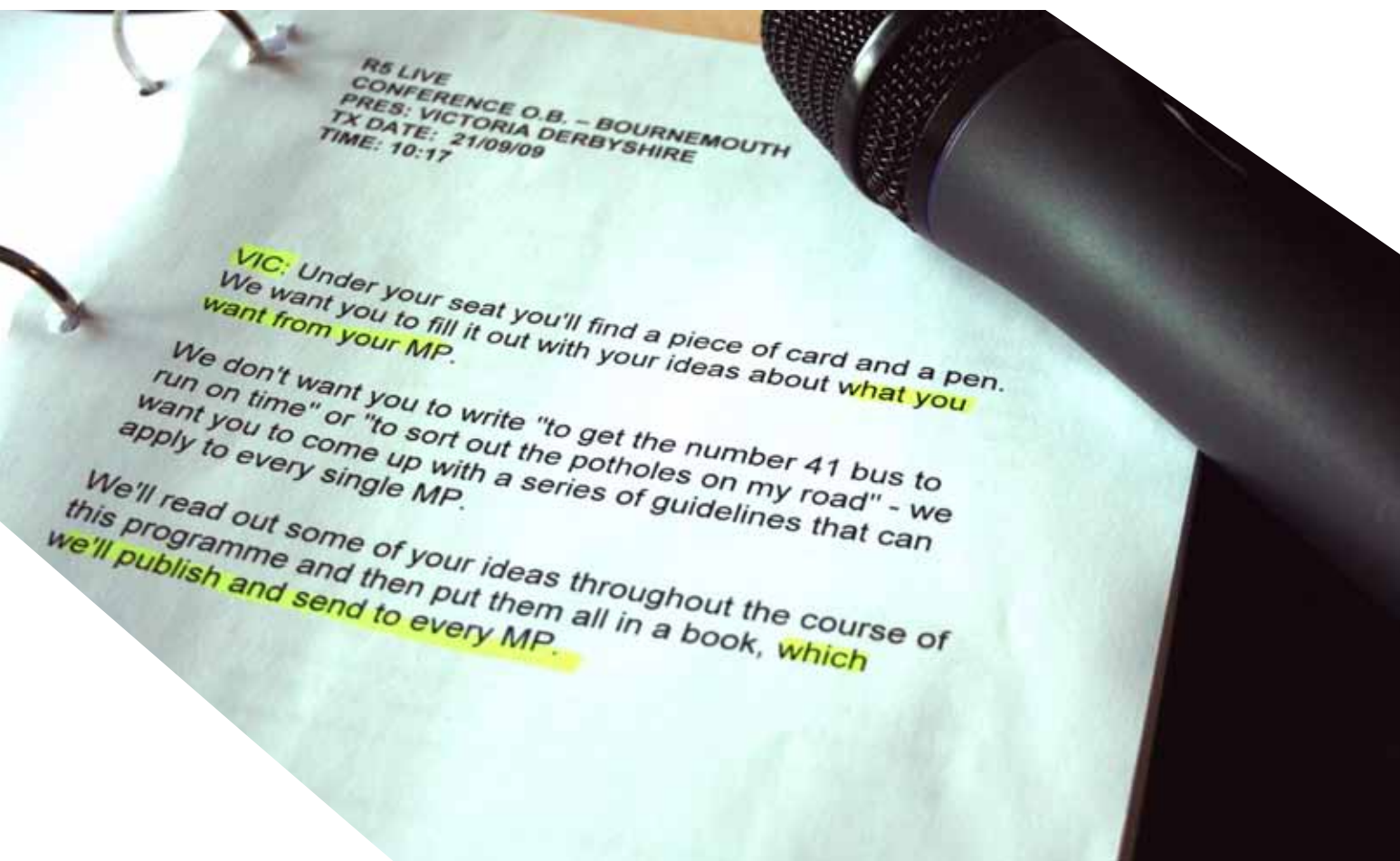
If the 2005 - 2010 Parliament is to be remembered for one thing, it will be the expenses scandal. Voters were incredulous at the claims for barbecues, silk cushions, Kit Kats and hanging baskets; “house flipping” entered the lexicon, as did the explanation, “but it was all within the rules”. Rules, voters learned, that had been written by Members of Parliament themselves. 5 live listeners were angry - and the scandal energised them - hence “Commons Sense - a quick word from your employers”. We asked listeners for a succinct list of what they require from their elected representatives. Here it is. It's not meant to be clever or patronising or trite: it's simply a request from good people that you serve them well and with integrity.

Kind regards, Victoria Derbyshire
BBC Radio 5 live



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600 5 live listeners gather for three party conference broadcasts

Liberal Democrats, Bournemouth
Labour, Brighton
Conservatives, Manchester

Monday 21st September 2009
Monday 28th September 2009
Monday 5th October 2009



Total number
of cards filled in:

325

Oldest participant:

76

Youngest participant:

15

Longest answer:

153 words

Shortest answer:

1 word

Number of cards that include the word honest or honesty: **82**



Three 5 live listeners whittle down the cards to our Final 15:

The Red Lion Pub, Whitehall, Thursday 10th December 2009



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We discussed, we argued, we laughed, we persuaded and we cajoled.

The selection of some cards was easy. An overwhelming majority read “honesty, integrity, morality”. We were fiercely adamant that these must have a place in the final publication.

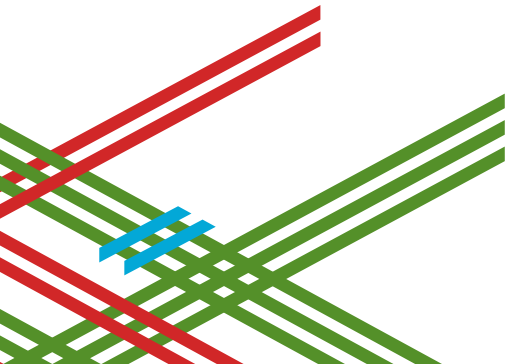
As the cards flew across the pub table into the ‘yes’ and ‘no’ piles, disagreements brewed. How were we to select on certain contentious issues such as toeing the party line and the importance of personality? In the spirit of democracy a vote was taken.

A challenging, exciting and sometimes frustrating process was at an end. Our final selections were made. The people have spoken...

Vanessa Cox - 5 live listener

”

Vanessa Cox
with 5 live reporter Chris Mason



THE FINAL 15:

What I want from my MP is...

*inspirational leadership and
interesting, imaginative policies*



“ Listen to your constituents, be compassionate and act on their concerns; but also provide them with imaginative ideas and solutions. Be bold enough to raise awareness of issues about which ordinary people may not be aware. Be sufficiently dynamic and eloquent to capture our attention and make us think about politics at a local and national level. ”

Matthew Godfrey

Age 38

“ What I want from my MP is not to take advantage of the expenses system. ”

Ollie Knight

Age 24



“ What I want from my MP is to remember where they come from and that their job is to represent their constituency, not blindly obey the whips. ”

When you become an MP, don't shift your focus to the Westminster Village and the greasy pole of political power. There are 60 million of us on the outside relying on you and watching your every move to make sure that you are doing a decent job of representing us, your constituents. We are your bosses, nobody else. ”

Hazel Malcolm-Walker

Age 47

“Simply an ‘honourable’ member of parliament who not only has a passion for politics but a passion for working for the people.”

James Bacon
Age 20

Diligence, Hard work, intelligence,
interest in local issues, honesty,
less spin & most importantly, A human
being.



Simon Jay
Age 21

“What I want from my MP is a contract of employment for MPs where they can be held to account, with no grey areas and unlimited expenses.”

MPs who should have been the backbone of our great country felt they were beyond accountability and punishment. Where an MP claimed for a duck house on expenses, real people worried about the cost of bread and milk.”

Nasim Awan
Age 47





“ What I want from my MP is the truth, and honest answers to questions asked. Whether that answer gains favour with the public or not, it is the only way to gain public trust.

Transparency is the only way the electorate will feel truly part of the political process. ”

Dan Kinder

Age 18



“ What I want from my MP is to represent their constituent - not their own interests. To have real life experience - not young career politicians.

With an ageing population, what is needed is more mature faces in Westminster, not ever younger faces with nothing real to say. Too often students leave university and go straight into working within politics; they move from the protected toy town of the campus to the Westminster bubble, without ever having to survive in the real world. ”

Wendy Ashall

Age 40

What I want from my MP is...

More emphasis on the youth, and an increase in political awareness. Also, for them to not be afraid of 'bad-press' and let us see the REAL MP we're voting for.



“ The young are Britain's future and it's essential for the survival of politics that awareness is increased. As a student studying politics, I have a basic grasp of the process that occurs within government – but so many people my age do not. ”

Freya Block

Age 16



What I want from my MP is...

I Express his opinions in a straight talking non - P.C. Manner, work for the majority and not the minority.



“ You all seem more interested in keeping the various pressure groups which constantly bombard you with ridiculous demands happy. Here’s a thing- I and millions like me do not have the time to lobby you, as we are working too hard to keep our heads above water. Stop taking the majority for granted. ”

Chris Oldroyd
Age 36



“ Better use of new media technology to reach the public.

To all busy MPs - you have your weekly surgeries, your trips to Westminster and your promises to keep – but you should still have time to update your status on Facebook. The equivalent radio or TV broadcast or flyer campaign could cost tens of thousands. So why not become a blogging, twittering MP? ”

Matthew Tucker
Age 25

What I want from my MP is...

o clear-cut measures on how his/her party is going to improve the lives of the people; no more 'waffling' or references to history (e.g. Labour's track record) but ~~at~~ present us ^{to us a} ~~as a~~ vision.

Izzah Farzanah Ahmad
Age 16

What I want from my MP is...

Honesty. Telling the Truth, no matter how
Painfull, like IF A Policy IS reversed, ADMIT it
didn't work, People respect the truth more than
spin.



“ When people try something and it doesn't work out, they hold their hands up and try something new. The people want you, our elected representatives, to do the same. There's no shame in a “u-turn” - far better to admit defeat than persevere and cover up the facts. The future of a democratic parliament is in your hands. ”

Roger Patterson
Age 40

What I want from my MP is...

Someone who isn't behind a desk 24/7, who
goes out and sees the public regularly.
Someone who does their job to the best of their
ability.



“ When we were asked to fill in “what I want from my MP...” I had to ask myself, who on earth is my MP? They are supposed to be there for the people of their borough, but you never usually hear about them unless they've done something wrong on the news. This made me think, if you don't hear about them, are they just constantly being drowned in paperwork? Instead of being behind a desk trying to solve things, they should be out where the problem is, giving them a more realistic view. ”

Alastair Royston
Age 17

What I want from my MP is...

HONESTY - INTEGRITY - INTELLIGENCE
COMMITMENT

Elaine Cooper
Age 71

Finally some advice from three people who were here before you.



“ Stay close to the people who vote for you. That keeps your feet on the ground. And don't be a clone; be true to yourself. ”
Clare Short, Labour then Independent Labour
(Birmingham Ladywood 1983-2010)



“ The most important thing to remember is that you are no more important than the people who put you there, and your job is to do your best for them. Self importance is the politician's original sin, and self interest the greatest vice. ”
Matthew Taylor, Liberal Democrat
(Truro and St Austell 1987-2010)



“ The prayer I made when I became an MP was “Please, Lord, never let me lose my sense of outrage.” After twenty three years I am pleased to say I still had it. The obvious temptation when confronted with a mountain of letters from constituents is simply to process them through the usual routes and accept the replies which come from officialdom but, even though you may have hundreds of cases ongoing, each one is unique to the individual and anger on their behalf coupled with bloody minded persistence can obtain results which alter their lives for the better. And, for goodness sake, just be yourself. ”
Ann Widdecombe, Conservative
(Maidstone then Maidstone And The Weald 1987-2010)



Victoria Derbyshire
Weekdays 10:00 - 12:00

BBC
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