



Written by [James Murphy](#) on November 8, 2021

U.K. Group Looks to Force Parliament to Consider Brexit-like Referendum on Johnson's "Net Zero" Pledge

A group of U.K. political activists is looking to force Parliament to consider a Brexit-like referendum on Prime Minister Boris Johnson's ambitious plan that the nation reach "net zero" carbon emissions by 2050. Unlike Brexiteer [Nigel Farage](#), who says he is considering such a campaign, this group has taken the first step in making it happen.

The [Harrogate Agenda](#), a movement pushing for a greater level of "democracy" in the United Kingdom, has already initiated a petition asking Parliament to consider holding a referendum on whether the government should proceed with its 2050 net-zero target.



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"I believe net zero target lacks legitimacy and without a referendum the current climate change policy lacks the explicit consent of the people, as argued by The Harrogate Agenda. This exposes a massive democratic deficit in our system of government," the [petition](#) begun by Harrogate Agenda co-founder Niall Warry stated.

In a piece on Sunday, another co-founder of the Harrogate Agenda, Richard North, said the fact that "uncertainties still exist point up the absurdity of the claims that the science is settled. The only thing that is settled is the Climate Worshipers' determination to use this excuse to shut down the public debate."

As of this writing, the petition already has over 17,000 signatures, more than the 10,000 signatures needed to cause the government to have to respond to the petition. The petition's next goal is 100,000 signatures, which would force Parliament to consider a debate on the proposal.

"It was a similar initiative, back in 2011, which forced a debate in the UK Parliament, that led directly to the 2016 [Brexit] referendum," North told *The New American* in an e-mail. "We hope that we can repeat history."

The Harrogate Agenda, however, is about far more than the current climate insanity being pitched in Glasgow currently. The group's ultimate goal is to achieve nothing less than a citizen-driven change in how the U.K. is governed.

In their own words: "The premise on which our movement is based is that democracy means 'people power.' The word democracy stems from the Greek word, *dēmokratía*, comprising two parts: *dēmos* 'people' and *kratos* 'power'. Without a demos, there is no democracy. But people without power is not democracy either."

Besides pushing for climate sanity, the group is arguing that in the British system, the people don't hold enough power in their form of "representative democracy." The Harrogate Agenda [insists](#) that the



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sovereignty of the people be recognized by the Crown and the nations' various governments; that there be a separation of powers, similar to the United States, where the people choose the head of state rather than having the leader of the party that wins the election being selected as prime minister; and that treaties and taxation and spending must be approved by the people of the U.K. via referendums.

The group, loosely based on the Chartist Movement of mid-19th century Britain, also hopes for a new constitution for the U.K., in which their demands are codified.

"Parliament, once members of the executive are excluded, must host a constitutional convention to draw up a definitive codified constitution for the peoples of England, Wales, Scotland and Northern Ireland. It shall recognise their sovereign status and their inherent, inalienable rights and which shall be subject to their approval," the group's website states.

"We aim to make referendums a normal part of UK governance, and we're after the same separation of powers that [Americans] enjoy. Parliament should be more than a (shallow) gene pool for the administration," North explained.

It should be noted, of course, that the United States was not founded as a democracy, but a republic; a nation governed by the rule of law rather than the rule of the majority. The Founders of America did not want the new nation to be a democracy, as they felt that democracies often gave rise to silver-tongued politicians able to sway the masses with promises of wealth redistribution, etc., and would inevitably devolve into tyranny. As James Madison wrote in *The Federalist Papers*, "Hence it is that such democracies have ever been spectacles of turbulence and contention; have ever been found incompatible with personal security or the rights of property; and have in general been as short in their lives as they have been violent in their deaths."

With respect to Nigel Farage's possible involvement in the current petition, as far as the Harrogate Agenda is concerned, they would rather the well-known Brexiteer stay out of the fray: "This is far bigger than Farage, and we have a number of Tory MPs backing it — we aim to foment a backbench rebellion when (if) the petition comes to town. Farage would actually be the kiss of death because no Tory MP would touch it if he was involved," wrote North.



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