

Manifesto Round-up

A look at commitments from the Conservative, Labour and Liberal Democrat manifestos next to our own General Election asks

The Society of Authors protects the rights and furthers the interests of authors. It is a trade union representing 10,000 professional writers, illustrators and translators from all sectors and genres.

At the beginning of May we published [More than Just Words](#), a set of pre-election asks calling on the next Government to “support Britain’s cultural heart: with funding and legislation, with transparency and ambition”.

Now that the Conservatives, Labour and the Liberal Democrats have published their election manifestos, we’ve produced this paper as a side by side comparison of election commitments from each party, as they relate to our key campaign areas.

This isn’t an analysis of the credibility of the policies listed, nor does it aim to cover specific policy areas in their entirety. It isn’t a substitute for reading the manifestos in full and it certainly isn’t designed to influence your vote!

However, we do hope it provides a useful snapshot of each party’s approach to the cultural landscape, and how their manifesto pledges might affect authors working in 2017.

Downloads

- [SoA 2017 manifesto, More than Just Words](#)
- [Conservative manifesto](#)
- [Labour manifesto](#)
- [Liberal Democrats manifesto](#)

COPYRIGHT

Our ask: support and promote a stable and clear framework for copyright in the UK and at EU level, balancing user access and reward for creators.

Conservatives

- Ensure there is a robust system for protection of intellectual property when the UK has left the EU, with strong protections against infringement.

Labour

- Make sure that all EU-derived laws that are of benefit are fully protected without qualifications, limitations or sunset clauses, with no rolling back of key rights and protections.

Liberal Democrats

- Maintain current standards of intellectual property (IP) protection with continuing co-operation on enforcement of IP generated in the UK and working within the EU to ensure the continuation of territorial licensing of rights.

BACKING CREATORS AND THE CREATIVE INDUSTRIES

Our ask: support creators and sustain an environment where innovation and creativity can flourish.

Conservatives

- Pursue free trade with European markets, and secure new trade agreements with other countries.
- Ensure there is a sustainable business model for high-quality media online, to create a level playing field for media and creative industries.
- Help provide the skills and digital infrastructure that creative companies need and will seek to build upon the favourable tax arrangements that have helped them, including the creative industries tax credits scheme.
- We will control immigration and secure the entitlements of EU nationals in Britain and British nationals in the EU.

Labour

- Retain unrestricted access for our goods and services with EU markets.
- Guarantee existing rights for all EU nationals living in Britain and secure reciprocal rights for UK citizens living in EU countries.
- Improve diversity on and offscreen, working with the film industry and public service and commercial broadcasters to find rapid solutions to improve diversity.
- Aim to close the 'value gap' between producers of creative content and the digital services that profit from its use, reviewing the way that innovators and artists are rewarded for their work in the digital age.

Liberal Democrats

- Press for the UK to unilaterally guarantee the rights of EU nationals in the UK and secure the same rights for UK citizens living in European Union countries, and push for freedom of movement in Brexit negotiations.
- Continue to support the Creative Industries Council and tailored industry-specific tax support, promoting creative skills, supporting modern and flexible patent, copyright and licensing rules.

June 2017

- Address the barriers to finance faced by small creative businesses.

Find out more:

societyofauthors.org/backing-creators

TAX & BENEFITS: SUPPORTING FREELANCE WORKERS

Our ask: review the laws that impact self-employed workers: ensuring that authors are not penalised by benefits, tax and National Insurance rules, and reducing VAT on ebooks and digital publications to zero.

Conservatives

- Tax
 - Increase the personal allowance to £12,500 by 2020 and the higher rate to £50,000.
 - No increase in VAT.
 - Aims to “simplify the tax system” and “keep taxes as low as possible”.
 - Continue the current programme of tax reform, including quarterly reporting and planned changes to National Insurance.
- Welfare
 - No plans for “further radical welfare reform in this Parliament” but will continue the roll-out of Universal Credit.
 - Adopt a “Breathing Space” scheme, so that someone in serious problem debt may apply for legal protection from further interest, charges and enforcement action for a period of up to six weeks.

Labour

- Tax
 - No increase in income tax for those earning less than £80,000 per year.
 - No increase in personal National Insurance or VAT.
 - Renewed pledge not to extend VAT to books and newspapers.
 - Exclude small businesses from quarterly reporting.

June 2017

- Welfare
 - Scrap the Bedroom Tax, the current sanctions regime, and overhaul the current approach to Work Capability and Personal Independence Payment assessments.
 - Increase Employment and Support Allowance by £30 per week and Carer's Allowance by £11 to match Jobseeker's Allowance.

Liberal Democrats

- Tax
 - 1p rise on the basic, higher and additional rates of Income Tax (England, Northern Ireland and Wales).
 - 1p rise in dividend tax (UK-wide).
- Welfare
 - Scrap the Bedroom Tax and replace the current Work Capability assessment with one run by local authorities.
 - Reverse the cuts to Work Allowances in Universal Credit, enabling people to work for longer before their benefits are cut.
 - Uprate working-age benefits at least in line with inflation.
 - Increase Local Housing Allowance in line with average rents in the area.

ACCESS TO FUNDING

Our ask: ensure that public funding of the arts recognises the value and addresses the needs of authors, translators and illustrators, and replaces European funding lost through Brexit.

Conservatives

- Introduce a new cultural development fund to use cultural investment to turn around communities.

Labour

- Introduce a £1 billion Cultural Capital Fund, administered by the Arts Council, to boost arts, music, theatre and literature.
- Ensure that no region or nation of the UK is affected by the withdrawal of EU funding for the remainder of this Parliament.

Liberal Democrats

- Protect sports and arts funding via the National Lottery.

LIBRARIES

Our ask: renew support for libraries at national level, to ensure a truly comprehensive and efficient public library service, to maintain PLR payments, and to follow through on the commitment to ensure all creators are fairly remunerated for library ebook loans.

Conservatives

- No mention of libraries.

Labour

- End cuts to local authorities to “support the provision of libraries, museums and galleries”.
- Ensure libraries are preserved, and updated “with wi-fi and computers to meet modern needs”.
- Reintroduce library standards to ensure “the best possible service”.

Liberal Democrats

- Libraries in rural areas to benefit from a £2 billion Rural Services Fund, along with children’s centres, post offices and others.

READING AND THE CULTURAL ENVIRONMENT

Our ask: value cultural literacy and reading for pleasure as centrally important to society, and encourage and support creative arts in education and general policy.

Conservatives

- Continue strong support for the arts, and ensure more of that support is based outside London.
- Hold a Great Exhibition of the North in 2018, to celebrate amazing achievements in innovation, the arts and engineering.

Labour

- Introduce an Arts pupil premium in every primary school in England.
- Review the EBacc performance measure to make sure arts are not sidelined from secondary education.
- Launch a creative careers advice campaign in schools.
- Seek to ensure that Britain remains part of the Erasmus scheme so that British students have the same educational opportunities post Brexit.

Liberal Democrats

- Support specialist routes such as Teach First to recruit teachers in shortage areas, including the arts.
- Protect the availability of arts and creative subjects in the curriculum and act to remove barriers to pupils studying these subjects.
- Do “everything we can” to protect Erasmus+ and other EU-funded schemes which increase opportunities for young people.

FREEDOM OF EXPRESSION

Our ask: support freedom of expression both here and abroad

Conservatives

- Will not bring the European Union's Charter of Fundamental Rights into UK law, and "will consider our human rights legal framework when the process of leaving the EU concludes".
- Will remain signatories to the European Convention on Human Rights for the duration of the next parliament.

Labour

- Enhance the powers, functions and independence of the Equality and Human Rights Commission.
- Will urge respect for human rights and the rule of law in discussions with other governments, and "review all training and equipment contracts with repressive regimes, to ensure that Britain never colludes in the mistreatment of civilians.

Liberal Democrats

- Oppose any attempt to withdraw from the ECHR or abolish or water down the Human Rights Act.