



Meeting 01 02-Oct-25

Dr Caroline Lucas

Caroline Lucas was the UK's first Green Party Member of Parliament between 2010 and 2024, and before that served for 10 years in the European Parliament.

She has also served as both Leader and Co-Leader of the Green Party of England and Wales.

Caroline is a writer, campaigner and keynote speaker, with a particular interest in the role of education and the arts in mobilising action on the climate and nature emergencies.

She has won numerous awards for her work. In 2020 she topped the list of the BBC Radio Woman's Hour One Planet Power List of influential activists, educators and campaigners, and in 2024 the UK's largest sustainable business awards scheme presented her with its Lifetime Achievement Award.

Caroline is Co-President of the European Movement, and a Trustee of the Towner Art Gallery in Eastbourne.

Her latest book, a Sunday Times bestseller, is *Another England: How to Reclaim our National Story*.



Meeting 01

02-Oct-25

Jonathon Porritt CBE

Jonathon Porritt is a prominent campaigner and eminent writer, broadcaster and commentator, who has been providing strategic advice to leading UK and international companies on today's converging environmental and climate crises for the past 30 years.

He is President of The Conservation Volunteers and Population Matters and is involved in the work of many other NGOs.

Jonathon was Co-founder of Forum for the Future, a leading UK sustainable development charity, and a Co-Founder of the Prince of Wales's Business and Sustainability Programme. For 9 years he was Chairman of the UK Sustainable Development Commission, providing high-level advice to Government Ministers. He was a Director of Friends of the Earth, and Co-Chair of the Green Party, of which he is still a member.

Jonathon holds Honorary Degrees from many UK Universities and served as Chancellor of Keele University 2012-2022. In 2017 he received an Ethical Corporation's Lifetime Achievement Award and was awarded a CBE in 2000 for services to environmental protection.

He has written numerous books on sustainability, recently, *Hope in Hell: A Decade to Confront the Climate Emergency* (2020), a powerful call to action. His latest, "Love, Anger and Betrayal: Just Stop Oil's Young Climate Campaigners" may indicate a further shift in his views.

Jonathon is an Honorary Member of our Advisory Panel.



Meeting 02 09-Oct-2025

Chris Doyle

Chris is the Director of the Council for Arab-British Understanding (Caabu) and its lead spokesperson. He gives numerous talks around the country on issues including the Arab Spring, Libya, Syria, Palestine, Iraq, Islamophobia and the Arabs in Britain.

He has worked with the Council since 1993 after graduating with a first-class honours degree in Arabic and Islamic Studies at Exeter University. Since then he has travelled widely in the Middle East and North Africa. In 1996 Chris moved to work for a professional government relations firm but returned to a more senior role at Caabu in 1997. In November 2002, he was made full-time Director.

In 2005, Chris addressed the United Nations on behalf of the International Coordinating Network on Palestine on the International Day of Solidarity with the Palestinians. He urged members of the UN General Assembly to increase their efforts to establish a meaningful peace process with the aim of creating a viable Palestine state. Chris appeared as an expert witness to the Foreign Affairs Select Committee discussing UK relations with the Gulf.

He has travelled to nearly every country in the Middle East and has organised and accompanied numerous British Parliamentary delegations to Arab countries. He writes frequently in the Independent, the Guardian, and Middle East Eye. He was the subject of a documentary for Al Jazeera Arabic in 2012.



Meeting 03 16-Oct-25

Professor Linda Woodhead MBE FBA

Linda Woodhead is a distinguished scholar in the field of religious studies and the sociology of religion. She is best known for her work on religious change since the 1980s, and for initiating public debates about faith.

Linda is Head of the Department of Theology and Religious Studies at King's College London. Prior to this, she was Professor of Sociology of Religion at Lancaster University.

She has written extensively about the decline of institutional religion, especially the churches, and the rise of alternative spiritualities, and she has carried out empirical research around the world. Her recent publications include *Unknowing God: Towards a Post-Abusive Theology* with Peter Harvey (2022).

In addition to her academic achievements, Linda works with journalists covering religion, culture and values. She is actively involved in public debates about faith and founded the Westminster Faith Debates with the Rt Hon Charles Clarke, which became an annual series bringing researchers into conversation with prominent figures in public life.

Linda has been recognized with several honours, including being appointed a Member of the Order of the British Empire in 2013 and has been elected a Fellow of the British Academy, the United Kingdom's National Academy for the humanities and social sciences, and the Royal Society of Edinburgh.

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Meeting 04 23-Oct-25

Professor Anand Menon

Anand Menon is Professor of European Politics and Foreign Affairs at King's College London. He directs the Economic and Social Research Council Initiative, The UK in a Changing Europe, which promotes rigorous, high-quality and independent research and provides an authoritative, non-partisan and impartial reference point for those looking for analysis of UK-EU relations.

Before joining King's College, Anand was Professor of West European Politics and founding Director of the European Research Institute at the University of Birmingham. Prior to that, he was a lecturer in European Politics and Fellow of St Antony's College, Oxford. He has held visiting positions at New York University, Columbia University and the Université Libre de Bruxelles.

Anand is an associate fellow of Chatham House and Senior Associate member of Nuffield College, Oxford. He is co-editor of the journal *West European Politics* and has written for the *Financial Times*, *Prospect*, *The Guardian*, *The Daily Telegraph*, *The Times* and *Le Monde*.

He is a frequent commentator on national and international broadcast media and has made several radio documentaries on contemporary politics. Anand is co-author of *Brexit and British Politics* (2017) and author of *Europe: The State of the Union* (2008).

Anand is a valued Hon Member of our Advisory Panel and frequent speaker at Keele World Affairs.



Meeting 05 30-Oct-25

Elisabeth Braw

Elisabeth Braw is a Senior Fellow at the Atlantic Council's Scowcroft Center for Strategy and Security. Her work focuses on defence against gray-zone and other national security threats as well as the intersection of geopolitics and the globalised economy.

She leads the Atlantic Council's Threats to the Global Maritime Order project and is also a columnist with Foreign Policy and Politico Europe, where she writes on national security and the globalised economy.

Elisabeth is an adviser to Willis Towers Watson's research arm and a member of the advisory boards of M&C Saatchi World Services, GALLOS Technologies and Disruptive Industries. She's also a member of the UK National Preparedness Commission and the steering committee of the Aurora Forum (the UK-Nordic-Baltic leader conference).

Elisabeth is the author of several books including the award-winning Goodbye Globalization: The Return of a Divided World (2024) and The Defender's Dilemma: Identifying and Deterring Gray-Zone Aggression (2022). She is also the author of the upcoming book Undersea War.

Before joining academia, Elisabeth worked in the private sector following a career as a journalist. She is a regular op-ed contributor to the Financial Times, the Wall Street Journal and the Times (of London).

A citizen of Sweden, she attended university in Germany, graduating with a MA in political science and German literature.



Meeting 06 06-Nov-25

A leading and indefatigable voice on international security

Paul Rogers works in the field of international security and political violence with a particular interest in conflict prevention. He has a long-term interest in the changing drivers of international conflict, especially the connection between socioeconomic marginalisation, climate disruption and security.

For over forty years he has lectured at senior UK defence colleges including the Royal College of Defence Studies. For two decades he was Global Security Consultant to the Oxford Research Group and wrote a series of influential reports following the 9/11 attacks.

Paul was educated at Imperial College and lectured there, before joining the Department of Peace Studies at Bradford in 1979. This included periods as Head of Department and Chair of Faculty; he has maintained a close connection with the University since being appointed Emeritus Professor of Peace Studies.

He has written or edited more than thirty books including *Losing Control: Global Security in the 21st Century* (4th edition, 2021) and, most recently *The Insecurity Trap: a Short Guide to Transformation* (2024). His work has been translated into many languages.

Paul is a regular broadcaster on radio and TV networks and still averages around a hundred interviews a year. He has written a regular weekly column for *Open Democracy* since 2001 and is their advisor of international security.

Paul is also a valued member of the Keele World Affairs Advisory Panel.



Meeting 07 13-Nov-2025

Dr Danny Sriskandarajah

Danny Sriskandarajah is a Sri Lankan-born British-Australian activist with a deep-rooted commitment to tackling inequality, and expertise in international development, conflict and migration. He has extensive experience leading organisations across civil society, intergovernmental and policy worlds at both national and international levels.

In January 2024 Danny became Chief Executive of the New Economics Foundation, a charitable think-tank which is wholly independent of political parties. Prior to this he spent 5 years as CEO of Oxfam GB, steering it through significant organisational and cultural change.

Danny has previously been Secretary General of the Global Civil Society Alliance (CIVICUS), Director General of the Royal Commonwealth Society, Interim Director of the Commonwealth Foundation and has held various posts at the Institute for Public Policy Research.

He has served on two United Nations' High-Level Panels (on Humanitarian Finance and on Digital Cooperation), was a Trustee of the Disasters Emergency Committee and the Guy's and St Thomas' Foundation. He serves on Quadrature Climate Foundation's Advisory Board.

Danny holds both Masters and Doctorate degrees from Oxford University and an undergraduate degree from the University of Sydney. He is the author of the 2024 book, *Power to the People* (subtitled "*Use Your Voice, Change the World*").



Meeting 08 20-Nov-25

Dr Avinash Paliwal

Avinash Paliwal specialises in foreign and security policy analysis, with a regional focus on South Asia, Afghanistan, and Myanmar. His areas of expertise include International Security and International Relations.

He holds a PhD in International Relations from King's College London, and a BA in Economics from the University of Delhi. Formerly a Visiting Fellow at the Observer Research Foundation, New Delhi, he briefly worked as a foreign affairs journalist before entering academia.

Prior to his post at SOAS, Avinash taught Defence Studies at King's College London and was the Defence Academy Postdoctoral Fellow at the Regional Security Research Centre at King's.

His recent book, *India's Near East - A New History* (2024) unpacks India's faltering attempts to exert control over its eastern hinterland and neighbouring states.

Avinash has taken part in podcasts and public discussions on India's relations with Bangladesh, Pakistan and China and was an expert witness for the House of Lords Select Committee on International Relations and Defence, the UK and Afghanistan.



Meeting 09 4-Dec-2025

Professor Nic Cheeseman

Professor of Democracy and International Development, University of Birmingham

Is Democracy Alive in Africa?

Expert on international politics with sharp take on democratic deficits

Nic Cheeseman is Professor of Democracy and International Development at Birmingham University. He was formerly the Director of the African Studies Centre at Oxford University.

A political scientist by training, Nic works on democracy, elections, and development, particularly in Sub-Saharan Africa where he has conducted in-country research.

His research addresses a range of questions such as whether populism is an effective strategy of political mobilization in Africa, how paying tax changes citizens' attitudes towards democracy and corruption, and the conditions under which ruling parties lose power.

Author or editor of more than ten books, his most notable is probably *How to Rig an Election* (with Brian Klaas), analysing the pseudo-democratic methods employed by despots around the world to retain control.

He is a former editor of the journal *African Affairs*, and the founding editor of the *Oxford Encyclopaedia of African Politics* and the *Oxford Dictionary of African Politics*. Nic is a columnist for *The Africa Report*, and for *South Africa's Mail and Guardian*. He is the editor of the website *Democracy in Africa*.

Nic's articles have won several prizes, and in 2021, he was awarded a British Academy Fellowship to research the history and impact of African political thought. Since 2017 he has served on the board of Oxfam GB.



Meeting 10 04-Dec-25

Richard Murphy is currently Emeritus Professor of Accounting Practice at Sheffield University Management School, a regular blogger at Funding the Future (<http://www.taxresearch.org.uk/Blog/>) and YouTuber (<https://www.youtube.com/@RichardJMurphy>). He is also an economics columnist on The National newspaper.

Richard was formerly a Professor of International Political Economy at City, University of London, and was a chartered accountant in practice for more than forty years alongside these other activities.

As a co-founder of the Tax Justice Network, he created the system of country-by-country reporting that has transformed the way in which multinational corporations are taxed to bring to an end their abuse of tax havens.

Richard combines practical and real-world experience of economics, political economy, accounting and tax, which he uses to explain how he thinks the real world works, with a particular bias towards meeting the needs of those outside the top 10% of income earners and wealth holders.



Meeting 11 15-Jan-26

Laura Clarke OBE

Laura joined ClientEarth, an international legal environmental charity, as CEO in September 2022. She previously spent two decades in public policy, and in diplomatic roles across Africa, Asia and Europe.

Since joining ClientEarth, Laura has overseen the launch of several high-profile cases, against Shell for mismanaging climate risk, against Cargill for not addressing its links to deforestation and human rights abuses in the Amazon, and against the UK government over its inadequate strategy to tackle climate change.

A seasoned diplomat, Laura represents ClientEarth at major intergovernmental meetings around the world, advocating for the power of the law in bringing about systemic change to protect all life on Earth.

Prior to joining ClientEarth, Laura was British High Commissioner to New Zealand and Governor of the Pitcairn Islands from 2018 - 2022, and High Commissioner to Samoa from 2018 - 2020. As High Commissioner, she worked to strengthen the UK - New Zealand relationship, including through the negotiation of a standard-setting Free Trade Agreement, and climate co-operation with New Zealand and the South Pacific during the UK's COP26 Presidency.

In her role as Governor of the Pitcairn Islands she was responsible for the governance and sustainability of the Islands, including efforts to tackle plastic pollution, and maximize the benefits of Pitcairn's Marine Protected Area.



Meeting 12 22-Jan-2026

Michael Stephens

Michael Stephens is a Development and Security consultant focused on the Middle East and North Africa and Pakistan. Prior to this Michael led RUSI's Middle East programme from 2010-2020, and as Head of RUSI's Leadership Centre Michael implemented training and capacity building programmes for governments and business clients.

From February to June 2017 Michael was seconded into the Foreign and Commonwealth Office, serving as the Senior Research Analyst for Syria and Lebanon.

Michael's research has focused on topics ranging from nuclear security in the Middle East, to terrorist threats posed by non-state actors. In 2021 Michael Co-authored a volume with Dr Christopher Phillips entitled *What next for Britain in the Middle East? Security, Trade and Foreign Policy after Brexit* (I.B. Tauris), which focused on British policy toward the Middle East following Britain's exit from the European Union in January 2020.

Michael is also an Associate Fellow at RAND Europe and a Senior Fellow at the Foreign Policy Research Institute (FPRI). He studied at King's College London and undertook three years of post-graduate research in the Middle East and is proficient in both Arabic and Hebrew.



Meeting 13 29-Jan-26

Professor Sir Vernon Bogdanor CBE

Vernon Bogdanor is a political scientist and historian, and one of Britain's foremost constitutional experts. He is a research professor at the Centre for British Politics and Government, King's College London and Emeritus Professor of Politics and Government at the University of Oxford, where he taught for many years.

Internationally and domestically, he has been an adviser to governments and to parliamentary bodies on many occasions. In 1998 he was awarded the CBE for services to constitutional history. In 2009, he was appointed a Chevalier de la Légion d'Honneur by the President of France, Nicolas Sarkozy, for his work on the law and history of Britain and France. He was knighted in 2023. Vernon's many other honours include: Fellow of the Royal Society of Arts, Fellow of the British Academy and Fellow of the Academy of the Social Sciences.

Vernon has written widely on government and politics. His most recent books include *The Strange Survival of Liberal Britain: Politics and Power Before the First World War* (2022), which upends the orthodoxy about the decadent Edwardians, and *Making the Weather* (2024) on six influential post war politicians.

He is a frequent contributor to TV, radio and the press and was awarded the Sir Isaiah Berlin Prize for Lifetime Contribution to Political Studies by the Political Studies Association.



Meeting 14 05-Feb-26

Dr Gillian Tett OBE

Gillian Tett is an eminent author and journalist, and has been Provost of Kings College, Cambridge since 2023. She has a PhD in Social Anthropology from the University of Cambridge, based on research conducted in the former Soviet Union in the early 1990s. Her outstanding journalistic work covers a range of economic, financial, political and social issues.

She was previously Chair of the US Editorial Board and America Editor-at-Large at the *Financial Times*. Alongside her role as Provost, she continues to write a weekly column and is a member of the editorial board for the *FT*. Her work covering the Global Financial Crisis of 2007-2008 received extensive media attention for its prescient coverage of the financial instruments that led to the crisis.

Gillian has received many awards in recognition of her work, including Columnist of the Year (2014), Journalist of the Year (2009) and Financial Journalist of the Year (2008) at the British Press Awards; the British Academy President's Medal (2011); and the American Anthropological Association President's Medal (2022). She was appointed OBE in the 2024 New Year's Honours for services to economic journalism.

She has published a number of books, including *Anthro-Vision, a New Way to See in Life and Business*, published in June 2021, which concerns the behaviour of organizations, individuals, and markets by looking through an anthropological lens.



Meeting 15 12-Feb-26

Professor Mark Galeotti

Although by training an historian, Mark Galeotti is an interdisciplinary scholar with interests falling within the realms of politics, criminology, security studies, international relations and anthropology.

Mark is a specialist in Russian security and international politics, intelligence services and criminality, as well as in issues relating to transnational crime, intelligence and modern conflict.

He has been Head of History at Keele University, Professor of Global Affairs at New York University, a visiting professor at Rutgers-Newark (Newark), Charles University (Prague), MGIMO (Moscow), and a senior research fellow at the Foreign & Commonwealth Office.

As well as being the founder and CEO of Mayak Intelligence, he is an Honorary Professor at the UCL School of Slavonic and East European Studies, a Senior Non-Resident Fellow of the Institute of International Relations, Prague, A Senior Associate Fellow at RUSI and an Associate Fellow at the Council on Geostrategy. He consults widely for government and commercial clients across Europe and North America.

Mark is a prolific author with some 30 books on Russia, most recently *Forged in War: a military history of Russia from its beginnings to today* (2024) and *Putin's Wars* (2022). Since the start of the Ukraine War, he has written regularly for *The Spectator* and, largely based on these publications, was banned by the Russian government from travelling to Russia in 2022.



Meeting 16 19-Feb-26

Charles Parton OBE

Charles Parton was a long-serving career diplomat in the Foreign and Commonwealth Office, spending 22 out of his 37-year career working in or on the People's Republic of China, Taiwan and Hong Kong. He has also had postings in Afghanistan, Cyprus, Libya and Mali.

In his final posting, he was seconded to the EU delegation in Beijing, where, as First Counsellor until late 2016, he focussed on Chinese politics and internal developments, and advised the EU and Member States on how China's politics might affect their interests.

In 2017 Charles set up his own consultancy, China Ink, and that year was chosen as the UK Parliament's Foreign Affairs Committee Special Adviser for its China inquiry; he returned to Beijing for 4 months as Adviser to the British Embassy to cover the Communist Party's 19th Congress.

He is a Distinguished adviser at the think tank the Council on Geostrategy, Senior Associate Fellow of the Royal United Services Institute (RUSI), and associate fellow at the Mercator Institute for China Studies in Berlin.

Charles has appeared extensively on television and radio and has published articles on China in most mainstream UK media.



Meeting 17 26-Feb-26

Bill Emmott

Bill Emmott is a prolific and well-respected writer and consultant, who spent 13 years as editor-in-chief of *The Economist* (1993-2006). Altogether he spent 26 years at *The Economist*, working as a correspondent and editor in Brussels, Tokyo and London, on subjects ranging from politics to finance, economics and business. He has published many books and documentary films on Japan, Italy, liberalism and globalisation, including "The Great European Disaster Movie", broadcast on BBC Four of which he was Executive Producer.

He is chair of the International Institute for Strategic Studies, and also of the Global Disinformation Index, a non-profit. He acts as Senior Adviser for Geopolitics for Montrose Associates, a London-based strategic intelligence consultancy.

Bill has honorary degrees from Warwick, City and Northwestern Universities, and is an honorary fellow of Magdalen College, Oxford. He is an Ushioda Fellow of Tokyo College, a trustee of the Chester Beatty Library in Dublin, and is a member of the Comitato Scientifico of the Centro Einaudi in Turin. He writes regular columns for *La Stampa* in Italy and the *Mainichi* newspaper in Japan, and writes book reviews for the *Financial Times*.

Bill is the author of numerous books over the past 40 years, including his latest, in 2024, entitled *Deterrence, Diplomacy and the Risk of Conflict Over Taiwan*, published in Japanese under the title *How to Stop World War Three*.

He is an Honorary Member of our Advisory Panel.



Meeting 18 05-Mar-26

Dame Karen Pierce DCMG

Dame Karen Pierce was appointed UK Special Envoy to the Western Balkans in February 2025, and previously was British Ambassador to the USA (2020-2025).

Prior to Washington, Karen was the United Kingdom's Permanent Representative to the United Nations in New York (2018-2020). She served as the Director General for Political Affairs and Chief Operating Officer of the Foreign and Commonwealth Office in London from 2016, having worked in the FCO since 1981.

She has worked in Tokyo (1984-1987), and in Washington as the Private Secretary to the British Ambassador to the United States (1992-1995). From 1996 to 2006, Karen held several positions in London including Team Leader for Ukraine, Belarus and Moldova, Deputy Head of Eastern Adriatic (Balkans) Department, and Head of Afghanistan Political Military Unit after 9/11. She returned to the Balkans as Balkans Coordinator from 2002 to 2006.

In 2006, Karen moved to New York as the Deputy Permanent Representative and Ambassador at the UK Mission to the UN. In 2009, she returned to London to become the Director of South Asia and Afghanistan Department and the UK's Special Representative for Afghanistan and Pakistan. In Geneva, she was the Ambassador and Permanent Representative to the UK Mission to the United Nations (2012-2015). Karen was the UK's Ambassador to Afghanistan (2015-2016).

Since 2020, she has been a Governor of the Ditchley Foundation, a charity founded to support the UK/US Transatlantic Alliance.



Meeting 19 12-Mar-26

Jonathon Porritt CBE

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He is President of The Conservation Volunteers and Population Matters and is involved in the work of many other NGOs.

Jonathon was Co-founder of Forum for the Future, a leading UK sustainable development charity, and a Co-Founder of the Prince of Wales's Business and Sustainability Programme. For 9 years he was Chairman of the UK Sustainable Development Commission, providing high-level advice to Government Ministers. He was a Director of Friends of the Earth, and Co-Chair of the Green Party, of which he is still a member.

Jonathon holds Honorary Degrees from many UK Universities and served as Chancellor of Keele University 2012-2022. In 2017 he received an Ethical Corporation's Lifetime Achievement Award and was awarded a CBE in 2000 for services to environmental protection.

He has written numerous books on sustainability, recently, *Hope in Hell: A Decade to Confront the Climate Emergency* (2020), a powerful call to action. His latest, "Love, Anger and Betrayal: Just Stop Oil's Young Climate Campaigners" may indicate a further shift in his views.

Jonathon is an Honorary Member of our Advisory Panel.



Meeting 20 19-Mar-26

Professor Michael Clarke

Michael Clarke's research covers current security policy in the broadest sense, dealing with UK policing, counterterrorism, military defence and security and various aspects of ongoing intelligence and security policy.

He is a Fellow of King's College London (KCL) and was founding Director of the Centre for Defence Studies, and Deputy Vice-Principal for Research Development. In addition to his visiting role at KCL he is also a Visiting Professor at the Universities of Exeter and Aberystwyth.

He was Director General of the Royal United Services Institute (RUSI) from 2007-2015 and is now a Distinguished Fellow at RUSI. He has been a Guest Fellow at the Brookings Institution, Washington DC, and a Fellow in Foreign Policy Studies at the Royal Institute of International Affairs (Chatham House) in London.

Michael was a Specialist Advisor to the House of Commons Defence Committee from 1997-2019 and is now Specialist Advisor to the Joint Committee on the National Security Strategy. He has served on the Prime Minister's Security Forum and the Chief of Defence Staff's Strategic Advisory Panel.

His recent publications include *Britain's Persuaders: Soft Power* (2021) and *Great British Military Commanders* (2024).

Michael is an Honorary Member of the Keele World Affairs Advisory Panel.