

What will Santa bring us this Christmas?

More money for the NHS? A quick finish to Brexit? Free Broadband? No increase in taxation for 95% of the electorate (apart from the other 60%)? No checks between NI and mainland UK? Well, in this House we stopped believing in fairytales a long time ago, so our manifesto for Christmas 2019 contains the greatest number of facts since records began, all fully costed and verified; it will impose no additional taxes on hard-working families, and will guarantee a decrease in crime and an increase in affordable housing.

Department of Work and Pensions. We have delivered more of both, Judy taking on another job examining for the RCGP, and Chris now receiving his state pension, though fortunately not solely dependent on it. Ben has also been doing his placement year at GKN in Bristol – it seems to have gone well, but information on this is strictly on a need-to-know basis. Stefan and Chris have entered the gig economy doing a lot of playing for not a lot of money.

Department of Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs. Members of this House have travelled to other countries to compare approaches to leisure (in Antigua) and chocolate (in Switzerland). Ben went with two of his school friends Matthew and Kaelan on a three week fat-finding mission to the US in the summer – he planned it meticulously, and increased our carbon footprint for the year by over 35%.

Department for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport. We are proud of our record of achievement in all these areas. Judy has a new iphone which takes fantastic pictures, and we have watched more TV than at any time since 2010. Stefan has performed on cello or clarinet in more than a dozen venues, some of them in deprived areas, and has made a YouTube recording of his string quartet (though this has yet to be uploaded to YouTube - Stefan). Our record of sporting success speaks for itself.

Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs. We care passionately about the environment, which is why we have sometimes been out in it. As part of our ongoing commitment to keeping the environment around us, we have initiated a rolling programme of vegetarianisation of our diet, and we cycle or walk rather than drive. This makes little difference to the planet, but raises our SmUg index to 8.3. We continue to support the rural economy of Cornwall by planting things at Enys, but the returns are meagre. As part of our investment in the rural infrastructure, we bought a leaf-blower in November. It burned out on the second day, as did the replacement which B&Q sent. Instead of this shoddy Chinese product, we now have a reliable European one (*cf.* Department of International Trade).

Home Office. In response to widespread public concern, we redecorated and recarpeted our hall in February, demonstrating our unshakable resolve to tackle the difficult issues. To relieve overcrowding in vegetable patches, we are having some overgrown parts of our garden cleared.

Scottish Office. To underpin our one-nation policy, Chris and Ben took a long weekend in Edinburgh in June, where they enjoyed the beautiful city, local colour, haggis and hog roast. Ben was amazed that a city of such scale and culture was possible north of Birmingham. A Fathers' Day trip to Berwick-upon-Tweed reached out to voters in both countries.

Ministry of Truth. To be honest, we made this up (or did we?)

Merry Christmas and a peaceful and prosperous New Year from Chris, Judy Ben & Stefan!



Heads or tails?



What's in the box, Stefan?