

Public Whip is a self-funded non-partisan project by Julian Todd and Francis Irving established in 2003 because there was no publically accessible database of the the votes cast by MPs in Parliament.

Part of the software was donated to the UK charity mySociety to run theyworkforyou.com, the place for citizens to find out everything about their MP's, from speeches, to expense claims, to their register of interests.

Francis now works full time for mySociety on projects such as www.writetothem.com, petitions.pm.gov.uk, and www.whatdotheyknow.com

Recently, Julian has applied the Public Whip concept to the General Assembly and Security Council of the United Nations with the website www.undemocracy.com

Many party activists devote more of their time and money than either Julian or Francis in order to support the political party they believe in. The dedication of these activists sets an example to those of us who are not affiliated with a mainstream party, and who must find another way to be involved in the political process.

Democracy can only work when the public knows enough about what is going and is willing to raise important questions at a time when they cannot be ignored. Politicians and their parties have little interest in revealing how the system works. All they want are your votes with no strings attached. They will say that it is impossible to give assurances or consult with the people they represent about votes on specific issues, but it is not true.

There is a conflict which comes from the fact that your MP has to win two elections, one by their Party (known as a "selection"), and one by the people. Their loyalty is divided, and they will tend vote with the side that knows enough about what they are doing to hold them accountable.

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THE PUBLIC WHIP
www.publicwhip.org.uk

Information for voters available from the Public Whip

There will be a by-election on **22 May** for Crewe and Nantwich, the Parliamentary seat formerly represented by Gwyneth Dunwoody.

The candidates campaigning for your votes are:

- Nick Delves (Official Monster Raving Loony)
- Tamsin Dunwoody (Labour)
- Gemma Garrett (Independent)
- Mike Nattrass (UK Independence Party)
- David Roberts (English Democrats)
- Elizabeth Shenton (Liberal Democrats)
- Robert Smith (Green Party)
- Paul Thorogood (Cut Tax on Diesel and Petrol)
- Edward Timpson (Conservative)
- Mark Walklate (Independent)

Source: http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Crewe_and_Nantwich_by-election,_2008

In the last General Election in May 2005:

- Gwyneth Dunwoody (Labour) received 21,240 votes (48.8%)
- Eveleigh Moore-Dutton (Conservative) received 14,162 votes (32.6%),
- Paul Roberts (Liberal Democrat) received 8,083 votes (18.6%)

from voters in Crewe and Nantwich.

According to reports, the campaigns are largely running on:

- Post office closures
- Abolition of 10p tax rate
- Car parking at Leighton Hospital

However, MPs in Parliament are responsible for so much more than this

Compare the Parties in Parliament to your views

Instructions: If you are **against** the post office “modernisation programme”, circle the AGAINSTs and cross out the FORs in the in the first row. Repeat for the other 9 policy rows.

The party with the most circles and fewest crosses in its column most closely represents your opinion for this set of policies, according to the votes in Parliament..

An on-line version of this chart with links is available at:

www.publicwhip.org.uk/byelection

Policies	Labour	Gwyneth Dunwoody*	Liberal Democrat	Conservative
Post office “modernisation programme”	FOR	FOR	AGAINST	AGAINST
Invasion of Iraq in 2003 for weapons of mass destruction	for	FOR	AGAINST	FOR
To hold an official inquiry into the invasion of Iraq	AGAINST	AGAINST	FOR	FOR
MPs should continue to be subject to the freedom of information laws	mixed	no vote	against	mixed
Replace Trident with a new submarine-based nuclear weapons system	for	no vote	AGAINST	FOR
Compulsory biometric ID cards for all UK citizens, plus an identity register	FOR	against	AGAINST	AGAINST
Smoking ban in all public places with no exceptions	FOR	FOR	FOR	against
The right to protest near Parliament without police permission	AGAINST	against	FOR	mixed
Allow terrorist suspects to be detained without charge for up to 90 days	for	AGAINST	AGAINST	AGAINST
Hold a referendum on the Treaty of Lisbon (aka “European Constitution”)	against	FOR	mixed	FOR

* Gwyneth Dunwoody's votes are included for reference for comparison with the Labour vote
** Columns for Cut Tax, English Democrats, Green Party, Independent, Monster Raving and UKIP are omitted due to a lack of representation in Parliament (Bob Spink MP joined UKIP in April this year), so there is no voting record on which to base these measures

MPs often vote several times on the same political issue in different ways. For example, the Post Office “modernisation programme” was voted on 14 occasions in the past 6 years. The chart on the left takes the averages (FOR, for, mixed, against, AGAINST).

Below are some individual votes which may be of interest. When the majority of MPs vote one way for something it becomes the law.

Ask your candidates which way they would have voted on these and other questions had they been MPs at the time.

Personal taxation - Frank Field MP proposed that the Government must report on the impact of any change in personal taxation according to each income group.
On 25 June 2007, 50 Libdem MPs, 7 Labour MPs and only 1 Conservative MP voted for this; however 269 Labour MPs voted against it.

Post offices - Alan Duncan MP proposed that the compulsory closure of sub-post-offices should be suspended until the policy could be reassessed.
On 19 March 2008, 59 Libdem MPs, 19 Labour and 177 Conservative MPs voted for this; however 290 Labour MPs voted against it.

ID Cards – The Lords proposed that the Government should publish a 10 year cost and benefit estimate of the ID Cards system, including the costs so far.
On 13 February 2006, 180 Conservative MPs, 2 Labour MPs, 60 LibDem MPs voted for this; however 315 Labour MPs voted against it.

Foundation schools – John Grogan MP proposed that there should be a ballot of the parents before a community school could be changed to a foundation school.
On 23 May 2006, 68 Labour MPs and 53 Libdem MPs voted for this; however 161 Conservative MPs and 245 Labour MPs voted against it.

Energy – Alan Simpson MP proposed a renewable energy tariff which to pay consumers for electricity they generated and exported back into the national grid.
On 30 April 2008, 125 Conservative MPs, 37 Labour MPs and 35 LibDem MPs voted for this; however 252 Labour MPs voted against it.

Iraq – William Hague MP proposed that there be an independent inquiry into events leading up to the March 2003 invasion of Iraq and its aftermath.
On 25 March 2008, 180 Conservative MPs, 12 Labour MPs, 59 LibDem MPs voted for this; however 300 Labour MPs voted against it.

Drugs – Caroline Flint MP (minister for the Home Office) proposed that cannabis be reclassified from a class B to a class C drug.
On 29 October 2003, 140 Conservative MPs, 11 Labour MPs and 2 LibDem MPs voted against this; however 278 Labour MPs and 37 LibDem MPs voted for it.

Equal Rights – Kevin Brennan MP proposed that new equal rights regulations prohibiting discrimination on the basis of sexual orientation be approved
On 19 March 2007, 85 Conservative MPs, 10 Labour MPs and 4 LibDem MPs voted against this; however 250 Labour MPs and 29 LibDem MPs voted for it.