

John Woodcock

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Former MP for Barrow and Furness

Dear Resident -

When I was first elected as your Labour MP nine years ago, I never imagined I would be writing to you now urging you to vote Conservative. But as I stand down from the huge privilege of representing our area in the House of Commons, I find myself doing just that.

It is clear to me that only a vote for Simon Fell on 12 December will protect the vital shipyard jobs on which our community depends.

Like so many around here, I had been a Labour supporter all my life but the party I joined has been changed beyond recognition by its CND supporting leader, Jeremy Corbyn. **Mr Corbyn has opposed Trident his entire career and would relish the chance to scrap the Dreadnought programme if you help put him in Number Ten by voting for the Labour candidate in this general election.** That would destroy thousands of jobs on which families round here rely and have a devastating knock-on effect across the whole area.

In 2017, you re-elected me after I made clear I could never support as Prime Minister a man who always sides with Britain's enemies on the world stage and has corrupted the once patriotic Labour party in hateful racism and extremism. Mr Corbyn is simply unfit to be Prime Minister and would be a disaster for our community.

Unfortunately, the Labour candidate is Jeremy Corbyn's man in Barrow and Furness and is relishing the chance to make his leader prime minister. **Labour's candidate only joined the party to vote for Jeremy Corbyn as its leader and used to question the need for Trident renewal while I was fighting hard in Westminster to get that investment flowing into the area.**

Simon Fell is the man I trust to work with the government to keep the submarine programme on track here as your Member of Parliament. He is a truly decent individual who will make a dedicated and caring MP. I know he is determined to carry on our fight to improve transport links, invest in the town centre and keep up our momentum on making the new homes in the marina village a reality.

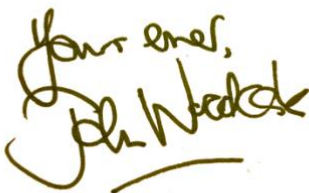
It feels strange to be urging you to back someone I have competed against in the previous two general elections and I know many with a similar Labour upbringing to me will share my qualms about voting Tory after a lifetime of backing the reds. I will be honest with you, this is not the choice I wanted the country to have in this election. I have disagreed with many of the decisions taken by the Conservative government during my time as your MP and that very much still stands.

Folk round here reluctantly leant the Tories their support in 1983 and elected a Conservative MP when Labour last had a leader in favour of scrapping the nuclear deterrent. We must do the same again now to protect the town and the many thousands of families who rely on the wages brought home from the yard.

I understand that some ex-Labour supporters here will be tempted to lend their support to the Liberal Democrats or the Brexit Party rather than putting their cross next to a Conservative candidate. But only Labour or the Tories can win here. **A vote for anyone other than Simon Fell risks helping Mr Corbyn into Downing Street. We cannot let that happen.**

It has been the privilege of my life representing you as your MP and my traditional Labour values still mean a great deal to me, so I hope you will understand that asking you to vote Conservative this time is not a decision I have taken lightly. But the interests of the area I served in parliament matter more than anything else.

I hope you will join me on 12 December in voting Simon Fell to stop Jeremy Corbyn destroying local jobs and putting our national security at risk.

A handwritten signature in brown ink that reads "Yours ever, John Woodcock". The signature is written in a cursive, slightly slanted style.

John Woodcock