

Rhion Jones  
Consultation Guru



**STAKEHOLDER  
ENGAGEMENT  
SUMMIT 2024**

Manchester — 8th October

# Stakeholder engagement at a time of political change

**8 October 2024**

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## About Rhion ...



- Founder of the Consultation Institute
- Joint author of ***The Art of Consultation*** (2008) and ***The Politics of Consultation*** (2018)
- Specialist in the law of consultation
- As ***Consultation GuRU***, adviser to many organisations  
.... ...including Tractivity



# To what extent are we engaged with 'political' stakeholders?

- 80%+ of last years' attendees were from organisations directly impacted by national and/or local politics
- Or concerned with issues affected by public policy.
- Few of us are unaffected.





# Everyone wants to be ...

## ... the CHANGE candidate



**Be the change!**  
Explore Inspire Discover Lead







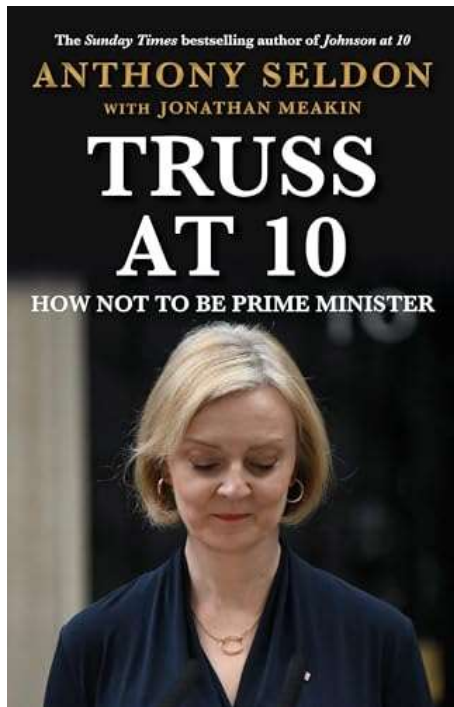
“...plus ça change, ....

... plus  
c'est la  
même  
chose ...”





In reality, the British public like the idea of change – provided it is not too painful!



*“When we’ve tried it, we didn’t like it...”*

***“Are too many of us stakeholders in the status-quo?”***



# Lasting change is seldom with a fanfare – more imperceptible



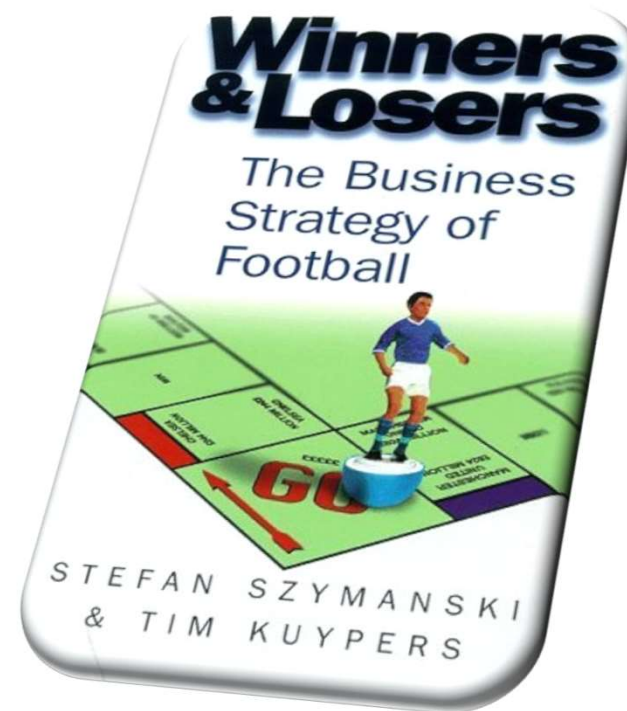
This is a country that has become used to things being announced but never done ....

This is how lasting change happens. It requires hundreds of policy choices, across different departments and layers of government, all consistently pointing in the same direction



# Thinking about 'change'

- **Good** change  
... and **Bad** change







# Thinking about 'change'

- ***Good*** change ... and ***Bad*** change
- ***Well-managed***-change and ***Poorly-managed*** ..





# Thinking about 'change'

- ***Good*** change ... and ***Bad*** change
- ***Well-managed***-change and ***Poorly-managed*** ...
- ***Unexpected*** change





**Not just political change but  
'political turbulence'**



**Unpredictable changes  
in pressure or velocity**



# Not just political change but 'political turbulence'

- ***Changes of policy***
- ***Changes of personnel***
- ***Changes of resources***
- ***Changes of process***





# Not just political change but 'political turbulence'

- *Changes of policy*

**Exams U-turn:  
Williamson  
caves in after**

**Two years,  
43 U-turns  
... how PM  
has caved  
over and  
again**

EXCLUSIVE

**NHS in talks on  
jabs U-turn - to  
save 70,000  
staff from sack**

» Government 'actively' considering a pause to mandatory Covid vaccines for NHS

**Labour U-turn on freebies**



# Not just political change but 'political turbulence'

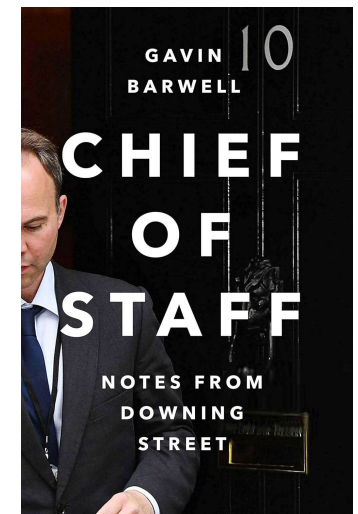
- *Changes of policy*
- *Changes of personnel*

16 in 13 years ?

...it is "very good public policy to have that level of change"

...because you don't get the chance to encourage change in this country.

Lord Gavin Barwell





# Not just political change but 'political turbulence'

- ***Changes of policy***
- ***Changes of personnel***
- ***Changes of resources***

18 Councils in receipt of EFS  
(Exceptional Financial Support)  
for 2024/2025

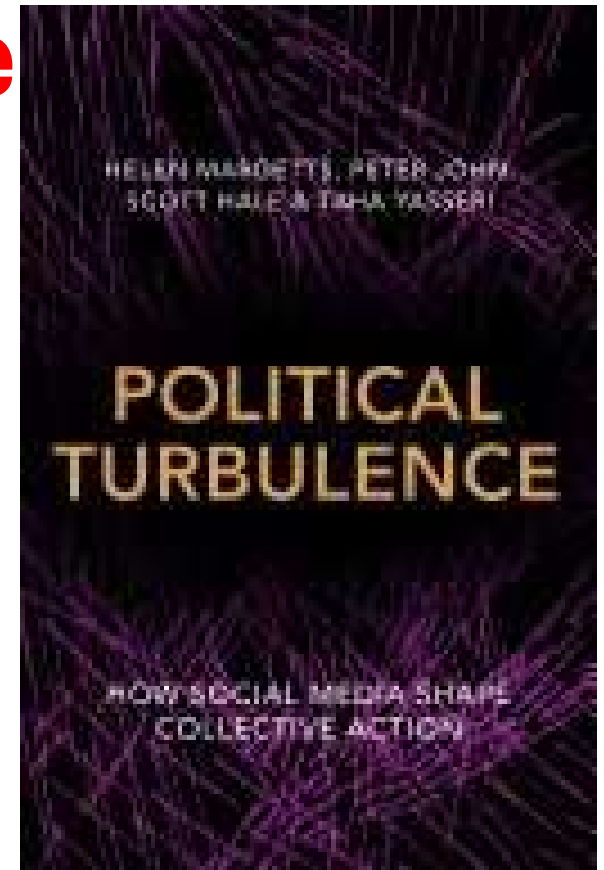




# Not just political change but 'political turbulence'

- *Changes of policy*
- *Changes of personnel*
- *Changes of resources*
- *Changes of process*

Social media reduces the transaction cost of political participation





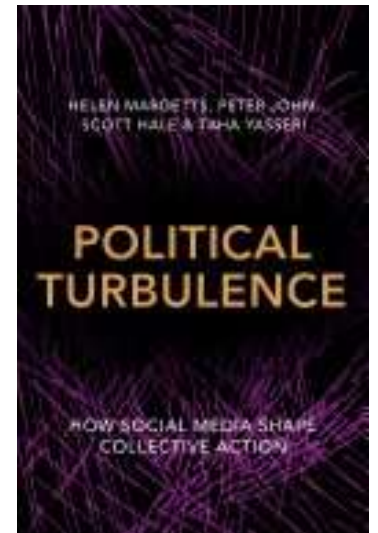


# Not just political change but 'political turbulence'

## Chaos theory



*Does the flap of a butterfly's wings in Brazil set off a tornado in Texas?*



The 'new ecology of mobilisation' means that small seemingly unimportant acts of participation can gather momentum and become mainstream very rapidly ....!



# Implications for stakeholder management

- *Agile agendas*
- *Rapid befriending*
- *Strategic focus*
- *Anticipatory skills*





# Implications for stakeholder management

## *Agile agendas*

*The subject-matter changes possibly very suddenly.*





# Implications for stakeholder management

## *Rapid befriending*

*Little time to get to build key relationships gradually*



POLITICS

### It's all change after shock election results





# Implications for stakeholder management

## *Strategic focus*

*Re-grouping to target upon most effective influence*





# Implications for stakeholder management

## *Anticipatory skills*

*Sufficient know-how and  
experience to forecast change*





***In SUMMARY ...***

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# **Stakeholder management is so much about anticipation**

- Part of the job is 'horizon-scanning'
- Providing early-warning
- Forecasting
- Assessing likelihood etc

**Think externally**

***Developing a stakeholder-conscious culture***

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