

CONNECT

The Problem In Our Garden

3085 SA

There's a problem in OUR garden - and I'm not talking Japanese Knotweed!

- 1 I was taken with the idea - described in a previous CONNECT article - that prompts people to see things in a completely different way. It suggested looking through the telescope from the other end. The view's very different!

One of the most useful forms of communication - and certainly when it comes to explaining and understanding a situation, which otherwise might be difficult - is the use of analogies. These are often perfect vehicles to see things in a particular way - maybe a completely different way. With that idea in mind, I wanted to look at the problem we have in *OUR garden*.



- 2 Many of us have had that knock on the door from an enthusiastic looking gent - with a happy smile - telling us that he's been speaking with our neighbours about their overgrown shrubs and gardens generally. He goes on to explain that he would like to quote for doing a garden tidy for us.

Well, for those of us with limited time - even limited ability perhaps - the idea of having an enthusiastic person come in and deal with all the things in our garden - needing taking care of - is a very attractive idea.

- 3 So, after taking a look at the garden and explaining what we would like done, we say thank you - to the nice looking chap - and he begins getting the place tidy and under control.

The thing is, whilst we get off to a good start with a clear meeting of minds - or so we think - we are puzzled by the fact that our newly appointed

gardening contractor seems to be drifting off mission. Our new gardening contractor starts doing things we hadn't expected, wanted or asked for.

What he is doing however appears valuable and we appreciate the difference being made. Due to this, we decide not to say anything and remain quiet about our questioning thoughts. Among those thoughts however is one which suggests, surely, we are going to get asked to pay more money. Well, so much more than the original brief is being done now and it would only be fair to pay more for the work – if we are happy – which we generally are at the moment.

With the passing of time, we and the new gardening contractor settle down into a regular working routine. We now have an appointed gardening contractor looking after all those things we are far too busy - and frankly quite unable - to deal with ourselves. He turns up, does his thing and disappears until the next visit. We barely hear from him except for his account and payment reminder once a month. In the process, an extra strain has been placed on our household budget to pay for this service – ever expanding as it is.

- 4 Some months into this new arrangement with our contractor we notice that the contractor is again starting to mission drift. The contractor starts moving things around in our garden. Pots get moved from the patio to another more obscure place in the garden. Our trusty old bench which has been in the family for years has been moved to the far end of the lawn and placed under the willow tree at the corner of our plot. We weren't happy with that. We regarded the bench as precious to us and wanted it left untouched.

Whilst these things are happening – in plain sight and without any mention of a plan or idea being shared – our contractor remains very happy and oblivious to our concern for what he's doing on his own account.

So many people are probably just like us – and that is exactly how we reasoned it – that when things are working reasonably well overall – it's perhaps best and easier, just to go along. **Go Along to Get Along** as they say. It never felt totally comfortable though – I must say. And as for our account – our contractor was lumping on his charges!

- 5 The following spring our gardening contractor suggested that what we needed in the garden was a pond. We specifically decided we never wanted a pond in the garden for reasons we couldn't possibly explain to anyone – far too embarrassing given what happened to our neighbour. The funny thing is, our contractor had very definite views about our having a pond, telling us about all the benefits it would provide – saying it was good for nature etc etc.

That said, we wanted a particular bird feeder, to attract wildlife but the contractor had other ideas. Extraordinary!

Well, we are busy people ourselves and far too busy to argue the toss with the contractor who seemed so convincing and capable. By the end of the spring, we had the most enormous *bloody* pond you could imagine. It was

finished whilst we were away and didn't resemble too closely the plan we had been coerced - shall I say - into agreeing before our departure. The added water feature was another complete surprise to be honest. It was a grandiose scheme - looking back - and one which should never have been embarked upon.

6 Pond in place it was some months later we ran into our next major issue.

Now, we do have rather a large plot and it made sense for the contractor to store some of his tools in our garden shed. It felt a bit like a takeover as it turned out but there seemed nothing we could do about it now. Our shed wasn't the newest of sheds to be fair and we had intended to replace it at some point. With the gardening budget now increasing month on month, it hadn't occurred to us to make it a priority. The thing is, now our not so new gardening contractor thought that replacement WAS a priority - and HIS priority - because of what he wanted. He decided on his own account - without one thought for running the idea past us - to replace it with something twice as large and charge it to our account.

There was not one word said about this idea before the panels just turned up one day - along with all the bits that go along with erecting a monster of a shed. There was not one vote on it!

There only ever seemed to be one narrative - HIS. Whatever we had to say on a matter there was always an argument - HIS - which trumped our own. It was unnerving, unsettling and felt almost dictatorial at times.

It was beginning to feel - more than ever - that the garden wasn't so much *our* garden any more - but the contractor's. Whatever the contractor wanted to do - he did - and we paid for it. It wasn't as if we were part of the decision-making process either - and we felt that strongly! He came up with the plan - for *OUR* garden - and *WE* paid for it.

7 We would ask ourselves - how on earth did we allow ourselves to get into this position? There seemed no real choice at the time - we supposed - and we didn't expect to be taken advantage of - by someone we were paying!

Well, things had come to a point now and we both felt that matters needed to be reined in somewhat. The difficulty though had been made far more challenging than it should have been. Before things started going out of line completely and causing us real concern - we had been lulled into thinking that things would be OK going forward. In a moment of weakness, I think it was, we agreed to enter an on-going contract with our gardening contractor which - according to our lawyer - was tricky to separate ourselves from. But not impossible - as it turns out.

8 Now and for the moment - this is where this story ends.

I confess that it has all been **total fiction** up to this point and told for the reason of creating an analogy which reflects real life as it is today. I'll explain.

As a people, we are all very busy – and far too busy to take care of the BIG things in life – *our gardens* included sometimes. Additionally, few of us are capable of dealing with the BIG things in life simply because we are not trained to do so. The answer for all of us is – naturally to appoint a contractor to do this BIG stuff for us. But that is not to say, that is where the matter ends.

- 9 It starts perhaps, with a smiley faced gent arriving at the door selling himself. He's NOT a gardening contractor but confesses to being the prospective MP for our local constituency. He talks a good talk and given the previous experience with the last one who got in, we decide to give him a go.

Well, the election comes about and our prospective MP becomes our elected MP. But, just like our self-propelled gardening contractor – this MP now has his own ideas.

In fairness, the problem started before the election of our *gardening* MP. We did not set out with our prospective MP, what it is we need doing – in *OUR garden*. The smiley gent just tells us – reminds us - how bad the current incumbent has been and what he will do – summarised on two sides of an A4 flyer – what he will do better.

If only that was enough – and we could believe him AND trust him!

From the get-go then, things go off the rails. Our contracted *gardening* MP starts a mission drift – along with his colleagues. Things we didn't want or didn't agree to, get done and we get to pay for it regardless. We don't get invited to a discussion at any point and don't get asked for our views. That is, our views on what we might want to see in our *garden* – or what we don't want to see. Our contracted *gardening* MP seems to – or rather actually does - decide what he wants and what he doesn't want – and gets on with it.

- 10 It wouldn't be so bad if at some point we could sit down with our contracted *gardening* MP with a view to pulling him back into line. But like in the story above – we have, in a moment of weakness, agreed to have this contracted *gardening* MP remain on contract for a period up to 5yrs. We ask ourselves – why – how could we possibly allow this to happen – knowing how these people behave? I mean, it's not as if these people don't have a track record.

- 11 And so it is.

As a People, we have all contracted - in this rather antiquated way – with a tiny group of individuals [650 in fact] to look after us and *OUR gardens*. We thought we could believe what they told us and we trusted them to be as good as their word. How silly!

Having handed over the reins to them, they go about the work which we pay them to do – like *gardening* contractors - as if we did not matter in the least. In fact, they behave as if the *garden* they are looking after is really *THEIR garden* and we are just an inconvenient obstacle to getting what they want when they want it. Our *ONLY* role is to award them a contract every 5yrs.

Does this seem curious to you – like it does to me?

- 12 The thing is, we are all tied into this contract and form of doing things – aren't we? Or are we? What if someone were to say – OK enough, we are going to have a change.

Now the interesting thing is – if someone were to say that - what possible change could we all have – I wonder? Who knows?

Do we need some form of People's Council perhaps – made up of people – who stand between the People and the paid *gardening* contractor MPs? It might be their role to ensure the *gardening* contractor MPs actually do what the People want – rather than what they want.

Such a People's Council might be the first institution to weed out the contracted *gardening* MPs who are not fit for the role. Instead of an MP's colleagues having the role of policing their colleagues' behaviour– a role they are arguably incapable of conducting without bias, as we know – that role would fall under the remit of the People's Council, say.

Well, the idea of a People's Council might well have merit – of course – and could in theory take the place of the House of Lords. But what I do know however – and know for sure - is that unless some people sit down to discuss this topic, nothing WILL change and we will be suffering under these elected *gardening* contractors for the rest of the millennium and beyond.

And that - for me at least - is not a happy thought.

- 13 So here we conclude.
The *gardening* analogy is not too different from the reality I have very briefly and simply described above. These *gardening* MPs have become untouchable, unreachable and pretty much unimpeachable.
And that is never right.

One only has to consider for a moment, all the things that are not right in our parliamentary system – and list all the unanswered questions and oddities about what is happening in our world currently - to reach the one and only conclusion possible.

That being that our *gardening* contractor MPs are not serving us.
They are clearly serving themselves and the People are paying.

I hope it has helped to underline the problem we all have in this *garden* of ours – our country by another name. These *gardening* MPs do work for us in *theory* - and are certainly paid by us. The Client decides – the Contactor does – The Client pays. That is the age-old order of things.

And in working for us it is time that we – the Client – need to set out clearly what it is we want and don't want. Further, if there is any variation along the way, then we the Client – through a People Council maybe – would become fully engaged in any new determinations.

And those determinations reached by such a council would then be relayed to the contractor for the contractor to perform as directed.

As the Magna Carta makes clear – written about tangentially in another article in CONNECT: [A New Magna Charter?](#) : M-3085 SB
The article describes that nothing in the kingdom can be placed above the sovereignty of the people. In other words, the People are and shall remain ABOVE kings and parliament and nothing shall change that!
It means that the People are not subordinate – and there to be controlled. Instead, the People are superior – and stand above the gardeners!
Sorry Monty!

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