

Boris Johnson

Alexander Boris de Pfeffel Johnson (/ˈfɛfəl/^[6] born 19 June 1964) is a British politician and writer serving as Prime Minister of the United Kingdom and Leader of the Conservative Party since July 2019. He was Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs from 2016 to 2018 and Mayor of London from 2008 to 2016. Johnson has been Member of Parliament (MP) for Uxbridge and South Ruislip since 2015 and was previously MP for Henley from 2001 to 2008. He has been described as adhering to the ideology of one-nation and national conservatism.^[7]

Johnson was educated at Eton College and studied Classics at Balliol College, Oxford. He was elected President of the Oxford Union in 1986. In 1989, he became the Brussels correspondent, and later political columnist, for The Daily Telegraph, where his articles exerted a strong Eurosceptic influence on the British right. He was editor of The Spectator magazine from 1999 to 2005. After being elected to Parliament in 2001, Johnson was a shadow minister under Conservative leaders Michael Howard and David Cameron. In 2008, he was elected Mayor of London and resigned from the House of Commons; he was re-elected as mayor in 2012. During his mayoralty, Johnson oversaw the 2012 Summer Olympics and the cycle hire scheme, both initiated by his predecessor, along with introducing the New Routemaster buses, the Night Tube, and the Thames cable car and promoting the Garden Bridge. He also banned alcohol consumption on much of London's public transport.

In the 2015 election, Johnson was elected MP for Uxbridge and South Ruislip. The following year, he did not seek re-election as mayor; he became a

The Right Honourable
Boris Johnson
MP



Official portrait, 2019

Prime Minister of the United Kingdom

Incumbent

Assumed office
24 July 2019

Monarch Elizabeth II

First Secretary Dominic Raab

Preceded by Theresa May

Leader of the Conservative Party
Incumbent

Assumed office
23 July 2019

prominent figure in the successful [Vote Leave](#) campaign for [Brexit](#) in the [2016 EU membership referendum](#). He was appointed foreign secretary by [Theresa May](#) after the referendum; he resigned the position two years later in protest at May's approach to [Brexit](#) and the [Chequers Agreement](#). After May resigned in 2019, he was elected [Conservative leader](#) and appointed prime minister. His [September 2019 prorogation of Parliament](#) was ruled unlawful by the [Supreme Court](#).^[b] In the [2019 election](#), Johnson led the [Conservative Party](#) to its biggest parliamentary victory since [1987](#), winning 43.6% of the vote – the largest share of any party since [1979](#). The United Kingdom withdrew from the EU under the terms of a revised [Brexit withdrawal agreement](#), entering into a transition period and [trade negotiations](#) leading to the [EU–UK Trade and Cooperation Agreement](#). Johnson has led the United Kingdom's ongoing [response to the COVID-19 pandemic](#).^[8]

Johnson is considered a controversial figure in UK politics.^{[9][10]} Supporters have praised him as humorous and entertaining,^[11] with an appeal stretching beyond traditional Conservative voters.^{[12][13]} Conversely, his critics have accused him of elitism, cronyism, and bigotry.^{[14][15][16]} His actions that are viewed by some as pragmatic^[17] tend to be viewed by opponents as opportunistic.^[18]

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Preceded by	Theresa May
Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs	
In office	
13 July 2016 – 9 July 2018	
Prime Minister	Theresa May
Preceded by	Philip Hammond
Succeeded by	Jeremy Hunt
Mayor of London	
In office	
3 May 2008 – 9 May 2016	
Preceded by	Ken Livingstone
Succeeded by	Sadiq Khan
Member of Parliament for Uxbridge and South Ruislip	
Incumbent	
Assumed office	
7 May 2015	
Preceded by	John Randall
Majority	7,210 (15.0%) ^[1]
Member of Parliament for Henley	
In office	
7 June 2001 – 4 June 2008	
Preceded by	Michael Heseltine
Succeeded by	John Howell
Personal details	
Born	Alexander Boris de Pfeffel Johnson <div> <div>19 June 1964</div> <div>New York City, US</div> </div>
Citizenship	 United Kingdom <div> <div> United States</div> <div>(1964–2016)^[2]</div> </div>
Political party	Conservative

<p><u>Second term</u></p> <p>Mayor of London</p> <p><u>Mayoral election: 2007–2008</u></p> <p><u>First term: 2008–2012</u></p> <p><u>Policies</u></p> <p><u>Relations with police, finance, and the media</u></p> <p><u>Re-election campaign</u></p> <p><u>Second term: 2012–2016</u></p> <p>Return to Parliament</p> <p><u>Brexit campaign: 2015–2016</u></p> <p><u>Foreign Secretary: 2016–2018</u></p> <p><u>Return to the backbenches: 2018–2019</u></p> <p><u>Journalism</u></p> <p><u>2019 Conservative Party leadership election</u></p> <p>Prime Minister of the United Kingdom</p> <p><u>First Ministry (July–December 2019)</u></p> <p><u>Brexit policy</u></p> <p><u>First Cabinet</u></p> <p><u>Spending plans</u></p> <p><u>Foreign policy</u></p> <p><u>Loss of working majority</u></p> <p><u>2019 general election</u></p> <p><u>Second Ministry (December 2019–present)</u></p> <p><u>COVID-19 pandemic</u></p> <p><u>Hong Kong</u></p> <p><u>UK–EU trade negotiation</u></p> <p><u>Departure of Dominic Cummings and Lee Cain</u></p> <p><u>Legislative agenda</u></p> <p>Political positions and ideology</p> <p><u>Environmentalism</u></p> <p><u>Immigration and the European Union</u></p> <p><u>Unionism and devolution</u></p> <p>Public persona</p>	<p>Spouse(s)</p> <p><u>Allegra Mostyn-Owen</u> (<u>m.</u> 1987–1993)</p> <p><u>Marina Wheeler</u> (<u>m.</u> 1993; <u>div.</u> 2020)</p> <p><u>Carrie Symonds</u> (<u>m.</u> 2021)</p> <p>Children</p> <p>At least 6^[a]</p> <p>Parents</p> <p><u>Stanley Johnson</u></p> <p><u>Charlotte Fawcett</u></p> <p>Relatives</p> <p><u>Rachel Johnson</u> (sister)</p> <p><u>Jo Johnson</u> (brother)</p> <p><u>Julia Johnson</u> (half-sister)</p> <p><u>James Fawcett</u> (grandfather)</p> <p><u>Edmund Fawcett</u> (uncle)</p> <p><u>Ali Kemal</u> (great grandfather)</p> <p><u>Elias Avery Lowe</u> (great grandfather)</p> <p><u>Helen Tracy Lowe-Porter</u> (great grandmother)</p> <p>Residence</p> <p><u>10 Downing Street</u></p> <p>Education</p> <p><u>Eton College</u></p> <p>Alma mater</p> <p><u>Balliol College, Oxford</u></p> <p>Signature</p> <p></p> <p>Website</p> <p><u>Boris Johnson website</u> (<u>http://www.</u></p>
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Early life

Childhood

Alexander Boris de Pfeffel Johnson was born on 19 June 1964 in the Upper East Side of Manhattan, New York City,^{[19][20]} to 23-year-old Stanley Johnson, then studying economics at Columbia University,^[21] and 22-year-old Charlotte Fawcett,^[22] an artist from a family of liberal intellectuals. Johnson's parents had married in 1963 before moving to the US.^[23] In September 1964, they returned to their native England, so that Charlotte could study at the University of Oxford,^[24] during this time, she lived with her son in Summertown, a suburb of Oxford, and in 1965 she gave birth to a daughter, Rachel.^[25] In July 1965, the family moved to Crouch End in north London,^[26] and in February 1966 they relocated to Washington, D.C., where Stanley had gained employment with the World Bank.^[27] A third child, Leo, was born in September 1967.^[28] Stanley then gained employment with a policy panel on population control, and in June moved the family to Norwalk, Connecticut.^[29]



Ashdown House preparatory school, East Sussex, attended by Johnson from 1975 to 1977

In 1969, the family returned to England and settled into West Nethercote Farm, near Winsford in Somerset, Stanley's remote family home on Exmoor in the West Country.^[30] There, Johnson gained his first experiences of fox hunting.^[31] Stanley was regularly absent from Nethercote, leaving Johnson to be raised largely by his mother, assisted by au pairs.^[32] As a child, Johnson was quiet and studious^[26] and suffered from deafness, resulting in several operations to insert grommets into his ears.^[33] He and his siblings were encouraged to engage in highbrow activities from a young age,^[34] with high achievement being greatly valued;

Johnson's earliest recorded ambition was to be "world king".^[35] Having few or no friends other than their siblings, the children became very close.^[36]

In late 1969, the family relocated to Maida Vale in West London, while Stanley began post-graduate research at the London School of Economics.^[37] In 1970, Charlotte and the children briefly returned to Nethercote, where Johnson attended Winsford Village School, before returning to London to settle in Primrose Hill,^[38] where they were educated at Primrose Hill Primary School.^[39] A fourth child and third son, Joseph, was born in late 1971.^[40]

After Stanley secured employment at the European Commission, he moved his family in April 1973 to Uccle, Brussels, where Johnson attended the European School, Brussels I and learnt to speak French.^{[41][42]} Charlotte suffered a nervous breakdown and was hospitalised with clinical depression, after which in 1975 Johnson and his siblings were sent back to England to attend Ashdown House, a preparatory boarding school in East Sussex.^[43] There, he developed a love of rugby and excelled at Ancient Greek and Latin,^[44] but was appalled at the teachers' use of corporal punishment.^[45] Meanwhile, in December 1978 his parents' relationship broke down; they divorced in 1980,^[46] and Charlotte moved into a flat in Notting Hill, west London, where she was joined by her children for much of their time.^[47]

Eton and Oxford: 1977–1987

Johnson gained a King's Scholarship to study at Eton College, the elite independent boarding school near Windsor in Berkshire.^[49] Arriving in the autumn term of 1977,^[50] he

As a kid I was extremely spotty, extremely nerdy and horribly swotty. My idea of a really good time was to travel across London on the tube to visit the British Museum.

—Boris Johnson^[48]

began using his middle name Boris rather than his first name Alex,^[51]

and developed "the eccentric English persona" for which he became famous.^[52] He abandoned his mother's Catholicism and became an Anglican, joining the Church of England.^[53] School reports complained about his idleness, complacency and lateness,^[54] but he was popular and well known at Eton.^[52] His friends were largely from the wealthy upper-middle and upper classes, his best friends then being Darius Guppy and Charles Spencer, both of whom later accompanied him to the University of Oxford and remained friends into adulthood.^[55] Johnson excelled in English and Classics, winning prizes in both,^[56] and became secretary of the school debating society,^[57] and editor of the school newspaper, *The Eton College Chronicle*.^[58] In late 1981, he was elected a member of *Pop*,^[59] the small, self-selecting elite and glamorous group of prefects. It was later in Johnson's career a point of rivalry with David Cameron, who had failed to enter *Pop*. On leaving Eton, Johnson went on a gap year to Australia, where he taught English and Latin at Timbertop, an Outward Bound-inspired campus of Geelong Grammar, an elite independent boarding school.^{[60][61][62]}



Johnson read Classics at Balliol College, Oxford.

Johnson won a scholarship to read Literae Humaniores at Balliol College, Oxford, a four-year course in the study of the Classics, ancient literature and classical philosophy.^[63] Matriculating at the university in late 1983,^[64] he was one of a generation of Oxford undergraduates who were later to dominate British politics and media in the second decade of the 21st century; among them David Cameron, William Hague, Michael Gove, Jeremy Hunt and Nick Boles all went on to become senior Conservative Party politicians.^[65] To his later regret, he joined the Old Etonian-dominated Bullingdon Club, an exclusive

drinking society notorious for acts of vandalism on host premises.^{[66][67][68]} Many years later, a group photograph including himself and Cameron in Bullingdon Club formal dress was the cause of much negative press coverage. He entered into a relationship with Allegra Mostyn-Owen, cover girl for *Tatler* magazine and daughter of Christie's Education chairman William Mostyn-Owen. She was a glamorous and popular fellow student from his own social background; they became engaged while at university.^[69]

Johnson was popular and well known at Oxford.^[70] Alongside Guppy, he co-edited the university's satirical magazine *Tributary*.^[71] In 1984, Johnson was elected secretary of the Oxford Union,^[72] and campaigned unsuccessfully for the career-enhancing and important position of Union President.^[73] In 1986, Johnson ran successfully for president,^[74] but

his term was not particularly distinguished or memorable^[75] and questions were raised regarding his competence and seriousness.^[76] Finally, Johnson was awarded an upper second-class degree,^{[77][78]} and was deeply unhappy that he did not receive a first.^[79]

Early career

The Times and *The Daily Telegraph*: 1987–1994

In September 1987, Johnson and Mostyn-Owen were married in West Felton, Shropshire, accompanied by a duet for violin and viola *Allegra e Boris*^[81] specially commissioned for the wedding from Hans Werner Henze.^[82] After a honeymoon in Egypt, they settled in West Kensington, West London,^[83] when he secured work for a management consultancy company, L.E.K. Consulting, but resigned after a week.^[84] Through family connections, in late 1987 he began work as a graduate trainee at *The Times*.^[85] Scandal erupted when Johnson wrote an article on the archaeological discovery of King Edward II's palace for the newspaper, having invented a quote for the article which he falsely attributed to the historian Colin Lucas, his godfather. After the editor Charles Wilson learnt of the matter, Johnson was dismissed.^[86]

I saw the whole [European Union] change. It was a wonderful time to be there. The Berlin Wall fell and the French and Germans had to decide how they were going to respond to this event, and what was Europe going to become, and there was this fantastic pressure to create a single polity, to create an answer to the historic German problem, and this produced the most fantastic strains in the Conservative Party, so everything I wrote from Brussels, I found was sort of chucking these rocks over the garden wall and I listened to this amazing crash from the greenhouse next door over in England as everything I wrote from Brussels was having this amazing, explosive effect on the Tory party, and it really gave me this I suppose rather weird sense of power.

–Boris Johnson^[80]

Johnson secured employment on the leader-writing desk of *The Daily Telegraph*, having met its editor, Max Hastings, during his Oxford University Union presidency.^[87] His articles appealed to the newspaper's conservative, middle-class, middle-aged "Middle England" readership,^[88] and were known for their distinctive literary style, replete with old-fashioned words and phrases and for regularly referring to the readership as "my friends".^[89] In early 1989, Johnson was appointed to the newspaper's Brussels bureau to report on the European Commission,^[90] remaining in the post until 1994.^[91] A strong critic of the integrationist Commission President Jacques Delors, he established himself as one of the city's few Eurosceptic journalists.^[92] He wrote articles about euromyths such as the EU wanting to ban prawn cocktail crisps and British sausages and standardise condom sizes because Italians had smaller penises.^[93] Many of his fellow journalists there

were critical of his articles, opining that they often contained lies designed to discredit the commission.^[94] The Europhile Conservative politician Chris Patten later stated that, at that time, Johnson was "one of the greatest exponents of fake journalism".^[91]

Johnson biographer Andrew Gimson believed that these articles made him "one of [Euro scepticism's] most famous exponents".^[80] According to later biographer Sonia Purnell – who was Johnson's Brussels deputy^[91] – he helped make Euro scepticism "an attractive and emotionally resonant cause for the Right", whereas previously it had been associated with the British Left.^[95] Johnson's articles established him as the favourite journalist of the Conservative Prime Minister Margaret Thatcher,^[96] but her successor, the Europhile John Major, was annoyed by Johnson and spent much time attempting to refute what he said.^[97] Johnson's articles exacerbated tensions between the Conservative Party's Euro sceptic and Europhile factions. As a result, he earned the mistrust of many party members.^[98] His writings were also a key influence on the emergence of the EU-opposing UK Independence Party (UKIP) in the early 1990s.^[95] The proprietor of the *Telegraph* at the time, Conrad Black, said Johnson "was such an effective correspondent for us in Brussels that he greatly influenced British opinion on this country's relations with Europe."^[99]

In February 1990, Johnson's wife Allegra left him; after several attempts at reconciliation, their marriage ended in April 1993.^{[100][101]} He then entered a relationship with a childhood friend, Marina Wheeler, who had moved to Brussels in 1990,^[102] and in May 1993, they were married at Horsham in Sussex,^[103] soon after which Marina gave birth to a daughter.^[104] Johnson and his new wife settled in Islington, North London,^[105] an area known as the home of the left-liberal intelligentsia. Under the influence of this *milieu* and of his wife and Johnson moved in a more liberal direction on issues like climate change, LGBT rights and race relations.^[106] Whilst in Islington, the couple had three further children, all given the surname of Johnson-Wheeler,^[107] who were sent to the local Canonbury Primary School and then to private secondary schools.^[108] Devoting much time to his children, Johnson wrote a book of verse, *Perils of the Pushy Parents – A Cautionary Tale*, which was published to largely poor reviews.^[109]

Political columnist: 1994–1999

Back in London, Hastings turned down Johnson's request to become a war reporter,^[110] instead promoting him to the position of assistant editor and chief political columnist.^[111] Johnson's column received praise for being ideologically eclectic and distinctively written, and earned him a Commentator of the Year Award at the *What the Papers Say* awards.^[112] His writing style was condemned by some critics as bigotry; in various

columns he used the words "piccannies" and "watermelon smiles" when referring to Africans, championed European colonialism in Uganda^{[113][114][115]} and referred to gay men as "tank-topped bumboys".^[116]

Contemplating a political career, in 1993 Johnson outlined his desire to stand as a Conservative candidate to be a Member of the European Parliament (MEP) in the 1994 European Parliament elections. Andrew Mitchell convinced Major not to veto Johnson's candidacy, but Johnson could not find a constituency.^[117] He subsequently turned his attention to obtaining a seat in the UK House of Commons. After being rejected as Conservative candidate for Holborn and St. Pancras, he was selected as the party's candidate for Clwyd South in north Wales, at that time a Labour Party safe seat. Spending six weeks campaigning, he attained 9,091 votes (23%) in the 1997 general election, losing to the Labour candidate.^[118]



Conservative Prime Minister John Major disliked Johnson and considered vetoing his candidacy.

Scandal erupted in June 1995 when a recording of a 1990 telephone conversation between Johnson and his friend Darius Guppy was made public.^[119] In the conversation, Guppy said that his criminal activities involving insurance fraud were being investigated by *News of the World* journalist Stuart Collier, and he asked Johnson to provide him with Collier's private address, seeking to have the latter beaten to the extent of "a couple of black eyes and a cracked rib or something like that". Johnson agreed to supply the information, although he expressed concern that he would be associated with the attack.^[119] When the phone conversation was published in 1995, Johnson stated that ultimately he had not obliged Guppy's request. Hastings reprimanded Johnson but did not dismiss him.^[119]

Johnson was given a regular column in *The Spectator*, sister publication to *The Daily Telegraph*, which attracted mixed reviews and was often thought rushed.^[120] In 1999, he was also given a column reviewing new cars in the magazine *GQ*.^[121] His behaviour regularly disgruntled his editors; those at *GQ* were frustrated by the large number of parking fines that Johnson acquired while testing cars,^[116] whilst at *The Telegraph* and *The Spectator* he was consistently late in delivering his copy, forcing many staff to stay late to accommodate him; some related that if they went ahead and published without his work included, he would get angry and shout at them with expletives.^[122]

Johnson's appearance on an April 1998 episode of the BBC's satirical current affairs show *Have I Got News for You* brought him national fame.^[123] He was invited back on to later episodes, including as a guest presenter; for his 2003 appearance, Johnson received a nomination for the BAFTA Television Award for Best Entertainment

Performance.^{[124][125]} After these appearances, he came to be recognised on the street by the public, and was invited to appear on other television shows, such as *Top Gear*, *Parkinson*, *Breakfast with Frost*, and the political show *Question Time*.^[126]

***The Spectator* and MP for Henley: 1999–2008**

In July 1999, Conrad Black offered Johnson the editorship of *The Spectator* on the condition he abandoned his parliamentary aspirations; Johnson agreed.^[127] While retaining *The Spectator's* traditional right-wing bent, Johnson welcomed contributions from leftist writers and cartoonists.^[128] Under Johnson's editorship, the magazine's circulation grew by 10% to 62,000 and it began to turn a profit.^[129] His editorship also drew criticism; some opined that under him *The Spectator* avoided serious issues,^[130] while colleagues became annoyed that he was regularly absent from the office, meetings, and events.^[131] He gained a reputation as a poor political pundit as a result of incorrect political predictions made in the magazine,^[130] and was strongly criticised – including by his father-in-law Charles Wheeler – for allowing *Spectator* columnist Taki Theodoracopulos to publish racist and antisemitic language in the magazine.^{[132][133]}

Journalist Charlotte Edwardes alleged in 2019 that Johnson had squeezed her thigh at a private lunch in the offices of the *Spectator* in 1999 and that another woman had told her that he had done the same to her. A Downing Street spokesman denied the allegation.^[134]

In 2004, Johnson published an editorial in *The Spectator* after the murder of Ken Bigley suggesting that Liverpudlians were wallowing in their victim status and also "hooked on grief" over the Hillsborough disaster, which Johnson partly blamed on "drunken fans".^{[135][136]} In an appendix added to a later edition of his 2005 book about the Roman empire, *The Dream of Rome*, Johnson was criticised for arguing Islam has caused the Muslim world to be "literally centuries behind" the West.^[137]

Becoming an MP

Following Michael Heseltine's retirement, Johnson decided to stand as Conservative candidate for Henley, a Conservative safe seat in Oxfordshire.^[139] The local Conservative branch selected him although it was split over Johnson's candidacy – some thought him amusing and charming; others disliked his flippant attitude and lack

The selection of Boris Johnson ... confirms the Tory Party's increasing weakness for celebrity personalities over the dreary exigencies of politics. Johnson, for all his gifts, is unlikely to grace any future Tory cabinet. Indeed, he is not known for his excessive interest in serious policy matters, and it is hard to see him grubbing away at administrative detail as an obscure, hardworking junior minister for social security. To maintain his funny man reputation he will no doubt find himself refining his Bertie Wooster interpretation to the point where the impersonation becomes the man.

of knowledge about the local area.^[140] Boosted by his television fame, Johnson stood as the Conservative candidate for the constituency in the 2001 general election, winning with a majority of 8,500 votes.^[141]

–Max Hastings, *London Evening Standard*,
^[138]

Alongside his Islington home, Johnson bought a farmhouse outside Thame in his new constituency.^[142] He regularly attended Henley social events and occasionally wrote for the *Henley Standard*.^[143] His constituency surgeries proved popular, and he joined local campaigns to stop the closure of Townlands Hospital and the local air ambulance.^[144]

In Parliament, Johnson was appointed to a standing committee assessing the Proceeds of Crime Bill, but missed many of its meetings.^[145] Despite his credentials as a public speaker, his speeches in the House of Commons were widely deemed lacklustre; Johnson later called them "crap".^[146] In his first four years as MP, he attended just over half of the Commons votes; in his second term, this declined to 45%.^[147] He usually supported the Conservative party line but rebelled against it five times in this period.^[148] In free votes, he demonstrated a more socially liberal attitude than many colleagues, supporting the Gender Recognition Act 2004 and the repeal of Section 28.^{[149][150]} (However, in 2001, Johnson had spoken out against plans to repeal Section 28, saying it was "Labour's appalling agenda, encouraging the teaching of homosexuality in schools"^{[151][152]}). After initially stating he would not, he voted in support of the government's plans to join the US in the 2003 invasion of Iraq,^[142] and in April 2003 visited occupied Baghdad.^[153] In August 2004, he backed unsuccessful impeachment procedures against Prime Minister Tony Blair for "high crimes and misdemeanours" regarding the war,^[154] and in December 2006 described the invasion as "a colossal mistake and misadventure".^[155]

Although labelling Johnson "ineffably duplicitous" for breaking his promise not to become an MP, Black decided not to dismiss him because he "helped promote the magazine and raise its circulation".^[156] Johnson remained editor of *The Spectator*, also writing columns for *The Daily Telegraph* and *GQ*, and making television appearances.^[157] His 2001 book, *Friends, Voters, Countrymen: Jottings on the Stump*, recounted that year's election campaign,^[158] while 2003's *Lend Me Your Ears* collected together previously published columns and articles.^[159] In 2004, his first novel was published: *Seventy-Two Virgins: A Comedy of Errors* revolved around the life of a Conservative MP and contained various autobiographical elements.^[160] Responding to critics who argued that he was juggling too many jobs, he cited Winston Churchill and Benjamin Disraeli as exemplars who combined their political and literary careers.^[161] To manage the stress, he took up jogging and cycling,^[162] and became so well known for the latter that Gimson suggested that he was "perhaps the most famous cyclist in Britain".^[163]

Following William Hague's resignation as Conservative leader, Johnson backed Kenneth Clarke, regarding Clarke as the only candidate capable of winning a general election. Iain Duncan Smith was elected.^[164] Johnson had a strained relationship with Duncan Smith, and *The Spectator* became critical of the latter's party leadership.^[165] Duncan Smith was removed from his position in November 2003 and replaced by Michael Howard; Howard deemed Johnson to be the most popular Conservative politician with the electorate and appointed him vice-chairman of the party, responsible for overseeing its electoral campaign.^[166] In his Shadow Cabinet reshuffle of May 2004, Howard appointed Johnson to the position of shadow arts minister.^[167] In October, Howard ordered Johnson to publicly apologise in Liverpool for publishing a *Spectator* article – anonymously written by Simon Heffer – which said that the crowds at the Hillsborough disaster had contributed towards the incident and that Liverpudlians had a predilection for reliance on the welfare state.^{[168][169]}

In November 2004, tabloids revealed that since 2000 Johnson had been having an affair with *Spectator* columnist Petronella Wyatt, resulting in two terminated pregnancies. Johnson initially called the claims "piffle".^[170] After the allegations were proven, Howard asked Johnson to resign as vice-chairman and shadow arts minister for publicly lying; when Johnson refused, Howard dismissed him from those positions.^{[171][172]} The scandal was satirised by *The Spectator's* theatre critics Toby Young and Lloyd Evans in a play, *Who's the Daddy?*, performed at Islington's King's Head Theatre in July 2005.^[173]

Second term

In the 2005 general election, Johnson was re-elected MP for Henley, increasing his majority to 12,793.^[174] Labour won the election and Howard stood down as Conservative leader; Johnson backed David Cameron as his successor.^[175] After Cameron was elected, he appointed Johnson as the shadow higher education minister, acknowledging his popularity among students.^[176] Interested in streamlining university funding,^[177] Johnson supported Labour's proposed top-up fees.^[178] He campaigned in 2006 to become the Rector of the University of Edinburgh, but his support for top-up fees damaged his campaign, and he came third.^{[179][180]}



As Shadow Minister for Higher Education, Johnson visited various universities (as here at the University of Nottingham in 2006)

In April 2006, the *News of the World* alleged that Johnson was having an affair with the journalist Anna Fazackerley; the pair did not comment, and shortly afterwards Johnson began employing Fazackerley.^{[181][182]} That month, he attracted further public attention

for rugby-tackling former footballer Maurizio Gaudino in a charity football match.^[183] In September 2006, Papua New Guinea's High Commission protested after he compared the Conservatives' frequently changing leadership to cannibalism in Papua New Guinea.^[184]

In 2005, *The Spectator's* new chief executive, Andrew Neil, dismissed Johnson as editor.^[185] To make up for this financial loss, Johnson negotiated with *The Daily Telegraph* to raise his annual fee from £200,000 to £250,000, averaging at £5,000 per column, each of which took up around an hour-and-a-half of his time.^{[186][187]} He presented a popular history television show, *The Dream of Rome*, which was broadcast in January 2006; a book followed in February;^[188] and a sequel, *After Rome*, focused on early Islamic history.^[189] As a result of his various activities, in 2007 he earned £540,000, making him the UK's third-highest-earning MP that year.^[190]

Mayor of London

Mayoral election: 2007–2008

In July 2007, Johnson announced his candidacy to be the Conservative candidate for Mayor of London in the 2008 mayoral election^{[191][192]} and in September was selected after gaining 79% of the vote in a public London-wide primary.^{[193][194]}

Johnson's mayoral campaign focused on reducing youth crime, making public transport safer, and replacing the articulated buses with an updated version of the AEC Routemaster.^[13] Targeting the Conservative-leaning suburbs of outer London, it capitalised on perceptions that the Labour Mayoralty had neglected them in favour of inner London.^[195] His campaign emphasised his popularity, even among those who opposed his policies,^[196] with opponents complaining that a common attitude among voters was: "I'm voting for Boris because he is a laugh".^[13] The campaign of Labour incumbent Ken Livingstone portrayed Johnson as an out-of-touch toff and bigot, citing racist and homophobic language used in his column; Johnson responded that these quotes had been taken out of context and were meant as satire.^[197]



Johnson pledged to replace the city's articulated buses with New Routemaster buses if elected mayor

In the election, Johnson received 43% and Livingstone 37% of first-preference votes; when second-preference votes were added, Johnson proved victorious with 53% to Livingstone's 47%.^{[198][199]} Johnson then announced his resignation as MP for

Henley.^{[200][201]}

First term: 2008–2012

Settling into the City Hall mayoral office,^[202] Johnson's first official engagement was an appearance at the Sikh celebrations for Vaisakhi in Trafalgar Square.^[203] Rather than bringing a team of assistants with him to the job as Livingstone had done, Johnson built his team over the following six months.^[204] Those in City Hall who were deemed too closely allied to Livingstone's administration had their employment terminated.^[205] Johnson appointed Tim Parker to be first Deputy Mayor, but after Parker began taking increasing control at City Hall and insisted that all staff report directly to him, Johnson dismissed him.^[206] As a result of these problems, many in the Conservative Party initially distanced themselves from Johnson's administration, fearing that it would be counter-productive to achieving a Conservative victory in the 2010 general election.^[207]

He received criticism during the early weeks of his administration, largely because he was late for two official functions in his first week on the job, and because after three weeks he went on holiday to Turkey.^[205] In July 2008, Johnson visited the closing ceremony of the 2008 Summer Olympics in Beijing, there offending his Chinese hosts with his attire.^[208] During the electoral campaign, Johnson had confided to Brian Paddick that he was unsure how he would retain his then lifestyle while relying upon the mayoral salary of £140,000 a year.^[209] To resolve this problem, he agreed to continue his *Telegraph* column alongside his mayoral job, thus earning a further £250,000 a year.^[210] His team believed that this would cause controversy, and made him promise to donate a fifth of his *Telegraph* fee to a charitable cause providing bursaries for students. Johnson resented this, and ultimately did not pay a full fifth.^[211] Controversy erupted when he was questioned about his *Telegraph* fee on BBC's *HARDtalk*; here, he referred to the £250,000 as "chicken feed", something that was widely condemned, given that this was roughly 10 times the average yearly wage for a British worker.^{[212][213][214]}



Johnson gave a victory speech in City Hall after being elected as a Mayor of London

During his first administration, Johnson was embroiled in several personal scandals. After moving to a new house in Islington, he built a shed on his balcony without obtaining planning permission; after neighbours complained, he dismantled the shed.^[215] The press also accused him of having an affair with Helen Macintyre and of fathering her child, allegations that he did not deny.^{[216][217][218][219]} Controversy was generated when

Johnson was accused of warning the MP Damian Green that police were planning to arrest him; Johnson denied the claims and did not face criminal charges under the Criminal Justice Act.^[220] He was accused of cronyism,^[221] in particular for appointing Veronica Wadley, a former *Evening Standard* editor who had supported him, as the chair of London's Arts Council when she was widely regarded as not being the best candidate for the position.^{[222][223][224]} He was caught up in the parliamentary expenses scandal and accused of excessive personal spending on taxi journeys. His deputy mayor Ian Clement was found to have misused a City Hall credit card, resulting in his resignation.^[225] Johnson remained a popular figure in London with a strong celebrity status.^[226] In 2009, he rescued Franny Armstrong from anti-social teenagers who had threatened her while he was cycling past.^{[227][228][229]}

Policies

Johnson made no major changes to the mayoral system as developed by Livingstone.^[230] He reversed several measures implemented by Livingstone's administration, ending the city's oil deal with Venezuela, abolishing *The Londoner* newsletter, and scrapping the half-yearly inspections of black cabs; the latter measure was reinstated three years later.^[231] Abolishing the western wing of the congestion charging zone,^[232] he cancelled plans to increase the congestion charge for four-wheel-drive vehicles.^[233] He was subsequently accused of failing to publish an independent report on air pollution commissioned by the Greater London Authority, which revealed that the city breached legal limits on nitrogen dioxide levels.^{[234][235]}



The New Routemaster bus introduced by Johnson's administration

Johnson retained Livingstone projects such as Crossrail and the 2012 Olympic Games, but was accused of trying to take credit for them.^[236] He introduced a public bicycle scheme that had been mooted by Livingstone's administration; colloquially known as "Boris Bikes", the partly privately financed system cost £140 million and was a significant financial loss but proved popular.^{[237][238]} Despite Johnson's support of cycling in London, and his much-publicised identity as a cyclist, his administration was criticised by some cycling groups who argued that he had failed to make the city's roads safer for cyclists.^[239] As per his election pledge, he also commissioned the development of the New Routemaster buses for central London.^[240] He also ordered the construction of a cable car system that crossed the River Thames between Greenwich Peninsula and the Royal Docks.^[241]



Johnson implemented Livingstone's idea of a public bicycle system; the result was dubbed the "Boris Bike".

Johnson's first policy initiative was a ban on drinking alcohol on public transport.^{[242][243]} At the beginning of his tenure as mayor, Johnson announced plans to extend pay-as-you-go Oyster cards to national rail services in London.^[244] One of the pledges in Johnson's election manifesto was to retain Tube ticket offices, in opposition to Livingstone's proposal to close up to 40 London Underground ticket offices.^[245] On 2 July 2008, the Mayor's office announced that the closure plan was to be abandoned and that offices would remain open.^[246] On 21 November 2013, Transport for London announced that all London Underground ticket offices would close by 2015.^[247] In financing these projects, Johnson's administration borrowed

£100 million,^[248] while public transport fares were increased by 50%.^[249]

During the first Mayoral term, Johnson was perceived as having moved leftward on certain issues, for instance supporting the London Living Wage and endorsing an amnesty for illegal migrants.^[250] He tried placating critics who had deemed him a bigot by appearing at London's gay pride parade and praising ethnic minority newspapers.^[251] In 2012, he banned London buses from displaying the adverts of Core Issues Trust, a Christian group, which compared homosexuality to an illness.^[252] In August 2008, Johnson broke from the traditional protocol of those in public office not publicly commenting on other nations' elections by endorsing Barack Obama for the presidency of the United States.^{[253][254]}

Relations with police, finance, and the media

Johnson appointed himself chair of the Metropolitan Police Authority (MPA), and in October 2008 successfully pushed for the resignation of Metropolitan Police Commissioner Ian Blair after the latter was criticised for allegedly handing contracts to friends and for his handling of the death of Jean Charles de Menezes.^{[255][256][257]} This earned Johnson great respect among Conservatives, who interpreted it as his first act of strength.^[258] Johnson resigned as MPA chairman in January 2010,^[250] but throughout his mayoralty was highly supportive of the Metropolitan Police, particularly during the controversy surrounding the death of Ian Tomlinson.^[259] Overall crime in London fell during his administration, but his claim that



Johnson's response to the 2011 London riots was criticised

serious youth crime had decreased was shown to be false, and he acknowledged the error.^{[260][261]} Similarly, his claim that Metropolitan Police numbers had increased was also characterised as untrue,^[260] but the fact-checkers at Full Fact say that both Johnson's and his critics' positions are defensible.^[262] He was also criticised for his response to the 2011 London riots; holidaying with his family in British Columbia when the rioting broke out, he did not immediately return to London, only returning 48 hours after it had begun and addressing Londoners 60 hours thereafter. Upon visiting shopkeepers and residents affected by the riots in Clapham, he was booed and jeered by elements within the crowds.^[263]



Johnson lights the flame at the 2010 London Youth Games opening ceremony

Johnson championed London's financial sector and denounced what he saw as "banker bashing" following the financial crisis of 2007–08,^[264] condemning the anti-capitalist Occupy London movement that appeared in 2011.^[265] He spent much time with those involved in the financial services, and criticised the government's 50p tax rate for higher earners.^[266] He collected donations from the city's wealthy for a charitable enterprise, the Mayor's Fund, which he had established to aid disadvantaged youths. It initially announced that it would raise £100 million, but by 2010 it had only spent £1.5 million.^[267] He also retained extensive personal contacts throughout the

British media,^[268] which resulted in widespread favourable press coverage of his administration.^[268] In turn he remained largely supportive of his friends in the media – among them Rupert Murdoch – during the News International phone hacking scandal.^[269]

The formation of the Forensic Audit Panel was announced on 8 May 2008. The panel is tasked with monitoring and investigating financial management at the London Development Agency and the Greater London Authority.^[270] Johnson's announcement was criticised by Labour for the perceived politicisation of this nominally independent panel, who asked whether the appointment of key Johnson allies to the panel – "to dig dirt on Ken Livingstone" – was "an appropriate use of public funds".^[271] The head of the panel, Patience Wheatcroft, was married to a Conservative councillor^[272] and three of the four remaining panel members also had close links to the Conservatives: Stephen Greenhalgh (Conservative Leader of Hammersmith and Fulham London Borough Council),^[273] Patrick Frederick (Chairman of Conservative Business Relations for South East England and Southern London) and Edward Lister (Conservative Leader of Wandsworth London Borough Council).^[274]

Re-election campaign

Up for re-election in 2012, Johnson again hired Crosby to orchestrate his campaign.^[275] Before the election, Johnson published *Johnson's Life of London*, a work of popular history that the historian A. N. Wilson characterised as a "coded plea" for votes.^[276] Polls suggested that while Livingstone's approach to transport was preferred, voters in London placed greater trust in Johnson over issues of crime and the economy.^[277] During the 2012 Mayoral election, Johnson sought re-election, while Livingstone was again selected as the Labour candidate. Johnson's campaign emphasised the accusation that Livingstone was guilty of tax evasion, for which Livingstone called Johnson a "bare-faced liar".^[278] The political scientist Andrew Crines believed that Livingstone's campaign focused on criticising Johnson rather than presenting an alternate and progressive vision of London's future.^[279] In 2012, Johnson was re-elected as mayor, again defeating Livingstone.^[280]

Second term: 2012–2016

London was successful in its bid to host the 2012 Summer Olympics while Ken Livingstone was still mayor in 2005. Johnson's role in the proceedings was to be the co-chair of an Olympic board which oversaw the games.^[281] Two of his actions subsequent to taking on this role were to improve the transport around London by making more tickets available and laying on more buses around the capital during the busy period, when thousands of spectators were temporary visitors in London.^{[282][283]} Johnson was accused of covering up pollution ahead of the games by deploying dust suppressants to remove air particulates near monitoring stations.^[234] In November 2013, Johnson announced major changes to the operation of London Underground, including the extension of Tube operating hours to run through the night at weekends. The announcement also revealed that all staffed Underground ticket offices would be closed with the aim of saving over £40 million a year, with automated ticketing systems provided instead.^{[284][285]}



Johnson at the 2012 Summer Olympics

Johnson had a close friendship with American technology entrepreneur, former DJ^[286] and model Jennifer Arcuri, with *The Sunday Times* describing him as a regular visitor to her flat,^[287] and implying they were in a sexual relationship.^[288] Innotech, her company, was awarded £10,000 from a mayoral fund in 2013, followed the next year by Arcuri being awarded £15,000 from a government programme. Johnson intervened to allow her onto three trade mission trips.^[289] *The Sunday Times* said in September 2019 that Johnson failed to declare his personal relationship as a conflict of interest.^[290] Later that month,

the Greater London Authority referred Johnson and his actions in the matter to the Independent Office for Police Conduct (IOPC) "so it can assess whether or not it is necessary to investigate the former mayor of London for the criminal offence of misconduct in public office". The IOPC was involved because the Mayor is also London's police and crime commissioner.^[291] The London Assembly commenced its own investigation, but paused it at the IOPC's request to avoid overlap. On 9 November 2019 it was revealed that the IOPC, which had been due to publish a report on its investigation, had decided to do so after the general election of 12 December.^[292] The IOPC issued its report in May 2020, concluding that, although there was no basis for any criminal charge, there was evidence that decisions by officials had been influenced by the close relationship between Johnson and Arcuri. The report also found that Johnson should have declared an interest concerning Arcuri and that his failure to do this could have breached the London Assembly's code of conduct. On behalf of the London Assembly, the chair of its Greater London Authority Oversight Committee said that the committee would now resume its own investigation.^[293]

In February 2012, Johnson criticised London's Saint Patrick's Day gala dinner celebrations, linking them to Sinn Féin and branding the event "Lefty crap",^[294] for which he later apologised.^[295]

In February 2013, during a London Assembly meeting following the publication of the 2014 budget for London, Johnson was ejected from the meeting following a vote and on the grounds that his deputy Victoria Borwick had left the chamber. Upon realising that the vote meant that he would not be questioned on the budget, Johnson referred to his political opponents as "great supine protoplasmic invertebrate jellies".^[296]

Johnson attended the launch of the World Islamic Economic Forum in London in July 2013, where he answered questions alongside Malaysian Prime Minister Najib Razak. He joked that Malaysian women attended university in order to find husbands, causing some offence among female attendees.^{[297][298]}

In 2014, Johnson pushed his biography of Winston Churchill, *The Churchill Factor*, with media emphasising how Johnson repeatedly compared himself to Churchill throughout.^[299] During campaigning in 2016, he said there was an attempt to create the Roman Empire's united Europe. He said, "Napoleon, Hitler, various people tried this out, and it ends tragically. The EU is an attempt to do this by different methods."^{[300][301]} Also in 2014, he was criticised for saying that "almost half" of his senior staff were female, when London Assembly members stated that only four of fourteen top positions in Johnson's administration were occupied by women.^[302]

In 2015, Johnson criticised then-presidential candidate Donald Trump's false comments that there were no-go zones in London governed by shariah and inaccessible for non-Muslims. Johnson said that Trump was "betraying a quite stupefying ignorance that

makes him, frankly, unfit to hold the office of president of the United States",^[303] becoming the first senior politician in the UK to declare Trump unfit for office (but rejecting calls for him to be banned from the country).^[304] Johnson also added that he "would invite [Trump] to come and see the whole of London and take him round the city – except I wouldn't want to expose Londoners to any unnecessary risk of meeting Donald Trump."^[303] He later called Trump's comments "ill informed" and "complete and utter nonsense", adding that "the only reason I wouldn't go to some parts of New York is the real risk of meeting Donald Trump".^[305] In 2016, he said he was "genuinely worried that he could become president", telling ITV's Tom Bradby of one moment where he was mistaken for Trump in New York as "one of the worst moments" of his life.^[306]

Johnson did not run for a third term for Mayor of London and stepped down on 5 May 2016 following the election of former transport minister, Sadiq Khan. Johnson left office still popular with the people of London. A YouGov poll commissioned at the end of his term revealed that 52% of Londoners believed he did a "good job" as Mayor of London while only 29% believed he did a "bad job".^[307] In 2016, Sadiq Khan announced that three German-made water cannon, which Johnson had bought for the Metropolitan Police without waiting for clearance from the then-Home Secretary Theresa May, were to be sold off with the funds going to youth services.^[308] The vehicles proved to be unsellable and were eventually sold for scrap in 2018 at a £300,000 loss.^[309]

Return to Parliament

Johnson initially said that he would not return to the House of Commons while remaining mayor.^[226] After much media speculation, in August 2014 he sought selection as the Conservative candidate for the safe seat of Uxbridge and South Ruislip at the 2015 general election,^[310] becoming the party's candidate in September.^{[311][312]} In the May 2015 general election, Johnson was elected MP. There was much speculation that he had returned to Parliament because he wanted to replace Cameron as Conservative leader and prime minister.^[313]

Brexit campaign: 2015–2016

In February 2016, Johnson endorsed Vote Leave in the "Out" campaign for the 2016 United Kingdom European Union membership referendum.^[314] He called Cameron's warnings about leaving "greatly over exaggerated". Following this announcement, which was interpreted by financial markets as making Brexit more probable, the pound sterling slumped by nearly 2% against the US dollar, reaching its lowest level since March 2009.^[315]

In April 2016, in an article for *The Sun*, in response to a comment by President Barack Obama that Britain should remain in the European Union, Johnson said that Obama's views may have been shaped by an "ancestral dislike" of Britain owing to his "part-Kenyan" background.^[300] The comments were branded "idiotic" and "deeply offensive" by Conservative MP Sir Nicholas Soames,^[316] and were condemned as racist and unacceptable by several Labour and Liberal Democrat politicians.^{[317][318]} In light of the remark, a King's College London student society revoked a speaking invitation it had extended to him.^[319] Conversely, his comments were defended by both the Conservative Iain Duncan Smith and UK Independence Party (UKIP) leader Nigel Farage.^{[317][320]}

Johnson supported Vote Leave's statement that the government was committed to Turkish accession to the EU at the earliest possible opportunity, contradicting the Britain Stronger in Europe campaign's view that Turkey "is not an issue in this referendum and it shouldn't be". Vote Leave was accused of implying that 80 million Turks would come to the UK if it stayed in the EU. When interviewed in January 2019, he said he had not mentioned Turkey during the campaign.^{[321][322]} On 22 June 2016, Johnson declared that 23 June could be "Britain's independence day" in a televised debate in front of a 6,000-member audience at Wembley Arena.^[323] David Cameron, British prime minister at the time, specifically addressed Johnson's claim, publicly stating, "the idea that our country isn't independent is nonsense. This whole debate demonstrates our sovereignty."^[324]

Following the victory of the "Leave" campaign, Cameron resigned as Conservative leader and prime minister. Johnson was widely regarded as the front-runner to succeed him.^{[325][326]} Johnson announced he would not stand in the Conservative leadership election.^[327] Shortly before, Michael Gove, hitherto a Johnson ally, concluded that Johnson "cannot provide the leadership or build the team for the task ahead."^{[328][329]} *The Telegraph* called Gove's comments "the most spectacular political assassination in a generation."^[330] Johnson endorsed Andrea Leadsom's candidature,^[331] but she dropped out of the race a week later, leaving Theresa May to be elected uncontested.

Foreign Secretary: 2016–2018

After Theresa May became leader of the Conservative Party and prime minister, she appointed Johnson Foreign Secretary in July 2016.^[332] Analysts saw the appointment as a tactic to weaken Johnson politically: the new positions of "Brexit secretary" and international trade secretary left the foreign secretary as a figurehead with few powers.^{[332][333]} Johnson's appointment ensured that he would often be out of the country and unable to organise and mobilise backbenchers against her, while also forcing him to take responsibility for problems caused by withdrawing from the EU.^{[334][335]}



Johnson meeting with Iranian foreign minister Mohammad Javad Zarif in Tehran in December 2017

Johnson's appointment was criticised by some journalists and foreign politicians due to his history of controversial statements about other



Johnson with US President Donald Trump in 2017 UNGA

countries^{[336][337][338]} and his tenure in the role has received criticism from diplomats and foreign policy experts.^{[339][340]} A number of diplomats, FCO staff and foreign ministers who worked with Johnson compared his leadership unfavourably to previous foreign secretaries for his perceived lack of conviction or substantive positions on British foreign policy issues.^{[339][340]} Former Prime Minister of Sweden Carl Bildt said: "I wish it was a joke".^[341] A senior official in Obama's government suggested Johnson's appointment would push the US further towards Germany at the expense of the Special Relationship with the UK.^[342] On one occasion Egyptian President Abdel Fattah el-Sisi walked out of a meeting with Johnson after a meeting did not "get beyond the pleasantries".^[339]



Johnson visited the British Virgin Islands after Hurricane Irma

Johnson's visit to Turkey from 25 to 27 September 2016 was somewhat tense due to his having won Douglas Murray's poetry competition about the President of Turkey, Recep Tayyip Erdoğan, four months earlier.^[343] When questioned by a journalist whether he would apologise for the poem, Johnson dismissed the matter as "trivia".^[344] Johnson pledged to help Turkey join the EU and expressed support for Erdoğan's government.^[345] Johnson supported the Saudi Arabian-led intervention in Yemen and refused to block UK arms sales to Saudi Arabia,^[346] stating there was no clear evidence of breaches of international humanitarian law by Saudi Arabia in the war in Yemen.^[347] In September 2016, human rights groups accused him of blocking the UN inquiry into Saudi war crimes in Yemen.^[348] Given the UK-Saudi alliance, in December, he attracted attention for commenting that the Saudis were akin to the Iranians in "puppeteering and playing proxy wars" throughout the Middle East.^{[349][350][351]} May said his comments did not represent the government's view.^[352]

In November 2016, Johnson told the Foreign Affairs Select Committee that Nazanin Zaghari-Ratcliffe—a British-Iranian dual citizen serving a five-year prison sentence in Iran after being arrested for training citizen journalists and bloggers in a BBC World Service Trust project—had been "simply teaching people journalism". Zaghari-Ratcliffe had said that her visit had been made simply for her daughter to meet her grandparents. Facing criticism, Johnson stated he had been misquoted and that nothing he said had justified Zaghari-Ratcliffe's sentence.^{[353][354]} In May 2018, Johnson backed^{[355][356]} the Iran nuclear deal framework despite Donald Trump's withdrawal.^[357] Johnson said that the deal brought economic benefits to the Iranian people.^[358] Johnson described the Gülen movement as a "cult" and supported Turkey's post-coup purges. He said that Turkey's coup attempt "was deeply violent, deeply anti-democratic, deeply sinister and it was totally right that it was crushed."^[359]

In April 2017, Johnson said that Gibraltar's sovereignty was "not going to change" after Brexit.^[360] Johnson promised while in Northern Ireland that Brexit would leave the Irish border "absolutely unchanged".^[361] In May 2017, during the 2017 United Kingdom general election, he was criticised by a woman for discussing ending tariffs on Indian whisky in a Sikh temple in Bristol (alcohol use is prohibited in Sikhism). He later expressed regret that the protester held differing views to his on alcohol.^[362]



Foreign Ministers of the US, the UK, Saudi Arabia and the United Arab Emirates, before a working dinner focused on Yemen, 19 July 2016

Johnson visited the islands of Anguilla, and Tortola (in the British Virgin Islands) on 13 September 2017 to confirm the United Kingdom's commitment to helping restore British territories devastated by Hurricane Irma.^{[363][364]} He said he was reminded of photos of Hiroshima after it had been hit by the atom bomb.^[365]

In September 2017, he was criticised for reciting lines from Rudyard Kipling's poem *Mandalay* while visiting a Myanmar temple; the British ambassador, who was with him, suggested it was "not appropriate".^{[366][367][368]} In October 2017, he faced criticism for stating that the Libyan city of Sirte could become an economic success like Dubai: "all they have to do is clear the dead bodies away".^{[369][370]} Johnson did not condemn the actions of the Spanish government and police during the outlawed Catalan independence referendum on 1 October 2017.^[371]

Johnson has backed a more aggressive policy towards Russia.^{[372][373]} Following the March 2018 poisoning of Sergei and Yulia Skripal in Salisbury, an act which the UK government blamed on Russia,^{[374][375]} Johnson compared Vladimir Putin's hosting of the World Cup in Russia to Adolf Hitler's hosting of the Olympic Games in Berlin in



Johnson met with Myanmar's de facto leader Aung San Suu Kyi in September 2016

1936.^[376] Russia's Foreign Ministry denounced Johnson's "unacceptable and unworthy" parallel towards Russia, a "nation that lost millions of lives in fighting Nazism".^[377] Johnson described the Nord Stream 2 gas pipeline from Russia to Germany as "divisive" and a "threat" that left Europe dependent on a "malign Russia" for its energy supplies.^[378]

Johnson has condemned the persecution of the Rohingya Muslims in Myanmar.^[379] He compared the Rohingya situation with the displacement of Palestinians in 1948.^[380] Johnson supported the Turkish invasion of northern Syria aimed at ousting

the Syrian Kurds from the enclave of Afrin.^[381]

In a September 2017 op-ed, Johnson reiterated that the UK would regain control of £350m a week after Brexit, suggesting it go to the National Health Service (NHS).^[382] He was subsequently criticised by cabinet colleagues for reviving the assertion, and was accused of "clear misuse of official statistics" by the chair of the UK Statistics Authority, Sir David Norgrove.^{[383][384]} The authority rejected the suggestion that it was quibbling over newspaper headlines and not Johnson's actual words.^[384] Following the 2017 general election, Johnson denied media reports that he intended to challenge May's leadership.^[385] In a February 2018 letter to May, Johnson suggested that Northern Ireland may have to accept border controls after Brexit and that it would not seriously affect trade, having initially said a hard border would be unthinkable.^[386]

In March 2018, Johnson apologised for his "inadvertent sexism" after being criticised for calling Shadow Foreign Secretary Emily Thornberry as "Lady Nugee"; Thornberry was married to Christopher Nugee but did not use his surname.^[387] In June, he was reported as having said "fuck business" when asked about corporate concerns regarding a 'hard' Brexit.^{[388][389][390][391]}

Johnson said that US recognition of Jerusalem as capital of Israel is a "moment of opportunity" for peace.^[392] In June 2018, Johnson accused the UNHRC of focusing disproportionately on the Israeli–Palestinian conflict and Israel's occupation of the Palestinian territories.^[393]



Johnson with Israel's Benjamin Netanyahu in June 2018

Secret recordings obtained by *BuzzFeed News* in June 2018 revealed Johnson's dissatisfaction with Prime Minister Theresa May's negotiating style, accusing her of being too collaborative with the European Union in Brexit negotiations. Comparing May's approach to that of the US President Donald Trump – who at the time was engaged in a combative trade war with the EU due to its raising of tariffs on metal – Johnson said: "Imagine Trump doing Brexit. He'd go in bloody hard ... There'd be all sorts of breakdowns, all sorts of chaos. Everyone would think he'd gone mad. But actually you might get somewhere. It's a very, very good thought." He also called Philip Hammond and the Treasury "the heart of Remain" and accused individuals of scaremongering over a Brexit "meltdown", saying "No panic. *Pro bono publico*, no bloody panic. It's going to be all right in the end."^[394]

During trips to the United States as foreign secretary, Johnson had repeated meetings with Trump adviser and speechwriter Stephen Miller, which were held off White House grounds and kept quiet from May. During the meetings, Miller and Johnson "swapped speech-writing ideas and tips".^[395]

In July 2018, three days after the cabinet had its meeting at Chequers to agree a Brexit strategy,^[396] Johnson, along with Brexit Secretary David Davis,^[397] resigned his post.^[398]

Return to the backbenches: 2018–2019

By resigning as foreign secretary, Johnson returned to the role of a backbench MP. In July, Johnson delivered a resignation speech, stating that ministers were "saying one thing to the EU about what we are really doing, and pretending another to the electorate". In it, he said that "it is not too late to save Brexit. We have time in these negotiations. We have changed tack once and we can change once again".^[399] *Buzzfeed* reported that Johnson had been in contact with Steve Bannon, Donald Trump's former chief adviser. In interviews, Bannon had praised Johnson and said that he should challenge Theresa May for the party leadership.^{[400][401]} In January 2019, Johnson came under criticism for remarks he had made during the 2016 Leave campaign regarding the prospect of Turkish accession to the European Union; he denied making such remarks.^[402] In March 2019, Johnson said that expenditure on investigating historic allegations of child abuse, instead of more police on the streets, was money "spaffed up the wall".^[403] This was strongly criticised by a victim, anti-abuse organisations, a police chief and Shadow police minister Louise Haigh.^[404]

Journalism

In July 2018, Johnson signed a 12-month contract to write articles for the Telegraph Media Group.^[405] In August, the Advisory Committee on Business Appointments (ACoBA) reported that this employment was a breach of the Ministerial Code.^{[405][406]} In December, Johnson was ordered to apologise to Parliament for failing to declare £50,000 of earnings. The Parliamentary Commissioner for Standards found that the errors were not inadvertent and that Johnson had failed on nine occasions to make declarations within the rules.^[407]

In September 2018, Johnson wrote: "We have opened ourselves to perpetual political blackmail. We have wrapped a suicide vest around the British constitution – and handed the detonator to Michel Barnier." Senior Tories heavily criticised him, with Alan Duncan of the Foreign Office vowing to ensure the comments marked "the political end of Boris Johnson".^{[408][409]}

In April 2019, the Independent Press Standards Organisation ruled that a claim in a 6 January 2019 article in *The Daily Telegraph*, "The British people won't be scared into backing a woeful Brexit deal nobody voted for", authored by Johnson,^[410] that a no-deal Brexit was "by some margin preferred by the British public" was false, and "represented a failure to take care over the accuracy of the article in breach of Clause 1 (i)" of its guidelines, and required that a correction to the false claim be published in the print edition, and appended to the online version.^[411]

2019 Conservative Party leadership election

On 16 May 2019, Johnson confirmed that he would stand in the forthcoming Conservative Party leadership election following Theresa May's anticipated resignation.^[412] On 7 June, Johnson formally launched his campaign, saying, "we must leave the EU on 31 October. We must do better than the current Withdrawal Agreement that has been rejected three times by Parliament—and let me clear that I am not aiming for a no-deal outcome. I don't think that we will end up with any such thing. But it is only responsible to prepare vigorously and seriously for no deal."^[413] On the campaign trail, Johnson warned of "catastrophic consequences for voter trust in politics" if the government pushed the EU for further delays. He advocated removing the backstop from any Brexit deal and replacing it with alternative arrangements. On 25 and 26 August, he announced plans to retain £7 or £9 billion of the £39 billion divorce payment the UK is due to transfer to the EU upon withdrawal.^{[414][415]}



Logo used by Johnson's leadership campaign

Johnson initially pledged to cut income tax for earners of more than £50,000 by raising the 40% tax threshold to £80,000, but backed away from this plan in June 2019 after coming under assault in a televised BBC debate.^[416] He has also said he plans to raise the

level at which low-paid workers start to pay National Insurance.^[417]

A poll of party members published on 13 June showed Johnson to be the clear front-runner.^[418] He received 114 votes in the first ballot of party MPs,^[419] 126 in the next, 143 votes in the third and 157 in the fourth. In the last ballot, on 20 June, he reached 160 votes and was named one of the final two candidates, alongside Jeremy Hunt.^[420]

The members' vote closed on 22 July. The following day, Johnson was elected leader with 92,153 votes (66%) to Hunt's 46,656 (34%).^[421]

Prime Minister of the United Kingdom

First Ministry (July–December 2019)

On 24 July 2019, the day following Johnson's election as Conservative Party leader, Queen Elizabeth II accepted Theresa May's resignation and appointed Johnson as prime minister. This made Johnson the second prime minister to be born outside of the British Isles, after fellow Conservative Bonar Law, and the first to be born outside British territories.^[422] Johnson appointed Dominic Cummings, whom he worked with on the Vote Leave campaign, as his senior adviser.^[423]

Brexit policy

In his first speech as PM, Johnson promised that the United Kingdom would leave the European Union on 31 October 2019 with or without a deal.^[424] The Government spent £2.1bn in making preparations for Brexit on 31 October which included mass advertising.^[425]

On 28 August 2019, Johnson declared he had asked the Queen to prorogue parliament from 10 September, narrowing the window in which parliament could block a no-deal Brexit.^[426] Prorogation was approved by the Queen at Privy Council later the same day, and it began on 10 September, scheduled to last until 14 October.^[427] It has been suggested by some^[428] that this prorogation amounts to a self-coup, and on 31 August 2019, protests occurred in towns and cities throughout the United Kingdom.^{[429][430]} As of 2 September 2019, three separate court cases challenging



Johnson discussing Brexit with French President Emmanuel Macron in Paris

Johnson's action were in progress or were scheduled to take place,^[431] and on 11 September, three Scottish judges ruled the prorogation of the UK Parliament to be unlawful.^{[432][433]} On 12 September, Johnson denied lying to the queen over suspension of the parliament, while a Belfast Court rejected claims that his Brexit plans will have a negative impact on Northern Ireland's peace policy.^[434] On 24 September, the Supreme Court ruled unanimously that Johnson's advice to prorogue parliament was unlawful, and therefore the prorogation was rendered null and of no effect.^{[435][436][437]}

On 3 September 2019, Johnson indicated he would call a general election under the Fixed-term Parliaments Act after opposition and rebel Conservative MPs successfully voted against the government to take control of the order of business with a view to preventing a no-deal exit.^[438] Despite government opposition, the Benn Act, a bill to block a no-deal exit, successfully passed the Commons on 4 September 2019, causing Johnson to propose a general election on 15 October.^[439] His motion was unsuccessful as it failed to command the support of two-thirds of the House.^[440]

First Cabinet

Johnson appointed his Cabinet on 24 July 2019, describing it as a "Cabinet for modern Britain",^[441] with *The Guardian* branding it "an ethnically diverse but ideologically homogeneous statement of intent".^[442] While forming his government, Johnson dismissed 11 senior ministers and accepted the resignation of six others, a purge described by Johnson's ally Nigel Evans as "not so much a reshuffle as a summer's day massacre".^{[443][444]} The mass dismissal was the most extensive Cabinet reorganisation without a change in ruling party in postwar British political history, exceeding the seven Cabinet ministers dismissed in the "Night of the Long Knives" of 1962,^[445] and was dubbed the "Night of the Blond Knives" by *The Sun*.^[446]



Johnson holding his first cabinet meeting at 10 Downing Street, 25 July 2019

Among other appointments, Johnson made Dominic Raab the First Secretary of State and foreign secretary, and appointed Sajid Javid and Priti Patel as the Chancellor of the Exchequer and Home Secretary respectively. Johnson increased the number of ministers attending the Cabinet to 33, four more than had attended the May Cabinet. One quarter of those appointed were women, and the Cabinet set a new record for ethnic minority representation, with four secretaries of state and two additional ministers coming from minority backgrounds. Nearly two-thirds of those appointed went to fee-paying schools,

and almost half had attended Oxbridge universities.^[441] Johnson also created a new ministerial role to be held by himself, Minister for the Union, fulfilling a campaign pledge he had made in the leadership election.^[447]

Spending plans

Shortly after he became prime minister, Johnson's government announced increased public sector spending. In particular, it was announced that an extra 20,000 police officers would be hired, the roll-out of high-speed broadband would be sped up, the funding per school pupil would be increased to a minimum of £5,000 and £1.8 billion for upgrades and new equipment at hospitals. £1 billion of the money for hospitals was money that NHS providers had saved over the past three years and then previously been told they would not be able to spend, rather than being new money.^[448] The Chancellor Sajid Javid also announced that the spending review would be fast-tracked to September. Javid said that this was so that departments would be free to plan for the planned Brexit date of 31 October 2019, but there was speculation that the increased spending was to gain popularity in preparation for a possible election in autumn 2019.^{[449][450]}

Foreign policy

Johnson said his government will be very "pro-China" in an interview with the Hong Kong broadcaster Phoenix TV. He voiced support for Chinese President Xi Jinping's infrastructure investment effort, the Belt and Road Initiative, and promised to keep the United Kingdom "the most open economy in Europe" for Chinese investment.^[451]

Johnson supported the European Union–Mercosur Free Trade Agreement,^[452] which would form one of the world's largest free trade areas.^[453] Johnson's government has placed importance on maintaining the "Special Relationship" with the United States.^{[454][455]}



Johnson with US President Donald Trump at the G7 summit in Biarritz, 26 August 2019

In December 2019, Johnson said: "quite a large number of people coming in from the whole of the EU – 580 million population – [had been] able to treat the UK as though it's basically part of their own country and the problem with that is there has been no control at all".^[456] The co-founder of The 3 Million accused Johnson of "demonising" EU migrants.^{[457][458]}

The sovereignty of the Chagos Archipelago in the Indian Ocean is disputed between the United Kingdom and Mauritius.^[459] In February 2019, the International Court of Justice in The Hague issued an advisory opinion stating that the UK must transfer the Chagos Archipelago to Mauritius. In June 2020, 30 British MPs – including Labour, SNP and Liberal Democrats – signed a letter calling on Prime Minister Johnson to immediately act on the ICJ ruling.^[460] Johnson disputed Mauritian claims to sovereignty over the Chagos.^[461]



Johnson and Russian President Vladimir Putin at the Berlin Conference on Libya, 19 January 2020

Loss of working majority

On 3 September 2019, Phillip Lee crossed the floor to the Liberal Democrats following disagreement with Johnson's Brexit policy. This left the government with no working majority in the House of Commons.^[462] Later that day, 21 Conservative MPs including the Father of the House and former Chancellor Kenneth Clarke, and another former Chancellor Philip Hammond, had the party whip withdrawn for defying party orders and supporting an opposition motion.^[463] (The whip was restored to 10 former Conservative ministers on 29 October.^[464])

On 5 September 2019, Johnson's brother Jo Johnson resigned from the government and announced that he would step down as MP, describing his position as "torn between family and national interest".^[465] Two days later, Amber Rudd resigned as Secretary of State for Work and Pensions and from the Conservative Party, describing the withdrawal of the party whip from the MPs as an "assault on decency and democracy".^[466]

2019 general election

In October 2019, Parliament was dissolved and an election called for 12 December. The election resulted in the Conservative Party winning 43.6% of the vote and a parliamentary landslide majority of 80 seats—its biggest since 1987 under Margaret Thatcher.^[467]

Second Ministry (December 2019–present)

COVID-19 pandemic

The COVID-19 pandemic emerged as a serious crisis within the first few months of Johnson's second term.^[468] Throughout the pandemic, Johnson made a number of policy decisions to curb the pandemic some time after they were advised by the Scientific Advisory Group for Emergencies (SAGE), and in contradiction with his previous pledges and statements.^{[469][470][471][472][473][474]} Johnson's non-attendance of five COBR briefings during the early months of the pandemic and failure of the UK government to prepare for and control the outbreak has been criticised.^{[475][476][477][478]} The UK was amongst the last major European states to progressively encourage social distancing, close schools, ban public events and order a lockdown.^{[479][480]} This slow response is thought to have contributed to the UK's high death toll from COVID-19, among the highest in the world in total and by population.^{[476][481][482]} Johnson's public communication over the virus has also been subject to criticism.^{[476][483]}



Johnson delivering a press conference on COVID-19, 31 July 2020

On 3 March, Johnson also admitted to shaking hands with COVID patients in hospital, on the same day that SAGE had advised the government to warn the public not to shake hands and minimise physical contact.^{[484][485]} On 20 March, Johnson requested the closure of pubs, restaurants, gyms, entertainment venues, museums and galleries that evening, though with some regret, saying "We're taking away the ancient, inalienable right of free-born people of the United Kingdom to go to the pub".^{[486][487]} On 23 March, this was strengthened into a "stay at home" order throughout the UK, except for a few limited purposes, backed up by new legal powers.^[488]

On 27 March, it was announced that Johnson had tested positive for COVID-19.^{[489][490][491]} On 5 April, with his symptoms persisting, he was admitted to St Thomas' Hospital in London for tests.^[492] The next day, his condition having worsened, he was moved to the hospital's intensive care unit;^{[493][494]} Dominic Raab was appointed to deputise for him.^[494] Johnson left intensive care on 9 April,^[495] and left hospital three days later to recuperate at Chequers.^[496] After a fortnight at Chequers, he returned to Downing Street on the evening of 26 April and was said to be chairing a government coronavirus "war cabinet" meeting.^[497]

A scandal in May 2020 involved Johnson's chief political advisor Dominic Cummings, who made a trip with his family to Durham during the March 2020 lockdown while suffering from COVID-19 symptoms. Both Cummings and Johnson rejected widespread calls for the former to resign.^{[498][499][500]} Calls for Johnson to sack Cummings came from MPs both within and outside the Conservative party, scientific advisors and media.

Johnson's defence of Cummings and refusal to do sack him caused widespread backlash.^[501] This resulted in a loss of confidence in the government and specifically its response to the pandemic, referred to as 'the Cummings effect' in a study in *The Lancet*. Concerns were raised in the study that this could affect the public's compliance with pandemic restrictions.^{[502][503]}

The Johnson ministry has been accused of cronyism in their assignment of contracts related to the pandemic response. Procurement of government contracts for key COVID-19 supplies and measures has become less transparent as a result of emergency measures which have bypassed the usual competitive tendering process.^{[504][15]} Johnson conceded that the UK's test and trace system and its specially developed contact tracing app, had caused "frustrations" and needed improvement in October 2020, which had been criticised for their cost and operational issues.^{[476][505][506]}

Johnson reportedly resisted calls from SAGE and within the government to enact a second lockdown throughout September as COVID-19 infections rose.^{[473][507]} In April 2021, Johnson denied allegations he said he would rather "let the bodies pile high in their thousands" than enact a second national lockdown on 30 October 2020.^{[508][509][510]} The government enacted a second national lockdown on 31 October.^[471]



Johnson hosts virtual G7 meeting in February 2021

Throughout December 2020, COVID-19 cases across the UK rose significantly, putting additional strain on emergency services and hospitals^{[511][512]} and novel variant Lineage B.1.1.7 spread widely.^[513] In response, the government enacted further restrictions to large parts of southern and eastern England and shortened a planned household mixing period over Christmas on 21 December.^[472] A third lockdown for the whole of England was announced on 4 January 2021.^[511] Record numbers of infections and daily deaths were recorded in the UK throughout January, and the government began exploring quarantine procedures on arrival.^[514] Johnson said he was "deeply sorry" and "take[s] full responsibility" as the UK passed 100,000 deaths from COVID-19, the first European country to do so, on 26 January.^[515]

The UK was the first country in the world to begin its COVID-19 vaccination programme, on 8 December 2020.^[511] Half of UK adults had received at least their first vaccine dose by 20 March 2021, Johnson himself receiving his first dose of the Oxford–AstraZeneca COVID-19 vaccine on the previous day.^[516]

Hong Kong

On 3 June 2020, Johnson announced that if China were to continue pursuing the Hong Kong national security law, the UK would offer 350,000 Hong Kong residents who are British National (Overseas) passport holders, and 2.6 million others eligible, the chance to move to the UK, with the possibility of later applying for citizenship.^[517] China accused the UK of interfering in its internal affairs.^[518]



Johnson with US President Joe Biden at the G7 summit in Cornwall, 10 June 2021

UK–EU trade negotiation

On 16 October 2020 Johnson said that the UK "must get ready" for no trade deal with the EU.^[519] After last-minute negotiations, it was announced on 24 December that a trade deal had been agreed.^[520] Entitled the EU–UK Trade and Cooperation Agreement, it provisionally came into force on 1 January 2021.

Departure of Dominic Cummings and Lee Cain

On 12 November 2020, Downing Street Director of Communications Lee Cain resigned amid infighting within the cabinet. He had previously been offered a promotion to chief of staff before his departure.^[521] On 13 November, Johnson ordered Chief Adviser Dominic Cummings, a longtime colleague of Cain, to vacate Downing Street. Despite this, reports stated Cummings and Cain would continue to work for the cabinet "from home" until mid-December.^{[522][523]} Several months after his dismissal, on 26 May 2021, Cummings claimed during a seven-hour testimony delivered to parliament that Johnson was "unfit for the job" and that "tens of thousands of people died who didn't need to die" during the early days of the COVID-19 pandemic due to what he claimed to be "criminal, disgraceful behavior" within Downing Street under the supervision of Health Secretary Matt Hancock.^{[524][525]} Johnson and Hancock denied some of Cummings' claims but refused to acknowledge others, such as Cummings claiming Johnson attempted to play down the threat of COVID-19 by claiming it was "only killing 80-year-olds" during the pandemic's early stages.^{[526][527]}

Legislative agenda

At the State Opening of Parliament on 11 May 2021, a range of proposed laws were announced that are expected to be enacted during Johnson's second term. These measures include the Dissolution and Calling of Parliament Bill, which would restore the royal prerogative to dissolve Parliament; a Higher Education (Freedom of Speech) Bill to combat deplatforming at universities;^[528] an Online Safety Bill that would impose a

statutory duty of care on online companies and empower Ofcom to block particular websites;^[529] and an Animal Welfare (Sentience) Bill that would legally recognise animal sentience. Further laws would introduce mandatory voter identification at general elections and reform the national immigration system.^[528]

Political positions and ideology

Ideologically, Johnson has described himself as a "One-Nation Tory".^{[530][531]} In 2012, the political scientist Tony Travers described Johnson as "a fairly classic—that is, small-state—mildly eurosceptic Conservative" who, like his contemporaries Cameron and George Osborne, also embraced "modern social liberalism".^[532] *The Guardian* stated that while mayor, Johnson blended economic and social liberalism,^[533] with *The Economist* saying that in doing so Johnson "transcends his Tory identity" and adopts a more libertarian perspective.^[534] Stuart Reid, Johnson's colleague at *The Spectator*, described the latter's views as being those of a "liberal libertarian".^[535] *Business Insider* commented that as London mayor, Johnson gained a reputation as "a liberal, centre-ground politician".^[536]



Johnson at a demonstration against hospital closures with Liberal Democrat MP John Hemming (left) and Conservative MP Graham Stuart (centre) in March 2006

Johnson's biographer and friend Andrew Gimson said that while "in economic and social matters, [Johnson] is a genuine liberal", he retains a "Tory element" to his personality through his "love of existing institutions, and a recognition of the inevitability of hierarchy".^[537] His liberal stance on matters such as social policy, immigration and free trade were also commented on in 2019.^{[538][539]} In 2019, Al Jazeera editor James Brownswell said that although Johnson had "leaned to the right" since the Brexit campaign, he remained "slightly more socially liberal" than much of his party.^[540] In 2019, former Deputy Leader of the Conservative Party Michael Heseltine said Johnson "has no right to call himself a one-nation Conservative" and wrote: "I fear that any traces of liberal conservatism that still exist within the prime minister have long since been captured by the rightwing, foreigner-bashing, inward-looking view of the world that has come to characterise his fellow Brexiters".^[541]

Stuart Wilks-Heeg, executive director of *Democratic Audit*, said that "Boris is politically nimble",^[532] while biographer Sonia Purnell stated that Johnson regularly changed his opinion on political issues,

[I am] free-market, tolerant, broadly libertarian (though perhaps not ultra-libertarian), inclined to see the merit of traditions, anti-regulation, pro-immigrant, pro-standing on your own two feet, pro-alcohol, pro-hunting, pro-motorist and ready to

commenting on what she perceived to be "an ideological emptiness beneath the staunch Tory exterior".^[542] She later referred to his "opportunistic – some might say pragmatic – approach to politics".^[17]

defend to the death the right of Glenn Hoddle to believe in reincarnation.

—Boris Johnson, 2011^[145]

In 2014, former Mayor Ken Livingstone stated in an interview with the *New Statesman* that, while he had once feared Johnson as "the most hardline right-wing ideologue since Thatcher", over the course of Johnson's mayoralty he had instead concluded that he was "a fairly lazy tosser who just wants to be there" while doing very little work.^[543]

Writing for *Prospect*, Philip Collins suggested that Johnson and other Brexiteers in the Conservative Party were "British Gaullists" who were "drawing on a conception of the nation in which the dormant spirit of liberty is being reborn." He suggested that this was a form of nationalism, albeit not of the "chauvinistic" variety.^[544] In *Politico*, Michael Hirsch compared Johnson to Trump, suggesting that both were advocates of a "New Nationalism".^[545] Johnson responded that he is "not a nationalist if by that you mean I'm a xenophobe or someone who deprecates other countries and cultures".^[546]

Purnell has argued that Johnson "is nothing if not an elitist".^[547] In a 2000 article titled "Long Live Elitism", Johnson stated that "without elites and elitism man would still be in his caves".^[548] Since the Brexit campaign, he has criticised the "cynicism of the elite" about Brexit,^[549] described an "elite conspiracy to thwart Brexit",^[550] and accused the elite of being "frankly indifferent to the suffering that their policies are causing".^[551] Some media sources have therefore called him a "populist".^{[552][553][554]} Richard J. Evans has described Boris Johnson as "a firm believer in the 'great man' theory of history".^[555]

Environmentalism

Despite frequently speaking about climate change and environmental issues, *New Scientist* noted that Johnson "generally voted against measures to prevent climate change" as an MP.^[556] Michael Gove has said that while at Oxford, Johnson introduced himself as a "green Tory".^[557] In 2019, Johnson's government aimed to achieve "net-zero" greenhouse gas emissions by 2050.^[558] He warned against Britain "napping" on the issue^[559] and said "as Saudi Arabia is to oil, the UK is to wind".^[560]

The Observer, however, has disputed Johnson's environmental record.^[561] Former Minister of State for Energy and Clean Growth Claire O'Neill has said that Johnson has "admitted to [her] that he doesn't really understand" climate change.^[562] In 2015, Johnson published a column in *The Daily Telegraph* that suggested the warm weather in December was not attributable to global warming, and cited a factually incorrect claim by

meteorologist and conspiracy theorist Piers Corbyn about how reduced solar activity could lead to a "mini-Ice Age".^{[556][563]} Bloomberg noted that Johnson's interest in climate change appears to have increased since becoming Prime Minister, and suggested that this could be influenced by his partner Carrie Symonds and father Stanley Johnson, who are both active environmental campaigners.^[562]

In November 2020, Johnson announced a 10-point plan for a "green industrial revolution", which would include the end the sale of petrol and diesel cars and vans by 2030,^[c] quadruple the amount of offshore wind power capacity within a decade, fund a variety of emissions-cutting proposals, and spurn a green post-COVID recovery.^[565] Representatives of Greenpeace and Friends of the Earth criticised Johnson's comments on plans to introduce "enforceable limits" on carbon emissions for other countries ahead of the COP26 summit that the UK will host, which they accused of being unsubstantive.^[566]

In 2021, the UK government under Johnson's leadership announced plans to cut carbon emissions by 78% by 2035,^[567] and the MI6 began "green spying" to secretly investigate if foreign nations were genuinely keeping their climate change pacts.^[568]

Immigration and the European Union

Purnell believed that it was the influence of Johnson's maternal family, the left-wing Fawcetts, that led to him developing "a genuine abhorrence of racial discrimination".^[569] In 2003, Johnson said of the EU, "I am not by any means an ultra-Eurosceptic. In some ways, I am a bit of a fan of the European Union. If we did not have one, we would invent something like it."^[570] As Mayor of London, Johnson was known as a supporter of immigration.^[570] From 2009, he advocated a referendum on Britain's EU membership.^{[570][571][572]}



Johnson with EU Commission President Jean-Claude Juncker, 16 September 2019

In 2018, during the Brexit negotiations, he called for Britain to leave the Single Market^[570] and advocated a more liberal approach to immigration than that of Prime Minister Theresa May.^[573] He stated that many people believed that Britain's EU membership had led to the suppression of the wages of its "indigenous" people, and said the EU was intent on creating a "superstate" that would seek to rob Britain of its sovereignty.^[570] In 2019, Johnson said he would take Britain out of the EU on 31 October whether there was a trade deal in place or not.^[574] Johnson also stated his opposition to a referendum on the Brexit withdrawal agreement.^[575]

On 19 August 2019, Johnson wrote a letter to the EU and asked for the removal of the "backstop" accord, which had previously been agreed and signed by Theresa May during her premiership. The proposal was rejected by the President of the European Council, Donald Tusk.^[576] On 26 August 2019, Johnson said that Britain would not pay £39 billion for the withdrawal agreement were the UK to leave without a deal on 31 October. The European Parliament Brexit coordinator Guy Verhofstadt said there would be no further negotiation on the trade deal unless the UK agreed to pay the entire sum.^[577]

Unionism and devolution

Speaking in Northern Ireland, Johnson described himself as a "fervent and passionate unionist".^[578] He has proposed building a bridge between Scotland and Northern Ireland.^{[579][580]}

The devolved administrations have criticised the Internal Market Bill for its re-centralisation of control over commerce, reversing the devolution of power in the United Kingdom.^[581] In 2020, Johnson reportedly said that "devolution has been a disaster" in Scotland, and said Scottish devolution was Tony Blair's "biggest mistake";^[582] he later said he was merely criticising the "performance of devolution" in Scotland under the SNP and did not "oppose devolution as a concept in itself".^[583]

Public persona



Johnson posing with an Aston Martin painted with the Union Flag in 2017

Often known simply as "Boris",^[584] Johnson has attracted a variety of nicknames, including "BoJo", a portmanteau of his forename and surname.^[585] Biographer Sonia Purnell described his public persona as "brand Boris", noting that he developed it while at the University of Oxford.^[586] Max Hastings referred to this public image as a "façade resembling that of P. G. Wodehouse's Gussie Fink-Nottle, allied to wit, charm, brilliance and startling flashes of instability",^[587] while political scientist Andrew Crines stated that Johnson displayed "the character of a likable and trustworthy individual with strong intellectual capital".^[588] *Private Eye* editor Ian

Hislop has defined him as "Beano Boris" due to his perceived comical nature, saying: "He's our Berlusconi ... He's the only feel-good politician we have, everyone else is too busy being responsible."^[589] To the journalist Dave Hill, Johnson was "a unique figure in British politics, an unprecedented blend of comedian, conman, *faux* subversive showman and populist media confection".^[590]

Johnson purposely cultivates a "semi-shambolic look",^[591] for instance by specifically ruffling his hair in a certain way when he makes public appearances.^[592] Purnell described him as "a manic self-promoter" who filled his life with "fun and jokes".^[593] Described by Crines as "a joker",^[588] Johnson has stated that "humour is a utensil that you can use to sugar the pill and to get important points across."^[593] Purnell wrote that colleagues regularly expressed the view that Johnson used people to advance his own interests,^[594] with Gimson saying that Johnson was "one of the great flatterers of our times".^[595] Purnell commented that he deflected serious questions using "a little humour and a good deal of bravado".^[596] According to Gimson, Johnson was "a humane man" who "could also be staggeringly inconsiderate of others" when pursuing his own interests.^[597] Gimson also stated that Johnson has "an excessive desire to be liked".^[598]

According to Purnell, "[Johnson] is blessed with immense charisma, wit, sex appeal and celebrity gold dust; he is also recognised and loved by millions—although perhaps less so by many who have had to work closely with him (let alone depend on him). Resourceful, cunning and strategic, he can pull off serious political coups when the greater good happens to

Boris is an original—the opposite of a stereotype, the exception to the rule. Overweight and goosey-fleshed, he's the antithesis of an airbrushed pin-up. He resembles a 'human laundry-basket' and has a habit of forgetting to shower.

—Biographer Sonia Purnell^[542]

coincide with his personal advantage but these aspirations are rarely backed up by concrete achievements, or even detailed plans."^[599] Furthermore, Purnell said that Johnson was a "highly evasive figure" when it came to his personal life,^[600] who remained detached from others and who had very few if any intimate friends.^[601] Among friends and family, Johnson is known as "Al" (short for his forename Alexander), rather than his middle name "Boris".^[602] Gimson stated that Johnson "has very bad manners. He tends to be late, does not care about being late, and dresses without much care".^[603] Highly ambitious and very competitive, Johnson was, Gimson wrote, born "to wage a ceaseless struggle for supremacy".^[604] He would be particularly angered with those he thought insulted aspects of his personal life; for instance, when an article in *The Telegraph* upset Johnson, he emailed commissioning editor Sam Leith with the simple message "Fuck off and die."^[605] Thus, according to Purnell, Johnson hides his ruthlessness "using bumbling, self-deprecation or humour",^[606] and was a fan of "laddish banter and crude sexual references".^[607]

Personal life

Having been born in New York City to British parents, Johnson at first held British-American dual citizenship. In 2014, he acknowledged he was disputing a demand for capital gains tax from the US tax authorities on a property that he inherited in the United Kingdom,^{[608][609]} which ultimately he paid.^[610] In February 2015, he announced his intention to renounce his US citizenship to demonstrate his loyalty to the UK,^{[611][612]} which he did in 2016.^[613] Johnson has a knowledge of French, Italian, German, Spanish,^[90] Latin, and Ancient Greek,^[614] frequently employing and alluding to classical references in both his newspaper columns and his speeches.^[586] His favourite movie is *The Godfather*, due to "the multiple retribution killings at the end".^[615]

In 2007, Johnson said he had smoked cannabis before he went to university.^[616] He has also said he had used cocaine.^[617]

Religion

Johnson was baptised a Catholic and later confirmed into the Church of England,^[53] but has stated that "his faith comes and goes"^[618] and that he is not a serious practising Christian.^[619] In 2020, his son Wilfred was baptised Catholic, prompting suggestions that Johnson had returned to Catholicism.^[620] Johnson and Symonds married in a Catholic ceremony at Westminster Cathedral on 29 May 2021.^[621] In order to be married in the Catholic Church, Johnson needed to have his two previous marriages proven to be invalid by reason of lack of canonical form. Since he was baptised Catholic but his previous weddings were not conferred by the Catholic Church, they are considered putatively invalid.^{[622][623]}

Johnson holds ancient Greek statesman and orator Pericles as a personal hero.^{[624][625]} According to Johnson's biographer, Andrew Gimson, regarding ancient Greek and Roman polytheism: "it is clear that [Johnson] is inspired by the Romans, and even more by the Greeks, and repelled by the early Christians".^[626] Johnson views secular humanism positively and sees it as owing more to the classical world than to Christian thinking.^[627] However, in 2021, Johnson was asked if he held pre-Christian beliefs, which he denied, saying "Christianity is a superb ethical system and I would count myself as a kind of very, very bad Christian[.] No disrespect to any other religions, but Christianity makes a lot of sense to me."^[628]

Relationships

In 1987, Johnson married Allegra Mostyn-Owen, daughter of the art historian William Mostyn-Owen and Italian writer Gaia Servadio.^[629] The couple's marriage ended in divorce or annulment in 1993^[d] and 12 days later Johnson married Marina Wheeler, a

barrister, daughter of journalist and broadcaster Charles Wheeler.^[633] Five weeks later, Wheeler and Johnson's first child was born.^{[634][635]} The Wheeler and Johnson families have known each other for decades,^[636] and Marina Wheeler was at the European School, Brussels, at the same time as her future husband. They have four children: two daughters and two sons.^[637]

Between 2000 and 2004, Johnson had an affair with *Spectator* columnist Petronella Wyatt when he was its editor, resulting in a terminated pregnancy and a miscarriage.^[170] In April 2006, the *News of the World* alleged that Johnson was having an affair with *Guardian* journalist Anna Fazackerley. The pair did not comment and shortly afterwards Johnson employed Fazackerley.^{[181][182]}



Johnson with his then-fiancée Carrie Symonds at the 2020 Commonwealth Day service

In 2009, Johnson fathered a daughter with Helen MacIntyre, an arts consultant. In 2013, the Court of Appeal discharged an injunction banning reporting of his daughter's existence. The judge ruled that the public had a right to know about Johnson's "reckless" behaviour.^{[219][638][639]} Johnson has not disclosed how many children he has.^{[4][5][638]}

In September 2018, Johnson and Wheeler issued a statement confirming that after 25 years of marriage they had separated "several months ago", and had begun divorce proceedings.^[640] They reached a financial settlement in February 2020,^[641] and the divorce was finalised by November 2020.^[642]

In October 2020, Jennifer Arcuri, asked whether her 'friendship' with Johnson was in fact an affair, said "I think that goes without saying ... But I'm not going to talk about it."^[643] In March 2021, she went into more detail about the alleged affair in an interview with the *Sunday Mirror*, saying that it lasted from 2012 to 2016.^{[644][645]}

In 2019, Johnson was living with Carrie Symonds, the daughter of Matthew Symonds, co-founder of *The Independent* newspaper. Symonds had worked for the Conservative party since 2009 and worked on Johnson's 2012 campaign to be re-elected as Mayor.^[646] On 29 February 2020, Johnson and Symonds announced that they had become engaged in late 2019, and that Symonds was expecting a baby in early summer.^[647] Their son, Wilfred Lawrie Nicholas Johnson,^[648] was born on 29 April 2020 at University College Hospital in London.^{[3][649]}

On 29 May 2021, Johnson married Symonds in a secret ceremony at Westminster Cathedral attended by thirty guests,^{[621][650]} becoming the first prime minister to marry in office since Lord Liverpool married Mary Chester in 1822.^[651]

Family and ancestors

Johnson is the eldest of the four children of Stanley Johnson, a former Conservative Member of the European Parliament and employee of the European Commission and the World Bank, and the painter Charlotte Johnson Wahl (née Fawcett),^[22] the daughter of Sir James Fawcett, a barrister^{[652][653]} and president of the European Commission of Human Rights.^[654] His younger siblings are Rachel Johnson, a writer and journalist; Leo Johnson, a partner specialising in sustainability at accountancy firm PricewaterhouseCoopers;^[655] and Jo Johnson, ex-minister of state and former Conservative MP for Orpington, who resigned from his brother's government in September 2019.^[465] Johnson's stepmother, Jenny, the second wife of his father Stanley, is the stepdaughter of Teddy Sieff, the former chairman of Marks & Spencer.^[656] Having been a member of the Conservatives between 2008 and 2011, Rachel Johnson joined the Liberal Democrats in 2017.^[657] She stood as a candidate for Change UK in the 2019 European Elections.^[658] Johnson also has two half-siblings, Julia and Maximilian, through his father's later marriage to Jennifer Kidd.^{[659][660]}



Boris and his younger brother Leo in 2013

Johnson's paternal great-grandfather was the Ottoman journalist Ali Kemal who was of Turkish and Circassian origin,^{[661][662][663]} and a secular Muslim. Johnson's paternal grandfather, Wilfred Johnson – Ali Kemal's son, was an RAF pilot in Coastal Command during the Second World War.^[664] His father's other ancestry includes English, German and French; one of his German ancestors was said to be the illegitimate daughter of Prince Paul of Württemberg and thus a descendant of King George II of Great Britain.^[665] This would make him and Elizabeth II sixth cousins twice removed. Through Mary of Teck's connection to Duke Frederick II Eugene of Württemberg, they would in that case also have a closer genealogical link as fifth cousins twice removed. Johnson's mother is the granddaughter of Elias Avery Lowe, a palaeographer, who was a Russian Jewish immigrant to the US,^[666] and Pennsylvania-born Helen Tracy Lowe-Porter, a translator of Thomas Mann.^[667] In reference to his varied ancestry, Johnson has described himself as a "one-man melting pot" – with a combination of Abrahamic religious great-grandparents.^[668] Johnson was given the middle name "Boris" after a Russian émigré his parents had once met.^[21] An episode of *Who Do You Think You Are?* explored the German origins of his middle name Pfeffel.^{[6][669][670]} Through this family line, Johnson is a descendant in the seventh generation of Anna Catharina Bischoff, whose mummified corpse was found in 1975 and identified in 2018.^{[671][672]}

Reception

Sonia Purnell described Johnson as "the most unconventional, yet compelling politician of the post-Blair era".^[600] She added that he was "beloved by millions and recognised by all".^[600] Giles Edwards and Jonathan Isaby commented that Johnson appealed to "a broad cross-section of the public",^[673] with his friends characterising him as a "Heineken Tory" who can appeal to voters that other Conservatives cannot (a reference to the beer advertisement).^[12] Gimson expressed the view that "people love him because he makes them laugh",^[11] noting that he had become "the darling of the Tory rank and file".^[674]

Purnell recognised that during the 2008 mayoral election he was "polarising opinions to the extreme",^[675] with critics viewing him as "variously evil, a clown, a racist and a bigot".^[16] Writing in *The Guardian*, journalist Polly Toynbee referred to him as a "jester, toff, self-absorbed sociopath and serial liar",^[676] while Labour politician Hazel Blears called him "a nasty right-wing elitist, with odious views and criminal friends".^[14] He has also been accused of sexism, after referring to Labour leader Jeremy Corbyn as "a big girl's blouse"^[677] and former prime minister David Cameron as a "girly swot".^[678] Cameron has said of Johnson: "The thing about the greased piglet is that he manages to slip through other people's hands where mere mortals fail."^[679]



A protest following the Cambridge Analytica scandal, 29 March 2018

In 2016, Johnson evoked comparisons (both ideological and physical) with United States President Donald Trump.^{[680][681][682]} In June 2016, Nick Clegg described him as "like Donald Trump with a thesaurus",^[683] while fellow Conservative MP Kenneth Clarke described him as a "nicer Donald Trump".^[684] Trump acknowledged the comparison, saying British people refer to Johnson as "Britain Trump".^[685] Johnson was critical of Trump on several occasions before Trump was elected;^{[306][686]} he praised Trump as president,^[687] but disagreed with some of his policies.^{[688][689]} Upon Trump's 2020 defeat, Johnson said that he had a "refreshing" conversation with his successor, Joe Biden.^[690]

In *The Economist's* 2018 end-of-the-year awards for "the worst in British politics", Johnson received the highest award—that for the "politician who has done most to let down his party and country".^[691] It described Johnson as one of the architects of the Brexit "catastrophe", and "the most irresponsible politician the country has seen for many years".^[691]

Johnson has been described as a divisive and controversial figure in British politics.^{[692][9][10]} In 2019, *The Irish Times* described him as "a deeply polarising figure, cherished by many older Conservatives but viewed by others as a serial liar and an amoral

opportunist who sold Brexit to the British people on the basis of false promises."^[18] Johnson's former boss at *The Daily Telegraph* Max Hastings in 2019 described him as "a brilliant entertainer", but accused him of "[caring] for no interest save his own fame and gratification", criticised his leadership abilities and described him as "unfit for national office".^[693]

Allegations of racism and Islamophobia

In August 2018, *The Daily Telegraph* published a satirical article by Johnson criticising the then newly implemented Danish law against the wearing of the burqa or niqab. In it, he defended the right of women to wear whatever they chose. He agreed that the burqa is oppressive and that "it is weird and bullying to expect women to cover their faces" and also commented that he could "find no scriptural authority for the practice in the Koran" and that it seemed "absolutely ridiculous that people should choose to go around looking like letter boxes" and that "[i]f a female student turned up at school or at a university lecture looking like a bank robber" that he "should feel fully entitled – like Jack Straw – to ask her to remove it so that [he] could talk to her properly."^[694] The Muslim Council of Britain (MCM) accused Johnson of "pandering to the far right", while Conservative peer Baroness Warsi accused him of dog-whistle politics.^{[695][696]} Several senior Conservatives, including May, called on Johnson to apologise.^{[697][698]} Others, such as MP Nadine Dorries, argued that his comments did not go far enough and that face veils should be banned.^[699] A Sky News poll found 60% thought Johnson's comments were not racist, to 33% who did; 48% thought he should not apologise, while 45% thought he should.^[700] An independent panel was set up to review Johnson's comments.^[701] In December, the panel cleared him of wrongdoing, stating that while his language could be considered "provocative", he was "respectful and tolerant" and was fully entitled to use "satire" to make his point.^[702]

Writing for the *Telegraph* in 2002, Johnson referred to a visit by then prime minister Tony Blair: "What a relief it must be for Blair to get out of England. It is said that the Queen has come to love the Commonwealth, partly because it supplies her with regular cheering crowds of flag-waving piccaninnies", in the same article he referred to African people as having "watermelon smiles".^[703]

In his 2004 comic novel *Seventy-Two Virgins*, Johnson described the thoughts of a black parking inspector who had been subjected to racist abuse: "Faced with such disgusting behaviour, some traffic wardens respond with a merciless taciturnity. The louder the rant of the traffic offenders, the more acute are the wardens' feelings of pleasure that they, the stakeless, the outcasts, the niggers, are a valued part of the empire of law, and in a position to chastise the arrogance and selfishness of the indigenous people." In the same book, the narrator refers to the media being controlled by Jewish oligarchs.^[704]

In September 2019, Labour MP Tanmanjeet Singh Dhesi called on Johnson to apologise for the comments he had made about burqa-wearing Muslim women in the *Telegraph*. Johnson declined to apologise, stating that his remarks had come as part of a "strong liberal defence of everybody's right to wear whatever they want."^[705] In 2021 the political journalist and author Peter Osborne, who has written several books about the lies told by politicians, published a book about the lies told by Johnson, in which he wrote "I have never encountered a senior British politician who lies and fabricates so regularly, so shamelessly and so systematically as Boris Johnson".^[706]

Depictions

The political career of Johnson has been the subject of several television docudramas:

- Stuart McQuarrie in the 2005 television film *A Very Social Secretary*^[707]
- Christian Brassington in the More4 drama documentary *When Boris Met Dave*^[708]
- Will Barton in the 2017 BBC-produced drama *Theresa vs. Boris: How May Became PM*^{[709][710]}
- Richard Goulding in the 2019 HBO and Channel 4 drama *Brexit: The Uncivil War*^{[711][712]}

Johnson's bumbling mannerisms and distinctive hairstyle have also made him the subject of parody:

- Johnson was voiced by Lewis MacLeod in the fourth and fifth series of *2DTV*^[713]
- MacLeod also voiced Johnson in *Newzoids*^[714]
- Johnson was portrayed as half-man and half dog, who would engage in acts of canine behaviour, chasing his tail rather than answering questions, in *Headcases*. He was voiced by Jon Culshaw^[715]
- In 2019, James Corden portrayed Johnson in a sketch on *Saturday Night Live*^[716]
- In the 2020 revival of *Spitting Image*, Johnson's puppet is voiced by Matt Forde^[717]
- Singer Robbie Williams portrayed Boris Johnson in the music video for his 2020 festive single '*Can't Stop Christmas*'^[718]

Honours

- Honorary degree of Doctor of Laws (LL.D) from Brunel University London, 2007^[719]
- Honorary Fellowship of the Royal Institute of British Architects (Hon FRIBA), 2011^{[720][721]}
- Honorary Australian of the Year in the UK, 26 January 2014^{[722][723]}

- Member of Her Majesty's Most Honourable Privy Council, 2016, upon his appointment as Foreign Secretary. This gave him the honorific title "The Right Honourable" for life.

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See also

- Electoral history of Boris Johnson
- List of foreign ministers in 2017
- Racism in the UK Conservative Party § Accusations against Boris Johnson

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Notes

- a. Johnson has not disclosed how many children he has. He is known to have had four children with his second wife, Marina Wheeler; a fifth child from an extramarital affair with Helen MacIntyre; and a sixth child with his third wife, Carrie Symonds.^{[3][4][5]}
- b. Formally, Parliament is prorogued by the monarch (Queen **Elizabeth II**) on the advice of the prime minister; it is a common **legal fiction** in the UK that many executive functions of the prime minister are formally carried out by the monarch on the prime minister's "advice", which is effectively the legal instrument by which the prime minister carries out the function. It was this advice of Johnson's that was ruled unlawful, not the actions of the Queen.
- c. This was a reduction on the 2035 target set in February that year, which brought forward the previous deadline of 2040.^[564]

- d. Sources differ on whether the marriage ended in divorce^{[630][631]} or with an annulment.^{[101][632]}

Further reading

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- Fintan O'Toole, "The King of Little England", *The New York Review of Books*, vol. LXVIII, no. 10 (10 June 2021), pp. 44–46.
- A. Vasudevan. *The Thinking Man's Idiot: The Wit and Wisdom of Boris Johnson* (New Holland Publishers (UK) Ltd., 2008) ISBN 978-1-84773-359-7

External links

- Boris Johnson (<https://www.boris-johnson.org.uk>) official website
 -
 - Profile (<https://www.parliament.uk/biographies/commons/member/1423>) at Parliament of the United Kingdom
 - Contributions in Parliament (<https://hansard.parliament.uk/search/MemberContributions?memberId=1423>) at *Hansard*
 - Boris Johnson (<https://www.telegraph.co.uk/comment/columnists/borisjohnson/>) column archives at *The Daily Telegraph*
 - Portraits of Boris Johnson (<https://www.npg.org.uk/collections/search/person.php?LinkID=mp58531>) at the National Portrait Gallery, London
 - Works by or about Boris Johnson (<https://worldcat.org/identities/lccn-nb2002-776>) in libraries (WorldCat catalog)
 - Appearances (<https://www.c-span.org/person/?borisjohnson>) on C-SPAN
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