



# **At No 50: *from insights to action***

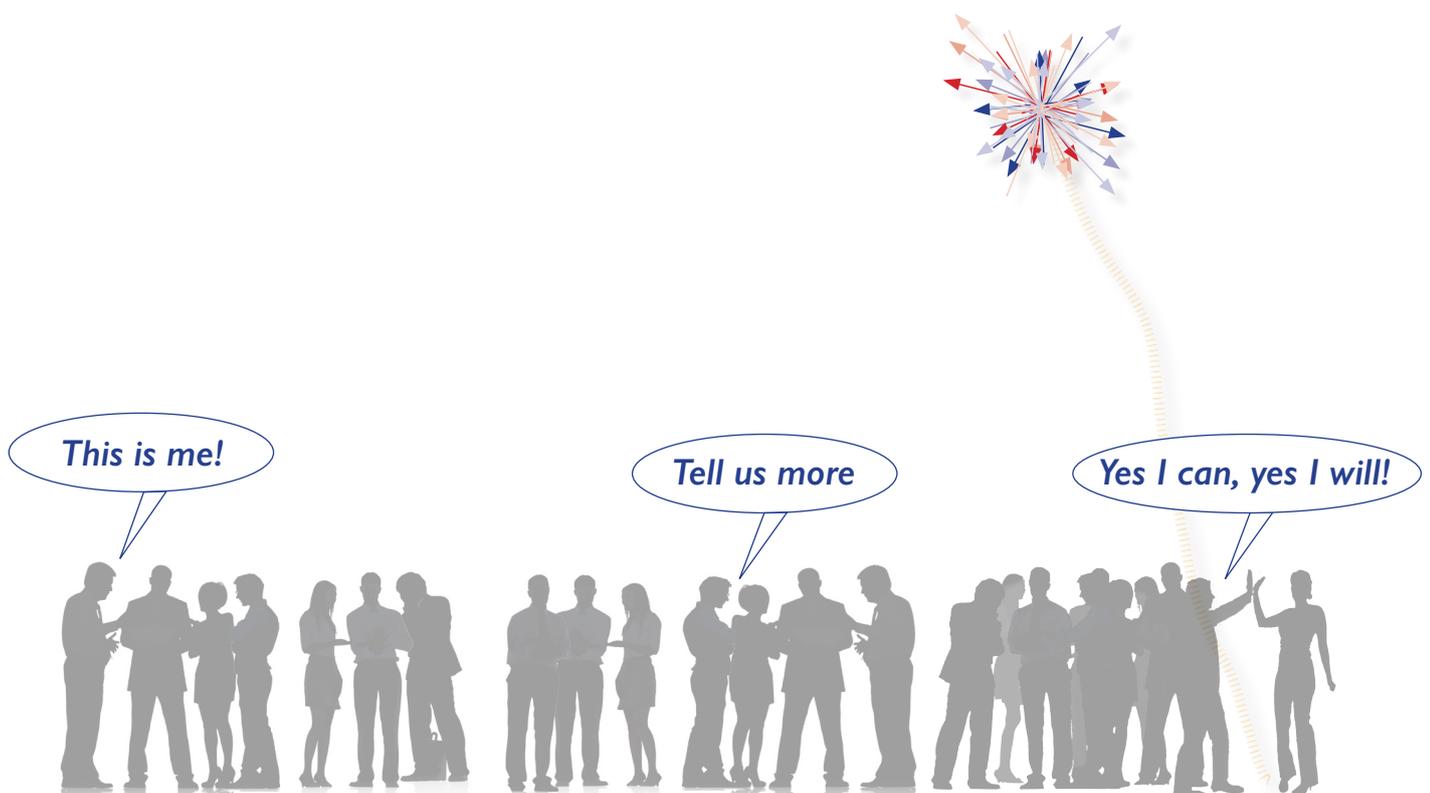
From 6.00pm on Sunday, May 17th 2020  
until 11.30am on Wednesday, May 20th

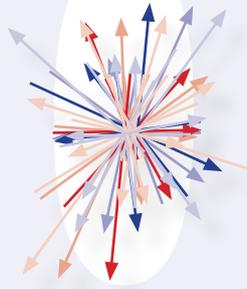
**Background Note and Agenda for our 50th Leadership Conversation**

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Society of Leadership Fellows, St George's House, Windsor Castle

This is me!  
Tell us more.  
Yes I can,  
yes I will!





## Welcome to our 50th Leadership Conversation

**A landmark event when we will reflect on the top insights from our first 49 Conversations and review and sharpen our resolves as leaders**

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### We will:

- Build on a paper from the House team on the top insights from our first 49 Conversations, sharpening up what we as a group regard as the 3 or 4 most powerful insights that we wish to act on as leaders
- Support each other in setting ourselves stretching targets to take full advantage of the shared wisdom of the Fellowship in improving our performance as leaders
- Offer each other generous and challenging feedback throughout the Conversation, modelling our practice of mutual support in a way that achieves still higher levels of trust among us and stretches us all in achieving higher standards of leadership.

This will be our third three-night Conversation. The first two, in March and October 2019, were two of our most powerful Conversations to date.

In this one, we will draw on some of the sharpest insights that emerged through our first 49 Conversations and ask how we might best draw on them in supporting each other in conquering our greatest leadership challenges going forward.

This will be a landmark event for the Society of Leadership Fellows and we are excited by the number of Fellows who have already said that you wish to join us in Windsor on May 17th.

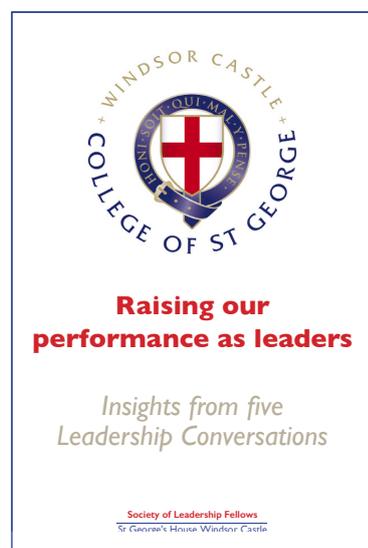
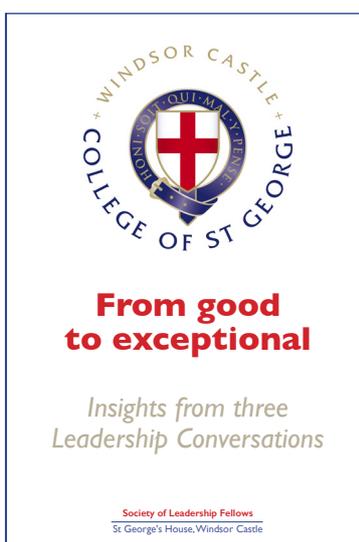
## Drawing on our key themes across the series so far

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During this Conversation we will draw on a number of the major themes that we have explored with Leadership Fellows in previous Conversations.

In preparing for this one, it would help a lot if you create the time to dip into one or two of the leadership themes set out on the [Leadership Insights](#) page on our website. It always adds a lot to a Conversation when a Fellow shares an insight they have seen in a previous report and been inspired by in some way.

The front covers of four of these themes are hyperlinked below:



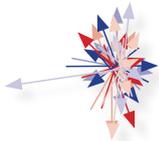
## Three stages to our Conversation

You might be wondering what is the significance of the 12 words on page two! They are designed to capture the three general stages around which we will structure our discussions:



### "This is me!"

We put stage one under this heading because we want to encourage you to share a story that helps us understand better where you are coming from as a leader. If we are to achieve strong connections across our group, we each need some sort of stake in the discussions from early on.



### "Tell us more"

Stage two is under this heading because we hope that by now we will all be drawing on the power of questioning to draw others out more. We want to get behind each other's stories to understand better what is holding us back and what's driving each of us forward as leaders.



### "Yes I can, yes I will!"

Stage three is under this heading because it is about each of us stepping into a really empowered place where we feel confident *stretching ourselves* as leaders because we have a greater sense of all that we can make possible together.

**For every breakthrough in thinking that we achieve during this third stage, we will be able to identify its origins in the stories that we have each shared and the curiosity that others have shown in response.**





## This is me!

*From 6.00pm on Sunday evening to mid-morning on Monday*

If there is any "magic ingredient" in our Leadership Conversations, it is surely the exceptionally high levels of trust that Fellows invest in the process - and each other.

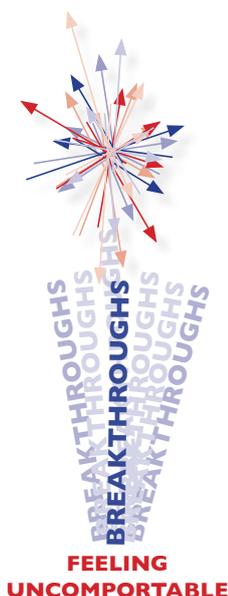
Whenever we achieve significant breakthroughs in thinking, we know that it is our trust in the goodwill and generosity of spirit of everyone in the circle that has made it possible for so many of us to position ourselves **just on the edge of our comfort zone**, as we think through a hard truth that we might have ducked for a considerable number of years!

### **A bumper number of breakthroughs**

Possibly our greatest point of learning since we started these Leadership Conversations is that these moments of letting ourselves feel "uncomfortable" have been **essential** to the breakthroughs that so many Fellows have achieved.

At this one, we are after a bumper number of breakthroughs!

We'd be disappointed if you expect anything less.



## Which insights capture your imagination?

At least a week before this Conversation we will circulate a summary of key insights from the series so far, as a basis for discussion in the opening session. Pete will then hope to discuss these insights with each of you on the phone, when he calls to ask what you most want out of this Conversation.

In our first round of small groups, shortly after 6.00pm on the Sunday, we will discuss which of the insights resonate most strongly with us as a group and make us want to work on them further.

### Encouraging story-telling

We will also ask whether **you** bring a key insight perhaps triggered by your involvement in a previous Conversation, or being moved by an insight in one of the Conversation reports, that you might include in some way as part of the story that you share about yourself as a leader.

Listening to others' stories triggers all sorts of ideas within us about aspects of our own leadership style, and our ambitions as leaders, that we can use this time to explore further.





## Tell us more

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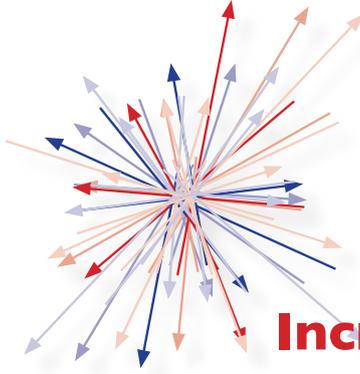
*From mid-morning on Monday through to Monday evening*

There will come a stage by mid-morning on Monday when we have in our minds a number of key insights that have captured our imagination, as a group.

We will then ask ourselves which are the **two or three most challenging insights** that we now wish to engage with in greater depth.

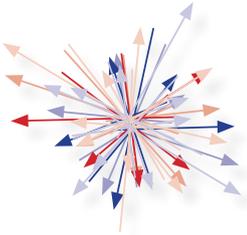
At this stage we want to be careful to focus on a small number of insights that we regard as potentially **really significant**, and also **truly difficult** in terms of the challenges they pose for us as leaders.

Ideally they will challenge some of the assumptions that a number of us are making about how we are meant to behave as leaders.



## Increasing our expectations

This is the stage when we will invite you to ramp up your ambitions for what you want to take away from this Conversation.



Please **expect more**, because if you expect more now we will push ourselves harder and **take away more** on Wednesday.

## Focusing on movement in thinking

If we are to move forward towards some powerful resolves by mid-morning on Wednesday, it's really important that throughout Monday we are each aware of how we are **shifting** in our thinking.

For this to happen, we will occasionally check that none of us are letting ourselves get trapped into fixed positions.

We always learn the most from those who move on in their thinking and are prepared to change their mind.



*I've never told myself  
I could really change.  
That's where I think  
I've gone wrong*

*I'm now seeing  
that quite  
differently - it's a  
little scary, too!*

*I agree, I want to  
stop settling for  
second best!*





## Yes I can, yes I will!

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*From Tuesday morning through to 11.30 on Wednesday*

We hope that we will have had some memorable moments on the Monday!

However good they might be, they won't be anything like as powerful as they will be on Tuesday and then on Wednesday morning.

During this second stage in the Conversation we will encourage a higher level of feedback and coaching across the group.

We will all have told our own stories and listened to how other Fellows responded to our questions about theirs. Now we can really gain the benefits of the philosophy of **assuming the best of each other**, and be relaxed about offering and receiving feedback in the safe space of the Vicars' Hall.

It is remarkable how quickly we can shift something that has been stuck in our minds for a long time, when we have the benefit of honest feedback from peers who we know want the best for us.



## Adopting a multi-speed approach

For the Tuesday to achieve all that it can, it is important to accept that we all tend to move forward at different paces.

Some will find that fairly quickly on the Tuesday morning you manage to crack something that has been worrying you, whilst others will want more time for reflection and thinking through personal options before you are ready to come to some sort of decision.

We each need to be free to set our own speed, knowing that other Fellows are there for us, on our terms.

Sometimes we find that a Fellow who achieves a quick breakthrough in their thinking is more than happy to concentrate their energy on supporting others, only to find a little later on that a breakthrough that someone else has made triggers a **much bigger breakthrough for them** than the one they have already had!

By this stage we should have achieved such a strong sense of **mutual trust and shared energy** as a group that we are all able to move further forward than any of us thought possible at 6.00 on Sunday.



## From insights to action

We attach a lot of importance to our final session on the Tuesday, before we break for drinks and then dinner and our social evening, with the option of our home-grown version of Karaoke that can make us all laugh so much that it's almost painful smiling at breakfast the next morning!

In this session from 5.30pm on Tuesday 19th we will ask you to focus on the resolves that you would like to have achieved **by the beginning of September**.

In October we found that by focusing on movement forward over the next three months we could each create a **platform** for ourselves that made possible some exciting work on the final morning.

This is when we asked everyone to undertake the "leadership walk" that we have been developing at our two and three-night Conversations in recent months.

## Letting our minds live in the future as if it is now

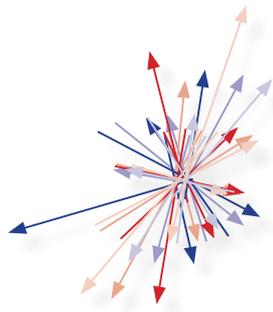
In our final session on the Wednesday morning we will ask you to consider what might become possible for you in the New Year and then May 2021, as you imagine yourself converting your resolves from this Conversation into **decisive action** as a leader.



As you will experience, the act of literally stepping into this space in the future and imagining that we are each **NOW** in January and then May 2021 makes it possible to **feel** and say some things in a way that almost certainly could not have happened if we had all just remained seated in our chairs speculating about the future from the position we are in now.

Once we have experienced these leadership walks, we will spend our final fifteen minutes together sharpening up our top insights since 6.00pm on Sunday. They will be captured in a special House publication.

# Agenda



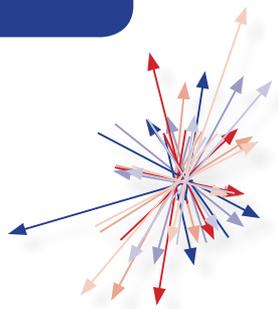
## Sunday, May 17th 2020

<b>2.30pm+</b>	You are welcome to check into your room in St George's House
<b>4.30pm</b>	Tea in the House for those joining Evensong in the Chapel
<b>5.05pm</b>	Evensong ( <i>optional</i> )
<b>5.50pm</b>	<b>Vicars' Hall.</b> Refreshments, then start of the Conversation at 6.00pm. Introduction to the Guiding Principles and then on to Stage One: <i>This is me!</i> We take our agreed question into small groups and then share our personal answers with the wider group
<b>7.40pm</b>	Free time/ drinks in the Sitting Room of St George's House
<b>8.15pm</b>	We have a working dinner in the House Dining Room
<b>9.30pm</b>	We go through to the Sitting room for tea/coffee with port or brandy
<b>9.45pm</b>	Private floodlit tour of St George's Chapel, departing from the Sitting Room ( <i>optional</i> ). After the tour, please join us for a nightcap in the Sitting Room

## Monday, May 18th

<b>7.45am</b>	Breakfast is served in the House Dining Room
<b>8.45am</b>	We start again promptly in the Vicars' Hall
<b>11.00am</b>	Personal reflection time
<b>11.30am</b>	We move on to Stage 2: <i>Tell us more</i>
<b>1.00pm</b>	A hot buffet lunch is served in the Vicars' Hall and we work together in our groups
<b>1.50pm</b>	Team photo on the West steps of the Chapel ( <i>weather permitting!</i> ) then we are back together as one group, with time for one round of small groups in this session
<b>3.00pm</b>	Personal reflection time until 4.00pm. Refreshments at 3.50

# Agenda



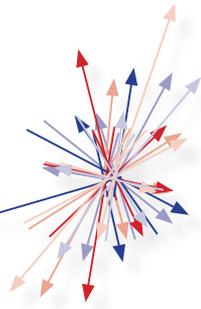
## Monday, May 18th (contd.)/

<b>4.00pm</b>	Conversation resumes. We take stock of the progress that we have made in tackling key challenges, refocus and move forward, moving in and out of small groups as necessary
<b>5.30pm</b>	Time out and refreshments, then resume the Conversation at 6.00pm
<b>7.15pm</b>	Free time, and drinks available in the Sitting Room
<b>8.15pm</b>	Dinner is served in the Dining Room
<b>9.30pm</b>	We go through to No 25 the Cloisters for tea/coffee and drinks

## Tuesday, May 19th

<b>7.45am</b>	Breakfast is served in the House
<b>8.45am</b>	We start again promptly in the Vicars' Hall. Some re-energising activity then on to Stage 3: <i>Yes I can, Yes I will!</i> We agree a new shortlist of challenges to tackle, with space for cross-group feedback and coaching as individual Fellows raise specific ideas and concerns with other members of the group
<b>11.00am</b>	Personal reflection time
<b>11.30am</b>	We take stock of insights so far and agree our agenda for the rest of the morning
<b>1.00pm</b>	A hot buffet lunch is served in the Vicars' Hall and we work together in our groups
<b>1.50pm</b>	We resume as one group, sharpening up insights so far and focusing on the small number where we need more thinking time to engage with how best to apply them to our own leadership styles
<b>2.45pm</b>	Personal reflection time
<b>3.30pm</b>	<b><i>Vicars' Hall.</i></b> A key part of the Conversation in which we focus our energies on any Fellows who feel stuck in some way and would appreciate additional group support to enable them to move forward in their thinking

# Agenda



## Tuesday, May 19th (contd.)/

- 
- 5.00pm** Refreshments and half an hour of personal space, to take some exercise or just catch up with messages
- 
- 5.30pm** *Vicars' Hall.* In small groups, we ask ourselves what are the two or three most important personal resolves that we want to have acted on by the time of **our online follow-up on September 3rd**. Share resolves and ideas, then draw together key overall messages
- 
- 7.15pm** Free time, and drinks in the Sitting Room
- 
- 8.15pm** Dinner is served in the Dining Room
- 
- 9.30pm** We go to No 25 the Cloisters for our social evening. Any Fellows who brings your own musical instrument will achieve instant heroic status! Followed by the unforgettable option of St George's Karaoke
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## Wednesday, May 20th

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- 7.30am** Breakfast is served in St George's House. Please clear your luggage from your bedroom, because the domestic staff need to service the rooms. You are welcome to leave it in the Sitting Room or bring it down to the Vicars' Hall where we will be for the remainder of the Conversation
- 
- 8.30am** *Vicars' Hall.* We start again **promptly**, and in our final small groups focus on how we each intend to build on the **springboard** we established for ourselves yesterday evening, with our clear resolves, to continue to strengthen and develop our leadership through to May 2021. We encourage each other to be bold in "living" our leadership ambitions for 2021. When we return from groups, we sharpen up our key insights and resolves through **personal "leadership walks"**. In the final 15 minutes we capture the most challenging messages that we take away from the past 3 days. We draw our discussions to a close **just before 11.30am**.
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- 11.30am** Close of the Conversation
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## Video link-up: Thursday, September 3rd 2020

In the final minutes of the Conversation we will confirm the time for a follow-up video link-up in September to swap notes. This will give us all a chance to hear how much progress we have each made in taking forward our resolves.

The key to us making the best possible use of our time is for Fellows to share a brief email beforehand updating the rest of us on how you have acted on your resolves, and especially which ones you found the most challenging – and we then take it from there!

**Suggested time for Video Link-up: 3.00 to 4.00pm on Thursday, September 3rd 2020**