

When you can see that rules and laws prevent basic survival, you will understand that centralised governance has gone too far

Adam Tugwell | 19 January 2026



A question that more and more people have begun to ask is: who does government really work for?

For some, that question comes from living at the sharpest edge of society's problems - for example, those who can no longer afford to feed themselves properly. But the truth is that across every part of society - our communities, small businesses, clubs, pubs, and the countless organisations that sit outside the government or public-sector bubble - rules, regulations and requirements are appearing everywhere. And when you look at what these rules actually do, many no longer make any sense at all in terms of allowing people to continue doing what they have always done.

Look more closely and the picture darkens further. Through licences, taxation, penalty notices, workplace directives and endless compliance demands, the ability of anything small, people-centred, cost-effective or community-driven to function is being slowly strangled.

The cumulative effect is suffocating. Many businesses have already gone to the wall because of red tape alone - and that's before we even consider the wider impact of a money-centric system and a government culture obsessed with growth, targets and perpetual money creation.

Very few have questioned any of this. Not because people haven't sensed something was wrong, or felt that the direction of travel jarred with the common sense of real life. But because every change introduced over decades has been sold as "progress".

Each new rule has been framed as something that improves life, modernises society, or makes everything better for us all - as if the past was universally terrible and the only possible path was the one we're on.

Yet the freedom we believe we have today is already hollow. With every new move the machinery of government makes, that freedom becomes more restricted.

At some point, we must confront the uncomfortable truth: what is being presented as freedom is increasingly just conformity to a narrative - a form of oppression wearing a very misleading name.

And all of this is happening at a time when global tensions are escalating. With our traditional allies across the Atlantic now posturing over who "owns" Greenland, and European elites openly entertaining the idea of war with Russia and the East, the systems we rely on are heading toward collapse - potentially in a matter of months. That's before we even consider the other crises and issues lining up behind them.

Without meaningful change - and without a wholesale rejection of the rule-based system that is already choking every part of life - we face a future where people simply cannot help themselves when they most need to.

Whether it's farms being unable to grow food, pubs being unable to operate as social spaces, or low-paid workers being unable to earn enough to live, the dark clouds gathering ahead point to a moment where survival becomes impossible. Not because people lack the

will or ability, but because someone in an office miles away decided to make normal life illegal.

Yes, governments talk about “emergency powers” - the idea that in a crisis, the state will temporarily turn a blind eye to rules that would otherwise be enforced. But that raises a very telling question: if these rules can be suspended when reality demands it, who were they ever really serving in the first place?

The time is fast approaching when people may have no choice but to ignore rules and regulations that were created solely because they suited someone else’s interests, rather than being developed to help people live. Frameworks that should never have existed in a genuinely free society, that are now the very things preventing society from functioning.

Of course, we will always need accepted and shared ways of doing things. But those ways should be created, maintained and managed by the people actually involved and the communities they will affect. Not by distant agendas and idealistic theories detached from basic human values.

Systems should reflect how life really works for everyone, not how it might look in the imagination of those who believe people must be forced to behave as they are told.

Dark as the future may appear, there is an opportunity emerging. People and Communities can take back our power and build a system centred on people, community and the environment - one that genuinely puts human beings first.

This alternative already exists in outline. It’s called the Local Economy & Governance System. Built on the foundation of The Basic Living Standard, and shaped by principles such as participatory democracy and the contribution culture.

It offers a complete shift away from the money-centric disaster path we are currently on. It creates a world where accountability is shared, where frameworks support life rather than restrict it, and where everyone is involved in shaping the society they live in.

Further Reading: Building a People-First Society

To deepen your understanding of the ideas discussed in this work - especially the critique of centralised governance and the vision for a people-centred alternative - these readings from Adam's Archive provide a logical pathway.

They move from foundational principles, through practical frameworks, to real-world applications and philosophical context. Each resource is accompanied by a brief description to help you navigate the journey.

1. The Basic Living Standard Explained

<http://adamtugwell.blog/2025/10/24/the-basic-living-standard-explained/>

Start here to understand the foundational principle underpinning the proposed alternative system. This article explains what the Basic Living Standard is, why it matters, and how it serves as the bedrock for a fairer, more resilient society.

2. The Local Economy & Governance System (Online Text)

<http://adamtugwell.blog/2025/11/21/the-local-economy-governance-system-online-text/>

This resource introduces the Local Economy & Governance System, outlining its structure and how it departs from traditional, money-centric models. It's a practical overview of how communities can reclaim agency and build systems that genuinely serve people.

3. From Principle to Practice: Bringing the Local Economy & Governance System to Life (Full Text)

<http://adamtugwell.blog/2025/12/27/from-principle-to-practice-bringing-the-local-economy-governance-system-to-life-full-text/>

Building on the previous readings, this article explores how the Local Economy & Governance System can be implemented in real communities. It bridges the gap between theory and action, offering concrete steps and examples.

4. The Contribution Culture: Transforming Work, Business, and Governance for Our Local Future (With Legs)

<http://adamtugwell.blog/2025/12/30/the-contribution-culture-transforming-work-business-and-governance-for-our-local-future-with-legs/>

This piece delves into the "contribution culture"- a key principle of the new system. It explains how shifting focus from profit to meaningful participation can transform work, business, and governance at the local level.

5. A Deep Dive Guide to the Philosophy of a People-First Society

<http://adamtugwell.blog/2026/01/03/a-deep-dive-guide-to-the-philosophy-of-a-people-first-society/>

Conclude your exploration with this philosophical guide, which ties together the practical and

ethical dimensions of a people-first society. It offers a reflective look at the values and vision driving this vision for systemic change.

Further Information

To explore more of Adam Tugwell's writing, including the online edition of this post, please visit:

www.adamtugwell.blog

Copyright Notice

Copyright © 2026 Adam Tugwell

All rights reserved.

This publication reflects the personal experience, views, and opinions of the Author.

No part of this work may be reproduced, stored in a retrieval system, transmitted, adapted, translated, or otherwise used in any form or by any means - electronic, mechanical, photocopying, recording, or otherwise - without prior written permission from the Author.

The Author asserts the moral right to be identified as the creator of this work and to object to any distortion or misrepresentation of it.

This work may be downloaded and stored for personal, non-commercial use only.

Any unauthorised reproduction, plagiarism, or misattribution constitutes a violation of copyright.

The Author accepts no responsibility for, and makes no endorsement of, content accessed through external links, PDFs, digital platforms, organisations, or individuals referenced herein.

Readers remain solely responsible for evaluating the accuracy and suitability of all external material.

This copyright notice shall be governed by and construed in accordance with the laws of England and Wales.