

Cameron humbled by gay marriage vote rebellion: More Tory MPs vote against Cameron than for him as PM's bill gets through thanks to Labour and Lib Dems

- **134 Tory MPs opposed and 126 backed the plans, with 35 abstaining**
- **Cameron sees the measure passed with the help of Labour and Lib Dems**
- **First gay marriages likely to be conducted within 12 months**

By James Chapman



Passed: Prime Minister David Cameron, pictured here leaving Downing Street today, has seen his gay marriage bill go through with the help of Labour and Lib Dems

David Cameron suffered a humiliating reverse last night when more than half his MPs rejected his 11th-hour appeals for support for same-sex marriage.

On an extraordinary day in the Commons, 134 Tory MPs took advantage of a free vote to oppose the plans. Only 126 backed the legislation, with 35 abstaining.

But with the help of the majority of Labour and Liberal Democrat MPs Mr Cameron saw the measure passed easily, by a margin of 400 to 175. The first gay marriages are likely to be conducted within 12 months.

The standard bearer of the Tory Right, Iain Duncan Smith, voted in favour of same-sex unions, but the Government's top lawyer, Dominic Grieve, astonished colleagues by abstaining.

A source close to Mr Grieve said: 'He is a practising member of the Church of England and it has caused a lot of hurt and upset for the church.'

Cabinet ministers who voted against the measure included Environment Secretary Owen Paterson, who told colleagues that 'biddies don't like botties', and Welsh Secretary David Jones.

They were joined by Simon Burns, Esther McVey and John Hayes.

Mr Cameron has been accused of needlessly splitting his party and prioritising an issue important to only a handful of voters. One poll suggests 70 per cent of voters now see the Tories as divided.

Despite the vote being deemed one of conscience, Tory MPs had been left in no doubt that the party leadership wanted as many as possible to vote in favour.

Senior ministers including George Osborne, William Hague and Theresa May were wheeled out on the eve of the debate to make the case.

Senior Tories had suggested before the vote it was crucial for Mr Cameron to win over more than half of his party – a benchmark he failed to meet.

However, several Tories who rejected the measure said they objected to being described as 'rebels', since it was a free vote. Labour also suffered a split, with 22 of its MPs voting against.



Passed: The Commons voted in favour of same-sex weddings by 400 votes to 175, a majority of 225



Rebels: A total of 134 Tory MPs took advantage of a free vote to oppose the plans. Only 126 backed the legislation, with 35 abstaining

A handful of Liberal Democrats – including former children's minister Sarah Teather – did likewise.

The Prime Minister said: 'I am a strong believer in marriage. It helps people commit to each other and I think it is right that gay people should be able to get married too.'

'This is, yes, about equality. But it is also about making our society stronger. I know there are strong views on both side of the argument – I accept that. But this is an important step forward for our country.'

But Graham Brady, the chairman of the Conservative backbench 1922 Committee, expressed doubts over the Government's assurances that faith groups will not be forced to conduct gay marriages.

PUBLIC SPLIT OVER ISSUE

OPINION polls have delivered mixed messages about the public appetite for last night's decision.

A YouGov survey published at the weekend found that 56 per cent of voters support the move toward same-sex unions.

But the same survey cited by the BBC also found that just 7 per cent of voters list gay marriage as one of the issues that most concerns them – far behind the 56 per cent who cite the economy.

A ComRes survey commissioned by the Coalition for Marriage asked whether 'marriage should continue to be defined as a life-long, exclusive commitment between a man and a woman'.

That poll found 53 per cent in favour and 36 per cent opposed.

Among the non-white voters David Cameron is seeking to woo, some 62 per cent believe in the traditional definition of marriage and 25 per cent are opposed.

And Cheryl Gillan, the former Welsh secretary, said: 'This legislation was not in our manifesto, it was not in the coalition agreement and it was not in the Queen's speech.'

Sir Roger Gale, Tory MP for North Thanet, accused Mr Cameron of an 'Orwellian' attempt to redefine marriage.

He prompted uproar as he suggested the Government might as well allow civil unions between all people 'irrespective of their sexuality or their relationship ... that means brothers and brothers and sisters and sisters and brothers and sisters as well'.

Margot James, a leading modernising MP, accused the Church of England and anti-gay marriage campaigners of a 'deliberate' attempt to distort the debate by falsely claiming faith groups would be forced to conduct same-sex ceremonies.

She warned the Conservatives risked alienating mainstream voters in the same way as US Republicans if they failed to embrace social changes such as equal marriage.

The MP for Stourbridge, who is gay, told the Commons: 'My party should never flinch from the requirement that we must continue this progression, otherwise we may end up like the Republican party who lost an election last year that they could have won were it not for their socially conservative agenda.'

Deputy Prime Minister Nick Clegg said: 'We will look back on today as a landmark for equality in Britain.'

Labour leader Ed Miliband said: 'This is a proud day and an important step forward in the fight for equality in Britain.'

Colin Hart, of the Coalition for Marriage, which has opposed the legislation, said: 'This result is a disaster for David Cameron. Despite a personal plea from the PM his MPs have overwhelmingly rejected gay marriage. Mr Cameron must think again.'

Last night was not the first time Mr Cameron has gone into the Commons division lobbies with a minority of his MPs over gay rights.

In 2007, on a free vote, he was among fewer than half of his party who supported gay adoption.

The previous biggest Tory split on a free vote was under Mr Duncan Smith in 2003, when the party split over reform of the House of Lords.

Tony Blair suffered a bigger loss of support over foxhunting in 2004.



Looking back: Deputy Prime Minister Nick Clegg said the day would be seen as a 'landmark for equality in Britain'

'Who are we to redefine the term marriage, which has always meant one man, one woman': The quotes of the day from the Commons



Culture Secretary Maria Miller defended the plans for gay marriage in the Commons

MARIA MILLER, TORY CULTURE SECRETARY

This Bill is about one thing. It is about fairness, it is about giving those who want to get married the opportunity to do so while protecting the rights of those who don't agree with same-sex marriage.

TIM LOUGHTON, TORY FORMER CHILDREN'S MINISTER

Who are we, this Government, or this country, to redefine the term marriage that has meant one man and one woman across cultures, across ages, across geographical barriers since before state and religion themselves?

YVETTE COOPER, LABOUR'S EQUALITIES SPOKESMAN

'Call us hopeless romantics, call it the triumph of hope over experience – most of us think when people love each other and want to make that long-term commitment, that is a wonderful thing. So why would we stop a loving couple getting married just because they are gay?

JIM DOBBIN, LABOUR MP FOR HEYWOOD AND MIDDLETON

The Government cannot possibly guarantee protection for churches or individuals with a traditional view because it cannot predict or control what happens in the courts.

SIR ROGER GALE, TORY MP FOR NORTH THANET

It is not possible to redefine marriage. Marriage is the union between a man and a woman, has been historically, remains so. It is Alice in Wonderland territory, Orwellian almost, for any Government of any political persuasion to seek to come along and try to re-write the lexicon. It will not do.

EDWARD LEIGH, TORY MP FOR GAINSBOROUGH

We should be in the business of protecting cherished institutions and our cultural heritage otherwise what, I ask, is a Conservative Party for? Indeed we are alienating people who have voted for us for all their lives, leaving them with no one to vote for.

NICK HERBERT, FORMER TORY POLICE MINISTER

What are heterosexual couples going to say? 'Darling our marriage is over, Sir Elton John has just gotten married to David Furnish'?



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Labour's equalities spokesman Yvette Cooper asked: 'Why would we stop a loving couple getting married just because they are gay?'

STEPHEN TIMMS, LABOUR MP FOR EAST HAM

Children are at the heart of marriage... but they are barely mentioned at the Bill. The Bill aims to open up the benefits of marriage to people excluded from it at the moment but it is doing at the price of taking away a significant part of its meaning.'

PETER BONE, TORY MP FOR BILLERICAY

It is my saddest day as an MP when my party brings in a Bill which I'm fundamentally opposed to. I'm very sad my party has brought this in without any democratic mandate.

SIR GERALD HOWARTH, FORMER TORY DEFENCE MINISTER

This Bill is wrong, the consultation process was a complete sham, it is opposed by the established church, it has caused deep and needless divisions within the Conservative Party, there is no mandate for it, there are huge potential consequences, not least the prospect of endless legal challenge and the nation faces much more serious challenges which the Government needs to address.

EMMA REYNOLDS, LABOUR MP FOR WOLVERHAMPTON NORTH EAST

The love that two men or two women feel for each other is equal to that felt by a heterosexual couple. Their love is no less significant and no less important.

JOHN GLEN, TORY MP FOR SALISBURY

By a factor of at least 30 to one my constituents have expressed their opposition to this. Huge numbers of Conservative supporters feel grave disappointment and alienation at the decision to pursue this legislation.

ANDREW SELOUS, TORY MP FOR SOUTH WEST BEDFORDSHIRE

What of further redefinitions? Will this be the last redefinition of marriage? I understand in the Netherlands and Brazil three way relationships are being legally recognised.'

GAVIN BARWELL, TORY MP FOR CROYDON CENTRAL

For Conservatives to work, we have to accept that the world changes. If we don't we become an anachronism.

<h1>THE TORY REBELS</h1>		
Nigel Adams (Selby & Ainsty) Adam Afriyie (Windsor) Peter Aldous (Waveney) David Amess (Southend West) James Arbuthnot (Hampshire North East) Richard Bacon (Norfolk South) Steven Baker (Wycombe) Tony Baldry (Banbury) Guto Bebb (Aberconwy) Henry Bellingham (Norfolk North West) Sir Paul Beresford (Mole Valley) Andrew Bingham (High Peak) Bob Blackman (Harrow East) Graham Brady (Atrincham & Sale West) Angie Bray (Ealing Central & Acton) Julian Brazier (Canterbury) Andrew Bridgen (Leicestershire North West) Steve Brine (Winchester) Fiona Bruce (Congleton) Robert Buckland (Swindon South) Simon Burns (Chelmsford) David Burrowes (Enfield Southgate) Alun Cairns (Vale of Glamorgan) Douglas Carswell (Clacton) Bill Cash (Stone) Rehman Chishti (Gillingham & Rainham) Christopher Chope	(Christchurch) Geoffrey Clifton-Brown (Cotswolds The) Geoffrey Cox (Devon West & Torridge) Stephen Crabb (Presell) Pembrokeshire) David Davies (Monmouth) Glyn Davies (Montgomeryshire) Philip Davies (Shipley) David Davis (Haltemprice & Howden) Nick de Bois (Enfield North) Caroline Dinenage (Gosport) Richard Drax (Dorset South) Charlie Elphicke (Dover) Jonathan Evans (Cardiff North) David Evennett (Bexleyheath & Crayford) Michael Fallon (Sevenoaks) Dr Liam Fox (Somerset North) Mark Francois (Rayleigh & Wickford) George Freeman (Norfolk Mid) Roger Gale (Thanet North) Sir Edward Garnier (Harborough) Mark Garnier (Wyre Forest)	Cheryl Gillan (Chesham & Amersham) John Glen (Salisbury) Robert Goodwill (Scarborough & Whitby) James Gray (Wiltshire North) Andrew Griffiths (Burton) Robert Halfon (Harlow) Simon Hart (Carmarthen West & Pembrokeshire South) Sir Alan Haselhurst (Saffron Walden) John Hayes (South Holland & The Deepings) Oliver Heald (Hertfordshire North East) Gordon Henderson (Sittingbourne & Sheppey) Philip Hollobone (Kettering) Adam Holloway (Gravesham) Sir Gerald Howarth (Aldershot) Stewart Jackson (Peterborough) Gareth Johnson (Dartford) David Jones (Clwyd West) Marcus Jones (Nuneaton) Greg Knight (Yorkshire East)
Kwasi Kwarteng (Spelthorne) Mark Lancaster (Milton Keynes North) Pauline Latham (Derbyshire Mid) Andrea Leadsom (Northamptonshire South) Phillip Lee (Bracknell) Jeremy Lefroy (Stafford) Edward Leigh (Gainsborough) Charlotte Leslie (Bristol North West) Julian Lewis (New Forest East) David Lidington (Aylesbury) Peter Lilley (Hitchin & Harpenden) Jack Lopresti (Filton & Bradley Stoke) Jonathan Lord (Woking) Tim Loughton (Worthing East & Shoreham) Karen Lumley (Redditch) Karl McCartney (Lincoln) Anne McIntosh (Thirsk & Malton) Stephen McPartland (Stevenage) Esther McVey (Wirral West) Anne Main (St Albans) Paul Maynard (Blackpool North & Cleveleys) Stephen Metcalfe (Basildon South & Thurrock East) Nicky Morgan (Loughborough) Anne-Marie Morris (Newton Abbot) David Morris	(Morecambe & Lunesdale) James Morris (Halesowen & Rowley Regis) Bob Neill (Bromley & Chislehurst) Caroline Nokes (Romsey & Southampton North) David Nuttall (Bury North) Stephen O'Brien (Eddisbury) Matthew Offord (Hendon) Jim Paice (Cambridgeshire South East) Neil Parish (Tiverton & Honiton) Priti Patel (Witham) Owen Paterson (Shropshire North) Mark Pawsey (Rugby) Mike Penning (Hemel Hempstead) Mark Pritchard (Wrekin The) John Randall (Uxbridge & Ruislip South) John Redwood (Wokingham) Jacob Rees-Mogg (Somerset North East) Simon Reeve (Dewsbury) Sir Malcolm Rifkind (Kensington) Andrew Robathan (Leicestershire South) Laurence Robertson (Tewkesbury) Andrew Rosindell (Romford) David Ruffley (Bury St Edmunds) David Rutley (Macclesfield) Andrew Selous (Bedfordshire South West) Alec	Shelbrooke (Elmet & Rothwell) Sir Richard Shepherd (Aldridge-Brownhills) Henry Smith (Crawley) Sir John Stanley (Tonbridge & Malling) John Stevenson (Carlisle) Bob Stewart (Beckenham) Mel Stride (Devon Central) Julian Sturdy (York Outer) Robert Syms (Poole) Sir Peter Tapsell (Louth & Horncastle) David Tredinnick (Bosworth) Andrew Turner (Isle of Wight) Shallesh Vara (Cambridgeshire North West) Martin Vickers (Cleethorpes) Ben Wallace (Wyre & Preston North) Robert Walter (Dorset North) James Wharton (Stockton South) Heather Wheeler (Derbyshire South) Craig Whittaker (Calder Valley) John Whittingdale (Maldon) Bill Wiggin (Herefordshire North) Gavin Williamson (Staffordshire South) Rob Wilson (Reading East) Jeremy Wright (Kenilworth & Southam)