**ALEX FORSYTH BIO**

Alex has worked as a BBC political correspondent for the past eight years, putting her on the frontline of British politics during a particularly busy time which has seen three general elections, the EU referendum, multiple leadership contests and the Covid pandemic. During this period, she has also covered as a presenter on Politics Live, the Westminster Hour & the World Tonight as well as regularly appearing on the Brexitcast and Newscast podcasts. Recently Alex has developed a new role for the BBC, working as a political correspondent based outside of London to diversify coverage and reach and reflect new audiences. Since 2019 she’s travelled the UK, spending time with communities and providing the link between political strategy in Westminster and the wider public mood. Alex has also had stints in specialist departments including home affairs, education and foreign news, including periods living and working in Brussels and Beirut. Alex started out in journalism in local newspapers before joining BBC local radio teams in Oxford and then Southampton before moving to network news. She grew up in Portsmouth and now lives in the West Midlands. Alex is thrilled to be hosting Any Questions? It’s a programme she has listened to and loved for many years, providing a vital opportunity for people to put their questions to elected leaders, which is more important than ever given the noise that can often surround the political debate of our times. She looks forward to attempting to get some answers.

ARTICLE

Five things you didn’t know about Alex:

1. One of my favourite jobs was being a waitress, which I did for several years. I loved the people I worked with, the sense of pulling together during really busy shifts which were all-consuming (and the odd glass of wind-down wine after a long day on your feet). It’s a job that requires a huge amount of stamina, but the best moments were when you got to add to someone’s special moment – like a kid’s birthday, an anniversary celebration or a retirement – and I have huge respect for the people who do that every day. I can also still carry four plates of food … just about.
2. I was going to be a doctor. I had my mind set on it when I was younger and managed to land myself a place at medical school which turned out to be a decision led more by ambition than calling. It was a fascinating and challenging experience, but I soon realised it wasn’t for me and so I switched paths and ended up in political journalism – quite the change of direction.  While the rethink set me back a bit, I wouldn’t change it for the world. It was a year in which I met amazingly dedicated people and had some great experiences, but also learnt it’s OK to quit and start again and I’m incredibly grateful for the fact I’ve somehow managed to end up in a job I love.
3. One of the first radio programmes I saw broadcast live was Any Questions? I was working in Brussels at the time and was offered a chance to sit in the audience for an episode Jonathan Dimbleby was presenting as part of a series of special events the BBC was hosting in European capitals. I remember being struck by the savvy questions from the audience, the willingness of the panel to take part in a debate programme in which they had no idea what would be asked and the ability of the production and technical team to make such a huge undertaking look and sound so smooth. I’m still pinching myself that within a few years I’ve gone from an audience member chuffed to get a ticket to the host of such a brilliant programme.
4. When I told my family I was going to be the new host of Any Questions? one of the first things one of my nieces asked was whether it meant I’d get famous and end up on Strictly Come Dancing. I’ve yet to break the news that’s unlikely to happen, though it’s probably a good thing given I’m (hopefully) more adept at navigating political debate than a foxtrot.
5. I spend a lot of my life on the road. For the past few years, I’ve been travelling around the UK finding out what people think about events in Westminster, which requires a good knowledge of the country’s political geography, an appreciation of the brilliant and unexpected people you meet, a love of service-station food and a very understanding partner – all excellent preparation for Any Questions!