Talk from Victoria, Trans Pride Hastings
Women's Voice International Women's Day Event, Saturday 7th March 2026

Hi everyone. Happy International Women's Day.

It's lovely to be back.

My name is Victoria. My pronouns are she/her. I run Trans Pride Hastings. And I recently got myself a shiny new vagina.

Which, frankly, feels like more than enough admin for one year.

I assumed I'd be talking about either of those things today. But as a trans woman in the UK, and with us all here, I thought it might be more appropriate to just offer an apology.

You see, apparently, I am wildly overachieving.

Without getting up two hours early.
Without completing a risk assessment.
Without even trying.

I am:

Erasing the word "woman."
Rewriting biology.
Undoing centuries of feminist struggle.
Dismantling single-sex spaces.
Toppling Western civilisation.
And personally pushing the English language off a cliff.

It's exhausting.

And the incredible part?
I just got dressed.

Somehow, while I'm trying to remember where I left my keys in the morning, I am simultaneously orchestrating the downfall of womanhood.

Multitasking queen.

I'm told that my presence alone puts people at risk.

That I am a threat in toilets.
A predator in changing rooms.
A menace in hospital wards.

Which is fascinating, because most days I am just trying to navigate public transport without making eye contact with anyone.

And sport. Oh, sport.

I have single-handedly detonated women's athletics.

Somewhere right now, a grassroots netball team is trembling because I bought trainers from Sports Direct.

The Olympics are on red alert because I downloaded Couch to 5K.

I don't even like running.

And yet I'm described as though I've been ducked behind a hedge for years waiting to ambush the 400 metres like some kind of RuPaul-sponsored supervillain.

Do you know how much training elite athletes do?

Years.
Decades.
Olympic cycles.

I get winded carrying two tote bags up the stairs.

But yes. I am the apex predator of netball.

It's amazing how fragile women's sport apparently is.

It survived chronic underfunding.
It survived being treated like an afterthought.
It survived being told no one wants to watch it.

But me buying leggings?

Collapse.
Call the UN.
Lower the flag.

And as if that wasn't enough... I am also erasing lesbians.

Entirely. Just poof! Gone.

Decades of lesbian activism, culture, resistance and community - evaporated because I updated my passport.

I didn't realise I had that kind of power.

If I'd known, I might have erased misogyny.
Or Donald Trump.
Or the price of heating.

But no. I chose "lesbians." That was my villain arc.

Some people get bitten by a radioactive spider. I got my deed poll.

And we should talk about how much better my life is now. Because you've no doubt heard that transitioning is the fast track to privilege?

That the minute you come out, doors swing open. Confetti falls. The NHS rolls out a red carpet. Employers line up to congratulate you. Strangers beam warmly and say,

"Hooray! Another one! We were hoping!"

Yes. It has been wonderful.

The speed of healthcare? Lightning fast.
The universal respect? Overwhelming.
The safety? Impeccable.
The online discourse? Serene. Thoughtful. Mature.

I've never felt more relaxed than when a national newspaper debates my right to exist before lunchtime.

Truly I transitioned for the perks.

I definitely didn't do it because living as someone I wasn't was slowly hollowing me out.

I definitely didn't do it because authenticity mattered more than comfort.

I definitely didn't weigh up every headline, every debate, every panel of strangers dissecting my body like I was a public planning application.

Nope. I did it for the queue-jumping privileges and the standing ovations in supermarket aisles.

And what fascinates me most is how much responsibility I've been handed.

When women are underpaid - that's me.
When services are collapsing - also me.
When politicians need a distraction - surprise! I'm trending.

It's remarkable how often "trans woman" turns out to be shorthand for "we don't want to fix the actual problem."

And I get it. Because it's easier to debate my existence than to confront male violence.

it's easier to argue about toilets than to fund refuges.

its easier to panic about sport than to invest in it.

and its far easier to obsess over pronouns than to even think about dismantling power.

But here's where the joke runs out.

Because for some of us, this isn't theoretical. It isn't a panel discussion or culture war.

It's our bodies.
It's our safety.
It's whether we make it home.

Transitioning didn't make my life easier. It made it survivable.

Before, I was disappearing.

Now I am visible.

But visibility is not the same thing as safety.

People say this is a debate. But debates don't follow you down the street. Debates don't shout from passing cars. Debates don't publish your existence as a question mark.

When you reduce someone's identity to an argument, you make it easier to ignore what happens to them. And what happens to trans people, especially trans women, is not hypothetical.

It is harassment.
It is assault.
It is poverty.
It is exclusion.
It is healthcare delayed until it becomes despair.

So when I hear that I am a threat to women, I think about which women we are talking about.

Because I am one.

And I know what fear feels like. I know what it feels like to calculate which toilet is safest. To lower your voice in public. To scan a room before you enter it. To weigh up whether holding your partner's hand is worth it.

That isn't power. That's vigilance. And vigilance is fucking exhausting.

If womanhood is defined by surviving scrutiny, by carrying fear in your body, by being told you are too much and not enough at the same time then trans women are not outside it.

We are inside it. Deeply.

And here is the part that matters most.

There is no liberation in drawing the circle smaller. There is no safety in pushing someone else out into the cold. Patriarchy does not weaken when we exile the most vulnerable.

No.

It watches us fracture.
It benefits from the distraction.
It thrives when we mistake each other for the enemy.

The real threat to women has never been trans women.

It is violence, control, systems that protect abusers and scrutinise survivors.

It is a culture that would rather debate our legitimacy than guarantee our safety.

And none of that shrinks when we turn on each other. It shrinks when we refuse to.

International Women's Day cannot just be celebration. It has to be courage. Courage to stand beside women who are different from you. Courage to defend people who are being loudly misunderstood. Courage to say: your dignity does not cost me mine.

Because My existence does not erase you. But your refusal to see me can erase me.

Not symbolically.

Actually.

From spaces.
From services.
From public life.

And I like all of my sisters, am tired. Not of existing.

But of defending our right to.

So yes. I will continue my radical agenda of:

Going to work.
Texting my bestie
Paying my bills.
And daring, DARING, to call myself a woman.

Not because it's provocative.

Not because it's political.

But because it's true.

And if that feels revolutionary then perhaps we've been living with the bar much closer to the floor than we thought.

So If we are lifting anything today, let it be the women who are most at risk of being dropped.

Thank you.