

[REDACTED]

From: FOI
Sent: 27 January 2017 15:39
To: [REDACTED]
Subject: FOI 02/17 - Conservatives against Fox Hunting

Dear [REDACTED],

Our Ref: FOI 02/17

I apologise for omitting the following information from the initial response to your freedom of information request made on **25 December 2016** received by the Commission on **28 December 2016**.

Some of the information contained in the attachments to the initial email named below:

- FOI 02 17 Electoral Commission enquiry
- FOI 02 17 The Times Conservatives Against Fox Hunting

contained personal data such as direct contact information of staff members, the names and contact details of junior staff members and names and contact details of external stakeholders and individual members of the public, which is exempt under Section 40 of the FOI Act. These documents were been redacted prior to release. Further explanation of the exemption is provided below.

Section 40(2) and (3)(a)(i) of the FOI Act

In the information we released, we redacted some of the information in the documents. Section 40(2) provides for an exemption where the information requested constitutes personal data as defined by the Data Protection Act 2000 (DPA), and where release of the information requested would breach one of the data protection principles. Some of the information contained in the requested information falls within the description of personal data as defined by section 1 of the DPA because the information relates directly to an identifiable living individual. Release of this information would breach the first data protection principle, which states the information must be processed fairly and lawfully.

Sorry for any inconveniences that may have been caused for not providing this information in the original email response. Please feel free to let me know if you have any questions.

Kind regards

[REDACTED]
Information Officer

The Electoral Commission
3 Bunhill Row
London EC1Y 8YZ
Tel: 0333 103 1928

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From: FOI
Sent: 26 January 2017 14:48
To: [REDACTED]
Subject: FOI 02/17 - Conservatives against Fox Hunting

Dear [REDACTED],

Our Ref: FOI 02/17

Thank you for your request under the Freedom of Information Act 2000 dated 25 December 2016, received by the Commission on 28 December 2017.

The Commission aims to respond to requests for information promptly and has done so within the statutory timeframe of twenty working days.

Your request is in bold below followed by our response.

You have requested:

Information concerning communications between the Electoral Commission and Conservatives Against Fox Hunting from and including December 22 2016.

Our response is as follows:

We hold the information you have requested.

The Commission emailed the group Conservatives Against Fox Hunting on 22 December 2016 following an enquiry they made to our political finance advice service. A copy of this e-mail is attached but we are unable to find a record of the phone enquiry from the organisation.

We also note that the Commission press office e-mailed you, following an enquiry you made to them regarding the group; this correspondence is also enclosed.

We have no other correspondence or documents falling within the scope of your request.

I trust that this information satisfies your request. The Commission strives to be an open, transparent authority.

If you are not satisfied with this response, please note that the Commission operates a review procedure, details of which can be found on the Commission website at:

Please also note that if you have exhausted all internal Commission review procedures and you are still not satisfied you have the right to appeal to the Information Commissioner. Details of this procedure can be found on the ICO website: <http://www.ico.gov.uk>

Yours sincerely

[REDACTED]
Information Officer

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[REDACTED]

From: [REDACTED]
Sent: 22 December 2016 16:19
To: [REDACTED]
Subject: Electoral Commission enquiry

Hi [REDACTED]

As discussed, members associations are required to report donations and loans and check permissibility when they receive them. An organisation is a members association if its membership consists wholly or mainly of members of a political party registered with the Electoral Commission. As this does not apply to your organisation and your function is not political you would not be considered to be a members association. Further information can be found [here](#).

If you have further questions, please do not hesitate to contact the party and election finance advice line on 0333 103 1928 or e-mail the party and election finance inbox at pef@electoralcommission.org.uk.

Kind regards

[REDACTED]

Political Finance and Regulation Directorate
The Electoral Commission
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[REDACTED]

From: [REDACTED]
Sent: 23 December 2016 11:49
To: [REDACTED]
Subject: FW: The Times/Conservatives Against Fox Hunting

Hi [REDACTED]

The Commission provides advice and guidance to regulated entities so that they are aware of the rules and their supplementary reporting requirements. I can confirm we spoke with the group and confirmed what the rules are for a members association – groups which are wholly or mainly made up of members from a political party.

It is the responsibility of all regulated groups to ensure they comply with the rules.

Regards,

[REDACTED]

From: [REDACTED]
Sent: 23 December 2016 11:24
To: [REDACTED]
Subject: re: The Times/Conservatives Against Fox Hunting

Hi [REDACTED]

I contacted the organisation Conservatives Against Fox Hunting to ask why its donations were not registered with the Electoral Commission.

It replied today: "Conservatives Against Fox Hunting have met all Electoral Commission requirements. We have confirmed it with them by phone yesterday 22/12/16."

Can the Electoral Commission confirm this please?

Thank you

[REDACTED]

On 22 December 2016 at 13:43, [REDACTED] wrote:

Hi [REDACTED]

As discussed, you can see a link to our enforcement policy here:

http://www.electoralcommission.org.uk/_data/assets/pdf_file/0011/199703/April-2016-Enforcement-Policy.pdf

I have also summarised what I said on our call just now below.

Under the Political Parties, Elections and Referendums Act 2000 (PPERA), there are rules that certain organisations must follow in relation to donations and loans that they receive in connection with their political activities. Groups that are wholly or mainly made up of members of a registered political party but exist outside that party's constitution, are subject to these rules. These groups are called members associations.

Under these rules, members associations are required to make sure that any donations or loans with a value of more than £500 that they receive in connection with their political activities are from permissible, mainly UK-based sources. Donations must be checked for permissibility within 30 days of receiving them, and loans before they are entered into. Any donations or loans with a value of more than £7,500 must be reported to the Electoral Commission within 30 days of being accepted. This includes individual donations or loans of that size and donations and loans with a value of more than £500 that aggregate with others from the same donor in the same calendar year to over £7,500.

You can see more information on our guidance for regulated organisations here:

<http://www.electoralcommission.org.uk/find-information-by-subject/political-parties-campaigning-and-donations/donations-and-loans-to-other-individuals-and-organisations/guidance-for-regulated-organisations>

I hope this helps.



Media and Public Affairs

The Electoral Commission

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From: [REDACTED]
Sent: 22 December 2016 12:56
To: [REDACTED]
Subject: The Times/Conservatives Against Fox Hunting

Hi [REDACTED]

The Times is preparing an article about a pressure group called Conservatives Against Fox Hunting which lobbies within the Conservative Party against blood sports.

CAFH has accepted large amounts in donations but there is a lack of transparency about the source of its funding.

Should CAFH have registered its donations with the Electoral Commission? What action will the commission take about these donations?

The accounts for Conservatives Against Fox Hunting are [here](#)

Since 2011, £54,237 appears to have been deposited with CAFH from an unnamed source which the accounts describe as an animal welfare charity. In 2015 alone, £20,000 was deposited in the account by the charity.

CAFH's sole shareholder and director is Lorraine Platt.

This Conservative Party [website](#) states: "Lorraine, from Thames Ditton, works within the Conservative Party as the Founder of Conservatives Against Fox Hunting of which our local MP, Dominic Raab, is a Patron."

The [CAFH website](#) makes the same points.

In addition, the League Against Cruel Sports has confirmed to me that it provided hotel accommodation to two volunteers from CAFH at the 2010 Conservative Party conference. I cannot see this registered as a donation by the Conservative Party. The League has explained that the room had been booked for one of its own staff who could not take it owing to illness. Rather than leave the room empty, the League offered it to CAFH. The League was co-hosting an event with CAFH at the conference.

Please could you respond by 1pm tomorrow (Friday December 23).

Thank you



The Times



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