

From: FOI
Sent: 06 February 2018 12:23
To: [REDACTED]
Cc: FOI <FOI@electoralcommission.org.uk>
Subject: FOI 012/18 Donations to Richmond Park MP - Response

Dear [REDACTED]

Our Ref: FOI 012/18

Thank you for your email to the Electoral Commission dated **25 January 2018**.

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.

I would like to know who the specific donors were to Zac Goldsmith's General Election bid in 2017, and the amount given.

Our response is as follows:

We hold copies of returns of candidate spending. We have published summaries of the spending of all candidates at the 2017 UK Parliamentary General Election on our website here:

http://www.electoralcommission.org.uk/_data/assets/excel_doc/0005/237551/2017-UK-Parliament-candidate-spending-publication-version.xlsx

All candidates who contested the general election had to submit their returns of candidate spending, including a statement of donations accepted, and along with the appropriate invoices and receipts, to the Returning Officer within 35 days of the declaration of the result. The Returning Officer is the primary holder of this information and has a duty to make the returns available for inspection.

For that reason, we consider this information is exempt under Section 21 as the information is publicly available elsewhere.

You should contact the Returning Officer to arrange to inspect the returns and supporting documentation from the candidates. Returning Officers are specified in the RPA 1983, section 24 for England and Wales, section 25 for Scotland and section 26 for Northern Ireland. In England and Wales the specified RO is often a ceremonial office-holder – Sherriff or Mayor – and so, in practice, an (Acting) Returning Officer is appointed to be responsible for managing the administration of the election.

The Acting Returning Officer for a local authority is normally a senior paid officer, in most cases the Chief Executive, a Director or senior lawyer.

I recommend that you address any request to 'The (Acting) Returning Officer for the relevant constituency.

Under section 21, information is exempt from disclosure if it is publicly available elsewhere. Information is taken to be reasonably accessible if it is information which the

other authority is obliged by legislation to make publicly available. Under section 88 of the Representation of the People Act 1983, Returning Officers need to make the returns available for public inspection. The ICO recognises that although something may only be available for public inspection, it will still be reasonably accessible. The Commission considers the legislative right of access to this information is through the relevant Returning Officer.

I trust that this information satisfies your request. The Commission strives to be an open, transparent authority, but in some circumstances we cannot responsibly release requested information, and we ask for your understanding in this regard.

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: <http://www.electoralcommission.org.uk/about-us/freedom-of-information-requests/how-do-i-make-an-foi-request>

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: <https://ico.org.uk/>

Yours sincerely,


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