

[REDACTED]

From: FOI
Sent: 24 October 2023 07:56
To: [REDACTED]
Subject: FOI 133-23 - Response

Dear [REDACTED],

Our Ref: FOI-133-23

Thank you for your email to the Electoral Commission dated 30 August 2023.

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 shown below followed by our response.

Please could you provide me with copies of electronic correspondence with external individuals, groups, and bodies regarding donations ruled impermissible from 1st January 2022 to date.

Please could you provide this records electronically.

Our response is as follows:

We hold the information you have requested.

We are releasing some of that information but other documents are not being disclosed because they are exempt from disclosure.

Exemption: Investigations and proceedings: Section 30(1)(a)(i) Freedom of Information Act 2000

The Commission has a statutory function to conduct investigations into potential breaches of the reporting requirements in Political Parties, Elections and Referendums Act 2000 ("PPERA").

Section 30(1)(a)(i) of the Freedom of Information Act 2000 (FOI) provides an exemption from disclosure for information which has been held at any time by a public authority for the purpose of any investigation which the authority has a duty to conduct with a view to it being ascertained whether a person should be charged with an offence. The section 30 exemption applies to information that is held at any time, whether or not the investigation is on-going.

We are not disclosing information where it is held by the Commission in relation to such investigations.

Public interest test

Application of the section 30 exemption is subject to the public interest test. There are a number of factors that must be weighed in the balance to consider whether the public interest in applying the exemption outweighs the public interest in disclosure.

Public interest factors in favour of disclosure

The Commission recognises that with regard to the disclosure of information generally, there should be a presumption in favour of disclosure. We also recognise that there is a general public interest in promoting transparency, accountability, public understanding and involvement in the democratic process. Flowing from that general public interest, there is a legitimate public interest in our carrying out investigations in an open and transparent way, and in promoting public understanding of the decisions we make as a regulator.

Public interest factors in favour of applying the exemption

The public interest lies in enabling the Commission to undertake inquiries as part of its investigation powers so that it can make regulatory decisions based on a firm factual basis and to gather such evidence and facts on a confidential basis. It is in the public interest to maintain this confidentiality, as it encourages the free and frank exchange of information from others to the Commission without which the Commission could not perform its statutory functions.

In carrying out effective inquiries the Commission depends on being able to secure the co-operation of those individuals and entities from whom we seek information. Whilst the Commission has powers to require information, the co-operation of the regulated community remains essential to our ability to conduct our statutory functions. As our investigations rely on gathering evidence from these individuals and entities it is clearly in the public interest that we maintain their co-operation and avoid releasing information that could prevent exchange of relevant information in the future and have the effect of hindering our ability to conduct our statutory functions.

If information provided in the course of our investigations was made public under the Act, it would make individuals and entities reluctant to co-operate and may prejudice interactions with them as well as others in the future. This would in turn impact on the type, timeliness, and quality of information provided to the Commission during its investigations which would prejudice the Commission's ability to conduct its statutory functions.

The Commission aims to be robust and fair in its regulatory decisions. We acknowledge that there is a legitimate public interest in carrying out investigations in an open and transparent way, and in promoting public understanding of the decisions we make as a regulator. These are matters we acknowledge and take into account, including when deciding whether to disclose information, whilst ensuring proper regulation of political finance. For that reason we make public the outcome of all of our investigations.

Balance of the public interest

In assessing where the public interest balance lies in section 30(1) case relevant matters include:

- (a) the stage a particular investigation or prosecution has reached;
- (b) whether and to what extent the information is already in the public domain;

(c) the significance or sensitivity of the information requested; and

(d) whether there is any evidence that an investigation or prosecution has not been carried out properly which may be disclosed by the information.

The information you have requested encompasses current and closed investigations. Where an investigation is concluded the public interest in disclosure can be higher, but this must be weighed against other relevant factors. The information requested is not in the public domain, the information requested is in the Commission's view sensitive and significant, and no evidence appears to be put forward to suggest that the investigation was not carried out properly. All of these factors add weight to the public interest in maintaining the exemption in the Commission's view.

The Commission considers that the balance of public interest in this case lies on the one hand in carrying out investigations in an open and transparent way, and in promoting public understanding of the decisions we make as a regulator; and on the other in our ability to conduct investigations effectively in future, as well as on our wider regulatory work.

The Commission considers that the public interest in carrying out investigations in an open and transparent way, and in promoting public understanding of the decisions we make as a regulator is met by the fact that we make public the outcome of those investigations.

The Commission does not consider that disclosure of communications in these cases would add to any significant degree to public understanding of our decisions. In addition, we consider it likely that disclosure could lead to a significant impact on the voluntary cooperation of organisations and individuals and others regulated by the Commission, with a consequent impact on our ability to conduct investigations effectively in future, as well as on our wider regulatory work.

Having carefully weighed the public interest relating to possible disclosure of the information requested under Section 30(1)(a)(i), the Commission is satisfied that it is not appropriate at this time to disclose the information which the Commission holds. The Commission is satisfied that maintaining the exemption outweighs the public interest in disclosure.

Exemption: Law enforcement: Section 31(1)(g) Freedom of Information Act 2000

Section 31(1)(g) exempts from disclosure information that would or would be likely to prejudice the exercise of the Commission's functions under PPERA for the purposes of ascertaining whether any person has failed to comply with the law, as provided by s31(2)(a) of the FOI Act.

For the same reasons set out above in relation to s.30, the Commission is satisfied that the information requested would likely prejudice the exercise of the Commission's functions under PPERA to conduct investigations into potential breaches of the reporting requirements.

Further, again for the same reasons set out above in respect of s.30, the Commission is satisfied that in this case the public interest in preventing that prejudice outweighs the public interest in disclosure.

The Commission therefore considers the information you have requested and which we hold to be exempt from disclosure under section 31 to the extent that it not exempt under section 30.

Exemptions under Section 40

Section 40(2) provides for an exemption where the information requested constitutes personal data as defined by the Data Protection Act 2018 (DPA), and where release of the information requested would breach one of the data protection principles. Part of the information contained in the requested information falls within the description of personal data as defined by section 1 of the Data Protection Act 2018 (DPA) because the information relates directly to an identifiable living individual.

You will notice that certain personal details have been redacted from the documents we are releasing. This redaction is necessary because section 40(2) and (3)(a) of the Freedom of Information Act 2000 (FOI) Act provides that personal data, where its disclosure would breach one of the data protection principles, is exempt from disclosure. The first data protection principle states that personal data must be processed fairly and lawfully. The Commission considers that it would be unfair to release the names and personal contact details of junior officials, who were not employed in public facing roles and did not act as spokespersons for their employer, as those individuals would have a reasonable expectation that this personal data would not be disclosed to the general public.

Finally, the nature of establishing or querying permissibility of individuals can involve obtaining personal data, and we have also redacted that data, for the reasons given above.

To see the documents we are releasing, you will need to access our secure document-sharing site, Objective Connect. You will receive an 'Invitation to Objective Connect Email Notification' (sent to the inbox of [REDACTED]). This notification will contain a link to enable you to start accessing your information. Please find below details on how to access the specific area we have set up for your documents.

1. Click on the link in the email.
2. You will be prompted to set up your username and password. Your username will be your email address, and your password can be whatever you like.
3. With your username and password, enter both details at the login screen and click 'login'
4. You will now see your personal page, which will show the Share 'FOI – 133-23'
5. By clicking on the name of the share, you will find your documents
6. You may view any of these documents
7. In addition you may download a copy to your personal computer by selecting the 'download' option and then 'save'

This service will be closed one month from our response date, this is the **24 November 2023**.

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

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: <https://www.electoralcommission.org.uk/freedom-information/make-a-freedom-information-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

Information Officer
FOI@electoralcommission.org.uk

The Electoral Commission
electoralcommission.org.uk

From: [REDACTED]
To: [REDACTED]
Cc: [Press](#)
Subject: Background information on political finance
Date: 09 January 2023 15:36:00

Hi [REDACTED]

Thanks for the call earlier today.

As agreed, below is an overview of what we discussed focusing on the areas you were interested in – donations to MPs and permissibility rules. I hope this will be helpful.

The current laws do provide transparency over the money that parties and regulated donees receive, but there is more that can be done to strengthen the system. We do have some recommendations in this area, specifically focused on the party finance regime – we're happy to schedule a background interview to go over the political finance rules in more detail in case this will be useful to your reporting, as well as discuss the recommendations we've made in this space.

Background on political finance rules

- A donation is any gift to a party of money, goods or services, with a value greater than £500. Any cash or other gifts to parties with a value of £500 or less are not treated as donations.
- In line with the Political Parties, Elections and Referendums Act 2000 (PPERA), before a party accepts any donation or loan of more than £500, it must take all reasonable steps to check that the source is permissible. They have 30 days to return the donation if it is from an impermissible source. Parties can accept a donation from any permissible donor. A list of permissible donors can be found on our [website](#), and includes individuals on a UK electoral register.
- Political parties are required to submit quarterly donation and loan reports to the Electoral Commission, and include:
 - donations accepted above the £7,500 threshold (£1,500 for accounting units)
 - smaller donations from a single donor which exceed the reporting threshold when taken together
 - donations which ought to have been reported in previous quarters
 - impermissible donations they have received and the action taken in relation to these.
- Holders of elective offices such as MPs and members of political parties are classified as 'regulated donees' under PERA.
- MPs report all donations and other financial interests over a certain value they receive to the [Register of Members' Financial Interests](#). The Registrar sends these details to the Commission. The Commission identifies any donations that fall within the regulated donee rules, and we publish these (these are donations they receive in connection with their political activities with a value of over £1,500. This includes instances in which multiple donations or loans are received from the same donor in the same calendar year.)

- There may be more donations that regulated donees have received, but that do not fall within the scope of the law that we enforce, so not every donation can be found on our database.
- The Parliamentary Commissioner for Standards is responsible for upholding the Code of Conduct for MPs agreed by the House of Commons and would take action if an MP breaches their reporting requirements. The Commission has a regulatory role in relation to the permissibility of donations.

To answer your questions regarding foreign governments donating money - the legislation takes into account that as part of their responsibilities, an individual regulated donee may undertake overseas visits. Where someone pays for the reasonable costs of an overseas visit, they are deemed to be a permissible donor (even if they do not meet the permissibility criteria). A donation provided to a regulated donee to meet the cost of an overseas visit is regarded as a donation from a permissible donor if it is made to meet 'qualifying costs' such as travel or accommodation which were incurred during a visit made in connection with the regulated donee's political activities.

There is more information you may find useful in our [guidance for parties](#), as well as for [regulated donees](#).

Best wishes,

[Redacted]

[Redacted]

The Electoral Commission

[Redacted]

electoralcommission.org.uk

From: [REDACTED]
To: [REDACTED]
Cc: [Press](#)
Subject: Electoral Commission enquiry
Date: 12 May 2022 16:44:44

Hi [REDACTED]

Thanks for your call earlier.

We don't currently have an open investigation into Ehud Sheleg and were not aware of any alerts relating to his financial transactions.

The law places a responsibility on the recipient of a donation to ensure they are satisfied as to the identity of the donor, and that the donor is permissible. The full [list of permissible sources](#) is available on our website. If someone makes a donation on behalf of someone else, they are required to inform the party and provide the actual donor's details.

Where there is evidence that a donation from an impermissible source has been accepted, we will consider it in line with our [Enforcement Policy](#), and consider what action, if any, is appropriate.

Please get in touch if you have other questions.

Thanks

[REDACTED]

electoralcommission.org.uk

Press office: 020 7271 0704

Press out of hours: 07789 920414

From: [REDACTED]
To: [REDACTED]
Cc: [Press](#)
Subject: Electoral Commission enquiry
Date: 12 May 2022 16:56:02

Hi [REDACTED]

Thanks for your call earlier.

We don't currently have an open investigation into Ehud Sheleg and were not aware of any alerts relating to his financial transactions.

The law places a responsibility on the recipient of a donation to ensure they are satisfied as to the identity of the donor, and that the donor is permissible. The full [list of permissible sources](#) is available on our website. If someone makes a donation on behalf of someone else, they are required to inform the party and provide the actual donor's details.

Where there is evidence that a donation from an impermissible source has been accepted, we will consider it in line with our [Enforcement Policy](#), and consider what action, if any, is appropriate.

Please get in touch if you have other questions.

Thanks

[REDACTED]

electoralcommission.org.uk

Press office: 020 7271 0704

Press out of hours: 07789 920414

From: [REDACTED]
To: [REDACTED]
Cc: [Press](#)
Subject: Electoral Commission enquiry
Date: 06 July 2022 15:18:01

Hi [REDACTED]

Thanks for your call earlier and sorry about the delay.

See the following link for details we hold on our [political finance database](#) for The Spring Lunch. Filtering by the 'Regulated donee type' column shows that The Spring Lunch is a members association and lists the donations it has accepted (as reported to us).

Below covers in broad terms the reporting rules for members associations and unincorporated associations, as it is common for organisations to be both.

- A members association is not a political party but a group that is wholly or mainly made up of members of a political party. It is required to report all permissible donations it accepts in line with their political activities with a value of over £7,500 and all impermissible donations over £500.
- Members associations do not have to report the donations they make to parties. Parties report the donations they receive, which we publish on a quarterly basis. If a members association is also an unincorporated association however it has to register with us once it has made over £25,000 of gifts to regulated organisations and individuals in a year.
- Members associations are regulated donees and so they have to conduct permissibility checks on their donors, and the details of their donations are included in our political finance database.
- Spending is only regulated in the build-up to elections. It could be that a members association is also a non-party campaigner if its activity before an election period meets [non-party campaigner criteria](#). If it spends more than £20k in England at a UK general election (or £10k in Scotland, Wales, or Northern Ireland), then it needs to register with us and report information of donations over £7,500 it receives. Campaigners that spend under these thresholds at elections do not need to report donation information to us. There is also a £700 spending limit in place for local campaigners in each constituency at general elections.

Please get in touch if you have further questions.

Thanks

[REDACTED]
The Electoral Commission

[REDACTED]
electoralcommission.org.uk

Press office: 020 7271 0704

Press out of hours: 07789 920414

From: [REDACTED]
To: [REDACTED]
Cc: [Press](#)
Subject: Electoral Commission enquiry
Date: 16 August 2022 10:52:09

Hi [REDACTED]

Thanks for your call.

The Conservative Party was late to report four loans. Two loans should have been reported in its Q4 2019 report and two in its Q1 2020 report. Instead all four loans were reported in Q3 2020. The values of the loans were [£37,797.34](#), [£27,500](#), [£27,500](#) and [£5,447.29](#).

We imposed four variable monetary penalties totalling £3,080. The party paid the fine on 3 August 2022.

We decided to impose a sanction in this case because the central party's system to make sure accounting units report loans to them was not as effective as its system for donations. We considered the case in line with our [Enforcement Policy](#) and decided that sanctions were appropriate for each misreported loan. When deciding the level of sanction, we took into account that, as a result of these instances, the party has improved its systems to reduce the chances of future issues.

As requested, please also see here more information on the [impermissible donation](#) that we investigated this month.

Let me know if you have further questions.

Thanks

[REDACTED]
[REDACTED]
The Electoral Commission

[REDACTED]
electoralcommission.org.uk

Press office: 020 7271 0704

Press out of hours: 07789 920414

From: [REDACTED]
To: [REDACTED]
Cc: [Press](#)
Subject: Electoral Commission query – visit category
Date: 27 April 2022 16:05:19

Hi [REDACTED]

Thanks for the call earlier today. Under the Political Parties, Elections and Referendums Act 2000 (PPERA), a donation is any gift to a party of money, goods or services, with a value greater than £500.

Parties can accept donations that cover the reasonable costs of a visit outside of the UK – this is the category you are seeing on our database labelled as 'visit'.

This can include both cash (so cash donation to meet the reasonable costs of the trip) or where the costs for the visit are met by the host organisation or individual.

In the latter case, the party can get the actual costs from the host, or have calculated the value of the trip based on the equivalent commercial travel and accommodation costs. Parties need to record, and report as part of their quarterly donations report, the full name and address of the person or organisation that funded the visit; the date on which the visit took place; and the country or countries in which the visit took place.

We provide guidance to parties to help them comply with the law – you can find all of this covered on our [website](#).

You mentioned on the phone that the reporting threshold for donations to political parties in Northern Ireland is different to the one in Great Britain. Just wanted to clarify that this isn't the case. Both in Great Britain and in Northern Ireland parties are required to submit quarterly donation and loan reports to the Commission, and include:

- donations accepted above the £7,500 threshold (£1,500 for accounting units)
- smaller donations from a single donor which exceed the reporting threshold when taken together
- donations which ought to have been reported in previous quarters
- impermissible donations they have received and the action taken in relation to these.

Let us know if there's anything further we can help with.

Thanks,

[REDACTED]

The Electoral Commission

electoralcommission.org.uk

From: [REDACTED]
To: [REDACTED]
Cc: [Press](#)
Subject: Electoral Commission query on donations
Date: 23 February 2022 10:13:31

Hi [REDACTED]

Thanks for your call yesterday.

As promised coming back to you with an overview of the rules regulated donees (this includes MPs and holders of elected office, such as mayors) need to follow.

Permissibility of donations

A donation is any gift to parties or regulated donees of money or goods or services, with a value greater than £500. Any cash or other gifts with a value of £500 or less are not treated as donations.

Parties and regulated donees, including MPs, must only accept donations from permissible sources. It is their responsibility to check that a donor is permissible, and they have 30 days to return the donation if it is from an impermissible source.

A list of permissible sources is [available on our website](#).

Reporting requirements

Holders of an elective office, such as MPs, are regulated under the 'regulated donee' rules outlined in the Political Parties, Elections and Referendums Act 2000 (PPERA). Under these rules, regulated donees have to report donations and loans over £500 that they receive in connection with their political activities.

MPs report donations and loans to the Register of Members' Financial Interests (RMFI). They report details of impermissible donations and loans directly to the Commission – we only have a regulatory role in this respect, and if necessary can investigate or sanction. The Parliamentary Commissioner for Standards is responsible for upholding the Code of Conduct for MPs agreed by the House of Commons.

The Commission is required, under the Political Parties, Elections and Referendums Act 2000 (PPERA), to publish donations that have been received directly by an MP in line with their political activities that have a value of over £1,500. We publish this information on our [database](#).

Further information on this is [on our website](#).

Candidate spending

For MPs who stand as Mayoral candidates – the donations they would receive as candidates would need to be reported in their capacity as candidates, rather than as MPs.

Candidates submit details of the donations they receive in connection with their election campaign to the Returning Officer after the relevant election in the area they stood in. Candidate donations over £50 must be from permissible sources, and candidates must submit details of these in their returns.

I hope this helps.

Best wishes,

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

The Electoral Commission

[REDACTED]

electoralcommission.org.uk

From: [REDACTED]
To: [REDACTED]
Cc: [Press](#)
Subject: Electoral Commission query permissible donations
Date: 23 February 2022 10:31:05

Hi [REDACTED]

Thanks for the call. Parties and regulated entities must only accept donations from permissible sources. The Political Parties, Elections, and Referendums Act places a responsibility on the recipient to ensure they are satisfied as to the identity of the donor, and that any donation they accept is from a permissible source. They have 30 days to return the donation if it is from an impermissible source. A list of permissible sources is [available on our website](#).

Best wishes,

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

The Electoral Commission

[REDACTED]

electoralcommission.org.uk

----- Original Message -----

From: [REDACTED]
Received: 22/03/2022 12:44
To: [REDACTED]
Subject: FW: Quarter 4 2021 Donation report - Donor Permissibility Query CCM:0113611

Hi [REDACTED]

Can you do permissibility checks on this address please.

Many thanks

[REDACTED]

From: Claire Mc Farlane [REDACTED]
Sent: 17 March 2022 16:16
To: [REDACTED]
Subject: Re: Quarter 4 2021 Donation report - Donor Permissibility Query CCM:0113611

Hello [REDACTED]

My apologies, Gerry Carroll has moved house and is now living at:

[REDACTED]

This is the address he was at when he made donations to the party in October, November and December 2021.

Kind Regards,

[REDACTED]

From: [REDACTED]
Sent: Wednesday 16 March 2022 14:49
To: [REDACTED]
Cc: [REDACTED]
Subject: Quarter 4 2021 Donation report - Donor Permissibility Query CCM:0113611

Dear [REDACTED]

I don't appear to have received a response to my email below.

Please provide a response by **Thursday 24 March 2022**.

Regards

[REDACTED]

From: [REDACTED]
Sent: 24 February 2022 15:12
To: [REDACTED]
Cc: [REDACTED]
Subject: Quarter 4 2021 Donation report - Donor Permissibility Query CCM:0113611

Dear [REDACTED]

Under the Political Parties Elections and Referendums Act 2000 a UK individual, is only a permissible donor to a party if they are registered in a UK electoral register when the party accepts the donation.

Gerry Carroll made a number of donations to the party during 2021. Gerry Carroll's address on the donation report form for Quarter 4 of 2021 was stated as [REDACTED]
[REDACTED]

A Gerard Carroll and a Gerard Patrick Carrol were registered at that address until the end of September 2021.

The 1 October 2021 electoral register update (notice of alteration) showed that a Gerard Carroll at [REDACTED] had been removed from the register. We believe this is the donor to the party.

The November update register and full register published in December 2021 did not have Gerard Carroll registered at the above address.

It is possible that Gerard Carroll was registered at another address in October, November and December 2021 when he made the donations.

Please provide details of the address that Gerry Carroll was registered at when the party accepted donations from him in October, November and December 2021 which the party used to confirm he was a permissible donor.

Please provide a response to this email by **10 March 2022**.

If you have any questions about this email please contact me, or in my absence [REDACTED]
[REDACTED]

Regards

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]
[REDACTED]

The Electoral Commission
Ground Floor
4 Cromac Place
The Gasworks
Belfast BT7 2JB
Tel: 028 9089 4025
Fax: 028 90314827
www.electoralcommission.org.uk

From: [REDACTED]
To: [Press](#)
Subject: FW: Electoral Commission enquiry
Date: 16 August 2022 11:03:42

Hi [REDACTED]

In this case, the donor donated regularly by standing order to the party. The donation became impermissible because the donor had died and was therefore removed from the electoral register. We decided not to impose a sanction because we did not consider it proportionate and the party returned the donation after it became aware of the circumstances.

Thanks

[REDACTED]
The Electoral Commission

[REDACTED]
electoralcommission.org.uk

Press office: 020 7271 0704

Press out of hours: 07789 920414

From: [REDACTED]

Sent: 16 August 2022 10:58

To: [REDACTED]

Subject: Re: Electoral Commission enquiry

Thanks [REDACTED] - much obliged.

Are you able to say why Cecil Duckworth was impermissible? From a brief search it looks like he died in 2020 - but I imagine this was left in his will - should I assume he wasn't on the electoral roll when he died?

Thanks

[REDACTED]
On Tue, 16 Aug 2022 at 10:52, [REDACTED]
wrote:

Hi [REDACTED]

Thanks for your call.

The Conservative Party was late to report four loans. Two loans should have been reported in its Q4 2019 report and two in its Q1 2020 report. Instead all four loans were reported in Q3 2020. The values of the loans were [£37,797.34](#), [£27,500](#), [£27,500](#) and [£5,447.29](#).

We imposed four variable monetary penalties totalling £3,080. The party paid the fine on 3 August 2022.

We decided to impose a sanction in this case because the central party's system to make

sure accounting units report loans to them was not as effective as its system for donations. We considered the case in line with our [Enforcement Policy](#) and decided that sanctions were appropriate for each misreported loan. When deciding the level of sanction, we took into account that, as a result of these instances, the party has improved its systems to reduce the chances of future issues.

As requested, please also see here more information on the [impermissible donation](#) that we investigated this month.

Let me know if you have further questions.

Thanks

[Redacted signature]

The Electoral Commission

[Redacted address]

electoralcommission.org.uk

Press office: 020 7271 0704

Press out of hours: 07789 920414

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From: [REDACTED]
To: [Press](#)
Subject: FW: Lib Dem - impermissible donation
Date: 17 May 2022 12:43:32

Apologies – I forgot to copy press in

From: [REDACTED]
Sent: 17 May 2022 11:18
To: [REDACTED]
Subject: Lib Dem - impermissible donation

Hi [REDACTED]
All details of the impermissible donation are on our register:
<http://search.electoralcommission.org.uk/English/Donations/I0542615>
This covers off all your questions below.
Let me know if you have anything further.
All the best

[REDACTED]
[REDACTED] Electoral Commission Scotland
The Electoral Commission
[REDACTED]
electoralcommission.org.uk

Press office: 0131 225 0211
Press out of hours: 07789 920414
From: Tom Gordon <tom.gordon@heraldandtimes.co.uk>
Sent: 17 May 2022 10:38

To: [REDACTED]
Subject: Re: Electoral Commission: Monthly update – concluded investigations

Hi [REDACTED]
Please can you tell me as much as you can about the Edinburgh West Liberal Democrats case.
For instance, who was the impermissible donor and how much did they try to donate and when?
Thanks
Tom

[REDACTED]

From: [REDACTED]
To: [REDACTED]
Cc: [Press](#)
Subject: Query on donations
Date: 16 March 2023 09:47:40

Hi [REDACTED]

Thanks for your call the other day. Under electoral law, a UK-registered company that is 'carrying on business' is a permissible donor. As such, Peterborough United Football Club is a permissible donor.

In terms of the donation by Cooper Quinn Holdings, it was reported by the party as impermissible as the company did not appear on the Companies House register and did not appear to be carrying on business. The party failed to return the donation within 30 days, as is the law in relation to receiving impermissible donations.

We opened an investigation into the failure to return the donation within 30 days. However, the investigation established that the company was in fact trading at the time of the donation and had been removed from the register as a result of a failure to deliver a required regular submission. When that submission was subsequently delivered, the company was reinstated on the register. Companies House confirmed to us that, under company law, a company which successfully applies to be restored to the company register would be deemed in law to have never left it. We were therefore satisfied that the donor was permissible.

Hope that helps, let me know if you have any other questions.

Best,

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

The Electoral Commission
electoralcommission.org.uk

Press office: 020 7271 0704
Press out of hours: 07789 920414

From: [REDACTED]
To: [REDACTED]
Cc: [Press](#)
Subject: RE: [EXTERNAL] Political parties accepted £11m in donations in three months to September
Date: 06 December 2022 10:11:00

Hi [REDACTED]

Details of all the [Q3 donations](#) are available on our political finance database, which you can filter by donor. This link details [donations from trade unions](#). You can also search by individual names or organisations using the search function box.
Hope this is helpful. Let me know if you need anything else.

The Electoral Commission

electoralcommission.org.uk

Press office: 020 7271 0704

Press out of hours: 07789 920414

From: [REDACTED]
Sent: 06 December 2022 9:59 AM
To: [REDACTED]
Subject: Re: [EXTERNAL] Political parties accepted £11m in donations in three months to September
Hi [REDACTED] - do we know how much Labour got from unions?

From: [REDACTED]
Sent: 06 December 2022 09:51
To: [REDACTED]
Cc: Press <press@electoralcommission.org.uk>
Subject: [EXTERNAL] Political parties accepted £11m in donations in three months to September

Hi Tim,
Please see below this morning's press release. Let me know if you have any questions.
Would you like me to add you to our mailing list so you'll receive our releases in future?
Thanks

The Electoral Commission

electoralcommission.org.uk

Press office: 020 7271 0704

Press out of hours: 07789 920414



Political parties accepted £11m in donations in three months to September

Political parties in Great Britain and Northern Ireland have reported accepting over £11m in donations and public funds from July to September, according to figures published today by the Electoral Commission. The total of £11,175,980 is made up of donations to 19 parties and compares similarly to levels reported in the same period in 2021 (£11,598,440).

Louise Edwards, the Electoral Commission's Director of Regulation, said:

"We are committed to protecting and promoting a transparent political finance system for voters, and publish the details of these donations so that everyone can see how parties are funded. Parties are legally required to check the donations they accept are from permissible sources and to report these to us.

"While these laws help voters to understand where political donations come from, reforms are needed to modernise and further safeguard the system. We have recommended for some time that the UK Government and Parliament work with us to improve donation controls and increase confidence in the UK's political finance regime."

The political parties that reported donations in Q3 2022 were:

Party	Total reported	Donations accepted (excl. public funds)	Public funds accepted	Total accepted in this quarter
Alliance - Alliance Party of Northern Ireland	£34,728	£15,000	£19,728	£34,728
Conservative and Unionist Party (GB)	£3,013,023	£2,890,867	£58,069	£2,948,935
Conservative and Unionist Party (NI)	£26,979	£26,979	£0	£26,979
Co-operative Party	£299,300	£299,300	£0	£299,300
Democratic Unionist Party - D.U.P.	£86,296	£0	£86,296	£86,296
Green Party (GB)	£129,786	£68,716	£46,778	£115,494
Labour Party	£4,756,370	£2,839,756	£1,867,064	£4,706,820
Liberal Democrats	£1,752,825	£1,366,827	£296,342	£1,663,169
People Before Profit Alliance	£4,766	£0	£4,766	£4,766
Plaid Cymru - The Party of Wales	£27,719	£0	£27,719	£27,719
Scottish Green Party	£5,761	£2,250	£3,511	£5,761
Scottish National Party (SNP)	£396,300	£0	£396,300	£396,300
SDLP (Social Democratic & Labour Party)	£115,276	£0	£115,276	£115,276
Sinn Féin	£183,049	£100,000	£83,049	£183,049
The Reclaim Party	£91,084	£91,084	£0	£91,084

The Socialist Party of Great Britain	£400,000	£400,000	£0	£400,000
Traditional Unionist Voice - TUV	£6,820	£0	£6,820	£6,820
True & Fair Party	£30,250	£30,250	£0	£30,250
Ulster Unionist Party	£23,236	£0	£23,236	£23,236
Women's Equality Party	£10,000	£10,000	£0	£10,000
Total	£11,393,567	£8,141,028	£3,034,952	£11,175,980

Political parties are required to submit quarterly donation and loan returns to the Electoral Commission. Within these returns, parties report:

- donations accepted above the £7,500 threshold (over £1,500 for accounting units)
- smaller donations from a single donor which exceed the reporting threshold when taken together
- impermissible donations they have received and the action taken in relation to these

Borrowing

There were £188,300 of new loans reported in Q3 2022. Loans with a value of £28,000 were fully paid off.

Donations accepted by regulated donees

The Commission also publishes details of donations accepted by regulated donees. Regulated donees are members of registered political parties, holders of relevant elective office and members associations.

In Q3 2022, £2,111,117 in donations were accepted by 182 donees. The total includes cash and non-cash donations, as well as donations towards overseas visits. Full details of [donations to regulated donees](#) are available on our website.

Type of regulated donee	Value of cash and non-cash donations accepted	Value of donations accepted towards overseas visits	Total value of donations accepted
Leadership Candidate	£1,172,938	£0	£1,172,938
Mayor	£17,533	£0	£17,533
Members Association	£126,800	£0	£126,800
MP – Member of Parliament	£660,033	£133,812	£793,845
Totals	£1,977,305	£133,812	£2,111,117

Further information

A [summary of donations](#) reported by parties, including the highest donors and details of late reports, is available on the Commission's website.

Full details of donations and loans reported in Q3 2022 are available on our [political finance register](#).

Ends

For more information contact the Electoral Commission press office on 020 7271 0704, out of office hours 07789 920 414 or press@electoralcommission.org.uk

Notes to editors

1. The Electoral Commission is the independent body which oversees elections and regulates political finance in the UK. We work to promote public confidence in the democratic process and ensure its integrity by:

- enabling the delivery of free and fair elections and referendums, focusing on the needs of electors and addressing the changing environment to ensure every vote remains secure and accessible
- regulating political finance – taking proactive steps to increase transparency, ensure compliance and pursue breaches
- using our expertise to make and advocate for changes to our democracy, aiming to improve fairness, transparency and efficiency.

The Commission was set up in 2000 and reports to the UK, Scottish and Welsh parliaments.

2. The amount that a political party reports to the Commission may be different to the amount it accepts in a quarter. The amount reported can include donations that were returned because they were impermissible and/ or donations which should have been reported in previous quarters.

3. Parties will likely have received other donations, from different individuals or bodies, that are below the thresholds for reporting to the Commission. Taken as a total sum these can amount to substantial sources of income for parties.

4. Six parties failed to meet the reporting deadline for this quarter. The Commission will consider each of these matters, as well as donations reported late, in line with its [Enforcement Policy](#), if appropriate. Any sanctions applied will be published at a later date.

5. The Political Parties, Elections and Referendums Act 2000 (PPERA) requires registered parties to report cash and non-cash donations and borrowing to the Electoral Commission on a quarterly basis. Political parties must report all donations and borrowing over £7,500 relating to the central party, or over £1,500 relating to an accounting unit. This includes aggregates of donations and loans from the same source during the calendar year. Once the central party has reported a donation or aggregate donation over £7,500 it must report each subsequent donation of more than £1,500 from that source.

6. As parties only report donations and loans over these thresholds, the figures do not include all donations and loans to political parties. Donations and loans under these thresholds are recorded in political parties' annual accounts. Information on the political parties' most recent statements of accounts is available on the [Commission's database](#).

7. Public funds are donations from the House of Commons, the House of Lords, the Scottish Parliament and the Electoral Commission. 'Short' and 'Cranborne' grants are available to

parties in opposition in the House of Commons or House of Lords respectively.

8. Some donations appear on the register as being from the Electoral Commission. These are Policy Development Grants, which were established by the Political Parties, Elections and Referendums Act 2000 for parties represented in the Commons by two or more sitting members. The grants are intended to assist parties in developing the policies that they will present in an election manifesto. The legislation provides the total sum of £2 million annually for this purpose. Policy Development Grants became reportable as donations for the first time in Q3 2006 as a result of the Electoral Administration Act 2006.

9. There were 383 registered political parties in Great Britain and Northern Ireland during Q3 2022. 67 were required to submit a quarterly donation report and 41 to submit borrowing information within the deadline. The remaining political parties have previously submitted four consecutive nil returns. Providing they have not received donations in the last quarter, they are therefore exempt from submitting a report.

10. More information on what constitutes a [regulated donee](#) and their legal reporting requirements is available on our website.

11. Members of Parliament report their accepted donations to the [Register of Members' Financial Interests](#). The registrar then sends these details to the Commission. The Commission identifies and publishes any donations that fall within the regulated donee laws. The Commission has a regulatory role in relation to the permissibility of donations.

12. Members of Scottish Parliament report their accepted donations to the [Register of Interests for the Scottish Parliament](#).

13. All other regulated donees report their donations directly to us. We then publish this information monthly as part of our role in providing greater transparency in political finance in the UK.

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From: [REDACTED]

To: [REDACTED]

Cc: [Press](#)

Subject: RE: unincorporated associations

Date: 03 February 2022 16:38:48

Attachments: [Outlook-Related im.png](#)

[image001.jpg](#)

Hi [REDACTED]

Thanks for the call earlier today. I've included below some information on the rules that unincorporated associations have to follow, as well as information on the reporting rules.

Firstly, we don't have the details of who chairs the associations – the Political Parties, Elections and Referendums Act 2000 requires unincorporated associations to notify us of their name, address of the main office in the UK and the date on which the notification was given. You'd need to contact the associations themselves to get further information.

To answer your specific questions on the United and Cecil Club.

- The register of gifts to unincorporated associations on our [website](#) only has information on the gifts reported by the unincorporated associations that are not also members associations. If an unincorporated association is made up wholly or mainly of members of one registered party, then it is also a members' association. The vast majority of UAs are members associations.
- Members associations are regulated donees, and so they have to conduct permissibility checks on their donors, and the details of their donations are included in our [political finance database](#).
- The United and Cecil Club is a members association. As a regulated donee the United and Cecil Club can only accept donations from permissible sources and must report donations received in line with their political activities with a value of over £7,500. The reason why there are four donations to the United and Cecil Club on our website that have an individual value below £7,500 ([NC0146478](#), [C0133712](#), [C0146479](#), [NC0133713](#)) is that taken together in the same calendar year they amount to over £7,500.

In conversations with the CSPL, prior to its 2021 report on Regulating Election Finance, we identified two key vulnerabilities with the rules on UAs:

- While UAs are included in the list of permissible donors, those who give money to them are not required to meet permissibility laws and are not considered 'donors' under PPERA. This means that they could legitimately receive money from overseas sources and donate that money to political parties. In this instance the UA is the donor and must be permissible; there are laws in place to prevent a UA evading the permissibility laws by acting as an agent for a foreign donor.
- UAs are not required to disclose donations to candidates

[CSPL recommended](#) addressing weaknesses in the transparency regime for unincorporated associations that are not also members associations. In its review the CSPL recommended, amongst others, that UAs that meet the threshold for registering with the Commission should be required to conduct permissibility checks on donations made to them. In its initial response to CSPL, the UK Government rejected these recommendations.

Below is some **background on the regime for unincorporated associations (UA)**.

- An unincorporated association is defined by law as any association of two or more persons which carries on business or other activities wholly or mainly in the United Kingdom and whose main office is there. Regulated unincorporated associations must follow certain rules set out in legislation.
- Unincorporated associations only become regulated if they make political contributions, and must register with us if they make political contributions over £25,000 in a calendar year. Political contributions include donations and loans made to political parties, organisations that campaign in elections, and individuals in elective office such as MPs. However, there are no registration requirements for donations to candidates.
- As well as registering with us, an association making contributions of more than £25,000 must also tell us about reportable gifts received in:
 - The calendar year before making these contributions
 - The calendar year of the contributions
 - The calendar year following the contributions
- Reportable gifts include single gifts of more than £7,500, or gifts from the same person of more than £500 totalling £7,500 in a calendar year.

Background on donations and reporting

- A donation is any gift to a party of money or goods or services, with a value greater than £500. Any cash or other gifts to parties with a value of £500 or less are not treated as donations.
- The Political Parties, Elections, and Referendums Act places a responsibility on the recipient to take reasonable steps to ensure they are satisfied as to the identity of the donor, and that any donation they accept is from a permissible source.
- The full list of permissible sources is [available on our website](#), but as you mentioned over the phone it does include individuals registered on a UK electoral register (including overseas electors) and most UK registered companies
- Political parties are required to submit quarterly donation and loan reports to the Electoral Commission, and include:
 - donations accepted above the £7,500 threshold (£1,500 for accounting units)
 - smaller donations from a single donor which exceed the reporting threshold when taken together
 - donations which ought to have been reported in previous quarters
 - impermissible donations they have received and the action taken in relation to these.

I hope this helps.

Best wishes,

[Redacted]

From: [Redacted]

Sent: 03 February 2022 11:42

To: [Redacted]

Cc: Press <press@electoralcommission.org.uk>

Subject: Re: unincorporated associations

Hi [Redacted]

Are you also able to tell me who chairs the following associations:

The Spring Lunch

United & Cecil Club

Leamington Fund

Thanks



Related image

From: [Redacted]

Sent: Thursday, February 3, 2022 9:22 AM

To: [Redacted]

Cc: Press <press@electoralcommission.org.uk>

Subject: Re: unincorporated associations

<https://www.theguardian.com/politics/2015/mar/13/conservative-party-given-nearly-500k-in-concealed-donations>

Image removed by sender. Opaque organisations give Tories nearly £500k in concealed donations | Party funding | The Guardian

Opaque organisations which do not have to declare their backers gave nearly £500,000 towards the Conservative party in marginal seats in the final three months of last year, official figures ...

www.theguardian.com



Related image

From: [Redacted]

Sent: Wednesday, February 2, 2022 7:00 PM

To: [Redacted]

Cc: Press <press@electoralcommission.org.uk>

Subject: Re: unincorporated associations

External Sender~~

Hi [Redacted]

No worries I can give you a call tomorrow morning and we can discuss your questions so I can see how best we can help. If easier do feel free to send them on email.

Thanks, [Redacted]



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0%3D%7C0&data=NTqcFi%2Fa4uFHA0ezXEiWX009R82JaWzwNsN4fN8ZJJ4%3D
&reserved=0>

On 2 Feb 2022, at 18:57, [REDACTED] wrote:

Would need to be by close of play tomorrow



[Related image]

From: [REDACTED]
Sent: Wednesday, February 2, 2022 6:56 PM
To: [REDACTED]
Cc: Press <press@electoralcommission.org.uk>
Subject: Re: unincorporated associations
External Sender~~

Hi [REDACTED]
Thanks for your email. What deadline are you working towards? Let me know if this is something we can look into for you tomorrow.

Thanks, [REDACTED]



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On 2 Feb 2022, at 18:52, [REDACTED] wrote:

Hi,
I'm writing a story on unincorporated associations. I would be grateful if I could run through a few points with someone from the Electoral Commission to ensure I have understood the rules correctly.

Thanks, [REDACTED]



[Related image]

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From: [REDACTED]
To: [Barney Doherty](#)
Subject: RE: Correspondence from the Electoral Commission CCM:0113731
Date: 23 February 2023 10:34:32

Dear Barney,

Thank you for your response.

You have confirmed that the party is in the process of returning the donations received from Gerry Carroll in January and February 2022.

Please confirm in writing when the donations have been returned.

When confirming if an individual is a permissible donor the party **must** check all monthly updates to the last full register to ensure that the individual has not been removed from the register and are on the register at the time the party receives the donation. If the person is not on the register you **must** return the donation to the donor **within 30 days** of receiving it.

I strongly encourage you to make an appointment with me so I can take you through your responsibilities as a treasurer. My normal working days are Tuesday – Thursday each week. If these days do not suit you, let me know and we can make alternative arrangements.

From: Barney Doherty [REDACTED]

Sent: 16 February 2023 4:20 PM

To: [REDACTED]

Subject: Re: Correspondence from the Electoral Commission CCM:0113731

Hello [REDACTED]

Thanks for your email. I hope I have answered your questions below but please let me know if any more is needed. I apologise for the mistakes that were made and will endeavour to correct these immediately and certainly will be better informed for the next submission.

I am new to this role and have a much better understanding of what is expected now having done one submission and will not make those mistakes again.

- Where either of the donations received in January or February returned to Gerry Carroll? If not, considering the information we have provided does the party now intend to return the donations?

Yes, we are in the process of returning these donations to Gerry Carroll. These donations were received during the same period as the donations in October, November, December in 2021 which were returned when we were informed he had fallen off the electoral register.

- What checks were carried out to confirm if Gerry Carroll was a permissible donor when the party received the donations in January and February 2022?

We informed Gerry of the problem and the need to fix his address with the register. We know he got in contact with the electoral register in January 2022 to ensure his new address was updated.

- When you took on the role of party treasurer what systems did the party have in place to record donations and carry out permissibility checks on donors?

When I took over treasurer responsibilities I was given access to the necessary accounts and took on to check permissibility of donors after a handover process. As a small party we only receive one donation over the threshold and we are in contact with Gerry about this. All other donations that come in during election campaigns etc. are carefully checked against the register. I should have double checked those received previous to me taking on the role.

- What handover did you receive from the previous party treasurer in relation to general management of the party's finances and specifically in relation to carrying out permissibility checks on donors and managing impermissible donations?

When I took on the role in November, we conducted a formal handover. This included gaining access to the necessary accounts and being walked through the process of conducting checks on incoming donations and submitting returns. I appreciate other training has been offered by yourself and this is something I will avail of before the next submission.

Again I apologise for these errors and hope this clarifies some.

Kind regards,

[REDACTED]

On Thu, Feb 9, 2023 at 3:54 PM [REDACTED] wrote:

Please see attached letter.

Regards

[REDACTED]
[REDACTED]
[REDACTED]

From: [REDACTED]
To: [REDACTED] [Press](#)
Subject: RE: Data query
Date: 27 January 2023 10:11:00

Hi [REDACTED]

From looking at the entries you've copied below those are indeed pre poll donations.

I just went on our database and searched for [all donations](#) given by Lubov Chernukhin and it looks like those are the only two, and one impermissible donation. With all of our database results, it may be easier to export these in an Excel and then you can filter out pre poll donations as well as impermissible donations and get the totals that way.

Best wishes,

[REDACTED]

The Electoral Commission

[REDACTED]

electoralcommission.org.uk

From: [REDACTED]
Sent: 27 January 2023 9:05 AM
To: [REDACTED] [Press](#)
<press@electoralcommission.org.uk>
Subject: Data query

Hi [REDACTED]

I'm looking to establish the total amount given by Lubov Chernukhin to the Conservative party, its MPs and associations since 2010. I see its widely reported she has given the Conservatives £2.2m and began donating in 2012.

However, looking at the EC's data, and removing what I believe are two pre-poll donations, as well as an impermissible sum, my figure comes to £1,943,629.40.

Could you confirm please that the following donations in your database from here are pre-polls and therefore duplicates that should be removed from the total?

- £200,000.00 - Pre-Poll 1 - Party(06/11/19 - 12/11/19) UKPGE 2019
- £12,500.00 Pre-Poll 2 - Party(10/05/17 - 16/05/17)UKPGE 2017

The impermissible sum was £10k.

If its at all possible to let me know this morning I'd be very grateful.

Very best wishes,

[REDACTED]

--

[REDACTED]

From: [REDACTED]
To: [REDACTED] [Press](#)
Subject: RE: Donation query
Date: 25 February 2022 12:45:57

Hi [REDACTED]

Thanks for taking my call just now. As discussed, on our [website](#) you can see a list of permissible donors.

The Political Parties, Elections, and Referendums Act places a responsibility on the recipient to ensure they are satisfied as to the identity of the donor, and that any donation they accept is from a permissible source. They have 30 days to return the donation if it is from an impermissible source.

Best wishes,

[REDACTED]
From: [REDACTED]

Sent: 25 February 2022 12:36

To: [REDACTED] Press

<press@electoralcommission.org.uk>

Subject: Donation query

Hi [REDACTED]

Thanks for taking my call just now.

The donation I was interested in is: I0399926

The database says that this was from an "impermissible donor".

I'd be grateful for clarification about what that means. Specifically: does it mean that the individual is not on the electoral register? Or could there be other reasons as well?

thanks,

[REDACTED]

--

[REDACTED]
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From: [REDACTED]
To: [REDACTED]
Cc: [Press](#)
Subject: Re: Electoral Commission enquiry
Date: 16 January 2023 17:06:59

Thanks, [REDACTED] Given that he is based in [REDACTED] is he therefore an overseas elector?

From: [REDACTED]
Date: Monday, 16 January 2023 at 16:51
To: [REDACTED]
Cc: Press <press@electoralcommission.org.uk>
Subject: Electoral Commission enquiry

Hi [REDACTED]

Thanks for your call earlier on donor permissibility.

MPs report all donations and financial interests over a certain value they receive to the [Register of Members' Financial Interests \(RMFI\)](#). The Commission then identifies any donations that fall within the rules we enforce and publish these. These are donations MPs receive in connection with their political activities with a value of over £1,500. There may be more donations that MPs report to RMFI, but that do not fall within the scope of the law that we enforce.

We haven't determined yet whether the interest reported by Mr Johnson to the RMFI falls within the scope of the law we enforce, so we have not made any permissibility checks on the donor.

In case useful, below is some information on the permissibility rules:

- A donation can only be accepted from a permissible source. In Great Britain, permissible sources are individuals registered on a UK electoral register, including overseas electors. There is more information on [permissible sources](#) on our website.
- The law places a responsibility on the recipient of a donation to ensure they are satisfied with the identity of the donor, and that the donor is permissible. They have 30 days to return the donation if it is from an impermissible source.
- Where there is evidence that a donation from an impermissible source has been accepted, we will consider it in line with our Enforcement Policy, and consider what action, if any, is appropriate.

To note, for your interest, Mr Harborne has donated in the past and was a permissible donor at the time. However, for any donation, checks have to be made to ensure the donor is still permissible at the time any other donation is made.

Let me know if you have further questions.

[REDACTED]
The Electoral Commission

[REDACTED]
electoralcommission.org.uk
Press office: 020 7271 0704
Press out of hours: 07789 920414

From: [REDACTED]
To: [REDACTED]
Cc: [Press](#)
Subject: RE: Electoral Commission: Monthly update – concluded investigations
Date: 16 August 2022 11:05:02
Attachments: [image001.jpg](#)
[image002.jpg](#)

Hi [REDACTED]

Sorry for not being clear, each of the links below will take you to our political finance database where you can see further information on the loans, including the lender information.

Let me know if you need anything else.

Thanks

The Electoral Commission

electoralcommission.org.uk

Press office: 020 7271 0704

Press out of hours: 07789 920414

From: [REDACTED]
Sent: 16 August 2022 10:55
To: [REDACTED]
Subject: RE: Electoral Commission: Monthly update – concluded investigations
Thanks [REDACTED] that's helpful – who were the loans from please?
[REDACTED]

From: [REDACTED]
Sent: 16 August 2022 10:53
To: [REDACTED]
Cc: Press <press@electoralcommission.org.uk>
Subject: RE: Electoral Commission: Monthly update – concluded investigations
Hi [REDACTED]

Thanks for your email.

The party was late to report four loans. Two loans should have been reported in its Q4 2019 report and two in its Q1 2020 report. Instead all four loans were reported in Q3 2020. The values of the loans were [£37,797.34](#), [£27,500](#), [£27,500](#) and [£5,447.29](#).

Please get in touch if you have further questions.

Thanks

The Electoral Commission

electoralcommission.org.uk

Press office: 020 7271 0704

Press out of hours: 07789 920414

From: [REDACTED]
Sent: 16 August 2022 10:29
To: Press <press@electoralcommission.org.uk>

Subject: RE: Electoral Commission: Monthly update – concluded investigations

Hi – just to follow up my call from earlier, I’m seeking clarification on the Conservatives’ late reporting of loans and the fines totalling £3,080.

Please can you provide details of the loans – who loaned the money – and the dates.

You can contact me on [REDACTED]

Thank you

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

From: [REDACTED]

Sent: 16 August 2022 09:32

To: [REDACTED]

Subject: Electoral Commission: Monthly update – concluded investigations

Image removed by sender.



Tuesday 16 August 2022

Monthly update – concluded investigations

Details of the investigations concluded in the last month have been published today by the Electoral Commission. This is an important part of delivering transparency in political finance in the UK.

Investigations where we found offences:

Name and type of regulated entity	What was investigated	Offences found	Decision taken
Basildon Community Residents Party (registered political party)	Late delivery of quarterly donations and loans reports	Late delivery of quarterly donations and loans reports	No sanction
Co-operative Party (registered political party)	Late reporting of a donation	Late reporting of a donation	No sanction
Conservative and Unionist Party (registered political party)	Late return of an impermissible donation	Late return of an impermissible donation	No sanction
	Late reporting of donations	Late reporting of donations	No sanction
	Late reporting of loans	Late reporting of loans	Four fines totalling £3,080

Workers Party of Great Britain (registered political party)	Failure to deliver an accurate campaign spending report	Failure to deliver an accurate campaign spending report	No sanction
	Failure to include campaign spending report declaration	Failure to include campaign spending report declaration	No sanction

Commenting on the concluded investigations, Louise Edwards, Director of Regulation, said:

“It is important for transparency that voters have timely and accurate information about political parties’ and campaigners’ finances. The requirements are clear, so it is always disappointing when they are not met.

“Where we find that offences have been committed, we do not automatically impose sanctions but will do so where we consider it appropriate. We act proportionately and take into consideration a range of factors when reaching our final decisions, including a party’s efforts to improve their compliance systems to avoid future breaches.”

Ends

For more information contact the Electoral Commission press office on 020 7271 0704, out of office hours 07789 920 414 or press@electoralcommission.org.uk

Notes to editors

1. The Electoral Commission is the independent body which oversees elections and regulates political finance in the UK. We work to promote public confidence in the democratic process and ensure its integrity by:

- enabling the delivery of free and fair elections and referendums, focusing on the needs of electors and addressing the changing environment to ensure every vote remains secure and accessible
- regulating political finance – taking proactive steps to increase transparency, ensure compliance and pursue breaches
- using our expertise to make and advocate for changes to our democracy, aiming to improve fairness, transparency and efficiency

The Commission was set up in 2000 and reports to the UK, Welsh, and Scottish parliaments.

2. This release forms part of the Commission’s regular monthly investigations update, an important part of its commitment to deliver transparency in political finance in the UK. Information of this nature is published routinely on the third Tuesday of each month. Details for [sanctions from previous months](#) are available.

3. Penalties imposed by the Commission go into the Consolidated Fund. This is

managed by HM Treasury and not the Electoral Commission.

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From: [REDACTED]
To: [REDACTED]
Cc: [Press](#)
Subject: RE: Following up – Tory membership permissibility
Date: 12 August 2022 15:20:50

Hi [REDACTED]

Thanks for getting in touch. As discussed on the phone, the rules and process for voting in internal party elections are a matter for the party and not within the remit of the Commission. Please find below some background information which I hope is helpful.

Members of political parties

- The Commission does not regulate the rules for a party's membership. The rules about internal political party membership are for the party itself. The Conservative Party's rules are within its [constitution](#), which is available on the party's website.
- It is not a requirement for political parties to inform the Commission of the number of its members, although some parties choose to include their membership numbers as part of their annual statement of accounts.
- The Commission published [the accounts of UK political parties](#) with income and expenditure under £250,000 last month, and will publish those beyond this threshold later this month. The accounts of the Conservative and Unionist Party will be published in due course, as they are a larger party. You can find accounts dating back to 2001 on our [political finance database](#).

Donation rules for party leadership contests

- Donations and loans to candidates in internal party leadership elections are essentially donations to MPs.
- MPs are required to report any donations (or loans) that they accept in relation to their political activity above £1,500 to the House of Commons [Register of Members' Financial Interests](#). The RMFI then pass that information to us so that we can also publish it. We publish these donations on our [website](#) on the third Tuesday of every month.
- Any impermissible donations must be reported directly to the Commission.
- MPs can only take donations or loans over £500 from permissible sources. A [full list of permissible sources](#) can be found on our website.

Permissible donations

- Donations over £500 (in relation to a donee's political activities) must be from a permissible source. It is the responsibility of donees to check the source of the donation. If it does not come from a permissible source, or they cannot identify the donor, they must return it within 30 days of receipt. This falls within the Commission's enforcement remit.
- Although existing laws provide transparency of the source of political donations, the Commission has made recommendations for reforms to modernise the system and improve controls to prevent foreign money being used in UK politics. This includes introducing a duty on parties for enhanced due diligence and risk assessment of donations, adapted from money laundering regulations. There is more on this in this [comment piece by John Pullinger](#), the Commission's Chair.

Happy to discuss any of this further on the phone. Let me know if you have other questions.

Thanks

[REDACTED]
[REDACTED]
The Electoral Commission

[REDACTED]
electoralcommission.org.uk

Press office: 020 7271 0704

Press out of hours: 07789 920414

From: [REDACTED]

Sent: 12 August 2022 07:41

To: Press <press@electoralcommission.org.uk>

Subject: Following up – Tory membership permissibility

Hi, I'm a journalist from Tortoise Media. Yesterday I spoke to someone in your press team about whether the actual membership of political parties, their eligibility to vote in internal leadership elections, and the rules set for those election is something you regulate at the Electoral Commission.

The answer was no, and when I asked whether the regulation of party membership was something any organisation was required to regulate, the answer was also, probably a no, but that they'd check to see if this was the case.

I just wanted to follow up to check that this was absolutely the case – that political parties' memberships, the internal rules that govern entry to membership and eligibility to vote in the leadership contests (i.e. ensuring foreign nationals and dead people aren't voting) are not required to be regulated by any body or organisation, or even checked against the electoral roll?

Thanks,

[REDACTED]

--

[REDACTED]

From: [REDACTED]
To: [REDACTED]
Cc: [Press](#)
Subject: RE: Impermissible donation
Date: 11 August 2023 16:25:44

Hi [REDACTED]

This was a non-cash donation involving a staff member being seconded to work for the MP. In some instances, where an MP is being provided with a team member to work for them for a period of time, the donor is that person's employer. In this case, the NHS was the employer and as such an impermissible donor. The donation was deferred as it was not possible to repay the NHS for a seconded team member working for a few days in the MP's office.

Just to note, for your background, in this case there was a confusion about who the actual donor was and the MP did not knowingly accept a non-cash donation from an impermissible donor.

Thanks,
[REDACTED]

From: [REDACTED]
Sent: Friday, August 11, 2023 12:26 PM
To: [REDACTED]
Cc: Press <press@electoralcommission.org.uk>
Subject: Re: Impermissible donation

Thanks [REDACTED]

On Fri, 11 Aug 2023, 12:00 [REDACTED] wrote:

Hi [REDACTED]

Thanks for the email, just confirming I've picked this up.

Best,
[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

The Electoral Commission

[REDACTED]
[electoralcommission.org.uk](https://www.electoralcommission.org.uk)

From: [REDACTED]
Sent: Friday, August 11, 2023 10:27 AM
To: Press <press@electoralcommission.org.uk>
Subject: Impermissible donation

Hi,

I'm a journalist for openDemocracy, the news website.

I am looking into this impermissible donation that was deferred last year:

<https://search.electoralcommission.org.uk/English/Donations/I0561992>

I wondered if you have any more information or context about this that you can share with me?

I also wanted to check what "deferred" means in practice in this context? Does it mean that the donee never actually received the money?

I would be really grateful for any guidance you can give on background.

Thanks,

[REDACTED]
[REDACTED]

From: [REDACTED]
To: [REDACTED]
Cc: [Press](#)
Subject: Re: NYT query
Date: 27 April 2022 10:58:14
Attachments: [image001.jpg](#)
[image002.jpg](#)

Wonderful, thank you [REDACTED] I may have a couple more follow up questions in the near future, but for now that answers them all.

Many thanks,

[REDACTED]



8 Bloomsbury Street, London WC1B 3SR

[REDACTED]
[REDACTED]
[REDACTED]
[REDACTED]

On Wed, 27 Apr 2022 at 10:48, [REDACTED] wrote:

Hi [REDACTED]

No problem. You can see the donor status in the list for each donation when you scroll down to results– whether the donor is impermissible will also appear there. Where it is permissible, you'll be able to see the status exactly, so for example whether it's a company or an individual. Hope that is clear!

Thanks,

[REDACTED]

From: [REDACTED]
Sent: 27 April 2022 10:35
To: [REDACTED]
Cc: Press <press@electoralcommission.org.uk>
Subject: Re: NYT query

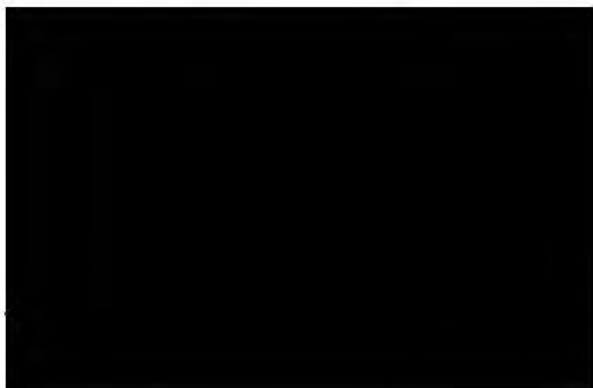
Hi [REDACTED]

Really helpful, thank you. So any impermissible donations would be declared so publicly on your register and if it is not (but shows up on the regular donations search) it was a permissible donation?

Best,

[REDACTED]





On Wed, 27 Apr 2022 at 10:25, [REDACTED] wrote:

Hi [REDACTED]

Thanks for the email.

You would be able to filter the search results on our database so that you can see donations from impermissible sources or unidentifiable donors – here is a [blank search with those filters](#) (they're under donor status).

To give you some background on the rules – parties and regulated entities must only accept donations from permissible sources. The law places a responsibility on the recipient of a donation to ensure they are satisfied as to the identity of the donor, and that the donor is permissible. They have 30 days to return the donation if it is from an impermissible source.

I hope that helps, but let me know if you have any questions.

Thanks,

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

The Electoral Commission

[REDACTED]

electoralcommission.org.uk

From: [REDACTED]

Sent: 27 April 2022 10:00

To: Press <press@electoralcommission.org.uk>

Subject: NYT query

Good morning,

I just had a quick fact-checking query I was hoping you could help me with — am I correct in understanding that the donations listed on your [register](#) are those which have been accepted by the relevant party or individual? If a donation had been returned, would it still be listed on the register?

Many thanks,

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]
[REDACTED]
[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

From: [REDACTED]
To: [REDACTED] [Press](#)
Subject: RE: Question - leadership contest
Date: 26 July 2022 11:59:26

Hi [REDACTED]

Thanks for the email. Donations to candidates in the leadership contest are essentially donations to MPs. MPs are required to report any donations in relation to their political activity above £1,500 to the House of Commons' Register of Members' Financial Interests (RMFI). They must also report any impermissible donations to us. We then publish all this information on our website on the third Tuesday of every month.

Candidates must report donations 30 days from when they are accepted.

I hope this helps.

Best,

[REDACTED]

The Electoral Commission

[REDACTED]

electoralcommission.org.uk

From: [REDACTED]

Sent: 26 July 2022 11:40

To: Press <press@electoralcommission.org.uk>

Subject: Question - leadership contest

Hi there,

Just a very quick question - when does the Electoral Commission expect to publish the first declarations on spending and donations from candidates in the Tory leadership contest?

Many thanks,

[REDACTED]

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From: [REDACTED]
To: [REDACTED]
Cc: [Press](#)
Subject: RE: Questions on spending returns / long campaign
Date: 04 July 2023 16:26:41

Hi [REDACTED]

Thanks for the statement, much appreciated. My (admittedly slightly niche) blog on this has been put back a bit due to competing priorities, but will make sure I include the Commission's statement in it as and when it sees the light of day.

Regards

[REDACTED]

From: [REDACTED]
Sent: Tuesday, July 4, 2023 3:56 PM
To: [REDACTED]
Cc: Press <press@electoralcommission.org.uk>
Subject: RE: Questions on spending returns / long campaign

Hi [REDACTED]

Thanks for your email. Please see below for a response to your question on the long campaign.

The Electoral Commission is in the process of producing guidance for electoral events in 2024. This includes a possible UK parliamentary general election, as well as local and Mayoral elections.

There is a high chance that a general election in 2024 will have a 'long campaign' for candidates, with different spending limits. Because there has not been a regulated period such as this since the 2015 general election, we are currently working with political parties and candidates to outline what the rules are, including those on donations, timings and spending limits.

We recognise that political parties and candidates have not needed to use this area of the law for a number of years, and will need guidance on the matter. Our focus is supporting them so that these requirements are fully understood and complied with, allowing for greater confidence in the electoral process.

I hope this helps.

Thanks

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

The Electoral Commission
electoralcommission.org.uk

From: [REDACTED]
Sent: Tuesday, June 13, 2023 4:58 PM
To: [REDACTED]
Cc: Press <press@electoralcommission.org.uk>
Subject: RE: Questions on spending returns / long campaign

Hi [REDACTED]

Re: publishing online: thanks for clarifying the Commission's current position.

Re: the regulation of long campaign donations: I understand the Commission's responsibilities under s.145 PPERA, and the Commission clearly does have a role in regulating donations to candidates (e.g. see [Sch.2A RPA 1983](#) re: impermissible donations) even if breaches of the spending rules are criminal only.

What I'm asking is whether the Commission still considers donations towards spending during the long campaign are regulated. It must know the answer to this to carry out its s.145 functions effectively. I'm guessing from the responses so far that it's not sure, which is a tad worrying given the law hasn't changed since previous elections when it did consider them regulated.

Happy to jump on a call with someone to discuss off the record if it helps. I know the law in this area is not straightforward.

Many thanks again for your time.

Yours sincerely

[REDACTED]

From: [REDACTED]
Sent: Tuesday, June 13, 2023 1:35 PM
To: [REDACTED]
Cc: Press <press@electoralcommission.org.uk>
Subject: RE: Questions on spending returns / long campaign

You don't often get email from ldavidson@electoralcommission.org.uk. [Learn why this is important](#)

Hi [REDACTED]

The requirement for ROs to publish candidate spending returns after local elections, is the same as that for UK parliamentary elections, in terms of the information made available and the duration of time for which it must be available. As previously mentioned, ROs must retain a copy of each election spending return

and declaration, and any accompanying documents, for a period of two years beginning with the date when the return is received and, during that period, make copies available for public inspection without charge. For information our guidance on that [is here](#) (on p.10).

On your second question regarding recommendations for ROs to publish copies of candidate spending returns online at the next general election, we have recommended that the law on publishing and making candidate returns available for inspection should be updated to reflect technological change, including advertising online and ultimately publishing candidate returns online. You can read our review [here](#), which I know you will be familiar with.

As you'll be aware, we also made it clear that there would be significant practical implications to be worked through. As the report says, "Moving to the online publication of candidate returns will require careful preparation. We will need to provide guidance and support for Returning Officers, including on data protection issues. We will also have to review the current range of forms used for candidate spending and encourage the use of simpler forms which readers can readily understand. Currently, it can be difficult for readers to understand which information on a spending return is legally required or optional."

One of the potential issues is whether the wording of the law gives ROs the scope to publish online, and it is possible that a change of law may be needed to allow online publication - a change to our guidance might not suffice to enable this.

In terms of what the Commission publishes from candidate returns after general elections, we are constrained by our lack of specific legal powers to publish. Our current publication approach is not based on any direct power and arises more from our general duty to monitor compliance and a desire to improve transparency of money spent at elections, as you will appreciate. It could be that donation information may have to be so heavily redacted as to lose its value in terms of transparency. We will take your comments on board as we plan for a future general election.

Also, in response to one of your original questions on the long campaign, the Commission does not regulate candidate campaigning. Our role is to monitor compliance with the law during a campaign, including the long campaign at a UK parliamentary general election. We produce guidance for candidates in the lead up to the election outlining how the rules work. This will include any changes made by the Elections Act 2022.

I hope this helps.

Best wishes,

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

From: [REDACTED]
Sent: Friday, June 2, 2023 12:20 PM
To: [REDACTED]
Cc: Press <press@electoralcommission.org.uk>
Subject: RE: Questions on spending returns / long campaign

Hi [REDACTED]

Sorry for the slow reply.

A quick clarification on the spending returns question: does the same position apply for UK parliamentary general elections, too? I know the Commission has been recommending for some time that the law be updated to give a clearer mandate for publishing them online, as well as available for inspection in person. I don't think there's been any developments on this issue – either in law, policy or guidance – but wanted to double check in case I'd missed anything.

Possibly the below is for policy colleagues, but thought it helpful to provide for fuller context. Considering the below, is the Commission considering recommending returning officers to publish copies of candidate spending returns online at the next general election?

To be more specific, Section 89 of the Representation of the People Act 1983 (RPA 1983) requires that returning officers make spending returns available at their office OR some other convenient place chosen by them. A change to the law making this an “and” clause instead of an “or” would allow them the returning officer to do both. That said, the law already allows for these documents to be published online, it would just prevent returning officers from also providing them at their office.

There is a strong public interest in this information being made more publicly accessible i.e. published online.

- Given the next election will have a long campaign, the amounts of money being reportable is substantial – up to circa £50,000 per candidate and around £30 million in aggregate. Individually, candidates can spend more than most parties will report in regulated expenditure under PPERA (and parties have a yearlong regulated period compared to the four months or so for candidates at UK parliamentary general elections during when Parliament sits for over 55 months). In aggregate, candidates could spend almost more than the two largest parties' combined expenditure at the national level – this is a lot of money.
- While the Commission provides aggregate data on candidate spending and donations, it does not provide a disaggregated view of the source of individual donations – these can only be obtained from copies of the candidate returns.
- Understanding the flow of money into candidates' campaigns is crucial to forming a clearer view of any quid pro quo arrangements that may arise. Providing access locally and in a

physical location provides a barrier to accessing this information, while the monetary cost of buying photocopies makes this a unaffordable exercise for most people.

- Given local authorities will be sending pdf copies to the Electoral Commission (as it's required to do under Section 87A(1) RPA 1983), half the task of publishing them online is done – they just need to redact the addresses of individual candidates, which presumably they'd have to do anyway if they were making paper copies on request. Arguably, publishing them online would reduce the administrative burden on local authorities because they can just direct requests to their website instead of having to process requests individually.
- There is arguably an expectation nowadays that information about issues of public interest be published online to make them more accessible. Whether it be the finances of political parties, the financial interests of MPs and Lords, MPs' expenses, or information about the companies providing them with donations or other benefits, all of this is available online in some shape or form e.g. csv, html, api, pdf etc. Candidate returns remain the anomaly rather than the rule, which should change.

In sum, political finance at the candidate level is very important but patently less transparent than at the national level and less efficient administratively, which is seemingly due to an anomaly caused by inertia rather than a conscious policy choice by Parliament.

There's an opportunity for the Commission to level-up transparency for candidates through guidance to authorities advising them to publish online. However, given the need to consult and secure buy-in for this idea within authorities and parties, this process needs to start sooner rather than later if it's to happen for the next UKPGE.

Conscious I'm preaching to the converted here, but it's cathartic making the point nonetheless.

RE: regulation of donations towards spend incurred during the long campaign: understood, look forward to hearing the response. Let me know if there are any clarifications concerning this enquiry.

Thanks for your assistance.

Regards

[Redacted]

From: [Redacted]
Sent: 31 May 2023 11:17
To: [Redacted]
Cc: Press <press@electoralcommission.org.uk>
Subject: Questions on spending returns / long campaign

You don't often get email from ldavidson@electoralcommission.org.uk. [Learn why this is important](#)

Hi [Redacted]

Thanks for your call last week. In regards to your first question on spending returns, please see an answer below.

For local elections, the Proper Officer (as appointed by the local authority) at the principal area council must retain a copy of each candidate's election spending return and declaration, along with any accompanying documents, for a period of two years beginning with the date when the return is received. During that period, they must make copies available for public inspection without charge. The Proper Officer should make copies of the spending returns, declarations, and other accompanying documents available to anybody who requests them for a fee of £0.20 per side of paper. They must supply copies of the spending returns or declaration upon receipt of payment.

Candidate spending returns are not published online by the Proper Officer.

There has been no recent change to the Electoral Commission's guidance to Proper Officers (which is based on the relevant electoral legislation), and which you can read here:

[Candidates' election spending | Electoral Commission](#)

[Retention, inspection and supply of spending returns | Electoral Commission](#)

Apologies, we are still working with colleagues on your question about the long campaign, and we will need some more time before we can get back to you. Do you have a specific deadline for when you need a reply?

Best,

[Redacted signature]

[Redacted name]

[Redacted title]

The Electoral Commission

electoralcommission.org.uk

From: [REDACTED]
To: [REDACTED]
Cc: [Press](#)
Subject: RE: The Times - Ehud Sheleg
Date: 12 May 2022 16:36:16

Hi [REDACTED]

Thanks for your email.

We don't currently have an open investigation into Ehud Sheleg and were not aware of any alerts relating to his financial transactions.

The law places a responsibility on the recipient of a donation to ensure they are satisfied as to the identity of the donor, and that the donor is permissible. The full [list of permissible sources](#) is available on our website. If someone makes a donation on behalf of someone else, they are required to inform the party and provide the actual donor's details.

Where there is evidence that a donation from an impermissible source has been accepted, we will consider it in line with our [Enforcement Policy](#), and consider what action, if any, is appropriate.

Please get in touch if you have other questions.

Thanks

[REDACTED]
The Electoral Commission

[REDACTED]
electoralcommission.org.uk

Press office: 020 7271 0704

Press out of hours: 07789 920414

From: [REDACTED]

Sent: 12 May 2022 12:05

To: Press <press@electoralcommission.org.uk>

Subject: The Times - Ehud Sheleg

Hi,

I'm following up the New York Times story about a donation by Ehud Sheleg to the Conservative Party (C0394619) in Feb 2018 that was flagged by Barclays bank to the National Crime Agency in January 2021 as a potentially illegal campaign donation.

Is the Electoral Commission aware of this matter and is it being looked into?

Best,

[REDACTED]

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From: [REDACTED]
To: [REDACTED]
Cc: [Press](#)
Subject: RE: The Times/Donations from Peter Virdee aka Hardip Singh
Date: 22 February 2022 12:49:10

Hi [REDACTED]

Thanks for your email – I've responded to your questions below but let us know if there's anything else you need.

1. Will the Electoral Commission be checking whether the donations recorded from B&S Property Ltd were actually provided by B&S Properties (London) Ltd and whether there was any attempt to hide the source of those donations? What would be the problem for the Conservatives if they have wrongly recorded donations as coming from B&S Property Ltd?

We won't be carrying out any checks into these donations at the moment, as we've seen no evidence that they were inaccurately reported.

The Political Parties, Elections, and Referendums Act (PPERA) places a responsibility on the recipient to ensure they are satisfied as to the identity of the donor, and that any donation they accept is from a permissible source. You can find [here](#) a full list of permissible sources, and it includes most UK-registered companies. Failing to do checks is not an offence, but failing to return a donation from an impermissible donor is.

It is an offence to knowingly or recklessly make a false declaration about the true origin of a donation. So, if a party misreports the source of a donation it could be committing an offence. Where the donor (or the agent) misled the party as to the true identity of the donor then they could be committing an offence. Whether a donation is on behalf of someone else will depend on the exact facts of a situation. If a party is given a donation on behalf of someone else, the person giving it the donation (the agent) must tell it:

- that the donation is on behalf of someone else; and
- the actual donor's details

Where there is evidence that a donation from an impermissible source has been accepted, we will consider it in line with our Enforcement Policy, and consider what action, if any, is appropriate.

2. The £100 million tax fraud against Germany perpetrated by Peter Virdee took place between 2008 and 2012 and so preceded most of the donations to British political parties. Is it acceptable for the political parties to keep money from a source who enriched himself through criminality?

As mentioned above, before accepting a donation parties need to satisfy themselves as to the donor's identity and carry out permissibility checks. If the donor is permissible under electoral law then the party can decide to accept the donation. PERA does not require parties to conduct additional checks relating to the donor and does not place any restrictions on how funds were raised or obtained by a donor. Even if a donor is permissible, parties have complete discretion in whether they choose to accept or decline donations for any other reason.

3. The circumstances of the donation to Birmingham Edgbaston Labour Party, where Peter Virdee changed the ownership of the donating company on the same day that the party accepted its cash, has the inference of an orchestrated operation by Labour to launder the actual source of the donation because of Peter Virdee's poor reputation. What issues arise from this and what will the Electoral Commission do?

In this case the donor was reported as the company. Any change in a company's ownership would not have any implications from a political finance point of view, unless it impacted on the permissibility of the company.

Best wishes,

[REDACTED]

Senior Communications Officer(Media Relations)
The Electoral Commission

[REDACTED]

electoralcommission.org.uk

From: [REDACTED]
Sent: 21 February 2022 11:17
To: [REDACTED]
Cc: Press <press@electoralcommission.org.uk>
Subject: RE: The Times/Donations from Peter Virdee aka Hardip Singh

Hi [REDACTED]

Thanks for sending this through, we will pick it up. Can I ask what your deadline is please?

[REDACTED]

Media Relations & Public Information Manager

From: [REDACTED]
Sent: 21 February 2022 11:10
To: Press <press@electoralcommission.org.uk>
Subject: The Times/Donations from Peter Virdee aka Hardip Singh

Hi [REDACTED]

Thank you for speaking with me just now about donations made by Peter Virdee aka Hardip Singh.

The Times is preparing an article about this donor.

Peter Virdee aka Hardip Singh

Peter Virdee is a British businessman based in London. He was convicted in December 2021 by Germany for his role in a £100 million tax fraud. He has donated to both the Conservative and Labour parties.

In 2017 Peter Virdee was arrested twice. He was first arrested in the UK on behalf of Germany over the alleged tax fraud but that extradition failed because of a legal technicality which made European arrest warrants issued by Germany void. He was also arrested by the UK's National Crime Agency on suspicion of bribery and corruption of Caribbean politicians to get contracts.

In May 2018 the High Court released a [judgment](#) including transcripts of Peter Virdee discussing bribing Caribbean politicians. The National Crime Agency said the transcripts showed he was ready and willing to pay bribes and had given at least one gift to a Caribbean politician.

Donations to Conservative and Labour parties

A business jointly owned by Peter Virdee called B&S Properties (London) Ltd gave

donations to the Conservative Party of £50,000 and then £12,000 in 2011 and 2013. A business with a similar name but not owned by Peter Virdee called B&S Property Ltd was recorded as giving donations in a similar pattern - three tranches of £12,000 each in 2013 and 2014. It is routinely reported that Peter Virdee gave all those donations to the Conservatives (see attached article).

In October 2018 a business called 3V International in which Peter Virdee was the main owner gave £8,000 to the Conservatives.

On December 3 2019, the Birmingham Edgbaston Constituency Labour Party accepted £2,000 from 3V International. Peter Virdee had been the main owner of this company since 2001. On the same day that Labour accepted its donation, Peter Virdee transferred all his shares to a business associate who, unlike him, had a clean reputation.

Issues arising

Please could you address the following issues:

1. Will the Electoral Commission be checking whether the donations recorded from B&S Property Ltd were actually provided by B&S Properties (London) Ltd and whether there was any attempt to hide the source of those donations? What would be the problem for the Conservatives if they have wrongly recorded donations as coming from B&S Property Ltd?

2. The £100 million tax fraud against Germany perpetrated by Peter Virdee took place between 2008 and 2012 and so preceded most of the donations to British political parties. Is it acceptable for the political parties to keep money from a source who enriched himself through criminality?

3. The circumstances of the donation to Birmingham Edgbaston Labour Party, where Peter Virdee changed the ownership of the donating company on the same day that the party accepted its cash, has the inference of an orchestrated operation by Labour to launder the actual source of the donation because of Peter Virdee's poor reputation. What issues arise from this and what will the Electoral Commission do?

Thank you



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From: [REDACTED]
To: [REDACTED]
Cc: [Press](#)
Subject: Re: Urgent Press request - Donation from Gertler "s
Date: 16 November 2022 18:14:06
Attachments: [image001.jpg](#)
[image001.jpg](#)
[image001.jpg](#)

Thank you [REDACTED]

On 16 Nov 2022, at 17:45, [REDACTED] wrote:

Hi [REDACTED]

A donation from an individual is only permissible if the donor was on a UK electoral register when the donation was made. As mentioned, it is possible for a donor to be correctly on the register at a certain time, but then fall off it.

The legislation about the donor being on a UK electoral roll has been in place since 2001.

If an MP receives a donation of more than £500 they must take steps to ensure that they know who the donor is and that it is from a permissible source. It is the responsibility of the MP to ensure that donations are from permissible sources or returned to the donor within 30 days of receipt.

Hope that helps,

[REDACTED]

From: [REDACTED]
Sent: 16 November 2022 4:55 PM
To: [REDACTED]
Cc: Press <press@electoralcommission.org.uk>
Subject: Re: Urgent Press request - Donation from Gertler 's

Thank you [REDACTED]

A few further question:

- 1 - Is it a legal requirement for all donors to be on the electoral register?
- 2 - If the answer to question 1 is yes, can you confirm that this rule was in place in 2019 when Mr Gove received the £50,000 donation (referred to below).
- 3 - is it the MP'S responsibility to check if a donor is on the electoral register?

Many Thanks [REDACTED]

On Wed, Nov 16, 2022 at 1:59 PM [REDACTED] wrote:

Hi [REDACTED]

My colleague [REDACTED] passed on your question as she had a meeting.

The 2021 donation was reported directly to the Registrar of the

Register of Members' Financial Interests at the House of Commons, and Michael Gove would have made a declaration as to the accuracy and completeness of the details. He has not reported this donation to us as impermissible.

When a donee reports a donation as impermissible, it is because the donee was unable to confirm, or was uncertain, whether the donor was on a UK electoral roll. This can happen if the donor is removed from the register or not registered at their current address.

Hope this is helpful. Let me know if you need further information.

[REDACTED]

From: [REDACTED]
Sent: 16 November 2022 12:06 PM
To: Press <press@electoralcommission.org.uk>
Subject: FW: Urgent Press request - Donation from Gertler 's

From: [REDACTED]
Sent: 16 November 2022 12:04 PM
To: [REDACTED]
Subject: Re: Urgent Press request - Donation from Gertler 's

Dear [REDACTED]

Thank you for the prompt response. Very helpful.

Can you also answer the following additional questions:

1 - Zacharias Gertler also donated £50,000 to Mr Gove in 2021. According to the EC database the donation was accepted on the 06/08/2021. Can you confirm if this donation was returned? Was this transaction also considered "impermissible" by the EC?

2 - Can you explain why the latest donations made in October 2022 were classed as "impermissible donations" yet the 2021 donation was not?

Many thanks

[REDACTED]

On Wed, Nov 16, 2022 at 11:59 AM [REDACTED]
[REDACTED] wrote:

Hi [REDACTED]

Thanks for your email.

Michael Gove reported the [donation from Zachariasz Gertler](#) as received on 6 October 2022 and returned on 14 October; and the [donation from Natasha Gertler](#) as received on 13 October and returned on 25 October.

Each reported impermissible donation has a signed declaration by Michael Gove, to say that the donation has been returned to the donor or otherwise dealt with in accordance with PPERA and that the information provided is complete and accurate.

Let me know if you have further questions.

Thanks

[REDACTED]

The Electoral Commission

[REDACTED]
electoralcommission.org.uk

Press office: 020 7271 0704

Press out of hours: 07789 920414

From: [REDACTED]

Sent: 16 November 2022 9:56 AM

To: Press <press@electoralcommission.org.uk>

Subject: Fwd: Urgent Press request - Donation from Gertler 's

Dear Press Team,

My name is [REDACTED]. I am a journalist at Good Law Project writing a report on political donations and I have a number of questions that I would like to ask you.

Background Info

Mr Michael Gove MP recently received a £20,000 donation from Natasha Gertler and a further £20,000 donation from Zachariasz Gertler.

A record of both donations is now published on the electoral commission website.

Both donors were recorded as "impermissible"

All donations from an "impermissible" source must be returned within 30 days. (source: [Donations and loans: guidance for regulated donees in Great Britain \(electoralcommission.org.uk\)](https://www.electoralcommission.org.uk/guidance/donations-loans))

Questions

1 Please can you confirm the date that both donations were received by Mr Gove?

2 - Please can you confirm the date that both donations were returned due to the donor being defined as "impermissible"

3 - Please can you confirm if Mr Gove complied with the relevant PPERA rules? and if the donation was returned within 30 days.

Please can you provide a response by **2pm this afternoon 16 November 2022**

Kind Regards

Russell

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]



