From:	FOI
To:	[redacted]
Subject:	FOI 119/18 and 138/18 - Response
Date:	01 October 2018 16:10:08
Attachments:	Latham 1.pdf

Dear [redacted]

Our Ref: FOI 119/18 and 138/18

Thank you for your email to the Electoral Commission dated **19 July 2018.**

The Commission aims to respond to requests for information promptly and **regrets that on this occasion we have not done so.**

Your request is in bold below followed by our response.

Please could you provide me with copies of:

1. All emails sent or received by the Electoral Commission in 2016 which contain the name "Haestrup".

2. All emails sent or received by the Electoral Commission in 2016 which contain the name "Nawwaf".

3. All emails sent or received by the Electoral Commission in 2016 which contain the name "Angest".

4. All emails sent or received by the Electoral Commission in 2016 which contain the name "Latham".

5. All emails sent or received by the Electoral Commission in 2016 which contain the name "Vestey".

6. All emails sent or received by the Electoral Commission in 2016 which contain the name "Arron Banks".

If any of these emails cannot be disclosed under the FOI, please state the relevant exemption which applies for each question.

If no emails exist relating to a specific question, please state this also.

We are also responding to your request for information received on the 27 August 2018, reference number FOI 138/18. You asked us confirm or deny whether we hold any reports, letters or other documents which contain both:

(a) the word "Brexit"

AND,

(b) EITHER the name "Nawwaf", OR the name "Nawaf"

Our response is as follows:

We hold some the information you have requested.

Please find enclosed relevant correspondence which refers to the names 'Latham'. The Commission holds no correspondence with the other four names.

We are currently still searching for information in relation to the 'Arron Banks' part of your request. I am unable to provide you with a timeframe as yet. However I will be in contact as soon as possible. I apologise for the delay to this part of your request.

The only documents we hold which contain both the word 'Brexit' and either the name 'Nawwaf' or the name 'Nawaf' are two emails sent from the Commission's Communications Team to all Commission staff summarising relevant daily news coverage on 12 June 2017 and 3 July 2017. The relevant information is provided below:

Relevant content from email 'In the News - Monday 12 June 2017':

> **What links Brexit, dark money and a Saudi prince? – Irish Times**
> Two days before the EU referendum in 2016, the DUP paid for a wraparound advert in the Metro in London and other cities around the UK. The Metro does not circulate in Northern Ireland, so this spending was seen as unusual and at the time the DUP refused to confirm what the adverts cost or where the money to pay for them came from. The donation was later confirmed to be £425,622 to the DUP from the Constitutional Research Council (CRC) and the cost of the adverts to be £282,000.
>
> openDemocracy investigated the donation and found that the CRC's head, Richard Cook, is a Scottish Conservative. The CRC has no public presence and Mr Cook reportedly is unlikely to have access to such large funds himself. This has raised the question of where the £425,622 originated and openDemocracy has suggested the Mr Cook's past links to senior members of the Saudi royal family may provide a clue. They report that Cook jointly founded a company called Five Star Investments with Prince Nawwaf bin Abdul Aziz al Saud and a Danish national called Peter Haestrup. Prince Nawwaf died in 2015, having been Saudi minister for finance and head of Saudi intelligence. Five Star Investments was dissolved in December 2014 after it failed to ever file its accounts. And Prince Nawwaf's son has been Saudi ambassador to the UK since 2005.
>
> None of the reports contain any conclusive evidence about where the donation originated, or if anything illegal has taken place. However, concern has been raised about the fact that senior figures in the DUP have admitted that they do not know the true source of the money – despite it being their legal obligation to ensure the donation came from a permissable source.

Relevant content from email 'In the News - Monday 3rd July 2017':

The new Brexit minister, the arms industry, the American hard right... and Equatorial Guinea (Web) - openDemocracy

Steve Baker, the new Brexit minister, accepted a donation from the Constitutional Research Council, who openDemocracy asserts is "the same group that channeled a mystery £435,000 to the DUP to campaign for Brexit." openDemocracy "reveal" that Baker has also taken money from an arms company while promoting the aerospace industry in parliament; accepted travel costs from the government of Equatorial Guinea before writing a report dismissing concerns about their human rights abuses; and accepted conference expenses from radical right wing American groups with links to Robert Mercer and the Koch brothers.

Baker, the MP for Wycombe since 2010, is a new minister in the department for exiting the EU, and has declared in his register of interests that a donation of £6,500 from the Constitutional Research Council paid for a conference of the Eurosceptic "European Research Group". While it is yet to be established where the Constitutional Research Council (CRC) gets its money from, openDemocracy has previously stated that its chair, the Scottish Tory Richard Cook, "set up a business in 2013 with Prince Nawwaf bin Abdulaziz Al Saud, a very senior Saudi prince, and former head of the Saudi Arabian intelligence agency, and with Peter Haestrup, a Danish man wanted by the Indian prosecution service over his alleged role in smuggling Kalashnikovs to a Hindu group in West Bengal in 1995."

Labour MP, Pat McFadden, reported Baker to the police and the Electoral Commission last year over an email that was leaked to the Times in which he said: "It is open to the Vote Leave family to create separate legal entities, each of which could spend £700,000: Vote Leave will be able to spend as much money as is necessary to win the referendum." However, Vote Leave has denied that it was the source of the money paid to the DUP.

Steve Baker was deemed by Paul Goodman, the editor of ConservativeHome 'one of the 5 people that made Brexit happen', due to his role in fighting internally on purdah laws ahead of the referendum.

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

If you are not satisfied with this response, please note that the Commission operates a review procedure, details of which can be found on the Commission website at: http://www.electoralcommission.org.uk/about-us/freedom-of-information-requests/how-do-I-make-an-foi-request

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

Yours sincerely,

[redacted]

[redacted]
Access to Information Officer (FOI and DPA)

The Electoral Commission
FOI@electoralcommission.org.uk
electoralcommission.org.uk

Dear [redacted] Latham,

Thank you for your email.

Under the Political Parties Elections and Referendums Act 2000 (PPERA) the Electoral Commission has the responsibility for designating lead campaigners for each outcome, or just one outcome, at the referendum on the UK's membership of the European Union. PPERA sets out a statutory test we must apply when assessing applications to be a lead campaigner. Where there are competing applicants for a particular outcome the law is clear, we must designate the applicant which appears to us to represent those campaigning for that outcome to the greatest extent. Further information about the designation of lead campaigners may be found on our website.

The European Union Referendum Act 2015 includes provisions that require us to reach an opinion on whether the proposed name of a campaigner is obscene or offensive. If we decide that it is, we must refuse the application. There are no equivalent provisions that give us powers to refuse an application to register on the basis that the campaigner's name might be considered misleading.

Although we are responsible for registering campaigners in the referendum and regulating their campaign funding and spending, we do not regulate the content or messages of referendum campaigns.

I hope the above is helpful to you. If you have any further questions, or require any further clarification please do not hesitate to contact the party and election finance advice line on 0333 103 1928 or e-mail at pef@electoralcommission.org.uk.

Kind regards,

[redacted]
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www.electoralcommission.org.uk
www.aboutmyvote.co.uk

Putting voters first



Please consider the environment before printing this email.

From: [redacted]
Sent: 20 May 2016 09:10
To: info_inbox
Subject: New contact form submission

- Your name: [redacted]

• Your email:	[redacted]
• Your telephone number:	[redacted]
• Your region/country:	South East
• I am a...:	a member of a registered third party
• Comment/enquiry type:	other
• Comments:	The campaign group 'Britain Stronger in Europe' is misleading and misrepresents the Referendum which is not about whether we stay in Europe but about whether we stay in the EU. Most/all the Remain literature and verbal campaigning is misleading the public by referring to Europe which is not the same thing at all. The title therefore should be changed to 'Britain Stronger in the EU' so that it fairly reflects the purpose of the Referendum
• Eich Enw:	•
• Eich e-bost:	•
• Eich rhif ffôn:	•
• Eich rhanbarth/gwlad:	•
• Rwyf yn...:	•
• Math o sylw/ymholiad:	•
• Sylwadau:	