



APPG on
**Anti-Corruption
& Responsible Tax**

All-Party Parliamentary Group on Anti-Corruption and Responsible Tax
Annual General Meeting Minutes
17 October 2023 – 10:00 – Room P, Portcullis House
Chair – Margaret Hodge MP

1. Apologies

Allison Thewliss MP
Kate Osbourne MP
Sir Roger Gale MP
Peter Grant MP
Sarah Olney MP
Sir Christopher Chope MP
Lord Agnew of Oulton
Lord Faulks
Lord Alton of Liverpool
Lord Garnier
Lord Carlile of Berriew
Baroness Morgan of Cotes
Baroness Neuberger
Baroness Wheatcroft

2. Attendees

Dame Margaret Hodge MP
Clive Efford MP
Dame Angela Eagle MP
Sir Iain Duncan Smith MP
Liam Byrne MP
Nigel Mills MP
Charlotte Nicols MP
Siobhain McDonagh MP
Sir Stephen Timms MP
Marie Rimmer MP
Dan Carden MP
Lord Browne of Ladyton
Lord Vaux of Harrowden

3. Agenda Points

a. Thanks to our funders:

- i. Joffe Trust,
- ii. Kings College London,
- iii. Open Society Foundation;

Thanks to our secretariat (The Athena Foundation); and to Kings College London who hosted our donations from the Joffe trust.

Updates on donors:

- iv. Discussed the end of the Joffe Trust direct funding – which donated a total of £90,000 spread out over three years, though they continue to provide money to Athena for its general overhead and staffing cost. Also acknowledged that we had not received funds from CIPFA for this funding period, thanking them for their previous donations to the APPG.
 - v. Discussed the breakdown of the funding for this period. £42,001-42,500 paid by the Joffe Charitable Trust for , and £150,001-151,500 paid by Open Society Foundation.
 - vi. Discussed the future of funding – acknowledged that under the new rules, whereby MPs themselves would have to run bank accounts to enable the work of the APPG, continued funding by the likes of OSF (who are sceptical about funding politicians directly) may become problematic. It was also agreed that funding should be sought beyond the current two-year timeframe that only extends up to the next General Election.
- b. New rules for APPGs, approved by the Committee on Standards, discussed and acknowledged.
 - i. It was noted that having a joint secretariat with the APPG on Fair Business Banking, run by The Athena Foundation, might not be able to continue in its current form due to the new funding rules. Under these rules, the APPGs cannot share funds as they currently do. As a result, it was noted the APPG might have to set up its own charity to run and fund the group and employ the APPGs staffers directly.
- c. Election of officers.
 - i. Motion to re-elect all incumbent officers (Margaret Hodge MP, Alison Thewliss MP, Nigel Mills MP, and Liam Byrne MP) unanimously supported.
 - ii. Motion to elect Lord Vaux of Harrowden as the new honorary ‘Peers Champion’ unanimously supported.
 - iii. All other ‘vice chairs’ to become regular members, in line with the new APPG rules.
- d. Income/Expenditure Statement unanimously approved.
- e. Successes in 2022/23
 - i. Discussion on what was achieved with the Economic Crime and Corporate Transparency Bill. These included;
 - 1. reform of identification doctrine, now enabling larger companies to be held to account,
 - 2. progress made on SLAPPs,
 - 3. progress on making Companies House more accurate,
 - 4. progress on whistleblowing.
- f. Looking ahead to 2023/24
 - i. Some of the failures of the APPG over the past year were discussed. These were mainly regarding amendments to the Economic Crime and Corporate Transparency Bill which were rejected by the Government. These included;

1. failure to to introduce direct criminal liability,
 2. failure to introduce a failure to prevent money laundering offence,
 3. a lack of progress made on trusts,
 4. a lack of progress made on limited partnerships.
- ii. The next steps for the ‘Economic Crime’ side of the APPG were discussed. These included;
1. A renewed focus on seizing, not just freezing sanctioned assets, potentially including a roundtable,
 2. A renewed focus on the implementation of registers of beneficial ownership in our Overseas Territories and Crown Dependencies, , potentially including a roundtable,
 3. A new focus on crypto currency, potentially including a briefing for parliamentarians,
 4. Toughening up the sanctions regime with a heightened focus on transparency, potentially including a roundtable,
 5. Chasing up the anti-money laundering review, and assessing the outcomes,
 6. A renewed focus on whistleblowing,
 7. A new focus on climate finance, ensuring that money being sent to countries around the world for this cause does not end up the wrong hands
 8. A new focus on the ‘revolving door.’
- iii. On the ‘Responsible Tax’ side of the APPG, it was agreed there would be a focus on tax reliefs and preventing them from enabling tax avoidance rather than purpose to which tax relief is intended. It was also agreed that tactical taxes could be an interesting topic to engage with going forward.
- g. Open discussion
- i. Margaret Hodge MP noted that Tax Justice UK has begun to campaign for tax transparency matters to reside exclusively within the United Nations, rather than the OECD.
 - ii. Following the publication of the UK Government’s Fraud Strategy, Lord Vaux suggested the APPG should engage with the Prime Minister’s Anti-Fraud Champion, Anthony Browne MP.
 - iii. Lord Browne of Ladyton sought clarification on the APPG’s commonly used figure of economic crime in the UK amounting to £350 billion. Lord Browne questioned what impact this could have on UK growth figures, and whether this sum was a cost to the UK economy, or just moving through it.
- h. AOB
- i. Dan Carden MP asked the APPG to investigate a case study in his constituency, involving the involvement in and ownership of Everton FC by alleged Russian oligarch Alisher Usmanov.

ENDS