

[The Barkham petition](#)

I will make sure the strength of feeling in Barkham against further large scale housing development is well understood at Wokingham Borough. I am trying to get the government to agree that Wokingham has more than enough planning permissions outstanding to take care of needs for considerably more than the next 5 years. I wish to see the current local Plan upheld, with the Council sensitive to local opinion about the pace and location of additional development when considering a future local plan. I talked to representatives from Barkham recently about the issue.

[Spending the £39 bn – cutting VAT](#)

Once we take back control of our money and laws we can review the incidence and level of VAT. It becomes a UK tax on 29 March next year, after years of it being an EU imposition.

I have set out before my wishes. Surely most can agree we should abolish VAT on green products. We wish to encourage people to have more draught excluder and insulation, and to have better controls on their heating systems, yet the EU charges them top rate VAT on it all. Lets simply abolish it.

I would also like to see us abolish VAT on domestic fuels. Fuel is expensive, and hits those on lower incomes particularly hard. Successive governments say they want to tackle fuel poverty. The best contribution they could make would be to remove the tax on fuel.

We should also abolish VAT on female hygiene products.

These changes would create some loss of tax revenue, but are easily accommodated within the savings of £39bn if we leave without giving the EU a present. I set out the costings of all this in the Brexit budget I offered as an illustration of the scope prior to the referendum.

[Government tightens fiscal policy more to help slow the economy](#)

The latest figures for borrowing show a further reduction in additional borrowing in the first quarter of the new financial year, as forecast here.

Tax revenues are well up on a year ago, by more than the rise in spending, so additional borrowing falls again.

The authorities just need to be careful lest they slow the economy too much. Then they will find the deficit stops falling, as tax revenues are sensitive to the rate of growth. As expected, the combined fiscal and monetary tightening is slowing the economy, at a time when other advanced countries are offering more stimulatory policies.

More lies about second referendums

I have never supported two referendums on whether to Leave or Stay within the EU, contrary to some misleading stories.

Years ago before the Conservative party agreed a simple Remain/Stay referendum there was a proposal to ask the people if they wanted to renegotiate our relationship, to be followed by an In/Out referendum. In the end the government held a renegotiation without bothering with a referendum to approve such a renegotiation.

A spending cut for the Treasury – stop sending money to the dead

Every day government sends out pension money and benefits to people who have died. It then employs other staff to work out where there has happened, and to seek to reclaim it from relatives of the deceased. This process takes time and effort, and is not always successful. It is also upsetting to family members to receive communications about overpayments to their dead loved ones. There is a double cost in the money they do not get back and in the costs of the recovery, and a cashflow cost from all the erroneous payments made. I ask the Treasury to look at how to improve and save money.

More to the point this waste and cost could be easily saved. Most people who die in the UK are elderly UK citizens. They must be well known to the UK state, as they die under the supervision of an NHS hospital doctor in an NHS hospital, or under the eye of an NHS GP. In order to get the free NHS care the elderly person has to be well known to the UK authorities, with medical card, National Insurance number, and registered with a local surgery with name, address and these identifier details. More importantly, the supervising doctor has to make out a medical certificate identifying the

person and establishing date, time, place and cause of death. This document could be used to inform the rest of government of the death and cease all payments from close to the time of death.

It is true that NHS hospitals often delay producing the Death Certificate for a few days for no good reason. Why not ask the senior medical person on duty when the person dies to produce the certificate before going off shift, as surely it is easiest to write out an accurate certificate whilst the memory on the ward is still fresh as to the time and circumstance of death. This can be promptly checked and reviewed by another unrelated doctor at the hospital.

The state, however, delays matters further by requiring a relative of the deceased to pick up the medical certificate and to take it to a Registrar of Deaths to create a second death certificate. This can delay matters longer, as Registrars are not available at week-ends or in the evenings. The relative has to go in person to meet the registrar, and often there is a week's delay or more before the first available appointment can be secured. The relative is requested to take the birth certificate, marriage certificate, NHS card, NI number, tax reference, full name and address of the person as if the state does not know any of this from the medical death certificate and its own records. Still, however, when the formal Death Certificate is issued, the government may go on paying the deceased.

Individuals are further encouraged to register with Tell Us Once. The irony of this is not lost, when it is clearly tell us at least twice and turns out to be an invitation to tell them many more times. This entails putting onto another computer many of the details given to the Registrar, and saying what the relative knows about the deceased's relations with the state. After doing this, payments are still often made to the deceased!

This is a bad system that imposes plenty of stress and hassle on the grieving relative, and fails to use the amply supplied information to stop the flow of money promptly and cleanly. Surely in an age of computers which can talk to each other the state could stop paying pensions and benefits to the dead?