

## Tax independence

The Conservative Manifesto, echoing Vote Leave, promises to take back control of our money and our laws. Some are writing in to claim we will have to live with tax harmonisation or a level playing field with the EU after we have left thanks to the withdrawal Agreement.

I do not see it like that. It is most important we are free to set our own taxes. Today in the EU we have got away with setting a lower Corporation Tax rate than many other states, though there have been adverse judgements on other Corporation tax matters making us do as the ECJ decides. We are free to set our own Income tax rates, but are subject to strict controls on VAT which is partly an EU tax.

The government has made clear it will change the list of items subject to VAT once out. We need to assert our own authority over all taxes. The Bill to implement the Withdrawal Agreement contains a sovereignty clause. Once the Implementation period is over EU tax and other laws will no longer apply unless we choose to enact similar measures.

I do not think we will still have to raise or keep up taxes that we want to lower or abolish once out. Debate on the bill will be an important opportunity to clarify this matter. The likely decision to press on and take VAT off some items will be important proof that we have indeed taken back control of our taxes.

---

## Hospital parking charges

Parking as an outpatient or a visitor to a patient is often difficult and expensive at NHS hospitals. I recommended including free parking for patients and visitors in my proposed Brexit bonus budget.

I was therefore pleased to see the case half won in the Conservative Manifesto. It states that free parking will be offered to the disabled, to frequent outpatient attenders, to parents of sick children staying in overnight and staff working nights.

---

## Policies needed so when we leave we

## are better off

The government has already carried out two of the essential policy changes for us to be better off. The first is to switch the aim of policy to the promotion of prosperity and growth. The second is to make selective increases in public sector employment with teachers, police and doctors, and to expand worthwhile public investment.

The third must be to cut taxes in a Brexit budget. In a fast moving global economy capital and talent moves to the places with the more attractive tax rates. The UK government has been correct to lower our Corporation Tax rates at a time when the USA, India and others are doing the same. It is also necessary to have competitive personal Income Tax and transaction tax rates. The planned cuts in National Insurance will boost personal incomes and provide a stimulus to consumption.

The UK needs to lower Stamp Duties and CGT on property transactions. Lower rates will also bring in more revenue by encouraging more capital into the UK and fostering more transactions.

The UK needs to reduce the top rate of Income Tax to the 40% that prevailed during most of Labour's time in office. That would help resolve the issue of doctors' pay.

The government should implement its planned cuts to tariffs on imports from non EU sources. All components needed for UK manufacture should be tariff free. All foodstuffs that we are unable to grow for ourselves should also be tariff free.

The UK should expand its freeport strategy and ally them to enterprise zones where it is easy to get permissions and support to base a new or expanding business.

---

## Election candidates debate for Wokingham

I was asked by Churches Together in Wokingham if I would join a debate with the other candidates for the General Election. I replied promptly, offering dates and encouraging the initiative.

I am now told that only half the other candidates have agreed to such an event. I would urge all candidates to take up the Churches offer. I cannot see the point of going ahead with candidates missing. That seems unfair and means any audience would not see the full picture of the election. I am happy

to find a different date if that helps.

---

## Animal welfare

I have pressed for higher standards of animal welfare and am glad to see proposals in the Conservative Manifesto.

These include

1. Ending excessively long journeys for slaughter and fattening
2. New law on animal sentience
3. Banning primates as pets
4. Crack down on puppy and dog smuggling
5. Tougher sentences for animal cruelty