

[Why should the public purse pay for political parties?](#) [1]

Written by [Tim Ambler](#) [2] | Wednesday 23 November 2011



The so-reasonable sounding Sir Christopher Kelly has today pronounced on the funding of political parties and their election campaign. The big donors are to be cut back to a maximum of £10,000 each. Since he only proposes a cut in election costs of 15% that leaves a big gap (about £50M or so for each election) to be filled by, guess whom, the taxpayer. Needless to say, MPs will decide the matter with no say in the matter for the electorate. No referendum on this.

Of course, if the politicians could persuade more of us taxpayers to contribute [more] to their parties, as the Americans do, that would be another matter. If we liked our politicians we would be happy to pay for their election but the truth is that we don't. So why should taxes be imposed upon us without our agreement?

Direct contributions are to be encouraged by [gift aid] tax relief as for charities. That's a good idea but it is limited to the first £1,000 of the £10,000. How daft is that? The whole point of the change is to encourage personal giving.

Parties will get £3 per vote in Westminster elections and £1.50 for European ones based on the previous results. In other words, if a party comes in with a landslide, and then proves, disastrous it will receive far more funding than the parties the electorate now wishes to vote for.

There's a simple solution to all this. Make donations subject to tax relief by all means but otherwise if MPs cannot persuade us to pay for their campaigns, then they do not deserve office. We'd be better off without them.

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