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As many of you know, I was once an economist at the Treasury. There were huge economic events in the 1970s and 1980s, when I worked in Whitehall; but never did the government deliberately shut the whole thing down.

Thinking back to March, the course of action taken then was understandable. The nature and severity of covid-19 was unknown and as the lockdown started, so too did the extraordinary fiscal interventions. Standard policy objectives for a group like ours were turned on their head, and, for once, calls for higher – but properly targeted – spending, and the additional borrowing and debt that would bring, were justified.

We're in a different situation now. Treatment for those with the virus has improved and the economy is recovering, albeit much more slowly than some would like. But it's vital that we remember significant fiscal repair will be needed in the years ahead. Spending restraint will be necessary; debt levels will need to be brought back down rapidly through other growth-enhancing measures. Supply-side repairs will be critical, and tax increases must be strongly resisted.

One thing that I've reminded the team throughout the summer: the scale of the challenge has underlined the importance of sound public finances. Indeed, emergencies such as this are exactly why we fight the tough battles in normal times, when it's much more popular – in Westminster establishment circles, at least – to solve every problem with more taxpayers' money.

The work of the TPA will be critical in the coming years. We can't allow a big-spend orthodoxy to take hold; we have to push back against those who argue that the normal fiscal rules no longer apply, and we can borrow and print money with reckless abandon.

Looking through this publication, my confidence in the TPA team to lead that fight was only further solidified. The achievements you'll see in the coming pages are the fruits of tireless work and bucketloads of passion. Every member of the team – and our volunteers – really loves what they do, and it's evident in the results.

Thank you to the team, and of course to our supporters for backing us – and especially so in this most uncertain of years. We're proud to say that we survived the tough times without taxpayer support. We also acquired many brand new donors this year, to whom we say welcome.

I hope you enjoy our annual review and wish you the best for 2021.



Mike Denham



Welcome from our chairman

Introduction from our chief executive



I won't bore you with any clichés about how 2020 has panned out more generally. Instead, I invite you to enjoy looking through a year of positive work from our team here at the TPA. Like many others, we worked from home for several months – and every single member of staff made sure they hit deadlines and kept the creative fires burning.

We upped our digital game, launching TPA Talks, a video series featuring some of the most prominent voices on social media. The first episode was with a genuine global superstar – a former wrestler from the WWE, turned city mayor in America. And the hits have continued to clock up since.

The team also converted a room in our office into a studio. Thanks to the support of many of you, we were able to buy new kit and professionalise our campaign operation. James, Harry, Danielle, Joe and Kieran on our campaigns team have ensured our message continues to reach millions – on platforms old and new.

Research – the bedrock of an effective campaign – is as strong as ever. As well as our set pieces, such as the *Town Hall Rich List*, we've published some longer form pieces on issues such as commercial investments made by local authorities and an analysis of OECD health statistics. When I tell people that we have 3.5 full-time equivalent researchers, they can't quite believe it when looking at our fit-to-burst archive – with 30 new papers so far this year. The volume and quality of our research, relative to our resources, is unrivalled anywhere else in

Westminster. Duncan, Darwin, Jeremy and Scott continue to produce work that changes policy – both national and local.

Bricks and mortar events – and even our usual grassroots campaign events – have been put on hold, but our Fundraising, Operations and Events team have continued to ensure that the show is kept firmly on the road. Many of you will have received a call from us over the last six months – we thought it was a good time to get in touch and say hello, and some of the conversations we've had with you have inspired other elements of our work, too. Sara, Emma, Georgiana, Milly and Freya have all made sure our supporters have sight of our work and that the organisation is run like clockwork.

This publication is a fine way to demonstrate just how hard our team works. I hope, too, it shows the value we provide for the financial support we receive. To all our staff – including our voluntary chairman, Mike – thank you for not only keeping the TPA going in 2020, but taking us to new heights. And to our supporters: thank you for making it all possible. I hope you know how much we appreciate your backing.

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "John O'Connell". The signature is fluid and cursive.

John O'Connell

Our team



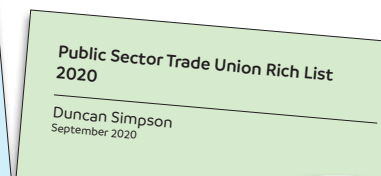
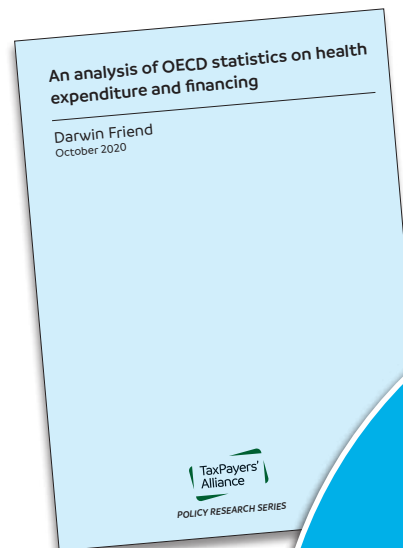
Our model

Our vision is for a pro-enterprise country with lower, simpler taxes funding better public services.

Our mission is simple. We want to:

- Make the case for fundamental reforms to taxes and public service delivery
- Equip a grassroots network with the tools to spread our message to millions, both on the ground and online
- Speak up for taxpayers to those in power and bring our vision to the heart of government

We have developed a unique three step campaign model, which we have rolled out over the past 16 years.



1. Solid research

Producing regular, rigorous research establishes the facts about the effects of high taxes and how your money is spent. This has always underpinned our strategy for winning hearts and minds – and eventually achieving those all-important policy changes.

Our skilled research team trawl through thousands of lines of data and distil that into solid figures that capture attention. The TPA is somewhat unique in that we also produce robust data on local issues – meaning we can also engage with taxpayers on issues that matter to them.





2. Strategic communications

Our campaign team then takes our message out to the national and local media. TPA spokespeople are always available for comment, 24 hours a day. That means you will see us defending taxpayers somewhere in the press almost every day.

We also harness the power of online platforms such as Facebook, Twitter and YouTube to reach a far greater audience than traditional media can. Our own blog is also a popular go-to for supporters, journalists and policymakers.

3. Sustained campaigning

This is what really sets us apart from a traditional think tank. We take our vision beyond the media to high streets across the country and utilise the power of local activists to campaign on important local and national issues.

To secure the policy changes we seek, our campaigning then leads us from the nation's streets into the corridors of power. We take our messages straight to ministers and their advisers inside Downing Street, the Treasury and a host of other government departments. We have also worked hard to build coalitions of support with opposition parties around particular issues.

Digital platforms can also keep a campaign going, and offer another way to continue to reach millions for longer periods of time.



The ultimate measure of our impact is winning campaigns and changing policy. We've got a great track record – and 2020 was no different.

Surrey Heath council exec resignation

After the *Town Hall Rich List* revealed that Karen Whelan, chief executive at Surrey Heath Borough Council, received £197,000 – which included a colossal and unwarranted pay rise of £46,000 – we called for an investigation.

The council's own independent investigation found that payments made to her were "unlawful" and "unprecedented". The report and Ms Whelan's resignation was a significant victory for taxpayers. Accountability in local government is vital and we hope other councils will take heed from these findings.



An end to exit payments

The long-running TPA campaign win of capping public sector exit payments finally came to fruition this year. It was originally made law in the 2016 Enterprise Act, but we have been waiting patiently for the secondary legislation to enact it. The government has finally laid out plans to do just that. A little too late for the quarter-of-a-million pay out for Sir Mark Sedwill, unfortunately, but still a very important victory!

2020

APR

MAY

JUN

JUL



Coronavirus small business loans

Our research into the coronavirus business interruption loan scheme (CBILS) showed that Britain was falling behind other European countries with similar schemes. We called on the government to streamline the scheme citing that red tape seemed to be delaying the loans. Within hours and after conversations with the Treasury, the chancellor announced the launch of Bounce Back Loans. This was a fantastic policy victory and a vital first step in opening up emergency cash to the small firms who needed it. The only downside was that our call to step up punishments for those who abused the system were not taken on board.

City Hall salaries

Following our extensively reported research into sky-high salaries at London City Hall, we were thrilled when mayor of London Sadiq Khan announced he had taken a 10 per cent pay cut and frozen the pay of 15 of his political appointments.



DfID and FCO merger

The decision to merge the Department for International Development with the Foreign & Commonwealth Office was music to our ears. It's something we've been campaigning for since 2010 when we urged all political parties to ditch the terrible 0.7 per cent foreign aid target.

In 2014, we argued that foreign aid spending was doing nothing to advance freedom around the world. A year later, we published the landmark *Spending Plan*, which recommended that DfID be scrapped with many of its responsibilities transferred to the FCO. And in May 2020, we submitted evidence to an International Development Committee report saying that the UK was alone in having an independent foreign aid department. This is a great start, with the next step being ditching the 0.7% of GDP commitment to foreign aid spending.

John spoke to *The Sun* in September, urging the government to do just that.



AUG



Megflix

After news broke of Harry and Meghan's megabucks Netflix deal, we launched a no-holds-barred campaign to demand the California couple pay taxpayers back in full for the £2.4 million spent to refurbish Frogmore Cottage. With our upgraded digital firepower, we took to social media and launched an online petition, which caught on like wildfire. Within days, thousands had signed up to our campaign to secure the "Megflix" refund and the money was paid back.

SEPT

Unconscious bias training

Our research revealed that ministers spent over £400,000 on unconscious bias training, with the Department of Education spending £92,500 on lectures in 2018-19 and the Department for Work and Pensions paying KPMG £112,500 to train 720 staff. *The Daily Telegraph* highlighted the story and we were delighted when Number 10 got in touch that same morning to say they'd be reviewing the programme.

The Daily Telegraph

'Woke' anti-bias training to be reviewed by Government after Tory ministers spent £400k on courses

OCT

Public Health England scrapped

It was a fabulous victory for taxpayers when health secretary Matt Hancock announced that Public Health England is to be scrapped. Our sustained campaigning has been the downfall of this bloated quango and highlights just how effective our grassroots movement is. Back in January our *Nanny State Rich List* exposed hundreds of six-figure salaries paid to public health mandarins. Our comments on the decision were picked up in *The Daily Express* and *The Sun*.



The realm of government measures enacted to deal with the coronavirus crisis has been unprecedented. They are highly damaging to the public finances and involve troubling interventions in the economy. They were, at one point, understandable and justifiable. At some point, though, they will no longer be – and will need to be reversed.

At every stage of this pandemic, we have been here to stand up for taxpayers who pay the bills and have offered constructive ideas to map a course to sound public finances in the coming years.

Emergencies such as this are exactly why we make the argument for living within our means in normal times – so that we can pull together as a nation to see off a crisis.

Responding to covid-19

In a statement from our chairman and chief executive, we responded to the interventions undertaken by the government to tackle the covid-19 public health emergency and prevent the economy from collapsing. In a briefing note, we also laid out three more measures the government should take:

- Divert the aid budget to fighting the virus
- Freeze council tax and focus money on front-line services
- Suspend Sunday trading restrictions



Tax reforms to secure a recovery from coronavirus

Raising taxes would mean taxpayer austerity and cripple the recovery. In *The Times*, John O'Connell argued that there must be a relentless focus on economic growth, and that should mean a strategic plan for tax cuts and simplification.

We called for major tax reform to provide vital support as Britain emerges from the pandemic. In a report endorsed by former cabinet minister Rt Hon Lord Lilley, we set out five key tax changes that should be made as quickly as possible to rescue the economy, which could cut the average wage bill by 38 per cent, put £1,622 in workers' pockets and boost economic growth, capital investment and the housing market:

- Abolish employer national insurance
- Abolish employee national insurance
- Abolish capital gains tax
- Increase the annual corporation tax investment allowance to £5 million
- Raise the stamp duty land tax threshold to £1 million

Former MEP Daniel Hannan hailed our suggested cuts in national insurance to protect jobs in his *Daily Telegraph* column, saying, "The TaxPayers' Alliance has shown how it could be done."



2020

MAR

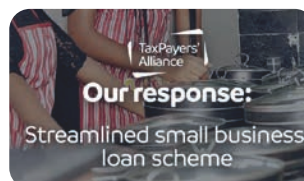
APR

MAY

JUN

Take-up rates of covid-19 business loans

TPA analysis showed the UK approval rate for coronavirus small business loans was less than half that of Germany, and reaching a fraction of the business of the Swiss scheme. Within days of our release, the chancellor signalled his intention to address the issue and, at the end of the month, he announced the new Bounceback Loan scheme to address the concerns. If these extraordinary measures were to take place, the TPA would make sure they were as efficient as possible.



The 50-year high tax burden

National media reported our warnings that increasing a 50-year high tax burden should not be a part of the plan for restoring the public finances. We were across the airwaves, splashed in national newspapers and interviewed on Sky News, explaining that raising taxes would be equivalent to 'taxpayer austerity' and needed to be off the table.



Scores of red tape: 20 reforms to unleash growth after coronavirus

As the government announced plans to lift lockdown and new measures to kick-start the economy, we laid out a blueprint for reopening Britain with a boost. Cutting red tape is a vital part of the government's arsenal and making the right changes will see the economy head in the right direction. On everything from loft extensions to e-scooters, our proposals would slash bureaucratic red tape in order to build more housing, promote employment, recover high streets, enhance product offerings in goods and services, and make accessing finance less burdensome for smaller businesses.

Our proposals were warmly received in government and went to the chancellor himself for consideration. The subsequent Business and Planning Bill, published by ministers in June, picked up many of our suggestions to set businesses free.



JUL

Pushing our save to spend message

John O'Connell had an op-ed published in the *Sunday Telegraph* outlining ways for the government to 'Save to Spend', which coincided with news across the Sunday papers about a possible tax bombshell, with hikes to a number of taxes. He argued that it would be madness to hike taxes on a private sector still on its knees and that we must find ways to save money and eradicate wasteful spending. John also appeared on LBC and Talk Radio continuing to bang the drum for spending restraint.

The Sunday Telegraph

The easy way for PM to save £15bn and kick-start our economy

By all means, upgrade unsexy infrastructure around the country, but find savings elsewhere to pay for it

JOHN O'CONNELL

© August 2020 - November

AUG

Winter Economy Plan

When we found out that the chancellor would be cancelling his planned November budget and delivering a 'Winter Economy Plan', our team was straight into action.

With John O'Connell booked in a prime time slot on BBC News for the morning of Rishi Sunak's address, we were at our desks well into the night once again crunching the numbers on a possible replacement for full furlough. As John told BBC viewers the next morning, extending the furlough scheme was simply unaffordable, explaining: "[Some of these measures] imagine a dream world where taxpayers' pockets are limitless."

The ONS stats released the next day confirmed what John had said. Borrowing in the first five months of this financial year was estimated to have been £173.7 billion, the highest borrowing in that period since records began.



SEPT

Chancellor's Economic Statement

When the chancellor made his economic statement in July, it was clear the government was in danger of moving in the wrong direction. Our media comment – *"While the jobs retention bonus will help ensure that the furlough scheme isn't just an expensive pause on mass lay-offs, taxpayers will be concerned about how and when they will pay the bills for ever-more spending promises."* – was picked up by hundreds of media outlets across the country.

We were, however, happy about the announcement on stamp duty – an issue we've long campaigned on. TPA staff worked into the night to produce an analysis which estimated that hundreds of thousands of home moves – equivalent to the city of Manchester! – would be unlocked by raising the stamp duty threshold. Government insiders were left remarking that they wished they had thought of the comparison!



Clean up the state

Since at least 2009, the TPA has called out publicly-funded bodies and appointments engaged in political activity. We have argued that the taxpayer-funded quangocracy has a damaging influence on the role and size of government. We have stood firm against those at war with the taxpayer, using their cash to lobby for even more. The system needs to be cleaned up.

The Clean Up The State campaign we launched in February may be one of our most important campaigns ever. While we often fight to change policy or cut taxes, this campaign seeks to change the very structure and nature of government itself.



Public appointments

Our research exposed what many suspected – public appointees tend to be from the left-wing London bubble. Analysis revealed that public appointees continue to be remarkably unrepresentative, with Labour and other left-of-centre parties' supporters dwarfing the number of Conservatives, and southerners significantly outnumbering northerners.

Having a majority of political quangocrats on one side of the fence undermines democratic accountability and leaves taxpayers footing the bill for establishment policy crusades – we want to see balance.

The cost of public inquiries

Our research found that – between April 2015 and June 2020 – three government departments had spent a total of just over £300 million on public inquiries. The Home Office alone spent over £192 million during that period.

Taxpayer funded lobbying and political campaigning

Our research revealed that political research and campaigning organisations known to attack the government or lobby for changes in public policy received £39,584,172 from that same government from 2017-19. As an organisation that doesn't take a penny of public money, we firmly believe this has to stop. Our research caused a storm, with some grants no longer being awarded as a result.

Members of the board

Quangos hold significant decision-making responsibilities and are funded by taxpayers, yet – as our earlier research has found – their board members come from a narrow pool of appointees and do not represent the balance of views in Britain. Our research revealed that the annual cost of quango board members was almost £124 million, with some collecting multiple pay packets by sitting on different boards. We found:

- 4,345 positions on the boards of quangos
- 319 quango board members on more than one board
- one person on five boards

The CUTS campaign has pushed the new government to engage its zeal for civil service reform, undertaking changes which none thought were possible. Using all of the tools at our disposal – hard hitting research, political intel, media clout and social media reach – we have changed the debate.

As one of the prime minister's advisers put it to us: *"This research puts the urgent need for reform right there in black and white."* Senior Conservative MPs have joined our calls for change, and the *Daily Telegraph* has featured multiple opinion pieces from our staff rallying politicians to act.

The Daily Telegraph



It's time taxpayers stopped footing obscene bills for Left-wing quangos

JAMES ROBERTS

22 FEBRUARY 2020 • 8:00PM



It's time to end the Left-wing stranglehold on public bodies

JOHN O'CONNELL
CHIEF EXECUTIVE OF THE TAXPAYERS' ALLIANCE

1 FEBRUARY 2020 • 5:00PM



Published: January 21, 2020

Duncan Simpson: Three tasks for Johnson. Cull quangos. End taxpayer-funded lobbying. And reform appointments.



The CONSERVATIVE WOMAN



Let's have another bonfire of the quangos – starting with the BBC

By **Danielle Boxall** - October 8, 2020




“The tentacles of the state reach much further than most people realise, and all too often **vast amounts of taxpayers' cash is wasted on pointless projects and bloated quangos**. It will take a monumental effort to reverse the trends of recent decades, and committed parliamentarians need all the help they can get. That's why campaigns like **Clean Up The State** are a vital contribution to the public debate, and the usual **forensic analysis of the TaxPayers' Alliance** will ensure this issue stays high up the agenda.”

Neil O'Brien, Member of Parliament for Harborough, Oadby and Wigston

We firmly believe that *“there is no such thing as government money; only taxpayers’ money”*.

Since we were founded in 2004, we have sent thousands of freedom of information requests, scoured hundreds of sets of accounts, and quizzed officials to root out wasteful spending at all levels of government. Every day, this is a major part of the work we do as the UK’s waste watchdog.

Unconscious bias training

Released as an exclusive with the *Daily Telegraph*, we uncovered that staff across Whitehall are being given compulsory training on ‘unconscious bias’. That’s the idea that people unknowingly attribute stereotypes to another person or group, leading to discrimination. However, unconscious bias is by no means a scientifically robust concept and it is highly questionable for public sector organisations to fund this training using taxpayers’ money.

Ministers spent more than £400k on ‘woke’ anti-bias training



Woke Whitehall

We revealed the thousands of pounds spent by Whitehall departments on ‘woke’ causes like gender neutral toilets, expensive LGBT lanyards and flags.

Civil service perks

We reminded everyone of the rollover holiday, cycle to work schemes and canteen subsidies exclusively enjoyed by bureaucrats, but paid for by the taxpayer. Many private sector roles do not offer these perks, yet taxpayers are forced to provide for those in the public sector.

Perks of the job

Government departments have spent over **£7.5 million** on employee benefits since 2014-15.

WAR on WASTE



Using freedom of information requests we have identified wasteful spending in the civil service, which – when added up – reaches into the millions.

Eco-illogical?

Whitehall departments have spent **over £15 million** on taxis and summer heating since 2014.

WAR on WASTE



Anti-eco civil service

We called out the hypocrisy of the civil service eco-warriors, who preached their green credentials while spending millions on taxis and needlessly heating their departments over the summer months.



Ashford's shambolic waste of money

Ashford Borough Council in Kent spent an eye-watering £6,300 on the sign pictured here. The authority said it was to symbolise the region's economic recovery from covid. All it symbolised to us was a shambolic waste of money and we rightly called out council chiefs.



Tidy motors

The Mid and West Wales Fire authority is using taxpayers' money to lease luxury vehicles including a Range Rover and a Mercedes Benz! The authority confirmed it spends nearly £157,000 per year to lease 32 luxury cars for staff and senior officers. Our digital campaign manager and local lad Joe Ventre issued a stinging rebuke to fire chiefs in his video.

Every week we highlight local War on Waste stories in our weekly bulletin and, in a normal year, would be out campaigning on high streets across the country about what we uncover. Over the past few months, we have tried something different. Our team are getting out in their local area and filming short videos exposing scandalous wastes of taxpayers' money.

Blackburn's bus blunder

A brilliant scoop by grassroots assistant Kieran Neild-Ali as he uncovered the true cost of Blackburn's new bus station was a staggering £8.4 million, nearly £4 million over budget! His freedom of information request revealed what the local press had failed to spot. Heads should roll as a result of this costly blunder.

Cleaning up their act

As TPA policy analyst Darwin Friend reported, three councils in Norfolk have joined forces to reduce the cost of bin collections. West Norfolk, Breckland and Norfolk District councils have pulled together and appointed a single provider to collect residents' rubbish. We very much welcome and commend this drive to make savings.

Town hall fat cats

Our operations assistant Freya Stear grew up in Oxfordshire and didn't hold back in her criticism of the council. Her update revealed that 20 staff at Oxfordshire County Council were paid over £100,000 in 2018-19. Worse still the outgoing chief executive took home total remuneration of nearly £360,000!



Axe the tax

The BBC television licence fee is one of the most hated and unnecessary taxes. This year, the TPA took the plunge and decided to take the fight to the TV licence fee, with our new Axe the Tax campaign.



Decriminalising non-payment of the licence fee

In March, the Department for Culture, Media and Sport launched a consultation into decriminalising non-payment of the licence fee. Within hours of it being announced, we created an innovative website tool to automate the process of submitting an entry. Over 5,000 people used the tool to send in their own submission.

DCMS Select Committee inquiry: the future of public service broadcasting

We submitted written evidence to the inquiry which laid out the reforms that are urgently needed – both to the BBC and Channel 4. Friend of the TPA and chairman of the committee, Julian Knight MP, was also able to use examples we collected of threatening licence fee letters to confront arrogant BBC bosses. Our clips of their meetings have gone viral and our calls to sell off C4 received widespread attention, including an endorsement by the former chairman of Channel 4 itself!

Responses throughout the year

Throughout the year, we've consistently responded to announcements from the BBC:

- March: we told them they were right to delay the introduction of the TV tax for over 75s.
- April: we blew apart their laughable suggestion of a new broadband tax to replace the licence fee.
- June: we were first to welcome the new Director General by telling BBC heads to 'get real'. This spread like wildfire on social media and was re-tweeted by prominent journalists, including the Political Editor of *The Sun* newspaper.

Events

We held an event with former BBC producer and director of communications at No 10 Downing Street, Sir Robbie Gibb, discussing the future of the licence fee where we received plaudits for our efforts to 'take the fight outside of Westminster'.

We also covered the topic at virtual ThinkTent, hosting a panel titled 'BBC and C4 – What next for the state broadcasters?'

BBC Rich List

We delved deep into the BBC accounts to find out how much their top stars and executives were taking home. We revealed that senior executives cost a total of £37.5 million in 2019-20, with an average salary of £148,221. Some top paid 'stars' at the BBC were:

- Football pundit Gary Lineker: £1,752,500
- Radio 2 presenter Zoe Ball: £1,362,500
- Presenter Fiona Bruce: £452,500

Our analysis also showed that median earnings at the BBC were £45,000 last year, which is 83% higher than the median salary across the UK.



Star salaries petition

The figures revealed in the *BBC Rich List* received widespread national media attention, but we didn't stop there. With our new digital capacity, we quickly launched an online petition to slash BBC star salaries. Within the hour, hundreds of people had signed and a day later, thousands. We took the petition itself straight to BBC Television Centre to deliver it in person. Safe to say, they were not pleased to see us!



**OVER 7,500
PEOPLE SIGNED
OUR PETITION.**

BBC bosses total pay bill:
£37.5 MILLION

**BBC
RICH LIST**

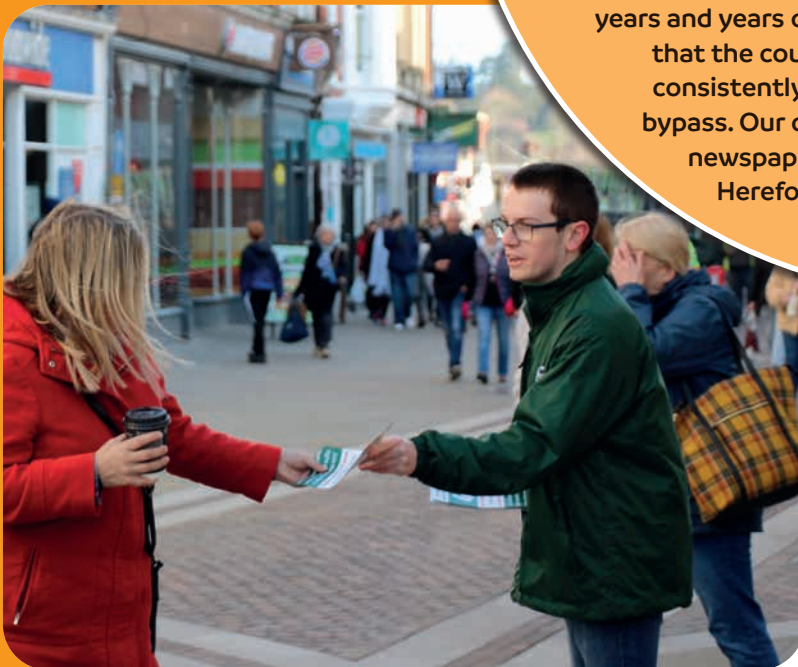
Investigating what goes on at the local level has always been a staple of our work. Thanks to our constant pressure over the years, councils must now publish all spending over £500 as well as publish in detail the pay and perks of senior staff. This year, we continued our focus on local government.

Fighting unjust council tax rises in Hereford

In early February, before the pandemic had taken hold, we managed to get in one action day. Our activists descended on Herefordshire to campaign against a planned 4 per cent rise in council tax. Supporters in the area notified us about the inflation-busting rise and, following conversations with local councillors, we realised it would pass unchallenged unless we acted.

The grassroots and research teams sprung into action and we soon made some startling discoveries. Despite the council having reserves of over £230 million, hard-pressed taxpayers are left footing the bill for the council-owned, loss making company Hoople Ltd.

The message on the ground was clear: locals are fed up with years and years of council tax rises. Many were staggered that the council has such large reserves but has consistently failed to build a much needed local bypass. Our campaign was reported in many local newspapers and even heard on BBC Radio Hereford & Worcester news bulletins.



TOWN HALL RICH LIST

Thirteen employees of **Manchester City Council** received **over £1.9 million** in remuneration in 2018-19.



BONUSES FOR BIG-WIGS

OVER £1.7 MILLION IN BONUSES
GIVEN TO TfL BOSSES



Town Hall Rich List

For the past 13 years we have assembled the most comprehensive list of council employees in the UK in receipt of over £100,000 in total remuneration. The 2020 edition of the *Town Hall Rich List* found:

- At least 2,667 council employees received total remuneration in excess of £100,000. That's 226 more than in 2017-18, and the highest number since 2013-14.
- 667 council employees earned over £150,000, 60 more than the previous year.
- A total of 32 local authority employees received remuneration in excess of a quarter of a million pounds.

Our research was covered in national media – from *The Times* to the *Daily Mail* – and local papers from every corner of the UK.

We were met with the typical backlash from ineffectual councillors and their lobby groups. In one example, a long-serving council leader claimed to be “*shocked and rather disgusted*” by our scrutiny, moments before bemoaning her pay compared to that of the Prime Minister and declaring “*councils have had a decade of austerity where there is no spare capacity left.*” Needless to say, we look forward to again examining her council in next year’s *Town Hall Rich List*!



City Hall Rich List

It's not just councils which levy council tax – municipal mayors do as well. So we turned our eye to the current mayor of London, Sadiq Khan, and examined how many highly paid mayoral staff were benefiting from his relentless rate rises.

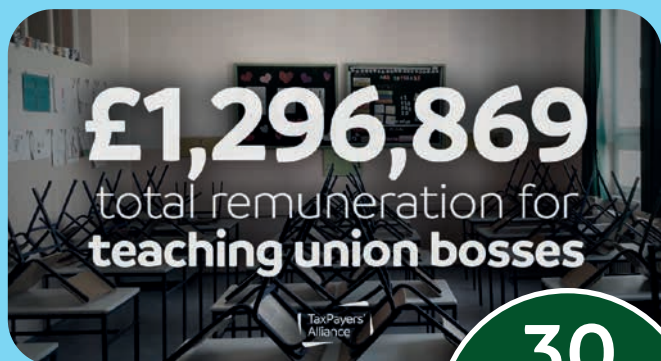
Our *City Hall Rich List*, detailing the highest paid officials in London, hit home. Shared by politicians such as Rt Hon Sir Iain Duncan Smith MP, it was the talk of the town, with listeners to radio stations LBC and TalkRadio infuriated by the figures – memorably including TalkRadio presenter Mike Graham tearing up the paper live on air in protest at the mayor!

Sadiq Khan struggled to explain the news away, with MPs confronting the mayor himself with the figures in front of a parliamentary committee in July.

Let this be a lesson to any local authorities who think they can get away with sky-high salaries, endless bailouts and relentless tax rises!



In addition to research on the pandemic, our team of four have churned out more quality research than any other group in Westminster. Here is an overview of some of the other reports we have released this year.



30
research
papers
published

Six of the 10 universities to
spend the most on vehicles
for vice-chancellors also
paid them over £300,000
per year.

TaxPayers' Alliance



The Nanny State Rich List 2020

The *Nanny State Rich List* revealed the remarkable scale of the rewards enjoyed by public health officials in 2018-19. The research showed over 350 employees enjoyed remuneration of more than £100,000 and 21 received more than the prime minister.

Local authority spending on settlement agreements

This paper focused on the cost to local authorities of reaching settlement agreements with ex-employees from 2016-17 to 2018-19. The research revealed that councils agreed at least 6,980 settlement agreements, worth over £98 million.

Local authority commercial property investments

Our analysis of a sample of council portfolios across England showed a mixed picture for investments with the research revealing the risks of the multi-billion pound council commercial property portfolio.

An analysis of OECD health statistics

We evaluated the UK health system (pre-coronavirus) in comparison to that of other developed nations, investigating the respective spending, functions of healthcare, healthcare providers, financing schemes, and – ultimately – the impact of expenditure on health outcomes.

Mod cons for dons

This paper revealed that 29 universities spent a total of £702,057 on vehicles for vice-chancellors between April 2016 and March 2019. This included purchases, leases, fuel, maintenance, tax and other associated costs.

Changes to duty free shopping in January 2021

Responding to government plans to scrap VAT-free sales in airports on selected items, our analysis revealed that Brits could have to stump up an extra £12 million on airport shopping each year as a result of a change.

Public Sector Trade Union Rich List 2020

We revealed that the average remuneration of the top 29 public sector union bosses was £153,935 in 2019. Education union bosses topped this year's annual Rich List, with six senior staff sharing £1,296,869 between them.

One big hit: fixing national insurance for good

Responding to government plans to gradually raise the national insurance threshold, our research suggested that delaying the increase in order to raise it fully to £12,500 in one go would also enable tax simplification and allow the aligning of rules to match income tax.

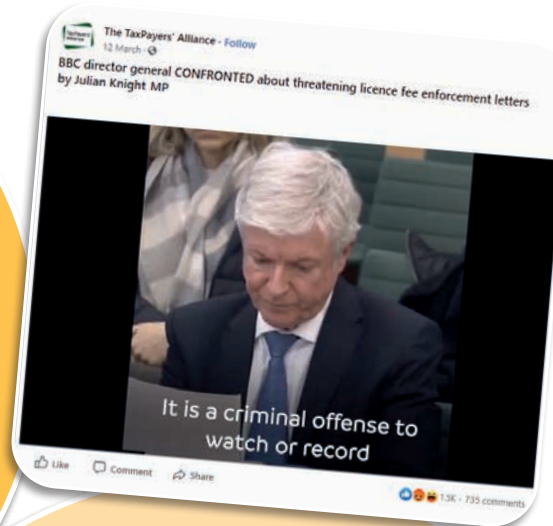
Select Committees

Select Committees are an important mechanism through which reforms can be made. We have been keen to use cross-party committees to push back on parliamentary groupthink. We've submitted written evidence to several inquiries this year:

Treasury Select Committee – **Tax after covid**

Department for Culture, Media and Sport Select Committee – **Future of public service broadcasting**

Defence Select Committee – **Inquiry on defence industrial policy**



Government consultations

We've also submitted to other government consultations throughout the year:

HM Treasury – **Fundamental review of business rates**

Department for Culture, Media and Sport – **Consultation on decriminalising licence fee evasion**

Department for International Development – **Overseas Development Assistance spending**

Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government – **Planning reform**

HM Treasury – **Spending review**

Independent Parliamentary Standards Authority – **MP pay**

Cabinet Office – **Strategic defence and security review**

Building coalitions

Forming and maintaining relationships with MPs and Peers from all parties is an important step in building a caucus who will fight the TPA corner on a pressing issue of the day. Parliamentarians each have their own areas of interest, and when they align with a TPA campaign we make sure to get in touch.

Part of our mission is to speak up for taxpayers in the corridors of power and bring our vision to the heart of parliament. We're constantly looking for where we can drive positive changes in policy and since last year's election we have been busy building links with new MPs from all parties, and reinforcing relationships with sitting MPs.

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Submissions to parliamentary inquiries and consultations



Speaking up for taxpayers

Digital

Due to the challenges of lockdown, we had to innovate to continue our vital work. We turned to online platforms, expanding our presence and enabling us to put out a steady stream of work. Social media has allowed us to reach so many more people outside of Westminster and thanks to our newly revamped studio, we're able to put out high quality content on a regular basis.

Even when life eventually goes back to normal, these platforms will remain a fixture of our output. We're constantly working to upscale and fine-tune them to provide the best experience possible.



Our new studio

When the government told us we could get back to the office in September, we came in and repurposed some office space, turning it into a dedicated studio. From it we can now produce high quality videos and webinars and do live link ups for broadcast appearances.





Webinars

We've held webinars on topics such as local authority council investment properties and the BBC. We also gave the NHS a check up, with policy analyst Darwin Friend discussing his new paper on OECD health stats at a digital round-table launch.

Videos

With our new studio up and running, we've been able to produce some great quality videos. We've hosted TPA Talks podcasts, webinars and even took our successful annual ThinkTent online.

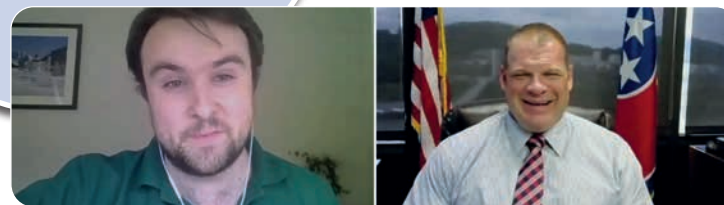
ThinkTent

Hundreds of viewers tuned in for panel discussions on carbon tax, repairing the public finances after coronavirus, free speech and the future of public service broadcasting during our 7th annual conference event.

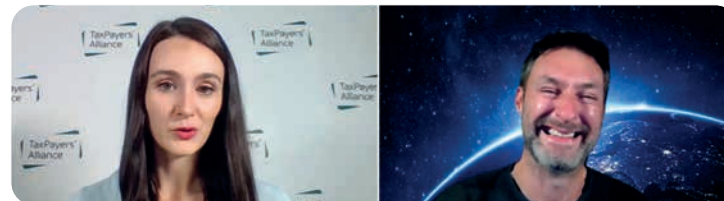


TPA Talks

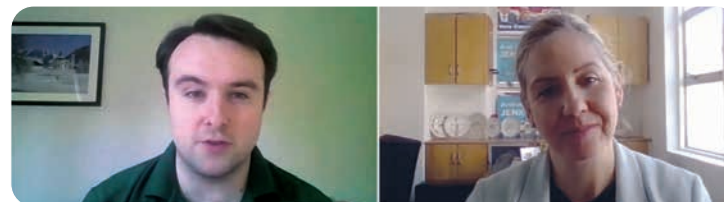
In this exciting new project, we sit down for engaging discussions with big-name guests to discuss the issues that matter to taxpayers. So far, we have hosted business owners, journalists, politicians, YouTubers, a comedian and even a professional wrestler.



TPA Talks with Glenn Jacobs



TPA Talks with Leo Kears



TPA Talks with Andrea Jenkyns



Reviewing Sadiq Khan with Mahyar Tousi – TPA Talks Special

Rate Expectations

In September, the government opened a consultation on business rates, and we led the charge to help high streets. It's about time Britain had a new system which keeps the business rate multiplier low and allows regular revaluations, including the right to appeal during a recession. This matters more now than ever! Using our online tool, over 200 supporters submitted a response telling the government that reform was urgently needed.



MPs' pay

When the Independent Parliamentary Standards Authority (IPSA) launched a consultation on MPs' pay shortly after MPs were awarded a £3,360 pay rise, we created an online tool that allowed over 800 people to tell IPSA that MPs pay should be performance related.



New online tools

This year we were keen to get as many supporters involved with our campaigns as possible. Using handy online tools, we were able to facilitate thousands of submissions to consultations on all manner of topics.

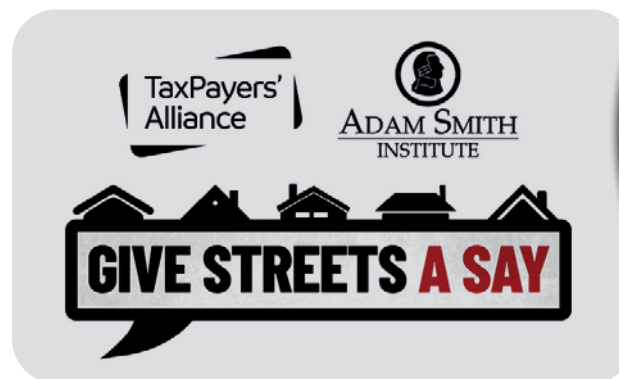
BBC licence fee decriminalisation

Within hours of the launch of the DCMS consultation into decriminalising non-payment of the licence fee, we had created an innovative website tool which helped over 5,000 people to send in their own submission.



Planning consultation

The government announced a new consultation on proposals for reform of the planning system in England, so we teamed up with the Adam Smith Institute to create an online submission tool to help give residents a voice on what happens in their communities. Over 80 people submitted their own response using our tool.



Play the chancellor tool

As Rishi Sunak put the finishing touches to his first Budget back in early March, we released a new tool, which allowed over-burdened taxpayers the chance to play chancellor with the click of a button, and select which taxes they would cut to bring the UK tax burden down.

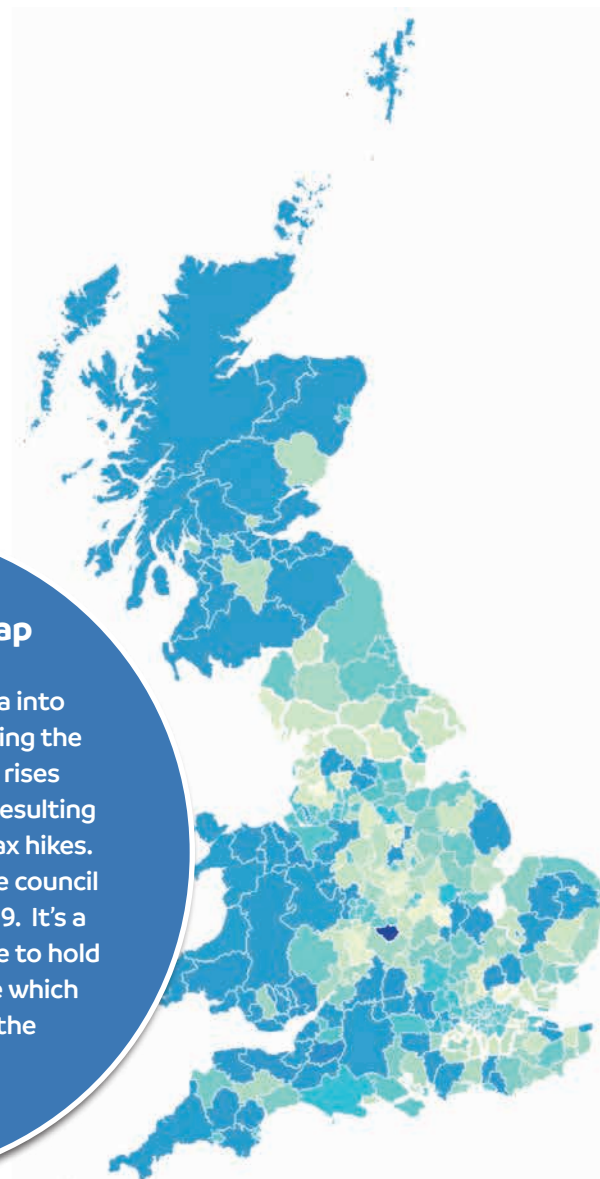


#BOGOF campaign

We're always thinking up new and creative ways to fight for taxpayers in the digital sphere. Responding to the government's announcement of new anti-obesity measures, we used catchy graphics to highlight how everything from soups to vegan sausages will be caught up in this shambolic scheme.

Council tax rises map

We compiled council tax data into an interactive heat map showing the inflation busting council tax rises occurring all over the country, resulting in £55 million in unnecessary tax hikes. It also revealed that not a single council in Britain cut council tax in 2019. It's a vital tool that taxpayers can use to hold councils to account and judge which authorities are delivering the best value for money.



Size of increase

- No/low increase
- Increase in line with inflation (~1.5)
- Average increase (~3.6%)
- High-end average (~5.1%+)

How to get involved

Our success is down to the help we receive from supporters all across the country. Here are the ways you can get involved.

Sign up for our weekly bulletin

Keep up to date on all the latest TPA campaigns, research and action days.

Sign up:
taxpayersalliance.com/join

Follow us on social media



@taxpayersalliance



@the_tpa



taxpayersallianceUK



the-tpa-uk

Become a local coordinator

Grassroots campaigning is a core component of the TPA. If you would like to become a local coordinator and help us fight wasteful spending in your local area please get in touch with:

Harry Fone

Grassroots campaign manager
harry.fone@taxpayersalliance.com
020 7340 6030



By bank transfer to

Account name:
The TaxPayers' Alliance Ltd

Account no: **40922257**

Sort code: **09-06-66**

*Please include your surname
and post code as
your reference.*

Make a donation

It's never easy asking for money, especially this year, but without supporters like you we couldn't campaign so effectively. We are always extremely grateful for the generous donations – big and small – from our network of supporters. There are several ways you can donate.



By cheque

Made payable to
The TaxPayers' Alliance
and posted to
55 Tufton Street,
London SW1P 3QL

By credit or debit card

Via our website:
taxpayersalliance.com/donate

Over the phone:
Call Freya Stear on
020 7998 1450

*"The weekly updates
from the TPA are just packed
full of solid achievements and
by the time I get to the end I am
so full of appreciation for what
you and your team do – it seems
proper to contribute resources
on the spot! The TPA decides
what to focus on, proceeds, and
executes with ferocity!"*

– TPA supporter





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