

Funding the Future

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[The Week](#) has a fascinating report, from which I borrow the following (edited) highlights:

BOB GELDOF lashed out at a reporter this week after he was asked about his tax arrangements, bizarrely demanding to know how many irrigation ditches her salary had built.

Geldof, who was in the Ethiopian capital Addis Ababa for the World Economic Forum, was interviewed by Times journalist Lucy Bannerman. Their encounter appeared to go very well at first, with Geldof talking about the huge changes that have taken place in Africa since Live Aid in 1985.

Then Bannerman asked him about his tax status. After confirming that he is a non-dom and can legally avoid income and capital gains tax on international earnings, Geldof laughed off the Sunday Times Rich List estimate of his worth (£32 million).

When pressed on how much tax he actually paid — the justification for the question being because his big idea, aid, can come from taxes - Geldof exploded.

"I pay all my taxes," he shouted. "My time? Is that not a tax? I employ 500 people. I have created business for the UK government. I have given my ideas. I have given half my life to this."

In a bizarre, heated exchange Geldof jabbed his finger repeatedly at Bannerman and demanded to know how many irrigation ditches she had built with her salary.

The tirade ended with Geldof yelling: "How dare you lecture me about morals", before being led away by his entourage.

Actually Bob, lots of us would like to lecture you on your tax morals if you don't pay in full what somebody else living in the UK might owe. I stress we don't know whether you do or not, but you had the option of saying you do and got angry instead, which makes me think you've got something to get angry about.

And candidly, in that case Lucy Bannerman was absolutely right to question you as she

did. Paying tax in the right place at the right time is a principle inextricably linked to solving the problems of poverty in Africa - and elsewhere. You can build as many ditches as you like. But candidly if you set an example by tax avoiding then you undo all your good works.

It's your choice though Bob. You've no need to get angry. You can just either drop the non-dom claim or pay up instead. It's not hard.