

Donations: a big thank you, and moving on from here

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It's now nearly a month since I started asking for donations here. Right now a month is a long time, so I thought an update might be appropriate.

Firstly, many thanks to all those who have donated: almost exactly 100 people have done so, and around £6,000 has been committed in all. I am genuinely touched, and grateful. The show of confidence in the work being done here is really appreciated.

Second, this has had a big influence on my thinking. My paid employment at City, University of London, ends in July. Other research-based work is delayed or on hold at the moment. And although as I note below, one new grant has been won, there is no way of knowing whether that is likely to be repeated in the current circumstances. Like so many others, I am living with economic uncertainty right now.

In that situation, I have had to think hard about what to do next. Given the current crisis in university funding it is apparent that the chances of further paid work there, excepting the possibility of specific grant-based research if I was so lucky to be part of a consortium winning one, is low. I am not placing much hope on any of this at present.

And I am also worried about the future of grant funding from other sources: most foundations will be facing tough decisions on the scale of their funding right now. I know that some are already cutting back. So whilst I am making grant applications, this is very much a matter of 'wait and see'.

Such a negative potential outlook could leave me deterred. The fact that, extraordinarily, even as I wrote that last sentence another donation was made means that I am actually seeing this moment as one of opportunity.

The last few weeks have seen exceptional levels of engagement on the blog. Blog traffic in the first half of this year is likely to exceed that for the whole of 2019. And what has become clear is that many see it as an educational resource, albeit one that is not terribly well organised as it stands. I admit that I have to, quite often, use Google to find what I want on it, and when doing so am very often surprised to find material that I

now have no recall of writing in the way that the search reveals that I did.

Three strands of thinking have emerged as a result. One is that existing data on key issues needs to be tidied: the wiki is a way to do that and I hope that it develops, although it will take time.

Second, there is a need for focus. The [Tax After Coronavirus \(TACs\)](#) project is part of that. It is a way to pull ideas together in a coordinated fashion under a common heading. Some have been pleasingly well-read, but the series is intended to create a narrative as a whole and the wiki page helps that for now.

The economic myths theme will provide another variant on this idea. I will write separately on that this morning.

Third, it has occurred to me that after fourteen years of writing this blog it is now more important to me than ever. Indeed, for the first time I want to make it a key element in my work, which it has not been to date. Throughout its history it has always fitted in and around my other work, and has never had any direct funding of any sort. I now think that this will change and I see it becoming a key focus for my work.

In that context I am also pleased to note that I have won a grant of £7,500 for the Tax After Coronavirus (TACs) project from the Joffe Trust. There are some conditions attached, one of which is that the work will be published on a separate blog - albeit that it will be linked from here. I am delighted to secure that support - which means that this project will over the next year develop into a full-scale review of the need for UK tax reform.

It's also important to note that donations were important in this process: the [Joffe Charitable Trust](#) did suggest, very strongly, that such an appeal be part of the funding process to indicate that there was support for the project. I am delighted that this has been proven.

Which, brings me to my last point. It's fantastic to have £13,000 or so to work in a more dedicated way on the issues arising here. But if other grants do not appear, or are deferred or cancelled as is possible, that is not enough to keep things going. Further donations would then, be much appreciated to provide the security to take these ideas forward. I do, in particular, want to tackle the economic myths issue alongside the TACs project because I believe both can have a role to play in delivering reform, as can the campaign by the Corporate Accountability Network for sustainable cost accounting (which is currently pretty much on hold because of the delay in COP 26 and related issues) do the same in another area.

After years of largely academic focus I do, then, once more hope to make campaigning a key feature of my work. I admit that would be exciting. But it has also has practical purpose. I have greatly enjoyed academic work, and will not shy from doing more if it:

the intellectual environment with those I am now working with is good for creating ideas. But, the outreach here is much bigger, and that seems to be important to me: it is apparent that many who comment here, and so I presume the many more who just read, want to see a changed world. So do I. If it is possible to play a slightly bigger part in achieving that it would be fantastic. So, many thanks for your support.