

# Sunak needs to be sacked, and be free to leave

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*I spent yesterday writing about the technicalities of domicile as they might impact Rishi Sunak's wife. But that's because her tax decisions cast doubt on his suitability for office. [Another thread](#), this time in the man himself ....*

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Sunak shot to prominence in 2020 when appointed Chancellor of the Exchequer. Although not quite unknown before then, few had paid him much attention.

Even his appointment as Chancellor looked as much like luck as anything else. He'd managed to be promoted through the ranks of obscure ministers to hold the number 2 position at the Treasury when Sajid Javid resigned. Appointing him saved a reshuffle, so he got the job.

Then Covid happened and Sunak spent like almost no Chancellor in history. Having discovered there really was a magic money tree, which quantitative easing turned on, he had the Bank of England create all the money he needed to cover the cost of Covid.

It could be argued that anyone who spends £400 billion without asking for anything back in tax and without increasing borrowing (which he didn't, because QE cancels government debt) is going to be popular. Sunak was.

Then came the reckoning. £37 billion on track and trace was very obviously wasted. It turned out Covid loans to businesses were handed out without any basic checks and billions will be lost. And then there was PPE corruption. Sunak must have known. The crown slipped.

But what we did not see until Covid was declared 'over' (when it very clearly was not) was just what the real Rishi Sunak was like. And the reality was shocking. The man who had turned the money on declared that this was an aberration. Sunak decided to play the hard man instead.

Not only did Sunak now deny there was a magic money tree, when he'd so obviously been using it, but he declared the policies he'd pursued were reckless and now he must shrink the state to pay for them. Rishi Scrooge appeared out of nowhere.

Although Covid put massive pressure on public services, and increased the cost of supplying them, Sunak refused the money to deliver the services required. From health to education, care, the legal system and so much more all Sunak offered was austerity and pressure on employees.

Pensioners lost out on the inflation pay rise they were due under existing rules.

Universal credit was cut even though it was known the cost of living was rising.

Tax increases were announced that hit those in work and on lower pay hardest, but which did not go near those with wealth at all.

And as fuel costs escalated because Sunak's Treasury had failed to understand that reopening after Covid was always going to impose supply chain, cash flow and other disruptions, his rebate offer was too small, and based in the idea of a loan, not a subsidy.

In the meantime the Bank of England chose to put up interest rates to increase the cost of living, deliberately, as if people were not being punished enough. Sunak must have approved this as he has the right to veto it.

Come the latest announcements, the failure to take further measures to help those millions now facing unplayable bills revealed a complete ignorance of the despair people face when their costs go up by maybe £3,000 a year and they have no way to find that money.

At the same time he revealed he did not know how to pay for a can of coke using a contactless payment card.

And we learned that Brexit, of which he was a strong supporter, really has trashed UK exports when those of every other country were recovering.

To cap which, he's also opposing spending on green measures as we are being told we are in the last chance saloon on climate change.

Then we discovered his wife has likely saved tens of millions in tax, quite legally, by paying £30,000 a year to use a scheme that let her do so. In other words, she consciously chose not to pay her taxes here.

So what to think of Rishi Sunak? Is he a man suitable to be Chancellor, let alone Prime Minister, as he'd clearly love to be? There are four criteria here. They're politics, economics, empathy and ethics.

Sunak's politics are to the right of the Tory party. He's into small government, low tax, and leaving people to get on and sort out their own problems without state help. But that's not what we need now.

Sick people desperately need a better, bigger NHS. We need more spent on education, the judicial system, care, the environment, green transport, climate change and social housing and benefits. Sunak is not recognising this. Politically he doesn't recognise the need of the moment.

Worse politically, his choice to make people worse off now - which has been his pattern since it was claimed Covid was over - has within it the suggestion that people must now be punished for Covid, and that was not their fault. That's bad political judgement.

Worse still is his economic judgement. He does not realise that by crushing expenditure by the government and by at the same time forcing households into poverty he is most likely pushing us into deep recession.

All Sunak thinks important is balancing his books, he has not noticed that by doing so he's reducing the income of most people in the country - and recession has to follow. That's the action of a man who does not understand economics, or his job.

But maybe that's not surprising because what's become very clear is that Sunak has not got the empathy required of a senior politician. It's either that, or he's just so rich that the idea that you just cannot pay your bills or opt for private medicine is beyond his comprehension.

To describe Sunak as a man without the common touch is to be generous: he does not even realise that there is such a thing and that he needs to have it.

And so I come to his ethics. As his family's decisions on tax reveal, these prioritise his wealth above the public interest. Faced with a moral choice, what is legal but not ethical is the choice made so long as there is personal gain to be had. For a politician that is staggering.

Is Rishi Sunak in that case a man fit to be Chancellor when his political, economic, empathic and ethical decisions are all wrong? The obvious answer is that he is not. Nor should he ever be a candidate for prime minister unless we want to create a wasteland.

Sunak's wife's domicile claim is based on the suggestion that she does not wish to live here in the long term. I'd suggest now is the time for Boris Johnson to help her fulfil that dream. Sunak needs to be sacked, and be free to leave.