

# Funding the Future

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Gary Stevenson said on [his YouTube channel](#) yesterday that:

*“Correct implementation on tax policy is a job of experts and government and civil service. It is not the job of \*\*\*\*\* YouTubers.”*

On that, he is entirely correct.

But here's what baffles me: I listened to Gary's latest video today, and I just wish he would talk to me. We were in correspondence for a while, a month or so ago. I sent his team the Taxing Wealth Report at their request, and then I was told his agent said he was too busy to talk to me.

What Gary has now admitted is that working out how to tax wealth is hard. He is right about that. What is more, it is now also very clear that he does not think the campaigners and academics he is currently talking to have the answers, and he is right; they don't. Saying “tax wealth” as organisations like Tax Justice UK and academics like Gabriel Zucman say will not work. The answers are much more complex than that.

Unfortunately, the tax justice movement, and too many others, have regressed to precisely that: slogans. They talk about taxing wealth, but they do not show how, in contrast to what John Chrisensen and I did in our era of tax justice campaigning, when we laid out precisely what we thought was required. Our strategy worked; just making demands does not.

I have, anyway, done the design work. I set it out in my [Taxing Wealth Report 2024](#). It contains thirty fully costed proposals that together could raise up to £90 billion a year from the UK's wealthiest households, designed to be legally robust, enforceable, and resistant to avoidance.

That said, Gary is right that narrative matters. His campaigning has helped move wealth taxation into the mainstream of political debate. But a narrative without an implementation story is empty rhetoric, and I think that is what Gary now realises that he has.

Second, he is right that resistance will be fierce. The wealthy will threaten to leave, and

the media will push scare stories. However, we have dealt with all of this before, not only in the context of wealth taxation, but also in other tax justice campaigns with which I was involved.

For example, after 2008, with the demand for country-by-country reporting for multinational corporations that used tax havens, automatic information exchange from those tax havens, and other reforms, particularly to company registries, a handful of campaigners overcame enormous opposition and changed the global tax landscape. I know this precisely because I helped design and deliver those reforms, including by helping negotiate them through the OECD process to deliver reforms which are now, in the case of country-by-country reporting, the law in more than 70 countries around the world.

Third, he is right that expertise is needed. But expertise is not the same as academic commentary or campaigning slogans. It comes from those who actually know how tax systems work, how legislation is drafted, and how rules are enforced. That is the expertise I have always brought to tax justice campaigning.

My record is not theoretical. I was a practising chartered accountant for forty years. I co-founded the Tax Justice Network, helped found Tax Justice UK, and created the Fair Tax Mark. I created and delivered country-by-country reporting to the world against massive resistance. I was ranked in the [world's top 50 on tax by International Tax Review](#) for more than a decade, a feat shared only with the head of tax at the OECD at the time. And I have been a professor of accounting and international political economy. The simple fact is that I know how to turn slogans into law, and law into working practice.

The consequences of not connecting Gary's platform with real expertise are stark.

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Campaigners will continue to say "tax wealth" while opponents laugh because they know no practical proposals exist in the debate.

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Politicians will duck the issue, saying implementation is too difficult.

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The public will be disappointed again, as hopes of reform fade into slogans and good intentions.

So my question is simple: why isn't Gary talking to me?

He has built a powerful campaign platform. I have built the practical tax policies. Together, narrative and expertise could be combined into the force that finally makes wealth taxation happen. Apart, the risk is that we go in circles.

## Call to action

Given all that I know, may I ask a favour? If you watch Gary's videos, and if you share his anger at inequality, might you tell him this:

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The implementation answers he knows are needed already exist.

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They are in the Taxing Wealth Report 2024.

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And if he is serious about "taxing wealth, not work," then he has to speak to those who actually know a lot about tax.

So, might I ask readers here to post this in his YouTube comments, to share it on social media, and [to mail it to him via his website](#)? We share goals and frustrations, but the narratives and the solutions are ready. What we need now is for campaigners and those with expertise on these issues to join up.

Gary is leading the narrative. I have the policies. It is time to connect the two.