

Funding the Future

Building economic narratives, one step at a time

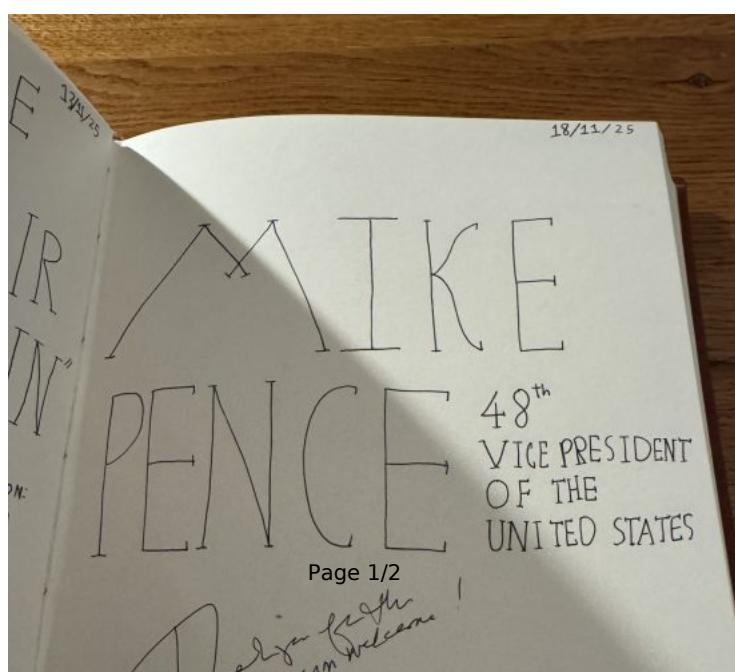
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I spoke at the Cambridge Union last night at what was described as a “fireside chat”.



Photo: Thomas Murphy

I was amused to learn when signing the guest book that I had followed a former vice-president, Mike Pence of the USA, who had spoken the night before to a larger audience, I think, but we have different appeals.



Isaac James, who interviewed me, had done his homework and guided the questions through subjects ranging from my problems with neoclassical economics to wealth taxation, inflation, capital flight, and the politics of care.

The audience then joined in, with an opportunity to ask questions on any subject they wished, most of which related to clarifying previously stated positions, many of which I could resolve by arguing that we could not solve current problems by perpetuating solutions that had already been shown not to work. The need is for new economic narratives, not for continued, desperate justification of existing formulas that are the reason so many people are alienated from the economy and politics as they are now.

I enjoyed the evening and I was grateful to my hosts. A YouTube video will be available sometime soon.

The evening was also of interest to the team here because we are progressing with our plans to hold our own event. This is now most likely to be on Saturday, February 28, and the venue is also likely to shift from Ely to Cambridge because demand appears to be higher than we initially expected, and we could not find capacity in Ely.

We are also, as a result, now coming in with a price slightly lower than the £50 we previously indicated, but wherever we have looked we have found that the costs mean that the ticket price has to be close to that range simply because of the cost of venues, insurance, ticketing and a host of other incidentals, all of which add up.

If there was one topic that stood out from the questions last night, it was the householder analogy. The mainly student audience was sceptical that any politician could secure office without using it, even if they knew it was wrong. That provides some indication of the scale of the challenge that we face, and the issues I know I will need to address when talking about these things. Creating new narratives will not happen overnight; minds need to be changed.