

[REDACTED]

From: FOI
Sent: 20 September 2017 13:54
To: [REDACTED]
Cc: FOI
Subject: RE: Freedom of Information request - Electoral Commission - Arron Banks
Attachments: 130_17.zip

Dear [REDACTED]

Our Ref: FOI 130/17

Thank you for your email to the Electoral Commission dated **15 August 2017**, for which you provided clarification related to the date range on **24 August 2015**.

The Commission aims to respond to requests for information promptly and has done so within the statutory timeframe of twenty working days from the date of your clarification.

Your request is in bold below followed by our response.

You have requested:

- 1) I would like to request all internal correspondence and communications held by the Electoral Commission that mentions, or refers to, the businessman and political donor Arron Banks, who is associated with Leave.EU campaign.**
- 2) I would like to request all external correspondence and communications between the Electoral Commission and Arron Banks, and between the Electoral Commission and Arron Banks' representatives.**
- 3) Please indicate the number of meetings that have taken place between the Electoral Commission and Arron Banks (and/or his representatives). For each meeting, please provide the following information:**

- A list of attendees, including the full names and titles of each attendee (and who each attendee represents)**
- The date when the meeting took place**

You clarified your request to request we provide documents covering the date range **01 April 2017 to the day this request is processed**.

The Electoral Commission does hold information relevant to your request.

The documents that we are releasing include:

- Internal correspondence;
- Planning and meeting briefing documents;
- Party applications;
- Communications from the public; and
- Press clippings;

Exemption under section 30

Section 30(1) of the FOI Act provides for exemption from disclosure of information which has been held at any time for the purpose of conducting an investigation of a potential offence.

As you may be aware, the Commission currently has an active investigation concerning the registered campaigner, Leave.EU. Information which falls under the scope of your request which is held as part of this investigation has been exempted under section 30 of the FOI Act.

The exemption under section 30 is subject to the public interest test. Under the circumstances whereby the investigation is ongoing, and that investigation is, in the Commission's view, a matter of importance and public interest the potential harm to the investigation caused by releasing the information outweighs the public interest in releasing it. Consequently, we are satisfied that it is not the public interest to disclose this information in response to your request.

You may wish to note that as a matter of routine the Commission publishes the outcomes of all its investigations, once they are concluded.

Exemptions under Section 40

You will notice that certain personal details have been redacted from the documents we are releasing. This redaction is necessary because section 40(2) and (3)(a) of the Freedom of Information Act 2000 (FOI) Act provides that personal data, where its disclosure would breach one of the data protection principles, is exempt from disclosure. The first data protection principle states that personal data must be processed fairly and lawfully. The Commission considers that it would be unfair to release the names and personal contact details of junior officials, who were not employed in public facing roles and did not act as spokespersons for their employer, as those individuals would have a reasonable expectation that this personal data would not be disclosed to the general public.

Finally, some information has been redacted from the documents disclosed because it fell outside of the scope of your request.

Release of information

I trust that this information satisfies your request. The Commission strives to be an open, transparent authority, but in some circumstances we cannot responsibly release requested information, and we ask for your understanding in this regard.

If you are not satisfied with this response, please note that the Commission operates a review procedure, details of which can be found on the Commission website at:

<http://www.electoralcommission.org.uk/about-us/freedom-of-information-requests/how-do-i-make-an-foi-request>

Please also note that if you have exhausted all internal Commission review procedures and you are still not satisfied you have the right to appeal to the Information Commissioner. Details of this procedure can be found on the ICO website: <https://ico.org.uk/>

Yours sincerely,



Information Management Adviser

The Electoral Commission
3 Bunhill Row
London EC1Y 8YZ

www.electoralcommission.org.uk

Putting voters first



Please consider the environment before printing this email.

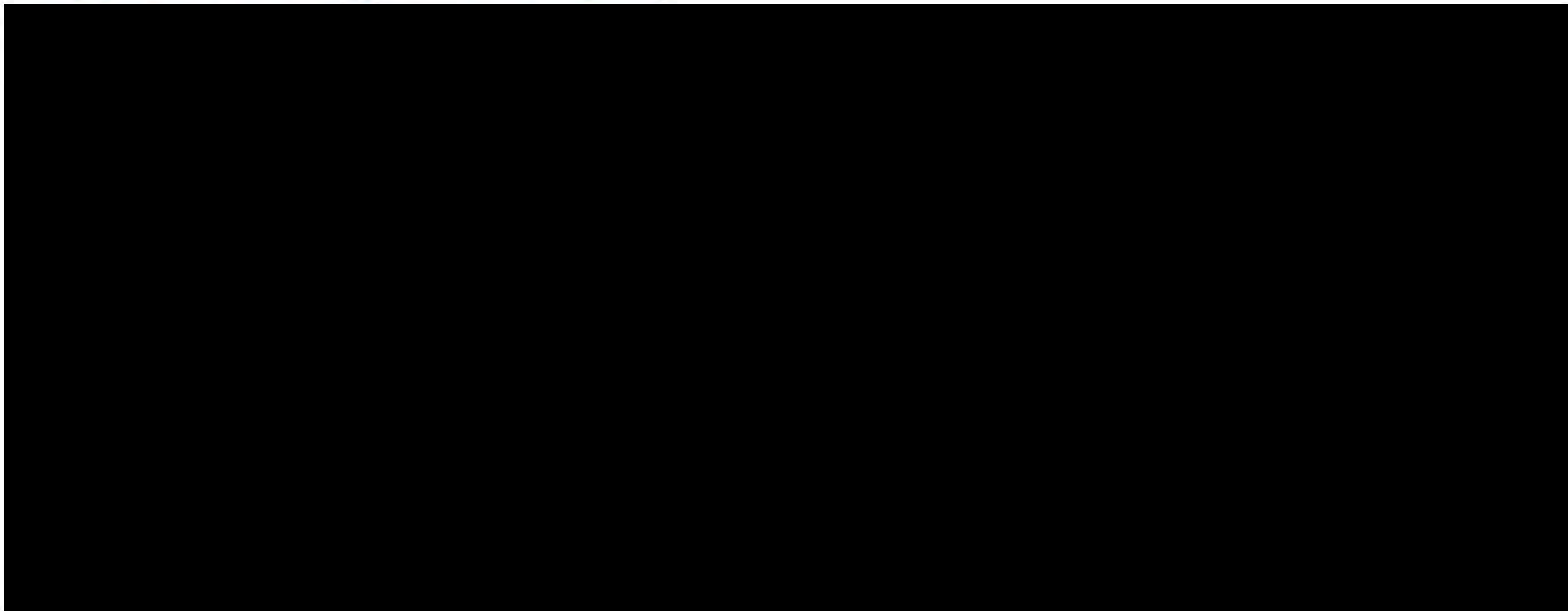


‘The needle of public opinion has shifted. There are people protesting but you can’t shift it back. It’s permanent... We won the war’ – The Observer [no link]

[REDACTED] writes that Arron Banks is creating a political movement of his own and plans to unseat “bad” MPs. He says he’s working with Steve Hilton, David Cameron’s former head of strategy, to come up with a points system that grades MPs on their “awfulness” and from that he’ll formulate a list of target seats to contest.

The Patriotic Alliance

Application to register a new party



- For information there were media reports¹ that this was a name of organisation that Arron Banks was interested in forming. Arron Banks is not connected with this application as far as we are aware.

Recommendation

¹ <https://order-order.com/2017/03/15/introducing-the-patriotic-alliance/>, <https://www.theguardian.com/politics/2017/mar/14/ukip-donor-arron-banks-says-he-has-guit-party-to-set-up-ukip-20>, https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Arron_Banks accessed 24/4/17

Tories rake in £25 million in donations ahead of election - more than two and a half times as much as Labour – Mirror

The Mirror also reports the publication, focusing on the fact the Conservatives received more than other parties and UKIP's donations were down to £156,455 this quarter, compared to the period before the 2015 general election when Arron Banks donated £1 million.

Tories rake in £25 million in donations ahead of election - more than two and a half times as much as Labour – Mirror

The Mirror also reports the publication, focusing on the fact the Conservatives received more than other parties and UKIP's donations were down to £156,455 this quarter, compared to the period before the 2015 general election when Arron Banks donated £1 million.

[REDACTED]

From: [REDACTED]
Sent: 24 April 2017 08:28
To: [REDACTED]
Subject: FW: newdirect: Mentions in Leave.EU press releases

From: [REDACTED]
Sent: 24 April 2017 08:25
Subject: newdirect: Mentions in Leave.EU press releases

Good morning,

Please find below two press releases from Leave.EU that mention the Electoral Commission.

In response to the Electoral Commission statement today, Leave.EU chairman Arron Banks said:

"We fully and correctly complied with the Electoral Commission rules on spending during the referendum. We have answered all of their questions.

"Today's announcement is politically motivated and the timing is intended to cause maximum damage just before the General Election.

"We will not be co-operating any further with the Commission and we will see them in court.

"It is however, worth noting that the Electoral Commission chose to ignore our complaint that the Commission allowed the government to issue a Remain campaign leaflet to every UK household packed with government-generated lies at a cost of £11m.

"The leaflet did not carry the legal imprint required and was delivered in Wales after the short period started because they forgot to translate it into Welsh! In effect, the government smashed the rules with the help of the Electoral Commission.

"Vote Leave meanwhile bunked £650,000 to a student to break spending rules with no investigation.

"Finally and most shockingly, the choice of Vote Leave as designated campaign was illegally made because the Commission did not have enough board members - because of the number conflicted to vote - to form a legal quorum. This was due to the fact that most of the board members were conflicted with pro-EU interests.

"The timing of this announcement was designed to cause maximum political damage.

"We have always said the Electoral Commission was the unofficial arm of the Remain campaign and they have proven our suspicions correct again today."

Responding to the Electoral Commission's notice of investigation into Leave.EU's spending during the referendum campaign period CEO [REDACTED] said:

"I was informed today by the Electoral Commission that our campaign may have caused 'offences' in the run-up to the referendum.

"I have responded to the Commission's numerous requests in a timely, honest and above all, informative manner, but still they persist in searching for infringements that simply have not occurred.

"The Leave.EU electoral return was signed off by an independent auditor, we consulted with legal opinion at every stage and employed a compliance officer to ensure EC guidelines were followed to the letter.

"I am therefore utterly flabbergasted to learn that we are now under further investigation. We fully intend to counter the Commission's excessive measures with our own inquiry into the level of attention given to other EU

referendum campaigns. We wish to bring to account the Commission's numerous lapses in professionalism and fair treatment.

"It is deeply worrying to witness a regulator operating at the heart of our democracy act with such a brazen disregard for rules, regulations and equitable treatment."

[REDACTED]
Senior Account Manager
[REDACTED]

newsdirect
[REDACTED]

This email and its attachments are confidential and are intended solely for the use of the individual to whom it is addressed. Any views or opinions expressed are solely those of the author and do not necessarily represent those of newsdirect. If you are not the intended recipient of this email and its attachments, you must take no action based on them, nor must you copy them or send them to anyone else. Please contact the sender if you have received this message in error.

From: [REDACTED]
Sent: 18 April 2017 12:18
To: Louise Edwards
Cc: Bob Posner; Tom Hawthorn; [REDACTED]
[REDACTED]

Subject: Potential 8 June UKPGE

Bob

Bullet points in relation to my team:

- Advice service will need to be resourced to have additional staff
- Advisors in my team will need training
- Pre-poll reporting from dissolution of Parliament to polling day – publishing these on a weekly basis will have resource implications if we are also publishing Q1 and Statements of Accounts
- Post-poll publication of large party returns – resource issue

5

Other thoughts:

- Arron Banks registering a party
- Gorton by-election on 4 May – any implications?
- Another NI Assembly election – implications for combined regulated period
- 4 May elections – any party spending will count against the UKPGE spending limits

[REDACTED]
Financial Reporting Manager

The Electoral Commission

3 Bunhill Row

London EC1Y 8YZ

020 7271 [REDACTED]

electoralcommission.org.uk

yourvotematters.co.uk

[Twitter](#) | [Facebook](#) | [Blog](#)

From: [REDACTED]
Sent: 03 April 2017 09:24
To: PEF Inbox
Subject: FW: New contact form submission

From: [REDACTED]
Sent: 03 April 2017 09:05
To: info_inbox
Subject: New contact form submission

- Your name: [REDACTED]
- Your email: [REDACTED]
- Your telephone number: [REDACTED]
- Your region/country: Scotland
- I am a...: a member of the public
- Comment/enquiry type: electoral fraud

- Comments: In an interview with the Guardian today Aaron Banks has admitted that "we spent £12-14m on the [Brexit] campaign", having put £7m of his own money in. <https://www.theguardian.com/politics/2017/apr/02/arron-banks-interview-brexit-ukip-far-right-trump-putin-russia> Can you confirm what the spending limits for Brexit were and whether or not this constitutes electoral fraud, please?
- Eich Enw:
- Eich e-bost:
- Eich rhif ffôn:
- Eich rhanbarth/gwlad:
- Rwyf yn...:
- Math o sylw/ymholiad:
- Sylwadau:

From: [REDACTED]
Sent: 03 April 2017 09:30
To: PEF Inbox
Subject: FW: New contact form submission

From: [REDACTED]
Sent: 02 April 2017 18:53
To: info_inbox
Subject: New contact form submission

- Your name: [REDACTED]
- Your email: [REDACTED]
- Your telephone number: [REDACTED]
- Your region/country: London
- I am a...: a member of a community group
- Comment/enquiry type: candidate/party spending/funding

- Comments: Dear Electoral Commission, Have you completed your analysis of spending by major campaigns during the EU referendum, 2016? If so, can you please provide me a list of URLs to all resources relating to Vote Leave and Leave.EU, including any other groups they may have funded? If not, can you please confirm when this review will be completed? I am greatly concerned by Arron Banks' interview in the Guardian today wherein he admits to having spent between £12-14 million on the referendum campaign. If he refers to Leave.EU, the campaign he was running, then his referendum period limit should have been £700,000. For him to have spent the money he claims, outside of the referendum period, would have meant spending well over £1million per month in the year running up to the referendum. Having monitored their activity closely over that time, I do not see that this is likely and worry that they have spent considerable amounts over their limit during the referendum period. Arron Banks regularly displays disregard for electoral propriety - in the Guardian article today he refers to the referendum as 'war' and shows disregard for your organisation when he says, "I don't give a monkey's what the Electoral Commission says." In another post-referendum interview in the Spectator, Banks admits misrepresenting the opinions of experts and again says he is unapologetic, again saying he was 'playing to win' and indicating that rules and regulations hold no meaning for him and that he was happy to break rules and common decency in order to cheat the result he wanted. The likelihood of this man having spent way more than legally allowed during the referendum period seems extremely high. Please

provide details of your review of this. Regards, [REDACTED] Link to Guardian interview: <https://www.theguardian.com/politics/2017/apr/02/arron-banks-interview-brexit-ukip-far-right-trump-putin-russia> Link to Spectator interview: www.newstatesman.com/politics/uk/2016/10/arron-banks-man-who-bought-brexit

- Eich Enw:
- Eich e-bost:
- Eich rhif ffôn:
- Eich rhanbarth/gwlad:
- Rwyf yn...:
- Math o sylw/ymholiad:
- Sylwadau:

[REDACTED]

From: [REDACTED]
Sent: 03 April 2017 09:33
To: PEF Inbox
Subject: FW: New contact form submission

From: [REDACTED]
Sent: 02 April 2017 18:14
To: info_inbox
Subject: New contact form submission

- Your name: [REDACTED]
- Your email: [REDACTED]
- Your telephone number: [REDACTED]
- Your region/country: North West England
- I am a...: a member of the public
- Comment/enquiry type: candidate/party spending/funding

Sir/Madam, What is the electoral commission's position on the use of personal internet data and targeted social media messaging in the recent EU referendum? I ask as I am incredibly uncomfortable with the notion that complex data about me, my actions, and my preferences, may have been deliberately gathered and used to inform targeted political messaging and propaganda. My concerns have been raised by the following articles, and many others like it, which all point to the dark and worrying use of Artificial Intelligence and Big Data. Not to mention the questionable in-kind support from companies such as Cambridge Analytica given to the Vote Leave campaign: <https://www.theguardian.com/politics/2017/mar/04/cambridge-analytica-democracy-digital-age>
<https://www.theguardian.com/politics/2017/apr/02/arron-banks-interview-brexit-ukip-far-right-trump-putin-russia> I am now watching this story very closely and am becoming increasingly outraged by the possibility that the referendum was hijacked by a deliberate and targeted campaign that played with the truth and preyed on emotional triggers gleaned by data insights. The ethics of this issue are deeply worrying, it's legality, questionable, and the implications are undoubtedly epic. My questions then are: Are the online marketing activities and messages of the campaign logged anywhere? If so, can I see them? How is this kind of online marketing activity funded and regulated? What online data is accessible to political parties? And, if there are questions about the legality of this issue, why is the decision to exit the EU still being upheld? Yours sincerely, [REDACTED]

- Comments:

- Eich Enw:
- Eich e-bost:
- Eich rhif ffôn:
- Eich rhanbarth/gwlad:
- Rwyf yn...:
- Math o sylw/ymholiad:
- Sylwadau:

Tories rake in £25 million in donations ahead of election - more than two and a half times as much as Labour – Mirror

The Mirror also reports the publication, focusing on the fact the Conservatives received more than other parties and UKIP's donations were down to £156,455 this quarter, compared to the period before the 2015 general election when Arron Banks donated £1 million.

Tories rake in £25 million in donations ahead of election - more than two and a half times as much as Labour – Mirror

The Mirror also reports the publication, focusing on the fact the Conservatives received more than other parties and UKIP's donations were down to £156,455 this quarter, compared to the period before the 2015 general election when Arron Banks donated £1 million.

Leave campaign funder Arron Banks to testify on 'Russia ties' to Brexit and Donald Trump – The Times [paywall]

The Times reports that Aaron Banks, major EU Referendum Leave campaign funder and former UKIP donor, expects to be called to give evidence before the US Senate regarding allegations of Russian links to Donald Trump's presidential election campaign. The Senate Judiciary Committee has already asked Banks to provide information and he now says he has received a "tip-off" that a subpoena is on its way. Banks has denied allegations that he was involved in Russian interference in the EU referendum, and Nigel Farage has recently denied that the FBI have designated him a "person of interest" in their investigation into the Trump campaign's dealings with Russia.

[Nigel Farage's Brexit campaign to be transformed into £60m Hollywood TV series \(Web\)](#) -

The Independent

Nigel Farage and Arron Banks, one of the co-founders of the Leave.EU campaign, are reportedly all set to sign a £60 million deal with a major Hollywood studio for a TV series next month. The film will be told from the perspective of US pollster Gerry Gunster, who advised the Leave.EU campaign, and will trace Mr Farage and Mr Banks role in Britain's departure from the European bloc. Mr Farage and Mr Banks are expected to be executive producers of the film.

A source told the [Daily Telegraph](#) Mr Gunster will be portrayed as a "respected US expert being employed to control these British lunatics in the referendum". "It naturally descends into farce - but they win against all odds - he is then horrified that the British lunatics are sent to help a US reality TV star fight for the presidency," they continued. "The farce continues and - guess what - they win and suddenly they are catapulted into the alternative White House to change the world, what could possibly go wrong!"

The six-part series, which will start filming next year, will be based on Mr Banks' memoir of the referendum campaign *The Bad Boys of Brexit* which somewhat unexpectedly became a best-seller.

Ukip wars: Arron Banks asks for his money back and submits invoice to Ukip for £200,000

– Telegraph

Arron Banks is demanding that Ukip pays him £200,000 for call centre and other services he provided for free, after the party had “effectively suspended him”. Ukip confirmed that Mr Banks had asked for some of his donations to be paid back but insisted that he had not had his membership suspended.

[REDACTED]

From:

Sent:

[REDACTED]
24 April 2017 18:15

To:

Subject:

[REDACTED]
RE: Joint enforcement/legal meeting this wednesday

[REDACTED] and all,

[REDACTED]

For this week's meeting, I for one would be interested to hear about the Leave.EU case. Is anyone involved yet from legal? All I know is what I've heard in the media, but Arron Banks is quoted as saying that he won't cooperate with us anymore and will see us in court, so one question would be whether enforcement expect to be serving document disclosure notices and, if so, whether we should be gearing up for high court enforcement.

[REDACTED]

Briefing for meeting with [REDACTED]

Details: Tuesday 12 September, 15.00
[REDACTED]

EC attendance: Bob Posner
Louise Edwards

Contact: [REDACTED]

Contents

A. Russia / Arron Banks / [REDACTED] / Leave.EU funding page 3

A. Alleged links between leave campaign and Russia

[REDACTED] has shared reporting by the journalist [REDACTED] in the Observer that alleges unspecified "links" between Arron Banks, [REDACTED] and Leave.EU on one side and Cambridge Analytica/AggregateIQ, [REDACTED] s campaign, right-wing organisations such as Breitbart and the billionaire [REDACTED] and Russian individuals and companies on the other.

[REDACTED] has been contacted by two journalists/campaigners who have made similar allegations about Arron Banks, and Leave.EU's communications director, [REDACTED] having connections with Russian businessmen and organisations.

From Times article (30 July 2017):

<https://www.thetimes.co.uk/article/leave-campaign-funder-arron-banks-to-testify-on-russia-ties-to-brexit-and-donald-trump-9dmsbqp3v>

The prominent "leave" campaigner and millionaire businessman Arron Banks expects to be called to Washington to give evidence before the Senate into alleged ties between the Kremlin, Brexit and Donald Trump's presidential campaign.

The business tycoon has already been asked to supply information to the Senate judiciary committee investigating alleged Russian interference in the 2016 presidential contest.

Now he claims he has been "tipped off" by the US authorities that he will be called to give evidence to the committee under threat of subpoena, which means he could be barred from America if he fails to attend.

Ukip tried to rebrand as Patriotic Alliance on ballot papers in attempt to stay relevant

By

CHIEF POLITICAL CORRESPONDENT

THE UK Independent Party considered rebranding itself as the Patriotic Alliance in a bid to become electorally relevant again after Brexit, *The Daily Telegraph* can disclose.

The Eurosceptic party lodged a formal application during the election campaign on May 11 by applying to the electoral watchdog to register the description the “Patriotic Alliance”.

The application was described as applying to Ukip for “all of Great Britain”.

It would have allowed the party to use the name on ballot papers. Parties are legally allowed to use either a party name or a description alongside a candidate’s name on ballot papers.

The application was rejected last month on the grounds that it “does not meet the requirements of a descrip-

tion”, the Electoral Commission said. The news was a surprise for former Ukip donor Arron Banks who unveiled his own plans in March to launch his own party called the Patriotic Alliance.

He said then that the “alliance aims



Former Ukip leader Paul Nuttall applied to the Electoral Commission but the bid was turned down

to not only burst the Westminster bubble, but drain the swamp too”.

He added: “We have an ambitious plan to assist independent candidates to win seats in Parliament from the most corrupt and negligent MPs.”

Mr Banks told *The Telegraph* this

weekend that he will launch his new political movement in the next few months but regarded the Patriotic Alliance as only a working title. He said that Ukip’s actions had been “desperate” and said Ukip needed “a change of attitude and a change of policies”.

A Ukip spokesman said that the application had been made by Paul Nuttall, the former leader who quit after the party’s dismal showing in the poll.

He added: “At the time Paul was talking about rebrands. There was no point having an option on the table if someone else had taken the name.

“The name was registered as an insurance policy. Is it likely to change its name to that? No. The chances are slim to nil.”

Ukip said on Friday said that 11 candidates will stand for Ukip leader. The winner will be announced at the party’s annual conference next month.

Extension of voter registration deadline and possible legal challenge - *ITV news* (no link)
ITV News evening programme reports on the government's decision to extend the registration deadline for voters to take part in the EU referendum. In the programme it is noted that Leave campaigners have heavily criticised the decision and in doing so have been accused of being 'paranoid'. In an interview **Tim Farron MP**, Liberal Democrat party leader, says that the majority of those registering to vote in the last few days have been under 35 and it is likely that most of the people who missed out on registration due to the technical issue were under 35 and Vote Leave might consider them more likely to vote 'Remain'. In response **Bernard Jenkins MP** welcomed the government's efforts to encourage voter registration but suggests that the problem has been created by the mis-leading messages from the UK Government and Electoral Commission to voters that have led to multiple duplications on the register. Mr Jenkins suggests that over 70% are people re-registering but confirmed that he would not take part in a legal challenge to the result.

These reports come after a statement was issued by Arron Banks, the founder of Leave.EU, confirming that he will seek a judicial review of the legislation that extends the deadline to register to vote.

The possibility of a legal challenge to the result of the referendum has also been reported by [BBC Online](#), [City AM](#), [Financial Times](#) (no link), [Herald Scotland](#) and [The Guardian](#).

[REDACTED]

From: [REDACTED]
Sent: 03 April 2017 17:42
To: Louise Edwards; [REDACTED]
Cc: [REDACTED]
Subject: The Patriotic Alliance
Attachments: ThePatrioticAlliancePartyConstitution.pdf

Hi All,

This is an FYI for this application.

We have had an application for the above party. I am letting everyone know, as this is the name of the organisation that Arron Banks has been interested in setting up.

From my initial look at the application and their constitution, it doesn't appear that this party is connected to Arron Banks and that they are likely registering to prevent him from doing so at a later date.

I have found what appear to be social media profiles for some of the officers which appear to be anti-far right.

I think it likely that this party will get some attention when their name is published on the current applications page of our website. There are some registration issues which we will be contacting them about as part of our usual process before that happens.

Cheers,

[REDACTED]
Registration Adviser
The Electoral Commission
3 Bunhill Row
London, EC1Y 8YZ
Tel: 020 7271 [REDACTED]
Fax: 020 7271 [REDACTED]
www.electoralcommission.org.uk
www.aboutmyvote.co.uk

Follow us on [Twitter](#)
Make sure you are [registered to vote](#)

Putting Voters First

 Please consider the environment before printing this email