

REDUCE VAT in SPORT

Witney Radio Campaign message for the REDUCE VAT in SPORT Party – April 2015

Hi there – I'm Vivien Saunders from the Fair Tax in Sport Campaign. I'm standing in the election in Witney for REDUCE VAT in SPORT because I want to tell David Cameron and other politicians that they must do more for British sport.

There is no Olympic legacy. There are fewer people playing sport now than before the Olympics.

We need the costs of playing sport to be fair for all. But some of you play sport at centres that have to add VAT of 20% to their charges and at others there is no VAT. Many of you have to pay VAT on the hire charges of pitches for 5 a-side football, courts for basketball or netball and so on. That's for adults and children.

You don't pay VAT at most local authorities or little volunteer clubs with modest income and that's fine. But there are many huge, very wealthy member-owned sports clubs where they escape VAT.

The Chancellor wrote to the Home Secretary and quoted three huge sports clubs where he thought it was right that they should be VAT exempt – the MCC at Lords, Queen's the huge racquet club in London, and Sunningdale – the poshest golf club in England. Correct words in their rules, being steeped in tradition and they escape VAT. But why should their wealthy members (and visitors) use the gym, play snooker, play squash, tennis or golf VAT free? And then the general public gets caught for VAT at 20% hiring a 5 a-side football pitch or playing at a modest 'commercial' sports centre. And don't imagine members' clubs aren't commercial. One golf club has taken £16 million in visitors' fees from you - the general public, escapes VAT and somehow never paid a penny in tax!



It is the only industry in the UK with this unfairness – some consumers paying no VAT and others 20%. And it isn't fair on the people who build sports facilities and simply cannot compete. Sports centres that are VAT exempt and those that charge VAT often look identical. It's as mad as making the left hand tunnel of the Dartford crossing VAT exempt, costing £2.50, and the right hand one having to add VAT to charge £3. You can't see the difference.

It isn't fair and it isn't right. At least if you get caught for VAT in sport let's make it 5%. Europe encourages low VAT for sport. We've been campaigning for reducing VAT on British sport for 21 years. But Governments always plead poverty. And then miraculously the Chancellor showed complete disdain for British sport in 2014 when he reduced the VAT on BINGO. Yes BINGO. It is ridiculous. Is it really better for the health of the nation and education of children to have a lower rate of VAT on BINGO than sport?

Yes of course David Cameron will still be your MP after the election. But if you do feel you have a spare vote on May 7th, please vote for me Vivien Saunders. Let's give David Cameron the message, that, whether Prime Minister or in Opposition, we must have a 5% VAT rate for British sport to help get the nation playing sport again.

Vivien Saunders

REDUCE VAT in SPORT

REDUCE VAT in SPORT – MANIFESTO GENERAL ELECTION 2015

I'm Vivien Saunders from the Reduce VAT in Sport party. VAT matters.

Our manifesto is threefold:

We want to see fairness in the VAT treatment of playing sport. Some people pay no VAT. Others have to pay VAT at 20%. We say this is unlawful distortion and breaks European VAT rules. Europe encourages countries to have a Reduced Rate of VAT for sport. In the UK that would be 5%. UK Governments always say they cannot afford Reduced VAT for sport but in 2014 the Conservatives reduced VAT on BINGO! So there is money. The UK must adopt VAT of 5% for playing sport to eliminate distortion.

If you rent or hire land in the UK it is generally exempt of VAT. But if you hire sports land – pitches for football, courts for netball you pay VAT at 20%. It all changed under Labour 15 years ago. We want the rules on hiring sports pitches and courts restored to make hiring these courts VAT exempt. We want to help clubs, teams and children's sport.



Clubs like Eynsham Cricket Club in Oxfordshire have a huge burden of paying VAT at 20% on the costs of building a new pavilion. Building sports facilities used to be zero rated until 25 years ago. We want the return of zero rate VAT for the building of sports facilities.

Away from VAT we campaign for a major overhaul of the business rates system. It is an outdated, unfair tax. We say it should be based on turnover not land and buildings. 85% of the UK is farmland. Farmers don't pay business rates. Nor do charities. Internet and on-line businesses often function with few premises, hence low rates. Sport and leisure facilities are often hit hard – with plenty of land but little turnover. All small and medium businesses need a change in crippling business rates.

Footnote: Europe also enables countries to adopt Reduced VAT for watching sport. Again in the UK that would be 5%. Our initial concern is with playing sport

Vivien Saunders