

STEVE BAKER MP



HOUSE OF COMMONS

LONDON SW1A 0AA

18th August 2023

Dear Gemma,

Thank you for your letter inviting me to meet members of “Steve Baker Watch”. I was reminded of the last time you asked for a meeting, only to cancel it at short notice and instead use it as an opportunity to stage a protest outside my constituency office.

First, I would hope this request has been prompted by the new Chair of the UN's Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC), Jim Skea, stating last month that “the world won't end if it warms by more than 1.5 degrees”¹. When I made this argument, I was called a ‘denier’ by your organisation. **Please confirm in writing whether you agree with Mr Skea or if you believe the head of the UN IPCC is a climate denier.**

I have chosen to ignore the defamatory stunts that you have pulled around town. Unfortunately, it is clear “Steve Baker Watch” has failed to engage with my actual views on this issue. I have made no effort to conceal my opinion that we must tackle a changing climate in a proportionate and pragmatic way that people can actually afford; anyone can read my views here:

<https://conservativehome.com/2022/02/23/steve-baker-wanted-a-politically-and-economically-viable-path-to-low-emissions/>

Second, we can address climate change without hysteria or inciting needless anxiety in young people – tactics that Extinction Rebellion and Just Stop Oil enthusiastically deploy. Leading members of your group are publicly endorsing Just Stop Oil and Extinction Rebellion and encouraging their extreme tactics. **Please clarify in writing whether “Steve Baker Watch” aligns itself with the beliefs of those groups.** I hope that we never see these tactics deployed in Wycombe.

Finally, some very serious matters related to “Steve Baker Watch” have been brought to my attention. It is important to all Wycombe residents and for our local democracy that your group is in full compliance with the law and all relevant regulations. Therefore please:

- **set out your policy on holding data and the date on which you registered with the ICO. Anyone who holds data on individuals as part of an organisation is required to hold that data in ways directed by the ICO;**
- **confirm how you accessed the names and contact details of Conservative Association members when you wrote to them on 12 August 2022, as well as how you have retained that data in line with data protection regulations;**

¹ <https://www.dw.com/en/climate-change-do-not-overstate-15-degrees-threat/a-66386523?maca=en-rss-en-all-1573-rdf>



- **provide all of us in Wycombe with assurances that all Steve Baker Watch income has been declared to the tax authorities. It has been brought to my attention that “Steve Baker Watch” is not registered as a limited company; HMRC require all donations that go into a personal bank account to be declared in the official way;**
- **confirm how you have verified your donors’ identities to ensure that your political campaign group is not being funded by foreign states, and confirm that you have followed all steps set out by the Electoral Commission when receiving donations. I have been made aware that your group has received a number of large anonymous donations. The Electoral Commission states that groups such as yours must declare donations over a certain amount, or aggregates over this amount, and must ensure those donations came from legal sources especially if they were made anonymously.² Not doing so would, of course, be illegal under electoral law.**

As you may understand, given how serious these issues are, I cannot engage further with your group in the circumstances. Everyone in Wycombe needs to be assured that “Steve Baker Watch” is not breaking the law. No doubt you would not like to find yourself in the position of having inadvertently committed offences, offences which the public would rightly want to see redressed.

I have copied this letter to the Bucks Free Press.

Yours sincerely,

Steve Baker

² <https://www.electoralcommission.org.uk/who-we-are-and-what-we-do/financial-reporting/donations-and-loans>