



10 DOWNING STREET
LONDON SW1A 2AA

From the Private Secretary

8 February 2005

Dear Mr Lamb

Thank you for your letter of 5 January seeking information about Chequers.

In as far as your letter makes requests for information (as opposed to opinion) they are being handled under the Freedom of Information Act 2000. I shall deal with each of your requests in turn.

Paragraph 1 – a list of those who have attended official dinners at Chequers between May 1997 and 8 June 2001.

A list is attached.

Paragraph 2 – a breakdown of the list already provided for the period 8 June 2001 and April 2003.

It is not appropriate to release the information, which you have already been provided, in the format you have requested because this could demonstrate a regular pattern of appointments by the Prime Minister and would therefore give rise to security risks. The release of this information in this format therefore is being withheld under exemption 38 (1) (b) of the Freedom of Information Act. The text of this exemption is:

38. – (1) Information is exempt information if its disclosure under this Act would, or would be likely to –

(b) endanger the safety of any individual.

This exemption would also apply to your request for information on when individuals attended.

Paragraph 3 – attendance by Alain Dominique Perrain.

The Prime Minister meets a wide range of people and organisations from all walks of life. The Prime Minister uses Chequers in a variety of ways, both official and private, consistent with the wishes of the donor, Lord Lee, and the Chequers Estate Acts 1917 and 1958.

Paragraphs 4 and 5 - information about Labour party donors.

Information on Labour Party donors is not held by Government. Information about donations made to political parties is the responsibility of the Electoral Commission.

When Ministers agree to meetings with outside interest groups or individuals, the Civil Service does not check whether such individuals have made donations to a political party. Meetings with Ministers on Government business are conducted in accordance with the requirements of the Ministerial Code and the Civil Service Code.

Paragraph 6 – Parliamentary Ombudsman’s ruling and its implications for similar requests in the future.

Section 12 of the Freedom of Information Act makes provision for public authorities to refuse requests for information where the cost of dealing with them would exceed the appropriate limit. The appropriate limit for central Government is set at £600, which represents the estimated cost of one person spending 3½ working days in determining whether the Department holds the information, and locating, retrieving and extracting the information.

There has been no change to the way in which the information is held and we estimate that it will take us more than 3½ days to locate, retrieve and extract the additional information you have asked for.

Paragraph 7 – public register.

This is not a request for information and is not therefore dealt with in this reply.

Paragraph 8 – information on costs to the public purse for running Chequers since 1997 and the entertainment budget for Chequers since 1997.

Information on:

- the annual grant from public funds which covers maintenance and to cover civilian staff employed at Chequers in accordance with the Act for the period 1997 – 2002/2003
- and entertainment costs for Chequers for the period 1997 – 2002/2003

are already publicly available (*official reports 13 February 2003 column 952w and 11 October 2004 columns 53-54w respectively*). As this information is reasonably accessible, it is exempt under section 21 of the Act.

The annual grant for the financial year 2003/2004 was £1,628,072.

The grant includes a contribution to the roof fund. Chequers is a Grade 1 listed building which the Trustees have a legal obligation to maintain in good repair. In addition to the annual £50,000 contribution to the roof fund therefore a special one-off payment of £400,000 was provided last year to fund urgent repairs and to prevent further damage to the historic fabric of the building and antique furniture through roof leaks.

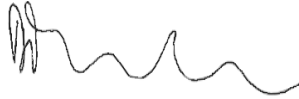
The grant for 2003/2004 also includes funding for a pensions bulk transfer payment. The civilian staff that work at Chequers transferred into the Principal Civil Service Pension Scheme (PCSPS) in 2003. Previously members of staff were in a by-analogy scheme with identical benefits to the PCSPS scheme. Under the arrangements set out in PES (1998) 34, the Treasury agreed to make available grants, classified as annually managed expenditure, for departments which moved unfunded pension schemes for their sponsor organisations to another unfunded pension scheme such as the PCSPS. The increase in grant for the department and sponsored body is matched by a receipt taken in by the receiving scheme. Such grants therefore do not increase liabilities but reflect their transfer within the public sector. In this case the Chequers Trust was given funding for a one-off bulk transfer payment of £467,985 to the Cabinet Office PCSPS account. This payment was required to go through the Chequers Trust accounts for accounting purposes, in order for it to prove that it had discharged this liability.

The remainder of the contribution from the grant in 2003/2004 went towards on-going repairs and maintenance and to cover civilian staff employed there. Defined projects the grant was spent on in 2003/4 included: drainage works and renewal of water supply pipework; urgent repairs to outbuildings used by Estate

staff; wiring and relighting; and modernisation of staff accommodation – last upgraded over 30 years ago.

The entertainment costs for the financial year 2003/2004 was £7767.

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'D Thornton', with a stylized, wavy flourish extending to the right.

DANIEL THORNTON

Mr Norman Lamb

Chequers: Official dinner engagements May 1997 to June 2001

Professor M.W. Adler
Miss Karine Alder
Mr Bertie Ahern TD
Mr Waheed Alli
Dr Eric Anderson
Mr Clive Anderson
Mrs Anderson
Mrs Anderson
His Grace the Lord Archbishop of Canterbury
Ms Hilary Armstrong MP
Miss Jackie Ashley
Ms Cathy Ashton
Professor Peter Atkins
Ms Jane Atkinson
Lady Attenborough
Lord Attenborough, CBE
Mr Reinaldo Avila da Silva
Mr Robert Ayling
Mrs Ayling
Mrs Barber
Ms Janice Barber
Professor Michael Barber
Mr Phillip Barton
Mrs Barton
Mr Leo Beckett
The Rt Hon Margeret Beckett MP
Mrs Beloff
The Hon Michael Beloff, QC
Mr Rodney Bickerstaff
Mrs Bickerstaff
Mr Dickie Bird MBE
Mr John Birt
Mrs Birt
Ms Cilla Black OBE
Lady Sylvia Blank
Sir Victor Blank

The Rt Hon David Blunkett MP
Bono
Mrs Gale Booth
Ms Lyndsey Booth
The Rt Hon The Speaker (Betty Boothroyd MP)
Mr David Bowie
Mrs Bowie
Admiral Sir Michael Boyce KCB OBE
Miss Rosie Boycott
Lady Bragg
Lord Bragg
Richard Branson
Mrs Branson
Ms Roz Brown
The Rt Hon Gordon Brown MP
Sir John Browne
Ms Deborah Bull
Mr John Burton
Mrs Burton
The Rt Hon Stephen Byers MP
Lady Callaghan
The Rt Hon Lord Callaghan of Cardiff KG
Mr Alastair Campbell
Professor David Cannadine
Mrs Carey
Mr Julian Chichester
Professor Linda Colley
Ms Joan Collins
Mrs Cook
The Rt Hon Robin Cook MP
Ms Jan Cookson
Mr Paul Corrigan
Mr Barry Cox
Jill Cragie
Mr Richard Curtis CBE
Ms Sinead Cusack
Ms Jan Dalley
Mrs Darling

The Rt Hon Alistair Darling MP

Mr Howard Davies

Mrs Davies

Mrs Val Davies

The Baroness Dean of Thornton-le-Fylde

Dame Judi Dench DBE

The Rt Hon John Denham MP

Ms Marion Dewer

The Rt Hon Donald Dewer, MP

Ms Ruth Dixon

Mrs Dobson

The Rt Hon Frank Dobson MP

Mr Greg Dyke

Mr Robert Earl

Mrs Earl

Mrs Lin Edmonds

Mr John Edmonds

Lady Falconer

Lord Falconer QC

Mr John Farrell

Mrs Farrell

Mr Dick Ferguson

Mrs Ferguson

Mrs Field

Mr Richard Field QC

Rt Hon Michael Foot

Ms Anna Ford

Ms Dawn French

Mr Matthew Freud

Ms Emma Freud

Mr Stephen Fry

Mr David Furnish

Senora Galli

Miss Kate Garvey

Sir Bob Geldof

Mr Eddie George

Mrs George

Mr Richard Gist

Mr Phillip Gould
Lady Jayne Grabiner
Lord Grabiner QC
Professor Susan Greenfield
Mr Bruce Grocott MP
Mrs Grocott
Prince Girolamo Strozzi Guicciardini
Principessa Strozzi Guicciardini
Signorina Irina Strozzi Guicciardini
Signorina Natalia Strozzi Guicciardini
Mr John Guinery
General Sir Charles Guthrie GCB LVO OBE ADC Gen
Lady Guthrie
Lady Hamlyn
The Lord Hamlyn CBE
Mrs Ruth Harding
Mr Robert Harris
Mr Gary Hart
Mr Maurice Hatter
Mrs Hatter
Mr Alan Hawarth
Mr Michael Hay
Mrs Hay
Lady Healey
Rt Hon Lord Healey
Mr Lenny Henry
Ms Ali Hewson
Mr Jeremy Heywood
Mrs Heywood
Mr John Higham
Mrs Higham
Ms Fiona Hillary
Mr Les Hinton
Mrs Hinton
Mr John Holmes
Mrs Holmes
The Rt Hon Geoff Hoon MP
Gill Hornby

Mr Charles Howard
Ms Sue Howes
Mr Mick Hucknall
Mr Hugh Hudson
Mr Robin Hurlstone
Mr Will Hutton
Mr Jeremy Irons
Lady Irvine
The Rt Hon Lord Irvine of Lairg
Mr Dorian Jabri
Lady Jay
Sir Michael Jay
Rt Hon Baroness Jay of Paddington
Lady Jenkins
The Rt Hon Lord Jenkins of Hillhead
Mr Elton John, CBE
Mr Nick Jones
Mr Michael Kaplan
Mrs Kaplan
Ms Katie Kay
Mr Kevin Keegan
Mrs Jean Keegan
Mr Peter Kellner
Mrs Kinnock
The Rt Hon Neil Kinnock
HE Mr Philip Lader
Mrs Linda Lader
Ms Celia Larkin
Mr Michael Le Poer Trench
Dr Jeremy Lee Potter
Mrs Lee Potter
Mr Ian Leslie
Lady Levy
The Lord Levy
Mr Luke Lucas
Mr John Lyons
Mrs Kitty Lyons
Ms Sarah Macaulay

Ms Lindsay Mackie
Sir Cameron Mackintosh
The Rt Hon Peter Mandelson MP
Jeanne Marine
Mr Andrew Marr
Mr Simon Mayo
Mrs Mayo
Mrs McCartney
Rt Hon Ian McCartney MP
Ms Margaret McDonagh
Ms Siobhan McDonagh MP
Mr Keith McDowell CBE
Mr Alan McGee
Mrs McGee
The Right Honourable Michael Meacher MP
Mrs Lucianne Meacher
The Rt Hon Alun Michael MP
Mrs Michael
Mr David Miliband
Mrs Louise Miliband
Ms Fiona Millar
Ms Helen Mirren
Ms Ruth Miskin
Mr John Monks
Mrs Monks
Mr David Montgomery
The Hon Mrs Montgomery
Ms Petrina Montrose
Mrs Mary Moore
Sally Morgan
Mr Bill Morris
Sir John Mortimer CBE QC
Lady Mortimer
Professor Andrew Motion
Rt Hon Mo Mowlam
Ms Elisabeth Murdoch
Mr James Naughtie
Mr Jon Norton

Trevor Nunn, CBE
Lady Otton
The Rt Hon Sir Phillip Otton
Mr Charlie Parsons
Mrs Karin Pena
Ms Vanessa Perry
Mr Trevor Philipson QC
Dr David Potter CBE
Mrs Elaine Potter
Mr Jonathan Powell
Sir Charles Powell KCMG
Mrs Prescott
The Rt Hon John Prescott, MP
Mr John Preston
Mrs Preston
Lady Puttnam
Lord Puttnam CBE
Ms Maggie Rae
Lady Rattle
Sir Simon Rattle
The Lord Rayne
Ms Gail Rebuck
Mrs Alexis Redmond
Professor Phil Redmond
Mr John Reid
The Rt Hon Dr John Reid MP
Mr Wladimir Reine
Mr Nick Ribbeck
Mrs Ribbeck
Mr Gerry Robinson
Mrs Robinson
Mr Gordon Roddick
Mrs Anita Roddick, OBE
Mr Roger
Lady Rogers
The Lord Rogers of Riverside
Lady Rothschild
The Lord Rothschild

Mr Alan Rusbridger
Mr Salman Rushdie
Mrs Rushdie
Lady Sainsbury
Lord Sainsbury of Turville
Sir Jimmy Saville OBE
Mr John Sawers
Mrs Sawers
Ms Prunella Scales CBE
Mr David Scott
The Rt Hon Clare Short MP
Mrs Jane Sim
Mr Andrew Smith MP
Mrs Val Smith
Ms Delia Smith
Sarah Smith
Baroness Smith
The Rt Hon Chris Smith MP
Mr Clive Soley MP
Lady Solti
Dr Irwin Stelzer
Mrs Stelzer
Lady Stevens
Sir John Stevens
Lady Stevenson
Lord Stevenson of Coddenham CBE
Mr Jackie Stewart
Mrs Stewart
Sting
Mrs Straw
The Rt Hon Jack Straw MP
Ms Imogen Stubbs
Ms Trudie Styler
Mr Alan Sugar
Mrs Sugar
Mr Chris Tavener
Mr David Taylor
The Rt Hon Ann Taylor MP

Dr James Thompson
Ms Emma Thompson
Ms Polly Toynbee
Miss Ellie Updale
Sir Iain Vallance
Lady Vallance
General Sir Mike Walker GCB CMG CBE ADC Gen
Lady Walker
Mr David Walker
Mrs Eileen Ware
Mr Timothy West CBE
Mr Michael Williams
Mr R J Willis
Lady Wilson of Rievaulx
Sir Richard Wilson KCB
Lady Wilson
The Hon Giles Wilson
Mr Michael Winner
Mr Greg Wise
Thai Ping Wong
Mr Chris Woodhead
Mr Michael Wynn Jones
Ms Kirsty Young

