

Roger's reflections on the aftermath of the referendum

Speaking in his Hall Green constituency after the result of the referendum had been declared, Roger said:

“The result has shocked many people – some are appalled while others are happy. I always said that it was going to divide families, friendships, political parties and all other groups within our society, and this is the way it turned out.

“The referendum, which was proposed by David Cameron to try to resolve political problems in the Conservative Party, was always going to unleash emotions and pent-up frustrations, particularly in those communities which had hardly benefitted from globalised neoliberal policies and had suffered from austerity.

“On balance, I believed it would be better for the future of this country if the UK left the EU. Because I was taking a view which was contrary to the official Labour Party's position I did not do any campaigning in my constituency, and nor did I circulate any leaflets. I was part of the ‘Labour Leave’ campaign made up entirely of Labour Party members and supporters, and I did not share any platforms where I spoke with representatives of any other political party.



“Of the 10 Parliamentary constituencies in Birmingham, six voted to leave and four voted to remain. So where does the result leave us? In the short term nothing changes and our current relationship continues. The new Prime Minister, Theresa May, will have to decide if, and when, to trigger Article 50, which allows for a minimum of two years for negotiations between the EU and the UK to take place on how the UK exits the EU.



“There will be opportunities for Parliament to lay down conditions on what the Government's position is in the negotiations with the EU, and I would not oppose the negotiated package being put to the people again in another referendum. There is a precedent for this, as second referendums were held in Denmark and Ireland when both countries originally rejected EU Treaties in referendums. In view of the clear majority in my constituency voting to remain, I will not be voting to trigger Article 50.

“The referendum has been highly divisive. I deplore the racist attacks which have occurred on innocent people, and want the perpetrators pursued and brought before the Courts.

“The people have, however, made their decision and it is now incumbent on Parliament and the Government to negotiate a deal with the EU and to try and heal the wounds which have been opened in the country. We urgently need to ensure that prosperity is shared by all, and does not just enrich further a few already very wealthy people.”

The turmoil in the Labour party

Roger met with some community activists in his constituency who wanted to talk about what was happening in the Labour Party and Jeremy Corbyn’s leadership. After the meeting, he commented:

“Jeremy Corbyn is a kindly and decent person who has principled views which he has upheld during his long service as a Member of Parliament. When he was proposed as leader to succeed Ed Miliband I supported his name being on the ballot paper so that Party members had as wide a choice of candidates as possible.



“I share his views on a number of political issues including the need to reject the ‘austerity policies’ of the Tories; opposition to renewing the Trident nuclear missile system; and his long held opposition to the

European Union ‘project’ and its neoliberal policies underpinning the Eurozone. I was therefore quite happy to give him every chance to prove himself as Leader and I hoped that he would grow into the job.

“Some members of the PLP found it hard to accept his leadership – but I was not one of them and, to begin with, his style and his desire for a ‘kinder politics’ were refreshing.

“After the referendum campaign there were some MPs who had never accepted his leadership and were happy to have any excuse for censoring him. But there were also many others, including MPs who had nominated him as Leader and others who had served in his Shadow Cabinet, who felt that he had not shown himself to be an alternative Prime Minister. There was concern that he was not winning over support from crucial segments of the population which we needed to stand a chance of winning the next general election.

“The Labour Party is now in the middle of a leadership Election. When members vote again on who shall be Leader they will be making a momentous decision which, I suspect, will have lasting consequences for the future of the Party and politics in this country.”

Roger responds to publication of Chilcot report on the Iraq war

Responding to the publication of the Chilcot report on 6 July, Roger said:

“I have been calling for the Government to publish this report for some time and remain concerned about the delays involved.

“The report’s findings are damning, particularly the conclusion that Tony Blair decided to take part in the US-led invasion of Iraq before ‘peaceful options’ had been exhausted. It also found that the then Prime Minister ‘exaggerated’ the case for war, and that it was not correct that Saddam Hussein constituted an imminent threat. This amounts to a very grave

misleading of the British Parliament into an illegal, unjustified and disastrous war, with an impact on stability across the region from which people in the Middle East are still suffering today. The UK has also suffered the consequences in the form of terrorist attacks, and we are all now less safe because of this war.



“The note from Tony Blair to President Bush saying: ‘I will be with you, whatever’ is extremely serious. This suggests that Blair gave a commitment to taking the UK into war regardless of the evidence base or the legality of such a war. He also ignored the clearly expressed views of the British people, who took part in the largest ever demonstration in the UK to try to stop the Government from taking their country to war against their will.

“The leader of the Labour party said in the Commons that Parliament should take action against Tony Blair for misleading Parliament in his attempt to get it to agree to the invasion. I would support this as I believe that those responsible for this disaster, in which 179 UK troops and hundreds of thousands of Iraqi civilians lost their lives and suffered horrendous injuries, must be held accountable. We also need to learn the lessons of the past and ensure that we never engage in illegal wars again, and that the UK is a force for good rather than for instability in the world.”

Attacks on medical facilities in Syria

Roger, who chairs the All-Party Parliamentary Group on Syria, has tabled an Early Day Motion on the horrific attacks on medical facilities in Syria.

The EDM expresses concern that hospitals, schools and other essential civilian infrastructure is being deliberately targeted by attacks carried out in Syria by the Russian air force and the Assad regime. Doctors, nurses, healthcare workers, patients and civilians have been killed in huge numbers as a result of these barbaric and unjustifiable attacks. Targeting civilians in this way contravenes international law and the rules of warfare, including the Geneva Conventions.

The motion calls on the Russian government to immediately desist from targeting attacks at civilians, the wounded or at those carrying out medical or humanitarian work. It also calls on the UK Government to do all it can to support medics and humanitarian organisations operating in Syria and to protect healthcare workers and civilians. You can read the EDM [here](#).



The al-Quds hospital after it was hit by airstrikes.

Government must act now on tax dodging, says Roger

Roger strongly believes that we urgently need to tackle tax dodging to prevent wealthy corporations and

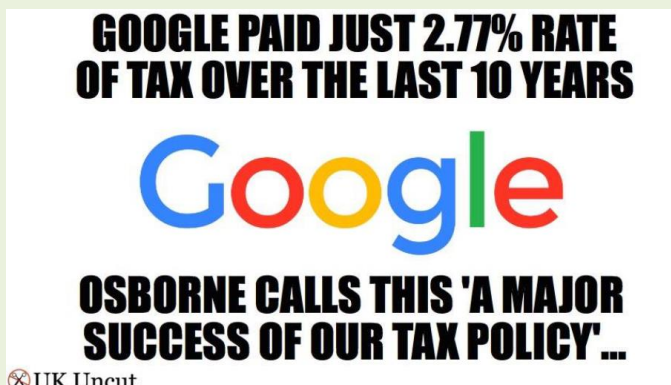
individuals from opting out of paying their fair share of tax.

It is really important to bring in a full register of beneficial ownership along with full, transparent, public country by country reporting if we are to make progress in tackling the corruption and misappropriation of funds which is facilitated by the existence of tax havens.



Roger has tabled an Early Day Motion calling for country by country reporting, which you can read [here](#). He has also previously tabled a motion on tax havens, which you can read [here](#). He recently tabled a number of Written Parliamentary Questions to the Government about action on making country-by-country tax reports public.

Said Roger: "I have been following the Panama revelations with great interest. They are shocking, although sadly not all that surprising, but I am hopeful that this will result in renewed pressure on the Government to take action on the role played by the UK territories."



The Secured Energy Bonds rip-off

Roger has backed local residents who have lost money after being ripped off by a dodgy investment scheme.

People living in Birmingham Hall Green, along with hundreds of others across the country, invested a total of £7.5 million into an investment scheme operated by Secured Energy Bonds (SEB).

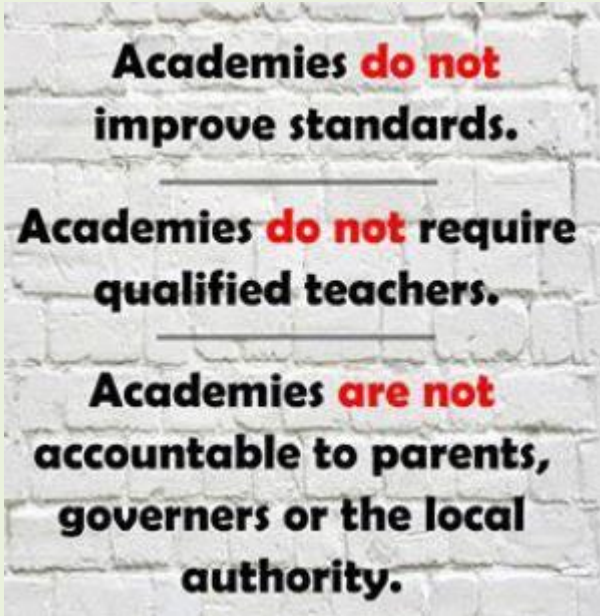
The scheme was approved by an FCA-authorized firm, but the money was never invested in renewable energy as promised. Instead, most of the money was siphoned off to the business's Australian parent company before it went into administration in November 2014, leaving investors out of pocket.

Roger has promised to speak up for local investors and called for any local people affected to come forward. He said: "I'm really concerned that local people have lost out after being ripped off by this firm. The authorities should make sure that no one is left out of pocket as a result of this business's failure to keep its promises. I am happy to speak up for local investors and want any local people affected to come forward so I take up their cases personally."

Forcing schools to become academies will not improve education, says Roger

Roger is opposed to the Government's plans to force all schools to become academies.

He commented: "I voted against the original proposals brought in by David Blunkett to allow so-called 'failing schools' to convert to academies, because I believed that this would be the 'thin end of the wedge' and would create a two-tier system in state education.



“Converting all schools to academies is not only a massive waste of tax-payers funds, but it also removes schools from the oversight of local Councils and parents. There is absolutely no evidence that converting schools to academies improves outcomes – if anything the reverse.

“I do not support this measure, but the Government are ideologically obsessed with privatisation and want to sell off as much of the public sphere as they can. They also want to destroy local education authorities and end national pay bargaining for teachers. That is their real objective, not the raising of educational standards or addressing specific problems within so-called ‘failing schools’.



“I also oppose the lack of choice implied in forcing schools to become academies even when this is opposed by teachers and parents. I will vote against these proposals.”

Horrific cuts to Birmingham’s schools budgets

The Tories’ claim that they are protecting funding for schools but this is proved false by the figures. Birmingham’s schools budget will have been cut by a horrific 14.1% in real terms by 2020 under the Tories. This will lead to poorer subject choice, larger class sizes, and worse educational outcomes.

Government must take action to stop unscrupulous owners running British businesses into the ground for their own gain, says Roger

Speaking from his office in Parliament after the collapse of BHS, Roger condemned the current regulatory framework which permits greedy billionaires to asset-strip formerly productive UK businesses to the point of collapse.



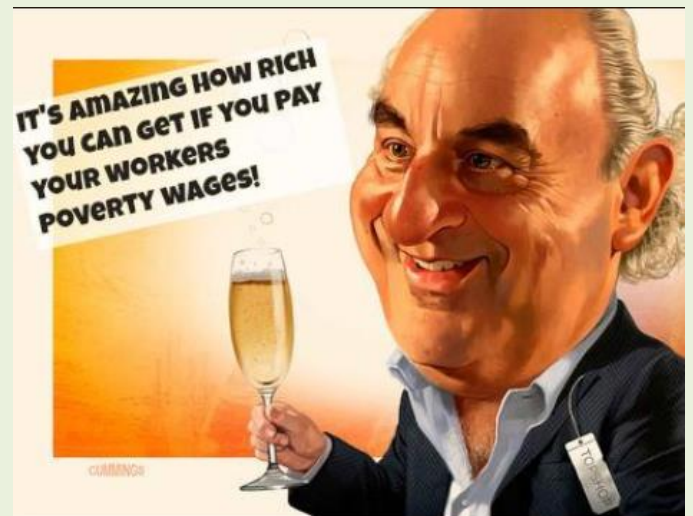


Recent figures from the Guardian revealed that former BHS owner Sir Philip Green and his family extracted an astonishing £586m from BHS over 15 years in the form of rent, interest and dividends. Over this same time period, the BHS pension fund went into a deficit of £571m from its original surplus. Said Roger: “For Green and his family to be rolling in wealth in offshore tax havens while BHS’s hardworking employees face unemployment and the loss of their pensions is utterly disgraceful. While Green orders multiple yachts, the people who really generated this wealth are being left to struggle.

“It is not acceptable for Green to extract funds of this magnitude—not so coincidentally, almost the same amount that is now missing from the pension fund—and then walk away to a life of luxury. As far as I am concerned, this is essentially an act of theft from BHS employees, and from the taxpayer, who will now have to pick up the bill in the form of unemployment benefits, as well as from other businesses which will also be financially liable through their contributions to the Pension Protection Fund.

“Green is facing calls to give up his knighthood if he does not pay back these dividends. I do not believe that this is sufficient. We should not be asking him nicely to give back these funds which he has seized from his own employees—we should be demanding it, along with stripping him of his knighthood and instigating criminal proceedings for theft, negligence and misappropriation of funds - not to mention tax avoidance.

“The Government should also seriously consider bringing in legislation to prevent similar incidents from happening again. We need rules to be put in place to prevent greedy, unscrupulous people such as Green from extracting huge amounts of money from a business then walking away when the company collapses due to lack of funds. This could include preventing dividends being paid while pension funds are in deficit, and capping the total amount that directors can be paid as a percentage of profits generated over the past ten years.



“Putting in place pay ratios between the highest and lowest paid staff in a business would also help. We also need serious action to crack down on tax avoidance and the use of tax havens, which the Government have been promising for some time but still have not delivered. What is lacking is not effective ways to stop this from happening, but the political will to implement solutions and stop the greed of the super-rich from destabilising our economy.

“Nor should Green be permitted to hide behind the sale to Dominic Chappell, a former racing driver who had twice been declared bankrupt. Despite BHS’s financial problems, Chappell paid himself a salary of more than half a million pounds, as well as diverting £3m of an £8.4m loan taken out of BHS to four directors, including himself. In addition, the week before BHS collapsed Chappell moved £1.5m out of the store into an unconnected corporate entity. On being asked to return

the money, he did so minus £50,000, which he claimed was the cost of changing currencies.”

Roger supports campaign for fair wages at Topshop

Roger is supporting cleaners working at Topshop who are campaigning for a living wage. The contract cleaners employed at Topshop stores by the contractor Britannia Services Group are paid below the living wage, forcing hard-working staff into debt and poverty. This is utterly unacceptable given the huge profits raked in by this group of stores.

Roger tabled an Early Day Motion stating that there is no excuse for profitable multi-national companies which generate huge payouts to shareholders refusing to pay decent wages. Roger entirely agrees with the actions of cleaners contracted to work at Topshop stores who are unionising, protesting and campaigning for the living wage, and is very concerned by reports that these staff are being victimised and bullied for asking for a decent wage. It is utterly disgraceful for the Arcadia Group, which owns Topshop, or its contractors to punish staff for asking for decent wages.



Philip Green – yes the same person who plundered millions from BHS - who runs Arcadia, avoided tax by registering the company in his wife's name in Monaco. The EDM calls for the Government to close tax loopholes and reclaim the approximately £285 million of tax which Arcadia has avoided, and condemns Philip Green's decision to hoard wealth overseas rather than pay his employees and pay his taxes. It also calls on the

Government to recognise that the new minimum wage of £7.20 is not a living wage, and to survive without being in poverty workers need £8.25 an hour or £9.40 in London.

All work should pay enough to live on. Roger supports a boycott of Topshop and any other companies which refuse to pay their workers a living wage and pay their fair share of tax.



You can read the EDM [here](#).

The Hillsborough Judgment

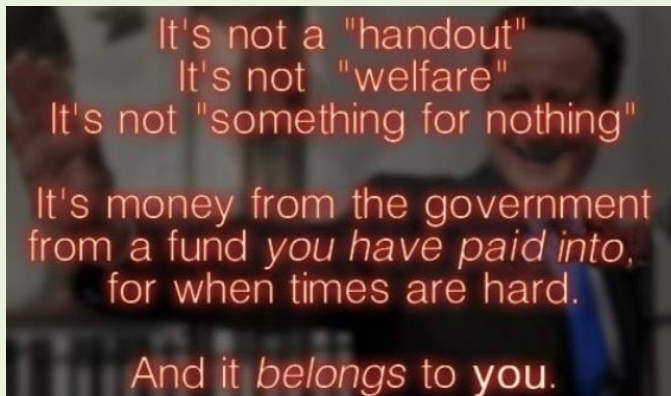
After two years of deliberation, a judgement was reached that completely exonerates the Liverpool supporters who attended the match of any blame. Roger has condemned the actions of senior officers in the south Yorkshire police who sought to deflect any criticism of their culpability onto innocent victims. He is calling on the CPS to ensure that the police officers involved are held to account for presiding over this terrible tragedy.

Said Roger: “Officers and individuals who falsified witness statements should be prosecuted. It is very sad to reflect that if those responsible for allowing the tragedy to occur had admitted their mistakes and accepted responsibility at the very beginning, then the families and friends of the 96 people who died could have been spared a 27-year struggle for the truth to come out, instead of having to endure the suffering which they have been put through.”

Harsh and vindictive rules for jobseekers claiming universal credit

The new rules being brought in for jobseekers on universal credit are extremely harsh and aimed at providing excuses to sanction claimants, rather than support them into work.

People claiming UC who are looking for work are forced to sign a contract agreeing that they will be sanctioned if they do not provide evidence that they have looked for work for 35 hours each week. There is no exemption made for public holidays, such as Christmas week when most businesses will be closed and almost none will be recruiting staff. In addition, claimants who have looked for work for 35 hours, but do not have a detailed breakdown of how they have spent this time, may also be sanctioned. Sanctions can leave people without any income at all for months.



Said Roger: "Being unemployed and looking for work is not a crime, but is being treated as one by the Conservative Party's cruel and punitive benefits regime. I am really concerned that the requirement to provide evidence that someone has looked for work for 35 hours per week, 52 weeks per year is impractical, cruel and unworkable. Sanctions do not help people find work, just push people into poverty and make it much more difficult for them to enter work. It is disgraceful that people are being pushed into poverty by the Government in this way."

If you have received a sanction, it is always worth going through the process of challenging it by applying for a

mandatory reconsideration and then going to appeal if necessary. If you need any help with this process, or require a food bank voucher after being sanctioned, please get in touch with Roger by email to roger.godsiff.mp@parliament.uk or by phone to 0207 219 5191.

Roger calls for an end to hereditary peers in the House of Lords

The system of appointing rather than electing people to sit in the House of Lords for the rest of their lives is shamefully undemocratic and unaccountable. It is extremely worrying that people are appointed to Parliament and can influence UK legislation because of the political connections or donations. However, this situation is made even worse by the fact that some peers are hereditary.



Hereditary peers were once guaranteed a seat in the House of Lords. Today, only 92 of them are allowed in, and they are chosen by holding an election but the only people allowed to vote in this election are hereditary peers from the same party.

For example, earlier this month Liberal Democrat politician Viscount Thurso became the latest member of the House of Lords - because he won an election only three people could vote in. The voters were the three existing hereditary peers in the House of Lords from his party. They included Lord Addington, who is in the

House of Lords because because his ancestor, a businessman and Conservative Member of Parliament, was given a title in 1887.

Roger backed legislation proposed by Welsh MP David Hanson. He said: "Let us end this farce once and for all."

The Bill was debated in Parliament but, sadly, will not progress further and become law because the Conservative Government are opposed to changing the current system. You can read the debate [here](#).

Tampon tax victory

Roger congratulates the campaigners against VAT on sanitary products, also known as the tampon tax, on their successful campaign against this sexist and unfair tax. He commented: "I am delighted that this campaign to stop essential products being taxed at a higher rate than some luxury goods has succeeded. It is extremely unfair to make women pay what was essentially a tax on being female."

Cost of HS2 rockets upwards

The cost of HS2 is continuing to grow, as figures show that the cost of phase 2 has increased from £21.2 billion in 2013 to £24.4 billion, with no guarantee that costs will not rise still further. In addition, two of the stations which were to form part of the plans have also been dropped, at Manchester airport and Meadowhall in Sheffield.

Roger, who has opposed HS2 since it was first proposed, said: "It is not acceptable for the Government to view the public purse as perpetually there to be dipped into for vanity projects which suffer from an ever-expanding budget. At a time of incredibly tight public spending, with vital services and essential benefits under threat from the Tories' passion for austerity, we should be thinking very carefully about whether we can afford projects which cannot stay on budget."

Corporate greed rages on

NUMBER CRUNCHING

- £14m** Amount stolen in Hatton Garden Raid which trial has been told was 'largest burglary in English legal history'
- £1bn** Amount taxpayers missed out on due to government undervaluing Royal Mail at time of privatisation
- £34bn** Amount of tax due in UK which HMRC estimates is going uncollected per year thanks to evasion and avoidance
- £115bn** Taxpayer support still outstanding to UK banks bailed out in 2008 financial crisis

NUMBER CRUNCHING

- \$100m** Annual grants made by Google's charitable arm
- \$1,500m** Estimated annual tax savings by shifting profits into tax havens

NUMBER CRUNCHING

- £750,000** Worth of surplus stock given away to charities in the UK by Amazon last year
- £5,300,000,000** Worth of stock sold to UK customers by Amazon last year via its Luxembourg arm, thus avoiding tax

Thank you to Private Eye for these enlightening facts!

Dangerous driving

Roger is calling for tougher penalties for drivers who use their mobile phones while on the road. Although using a hand-held mobile phone while driving is illegal, in 2014 1.6 per cent of all drivers in England and Scotland were observed using a hand-held mobile phone whilst driving. Research shows that using a phone while driving makes the driver's reactions 50% slower and makes them four times more likely to crash.



The existing penalty for this is three points on the driving licence and a fine of £100. Roger is concerned that this is too low to act as an effective deterrent, or reflect the risks involved to other road users. He is calling on the Government to consider bringing in a ban for all drivers who have used their phone while driving.

Victims of Birmingham pub bombings should receive legal costs

Roger asked the Home Office whether the families of the victims of the Birmingham pub bombings will be eligible for funding to cover the costs of their legal representation. He also urged the Ministers or officials from the Home Office to meet the families to discuss this.

He said: "The families of those who died in the pub bombings have already suffered appallingly from the

deaths of their loved ones. Legal aid has been slashed to the bone, but I believe that they should receive the financial support they will need for good legal representation. I will continue to press the Government for a positive decision on this."

Sparkhill foodbank receives award

The charity Narthex Sparkhill has received the Queen's Award for Voluntary Service, the highest award a voluntary group can receive in the UK. Roger nominated the charity for this award in recognition of their outstanding work providing a vital last resort for people facing hunger and appalling poverty.

Narthex Sparkhill is the charity that runs Sparkhill foodbank project and its recently-opened clothing bank in addition to numerous other projects.



The award notice states that:

"Narthex has a quite exceptional group of volunteers, admirably led and all working towards a vision that goes way beyond the provision of sanctuary, food and clothes. They are highly innovative, as demonstrated by their satellite food and clothes banks at the QE Hospital and in Fire Stations (it speaks volumes that so many want to copy this initiative). They are changing the culture in Sparkhill and creating a community spirit to confound those who thought that such values were lost. After many years of assessing Queen's Awards for voluntary service, I have never found an organisation

who deserve it more or whose very existence ushers in profound change for the better in an area that so badly needs it”.

Roger said: “I am really delighted that the Sparkhill food bank has received this recognition. It is very much deserved and I congratulate all the food bank’s volunteers.”

Southern cancels 341 trains per day. Bring back public service transport, says Roger

After Southern cancelled 341 trains per day, leaving commuters stranded and unable to travel to and from work, Roger called for an end to private companies being able to extract profits from the UK’s vital transport infrastructure while providing a horrendously poor service.



“The rail service should be brought under public or community ownership as it once was before John Major’s Government privatised it.”

Birmingham Balti should be given protected EU food status, says Roger

Roger has criticised the decision by the European Commission to deny protected EU food status to the Birmingham Balti. He commented:

“The decision by the European Commission is stupid, arrogant and, in my opinion, snobbish. To give protected EU food status to Champagne and Parma Ham but to deny the Balti a similar status smacks of bureaucratic ignorance, and it causes genuine offence to Balti restaurants throughout Birmingham, many of whom are in the Balti triangle in my constituency.”

Free trees scheme for schools

Over the next four years the Woodland Trust is offering 400,000 native British trees, free to up to 7000 state funded primary schools in England.

The new scheme offers eligible schools extra help with planting to encourage them to make their school grounds and local communities greener.

The closing date is September 9th 2016 and schools can apply via the Woodland Trust website. More details can be found [here](#).

Out and about in Birmingham



Supporting the Pobble Project at Wheelers lane Primary School



Roger opening the refurbished Station Pub in Kings Heath



Cutting the cake at an event at the Springfield Project



Lining up with Cllr. Habib Rehman and the award winners at the Attock Cricket Club Awards

 The poster features a white background with colorful circles in shades of green, blue, yellow, and pink. A banner with colorful triangles hangs across the top right. The text on the poster is as follows:

BIG LOTTERY FUND

Celebrate!

When was the last time your local community came together to celebrate?

What would you **celebrate** in your neighbourhood? It could be something from your local community's history or a community hero. Or maybe you'd just like to get to know your neighbours better?

You can apply for up to £10,000 for your local area.

#BigCelebration

f /biglotteryfund @BigLotteryFund

For more information:
www.biglotteryfund.org.uk/celebrate
 0345 4 10 20 30

Awarding funds from
The National Lottery®

For help and advice, please see the 'Helplines' section of Roger's website, available at www.rogergodsiffmp.co.uk/helplineAdvice.php, or [here](#).

You can also follow Roger on twitter at [@RogerGodsiff](https://twitter.com/RogerGodsiff)