

18 April 2016

I write in regard to the quote you provided for the story published on the Mail Online on 15 April, *Blooming ridiculous! Lord Speaker splashes out £4,000 on flowers for office - and more than £1,100 on trip to ballet with Russian diplomats.*

Thank you for acknowledging that my role does involve carrying out functions that inevitably carry a cost. I very much agree with your view that the costs incurred by the Lord Speaker's Office "should be published as a matter of course so that it can be subject to proper and regular scrutiny." To this end, my office had already published detailed information on the expenditure of the Lord Speaker's Office on the parliamentary website. Information on UK travel, for example, has been available for more than two years. This allows the public to view the data and form their own opinion of whether the spending is appropriate. This is surely correct in any democracy.

The following information is published quarterly on the parliamentary website:

- All UK travel costs incurred by the Lord Speaker representing the House of Lords
- The Lord Speaker's overseas travel costs representing the House of Lords
- The Lord Speaker's diary and appointments
- All expenditure incurred on the Lord Speaker's Official Entertainment budget
- Details of all events hosted in the River Room by permission of the Lord Speaker.
- All gifts received by the Lord Speaker.

Please let me know if there is anything further you believe the Lord Speaker's Office should publish on the parliamentary website in order to ensure expenditure by the Lord Speaker's Office can be subject to proper and regular scrutiny.

Dia Chakravarty  
Political Director, TaxPayers' Alliance  
55 Tufton St, London  
SW1P 3QL