

DRAFT PRESS RELEASE

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TAX JUSTICE SUNDAY CALLS FOR MORE BUSINESSES TO SAY WHAT THEY PAY WITH PRIDE

Church Action for Tax Justice (CATJ), in partnership with the Fair Tax Mark scheme, is pleased to announce that Fair Tax Week in 2019 will run from the 6th – 14th July 2019, incorporating Tax Justice Sunday on the 7th July.

The two organisations are working together in a bid to see Fair Tax Week and Tax Justice Sunday become an established part of the calendar, just like Fairtrade Fortnight and Living Wage Week, where organisations that do the right thing when it comes to tax are not only recognised but celebrated.

Reverend David Haslam, of Church Action for Tax Justice (CATJ), said: “In rich and poor countries alike, it is far too easy for large companies and wealthy individuals to avoid paying their fair share of tax. And, rather than celebrating tax as a powerful tool to create a more just society, tax is talked about in the negative – at best a burden to be minimized. Christians should love tax; it expresses that gratitude, sharing and justice which are the absolute heart of the Gospel. Fair Tax Week gives a real opportunity to bring this home to all people of faith, and Tax Justice Sunday especially to the whole Christian community.”

CATJ is an ecumenical, collaborative movement united by the belief that individuals and churches have a faith-derived imperative to challenge economic injustice. CATJ want to see a fairer and more effective tax system, where democratic governments set taxes to reflect the common good, and individuals and corporations pay their share.

Paul Parker, Recording Clerk for Quakers in Britain, said: “We are not raising enough tax income to build a society in which everyone can flourish equally in line with our Quaker values of equality and justice. Tax is not a burden to be minimised, but is one way in which those who have enough can support those who have not. Fair taxation and the elimination of a culture of tax dodging would enable us to have a fair and just society where resources are more equally shared and good services exist for all.”

The Fair Tax Mark scheme accredits businesses and organisations across the UK that are committed to paying the right amount of corporation tax at the right time and in the right place. It was launched in 2014 and some fifty businesses have now been certified, including FTSE-listed plcs, co-operatives, social enterprises and large private business – who between them have income of £50bn and over 6,500 offices and outlets. Fair Tax Mark accredited businesses include Lush, Richer Sounds, Pennon Group, Leeds Building Society, SSE and the Co-op. Their commitment to tax transparency helps consumers understand more about their tax practises and make informed spending decisions.

Paul Monaghan, Chief Executive, Fair Tax Mark, said: “It is estimated that £400bn of global corporate profits are shifted annually to tax havens, with corporate tax revenue losses in the UK of approximately £7bn per annum.

“During Fair Tax Week we’ll be celebrating the organisations that are proud to pay the right amount of tax for the benefit of all, and to ensure a level playing-field for business. We are delighted that Fair Tax Week 2019 will be co-sponsored by SSE plc and Pennon Group plc.”

Fair Tax Week 2019 is supported by a dedicated website that will detail Fair Tax and Tax Justice Sunday events across the UK. Churches, faith groups and supporting organisations are encouraged to share details of events they will be running at www.fairtaxmark.net/fairtaxweek2019. In 2018 groups did everything from hosting business breakfasts to introduce the Fair Tax Mark to their networks, to film screenings and panel debates.

Tax Justice Sunday worship materials including hymns, prayers, bible studies and a creed are available on the CATJ website along with a new publication, *Tax for the Common Good*. www.catj.org.uk

Margaret Hodge MP, Chair of the All-Party Parliamentary Group on Responsible Tax said: “The APPG on Responsible Tax is delighted to support Fair Tax Week and Tax Justice Sunday, together with the call for business to say what they pay in each and every country in which they operate. We hope to see Fair Tax Week and Tax Justice Sunday become an established part of the calendar, just like Fairtrade Fortnight and Living Wage Week, where organisations that do the right thing when it comes to tax are not only recognised but celebrated.”

Reverend David Haslam concluded: “Large parts of the world are still recovering from a financial crisis and ensuing austerity which – for many – have seen living standards plummet and undermined trust in our economic system. While the tax system can’t solve every problem it helps build more just and sustainable societies, and fosters good human relationships. For people of faith, tax is a way of sharing the enormous wealth created from the earth God has given us.

“The conversation about our tax system is not just a matter for tax experts: it is for all of us. Decisions about taxation cut to the heart of our beliefs about the type of society we want to live in and how to live out our faith in the world.”

ENDS

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Notes to editors

Fair Tax Week has been developed by the Fair Tax Mark, with kind early support from the Friends Provident Foundation and the Joffe Charitable Trust. In 2019, Fair Tax Week is co-sponsored by SSE plc and Pennon Group plc. Further details at <https://fairtaxmark.net/fairtaxweek2019>

The **Fair Tax Mark** certification scheme was launched in February 2014 and seeks to encourage and recognise organisations that pay the right amount of corporation tax at the right time and in the right place. Tax contributions are a key part of the wider social and

economic contribution made by business, helping the communities in which they operate to deliver valuable public services and build the infrastructure that paves the way for growth. Some fifty businesses have now been certified, including FTSE-listed plcs, co-operatives, social enterprises and large private business – who between them have income of £50bn and over 6,500 offices and outlets. We operate as a not-for-profit community benefit society and believe that companies paying tax responsibly should be celebrated, and any race to the bottom resisted. <https://fairtaxmark.net/>

Church Action for Tax Justice (CATJ) is an ecumenical, collaborative movement united by the belief that we, as individuals and churches, have a faith-derived imperative to challenge economic injustice. We stand for a fairer and more effective tax system, where democratic governments set taxes to reflect the common good, and individuals and corporations pay their share. Working as part of the wider UK and global tax justice movement, we aim to:

- Raise awareness throughout churches and faith communities of the fundamental relationship between taxation, equality and public services, and the urgent need for tax justice at national and international level
- Campaign for transparency and an end to tax dodging by both corporations and individuals
- Stimulate a conversation about the society we want to live in and the tax system that could deliver that
- Encourage Christian and all faith organisations to promote tax justice through their education and mission work, and their financial and investment policies.

www.catj.org.uk

Pennon Group plc is one of the largest environmental infrastructure FTSE 250 groups in the UK with assets of around £6.2 billion and a workforce of around 5,000 people – and includes South West Water, Viridor and Pennon Water Services. The merged water company of South West Water and Bournemouth Water provides water and wastewater services to a population of c.1.7 million in Cornwall, Devon and parts of Dorset and Somerset and water only services to c.0.5 million in parts of Dorset, Hampshire and Wiltshire. Viridor is a leading UK recycling, energy recovery and waste management company, providing services to more than 150 local authorities and major corporate clients as well as over 32,000 customers across the UK. Pennon Water Services provides water and wastewater retail services to over 160,000 non-household customer accounts across Great Britain, and is an 80:20 venture with South Staffordshire Plc. <https://www.pennon-group.co.uk/>

SSE plc is one of the UK and Ireland's leading energy companies, involved in the generation, transportation and supply of electricity and in the extraction, storage, transportation and supply of gas. Its vision is to be a leading provider of energy and related services in a low-carbon world. Its strategy is to create value for shareholders and society from developing, owning and operating energy and related infrastructure and services in a sustainable way. It is a Living Wage employer and has achieved Fair Tax Mark accreditation every year since 2014. <http://sse.com/>