

DT006 - Poll tax politicking

I have received through the post a threatening large pink mysterious form. The form is threatening because it says the law requires me to complete and return it, otherwise I shall be liable to penalties. The form is mysterious because it comes from something I have never heard of calling itself 'The Community Charge Authority for Oxford'. Is this some elaborate hoax?

I am further confused because the pink form gets several things wrong. It shows my postcode as OX4 4B, whereas it is OX1 1SU. It says the Government are imposing the community charge, whereas in fact it is imposed by Act of Parliament. It says the charge is called the Poll Tax, whereas that is merely a term of abuse invented by its opponents.

I sought an answer by consulting the Local Government Finance Act 1988, under which the community charge is levied. This tells me that the statutory name for the local collecting body is a 'charging authority' and that the Labour-controlled Oxford City Council are the charging authority for my area. As the name of Oxford City Council does not appear on this form, and it contains no reference to a 'charging authority' I conclude that it is spurious, and should be ignored.