

Ben Delo — Reform UK Donor (BitMEX Founder)

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Semantic Summary

Ben Delo is a British mathematician and Oxford graduate who co-founded cryptocurrency derivatives exchange BitMEX and has donated £4 million to Reform UK — a sum that has drawn intense scrutiny given his 2022 guilty plea for violating the US Bank Secrecy Act by failing to implement anti-money laundering procedures at BitMEX, for which he was subsequently pardoned by Donald Trump in March 2025. His donation directly connects to Reform's policy platform: the party's pledge to cut capital gains tax on crypto from 24% to 10% and create a Strategic Bitcoin Reserve would directly benefit the sector Delo helped pioneer, raising conflict-of-interest questions mirroring those around Harborne. Delo reportedly moved back to the UK from Hong Kong specifically to bypass Labour's planned overseas donation cap, and is described as often "in the company of convicted fraudster and criminal money-laundering expert 'Posh' George Cottrell" — with Farage present alongside both men in Thailand in 2020. He also funds Jordan Peterson, Triggernometry, and other right-wing media figures. Delo exemplifies Reform's deep entanglement with the cryptocurrency sector: a Trump-pardoned convicted money launderer whose donations align with policy commitments that would enrich his industry, operating within a network of convicted criminals orbiting Farage's inner circle.

Full name: Ben Delo **Approx total donated (to Reform UK):** £4 million **Source of wealth:** Mathematician, programmer and co-founder of BitMEX (cryptocurrency derivatives exchange). Educated at Oxford University, worked at IBM and JP Morgan. **Why they donate:** Backs Reform UK's anti-establishment, pro-crypto agenda. The party's pledge to cut capital gains tax on crypto from 24% to 10% and create a Strategic Bitcoin Reserve directly benefits the crypto sector Delo helped pioneer. **Controversies:** In 2022, Delo pleaded guilty to violating the US Bank Secrecy Act by wilfully failing to implement adequate anti-money laundering procedures at BitMEX. He was sentenced but in March 2025, Donald Trump pardoned him. His £4m donation to Reform has drawn scrutiny given his criminal conviction and the party's pro-crypto stance. The timing of donations relative to policy positions has raised conflict-of-interest questions similar to the Harborne-Farage

dynamic.

Twitter/X Discussion

Delo generates significant Twitter discussion. Key themes:

- **"Convicted criminal" framing:** Twitter accounts regularly note "Reform UK has received £4 million from a convicted criminal, Ben Delo" — this is one of the most common attack lines
- **Trump pardon:** The Trump pardon (§ March 2025) is widely cited, with critics arguing it shows Reform is linked to "international criminal networks"
- **Moving back to UK to bypass donation caps:** Several tweets discuss The Observer's reporting that Delo moved back to the UK from Hong Kong specifically to bypass Labour's planned donation cap on overseas donors — he's described as "heading home to UK to fund Reform after 'tinpot' donations cap by Labour"
- **Wider network:** He's linked to funding "Jordon Peterson, Reform, Kemi, Triggernometry" and other right-wing causes
- **Association with George Cottrell:** One tweet notes Delo is "often in the company of convicted fraudster and criminal money-laundering expert 'Posh' George Cottrell" — and that Farage was with both of them in Thailand in 2020

The "Reform is proposing cutting capital gains tax on crypto" — Delo benefit" connection is frequently made in threads about donation influence.

Reddit Discussion

On Reddit, Delo is discussed mainly in the context of Reform's crypto connections. The "Trump-pardoned money launderer bankrolling Reform" narrative is common. Some threads note that Delo living in Hong Kong (and now returning) is connected to investigations by Chinese authorities, linking to broader concerns about foreign influence in UK politics.

Notes

- BitMEX was one of the first major crypto derivatives platforms
- Delo is a British-born Oxford graduate — not a foreign donor
- His Trump pardon has been criticised as another example of the crypto industry buying political influence

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