

Sir Glum's medical millions unmasked: Boris Johnson's science guru Patrick Vallance made £5m from company racing to find vaccine... and still has £500,000 staked in it, writes ANDREW PIERCE

By ANDREW PIERCE FOR THE DAILY MAIL

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During a rare interview, Sir **Patrick Vallance**, the Government's chief scientific adviser, was asked to describe himself in three words. He replied: 'Introverted, curious... and geeky.'

Yesterday, jaws across Britain dropped when they learned quite how accurately he might have added a fourth adjective: rich.

For it has emerged that Vallance holds shares worth £600,000 in GlaxoSmith-Kline, the drugs giant racing to develop a Covid vaccine. Not so long ago, he sold other shares worth £5million.

A senior Tory MP was not alone in arguing that his current shareholding represents a 'potential conflict of interest' with Vallance being at the heart of the **Downing Street** race to find a vaccine against **coronavirus**.

The MP added: 'If he is making decisions on vaccines and advising the Government on them then he either needs to divest himself of the shares or make a declaration... Every time he is talking about vaccines or on TV, he should put it on the table.'

Even more surprisingly, it appears that Vallance, chairman of the Government's expert advisory panel on vaccines, did not think it necessary to inform Boris Johnson or Health Secretary Matt Hancock about his shares.

Mr Hancock admitted yesterday: 'The first I knew about it was when I read it in the newspapers.'

If GSK produces a successful vaccine against the coronavirus, it stands to make billions from the discovery – and Vallance's shares could be expected to rocket, potentially making him yet more millions.

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Already, the US government has provided £1.65billion to GSK and its partner Sanofi for vaccine development.

Vallance was president of research and development at GSK, Britain's biggest drug company, between 2012 and 2018, when he left to become a top mandarin.

'I think you will find Patrick Vallance is the wealthiest civil servant in the history of Whitehall,' said one senior source last night.



For it has emerged that Vallance (above) holds shares worth £600,000 in GlaxoSmith-Kline, the drugs giant racing to develop a Covid vaccine. Not so long ago, he sold other shares worth £5million

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If GSK produces a successful vaccine against the coronavirus, it stands to make billions from the discovery – and Vallance’s shares could be expected to rocket, potentially making him yet more millions. A researcher is pictured above in a GlaxoSmithKline lab in 2009.

Not surprisingly, given his wealth, Vallance has a gourmet palate, favouring langoustine, pigeon with figs and rare cheeses, though he admits he rarely drinks his expensive wine collection.

If he had his time all over again, he once said he would have liked to train as a chef.

The image of fine dining could not be further from the Vallance who appeared on TV next to the similarly gloomy chief medical officer Chris Whitty in a dispiriting press conference – leading to the duo being dubbed ‘Glum and Glummer’.

In previous appearances flanking the Prime Minister with Whitty, Vallance often seemed dour and defensive. He was regularly asked about the prospects of Britain developing the first viable Covid vaccine.

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Joining the Government, he took a huge pay cut. He was on £780,000 at GSK but is now paid around £180,000, although it is clear he could afford the reduced salary.

With his wife Sophia Ann, whom he married in 1988, he bought a large, fire-damaged house in south London two years ago for £1.85million, paying cash.

The new house requires extensive renovation – though happily the couple sold another house in south London last year for £2.95million, which may help to fund the works.

Vallance was born in Essex in 1960 and educated at Truro school in Cornwall, where boarding fees today are almost £30,000 a year.

He studied medicine at St George’s at the University of London, becoming a senior lecturer in medicines policy and for a while was a doctor seeing patients – but it did

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not suit him.

'Every time I didn't give a patient enough time,' he said.

'Every mistake I made resulted from not giving 100 per cent to the patient I was with – and it is dreadful to short-change people when they are at their most vulnerable.'



Vallance was president of research and development at GSK, Britain's biggest drug company, between 2012 and 2018, when he left to become a top mandarin

In 2006 he joined GSK as head of drug discovery and four years later became head of medicines, then president of research and development.

He may be 'geeky', but he is also passionate about certain causes, including assisted suicide which, interestingly, is not Government policy.

'Having had both of my parents ask me to help them die, I support doctor-assisted suicide for terminally ill people under certain conditions,' he has said.

Knighted in the New Year honours list in 2019, Vallance eschews party politics but is a huge admirer of Aneurin Bevan, the Welsh Labour MP who was one of the founders of the NHS. 'I understand the true and lasting importance of Bevan's remarkable vision.'

Despite the growing brouhaha about his vast shareholding and potential conflict of interest, Boris is keeping this adviser close.

The Government insists he has done nothing wrong.

A spokesman for the Cabinet Office said that 'appropriate steps were taken to manage [Vallance's] interests in line with advice provided at the time... The chief scientific adviser has no input into contractual and commercial decisions on vaccine procurement which are taken by ministers following a robust cross-Government approvals regime'.

Vallance himself has remained tight-lipped about the matter. His self-professed 'introversion' may continue to serve him well.

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 Kourtney kept things casual but chic

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Leona made for a dazzling sight

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Sofia enjoyed an afternoon in Hollywood

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