

Government WORLD™

Summer 2012 Edition

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Cover picture: Comfrey at Whithaugh

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ISPs launch open internet code of practice

Comms Minister says agreement is “great news for consumers”



Communications Minister Ed Vaizey

A group of the UK’s largest internet service providers (ISPs) are signing a voluntary code of practice in support of the open internet.

The companies have agreed to provide full and open internet access products as the norm, and not to use traffic management practices to restrict or block their customers’ use of competitors’ services.

A new process is also

being established to allow content providers to raise potential cases of targeted discrimination with ISPs, and refer unresolved cases to the Broadband Stakeholder Group (BSG) who will share them with Government and communications watchdog Ofcom .

“This voluntary agreement is great news for consumers,” Communications Minister Ed Vaizey said.

“It marks a significant commitment from leading ISPs to uphold the principles of an open internet and gives certainty to their customers.

“The internet has been built on openness and low barriers to entry, and this agreement will ensure that continues. By committing

to transparency, these ISPs are empowering their customers to make informed decisions about the services they want.”

Pamela Learmonth, Chief Executive of the BSG, which facilitated the agreement, said:

“With this code ISPs are making practical, tangible commitments to the open internet. The open internet model has long supported the innovation of new services and allowed customers to discover informative, useful and creative applications, services and content, and this must continue.”

The current signatories of the code are: BE, BT, BSkyB, KCOM, giffgaff, O2, Plusnet, TalkTalk, Tesco Mobile and Three.

55th BFI London Film Festival opens

World’s best new films come to the Capital.

The 55th BFI London Film Festival is now underway and will showcase 204 feature films and 110 shorts from around the world over 16 days.

Showing in venues across London, this year’s line-up includes Fernando Meirelles’ 360, Terence Davies’ The Deep Blue Sea, George Clooney’s The Ides of March, Alexander Payne’s The Descendants, Lynne Ramsay’s We Need to Talk About Kevin and David Cronenberg’s A Dangerous Method.

UK premieres

The Film on the Square strand includes highly anticipated new titles such as Werner Herzog’s Into the Abyss: A Tale of Death, A Tale of Life, Nuri Bilge Ceylan’s Once Upon a Time in Antolia and Andrea Arnold’s Wuthering Heights.

While New British Cinema will premier cinematic voices from across the UK including Dexter Fletcher’s directorial debut Wild Bill and Andrew Haigh’s award-winning second feature Weekend.

North Sea oil sheen reported

An oil sheen has been reported in the North Sea 160km North East of St Fergus approximately 3.7 km from the pipeline connecting the Galley subsea field to the Tartan Alpha Installation, which are both operated by Talisman Energy (UK) Limited. It was first observed at 13.50 on Tuesday 28 August and size of the sheen was estimated to be between 32 tonnes and 132 tonnes of oil. Aerial observations today (29 August) at 14.35 hours estimated between 5 tonnes and 34 tonnes of oil.

On 24 August Talisman reported a minor leak from the Galley subsea field to Tartan Alpha Installation pipeline. This is a 26 km pipeline in a water depth of 147metres which transports produced fluids from the Galley field for processing

on the Tartan Alpha installation.

Talisman has stated that the hydrocarbon content of the fluid isolated in the pipeline was approximately 14-15%. At the time the leak was identified the pipeline was depressurised and isolated. DECC were notified of this release and Talisman monitored the leak point using a remotely operated vehicle. The leak rate of emulsified fluid containing oil, gas and water was estimated at 4 kilograms per hour. The total fluid released from the Galley pipeline has been reported to DECC as approximately 14 tonnes of which 2 tonnes is oil.

On 28 August Talisman were preparing to commence flushing of the Galley subsea pipeline to the Tartan Alpha platform,

when the oil sheen was spotted by a surveillance aircraft.

The source of the sheen has not been identified and samples of the oil have been taken for analysis. At this time there is no evidence to indicate an ongoing release of oil. Nearby installations contacted by DECC confirmed that no potential sources of the sheen (topside or subsea) had been identified. Talisman are reporting that the source of the oil is not related to the Galley subsea pipeline.

The Maritime and Coastguard Agency and Marine Scotland have both been notified and DECC will continue to monitor and investigate the situation.

The incident will be subject to a full investigation by DECC.

UK film industry gives economy £4.6bn boost

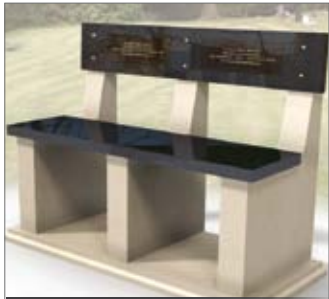
UK film contributes more than £4.6 billion to UK GDP and more than £1.3 billion to the Exchequer, an independent report has shown.

The Economic Impact of the UK Film Industry, published by Oxford Economics, shows the industry's growth outstrips the UK economy as a whole and suggests the overall picture is one of continued long-term growth.

The number of jobs has also risen, with the UK film industry supporting 117,000 direct and indirect jobs, up from 100,000 in 2009. Nearly three-quarters of the workforce are graduates and earn a significantly higher-than-average salary.

"This report clearly highlights the huge contribution that the UK film industry makes to long-term economic growth," Creative Industries Minister Ed Vaizey said.

"The UK's successes at the BAFTA and Academy Awards celebrate the wonderful creative talents and accomplishments of UK film, but this report reminds us of the crucial role the industry plays in job creation, tourism, inward investment and the promotion of all that is great about Britain."



Memorial bench standard model



Memorial bench with extended base plinth and planters



Memorial bench with full niche and planter specification



Niche and Keepsake arrangement



Keepsake niche option

Chiltern Memorial Bench Collection

Memorial benches that grow with your needs

The **welters**® Chiltern Memorial Bench provides a range of affordable solutions for commemorative and memorial seating arrangements.

The memorial bench collection comprises a range of options beginning with the standard bench and plinth arrangement with two inscription plaques on the back rest. Upgraded versions include end planters and extended base plinth.

A unique feature is the optional addition of four cremated remains niches providing two interments in each niche. These can also be enclosed in an attractive polished stainless steel frame furnished with toughened glass and used as keepsake storage niches for photographs, flowers and memorabilia.

Made in England

The Chiltern Memorial Bench Collection is manufactured in **welters**® UK factory using high quality stone and polished granite creating an adaptable and elegant addition to their furniture range.

Olympic crimes brought to swift justice

During London's Olympics Her Majesty's Courts & Tribunals Service acted efficiently and effectively to bring Olympic crimes to justice, Courts Minister Jonathan Djanogly said today.

Thanks to the hard work of the courts, criminal justice practitioners and agencies, which went in ahead of the start of the games, all courts and tribunals across London operated as planned.

In the criminal courts, a process was put in place to 'fast track' any cases directly connected with the London 2012 Games. To date 84 such cases have been listed at London magistrates' courts. Of the 84 fast track cases, 36 have already been dealt with by the magistrates' courts and 28 cases have

been sent or committed to the Crown Court. All these Crown Court cases had an effective preliminary hearing within 8 days of being sent and 10 of the cases were disposed of at this stage. Currently there remains 20 cases at the magistrates' courts and 18 cases at the crown courts.

The courts are now gearing up to deliver the same efficient service throughout the Paralympics games which begin tomorrow.

Courts Minister, Jonathan Djanogly said:

'I am impressed by the dedication and commitment of the courts in dealing efficiently with these cases. It was another example, following the summer disturbances last year, of how flexible and effective the criminal justice system

can be. I am confident this will continue throughout the Paralympics.

'In the future we plan to continue this efficiency drive by rolling out digital working across the system, removing unnecessary bureaucracy and maximising the use of video technology to allow more cases to be heard without delay.'



International Day of Democracy

Speaking to mark the International Day of Democracy, Foreign Secretary William Hague said:

"The UK firmly believes that democracy in its various forms is the system of government that best allows for dialogue between a government and its people. It gives a country's citizens the right to exchange one government for another by non-violent means, and to hold governments to account for their actions. The United Kingdom has been unstinting in its support for the positive democratic change we have seen in the Arab world and Burma over the last year.

"International Day of Democracy reminds us that enabling widespread participation in the democratic debate is crucial. The voices of all people must be heard, so potential conflicts can be resolved peacefully. In Syria we see the catastrophic consequences of a regime responding with brutal force to the legitimate aspirations of its people. We call on nations all over the world to uphold the values a society needs for stable democracy to thrive. These values include accountability, tolerance, inclusivity, respect for human rights and freedom of expression and education.

"The UK stands ready to support governments and civil society across the world in their efforts to forge more open, accountable societies."

£1.3 million to hand power back to tenants

New programme will give social tenants voice to challenge local decisions



Housing Minister Grant Shapps

The Housing Minister has unveiled a new fund of £1.3m to help give more power to communities over their social homes. Grant Shapps hopes the scheme will help bring the passion of the Olympic volunteers and last year's broom armies to local communities by giving housing association and council tenants a voice to lead change in their area.

Mr Shapps said the Tenant Empowerment Programme would offer a “springboard for success” to communities across the country who want to see their local needs reflected in the services they receive.

This could be by helping tenants learn the skills they need to engage and negotiate confidently with their landlords; forming tenant panels to come together to demand the best value-for-money services; or even to take control of local services themselves if they feel that they could deliver more for less.

The Minister also highlighted the benefits to landlords of getting their tenants involved, from community involvement in scrutinising new repairs contracts or tenants

working together with local authorities to tackle anti-social behaviour.

Giving tenants the confidence to invest in their community

The Minister invited charities and benevolent societies to submit their ideas for delivering a national programme that will:

- encourage the creation of more tenant panels - groups of tenants who can challenge landlords, shape services and get involved in local decision making; and
- help individual tenants engage with their landlords on a range of issues and services.

A new Community Cashback scheme will also be at the heart of the Tenant Empowerment Programme - allowing groups of tenants who choose to take on the management of services,

such as maintenance and repairs, to reinvest any savings they make from running these services themselves into other community priorities.

Grant Shapps said:

“In the past 12 months we’ve seen the power of local people in action, from the ‘broom army’ clean-ups after the riots to the Olympic volunteers helping this country put on the greatest show on earth. I know that tenants in communities across the country have that same passion.

“This £1.3m programme will be a real springboard for local success, giving tenants real power, whether they choose to take local services over completely or merely challenge their landlords to do better.

“We’re bringing communities together and giving them the knowledge, skills and confidence to build their own Big Society in their back yard. And by helping them to ensure their area’s unique needs are being met I hope they will inspire more tenants across the country to lead change in their communities.

Hoverfly at rest



Nature

£16million for carbon cutting entrepreneurs

Low carbon innovation is today being given a big injection of cash with the launch of a £16million fund for entrepreneurs to develop new ideas.

The first phase of the Entrepreneurs Fund, part of a £35million fund announced earlier this year, is now open to applications.

There is up to £10million available to support energy efficiency technologies such as building control systems, advanced lighting systems, and space heating and cooling technologies.

There is also up to £6million available for power generation and energy storage technologies including fuel cells, biomass boilers and heat pumps.

The aim of this funding is to speed up the development

of low carbon technologies towards commercialisation, helping cut carbon in the UK, supporting jobs and creating export opportunities.

A second phase of this scheme, building on the first phase, will be launched in early 2013 with the remaining £19million available.

Energy and Climate Change Minister Greg Barker said:

“Low carbon innovation is vital for the growth of our green economy. This investment will help entrepreneurs with novel ideas get designs off the drawing board and into our homes and businesses, helping cut carbon and spur on growth in this exciting

market place.”

The aim of a phased approach is to help assess the demand for this type of funding and test how the scheme works on the ground. The money is aimed at, but not limited to, small and medium sized enterprises (SMEs) as well as individual innovators and entrepreneurs.

Innovators will be able to bid for up to £1million to develop and demonstrate innovative technologies and processes and get support from experts on how to bring their products to market. Entrepreneurs can then use the funding to leverage additional funds from private sector investors.

Bids will be assessed against a range of criteria including the impact of the proposed technology

on meeting the Government’s 2020 and 2050 carbon targets, commercial potential of designs, improved performance characteristics over existing technologies and products, and ability to cut the cost of installation or maintenance of existing systems. A panel of investors will advise the Department of Energy and Climate Change (DECC) on the commercial potential of the bids.

The scheme will support projects at Technology Readiness level 3 (TRL 3) and above.

Applications can be made online and must be submitted by 31 October 2012 at the latest. Successful bidders will be announced later in the year.



Entrepreneurs Fund
GROW IN GOOD COMPANY

Even a Puddle Duck taxed online



Renault – 6.5 million
Peugeot – 6.5 million

Some of the more unusual vehicle makes, included:

Make: Puddle Duck Valiant –
Number: 1

Make: Hupmobile –
Number: 50

Make: Goggomobil –
Number: 66

Make: Peel Trident –
Number 678

Carolyn Williams, DVLA's
Head of Electronic Services
said:

"It's never been easier to go online or use the phone to tax your vehicle or tell us it's off the road. The service is available 24 hours a day, 7 days a week and only takes a few minutes.

The DVLA has today revealed some of the more unusual vehicles that have been taxed or declared off road via its online service.

Last year over 24 million vehicles were taxed or declared off road online or by phone. This means that over half of all motorists went online or used the phone.

The top five vehicle makes that were taxed or declared off road were:

Ford – 19.7 million
Vauxhall – 10 million
Volvo – 8.3 million

PM welcomes new Amazon jobs for UK

The Prime Minister welcomed the announcement of thousands of new jobs in the UK by online retailer Amazon, in a visit to one of its new distribution centres today.

More than 2,000 new permanent posts will be rolled out over the next two years with the company opening a further three new centres in Britain, building on its existing operations across England, Scotland and Wales.

At the official opening of Amazon's latest distribution centre in Hemel Hempstead, Mr Cameron also heard how the company will offer up to 3,000 additional seasonal jobs during Christmas peak periods.

Prime Minister David Cameron said:

"I am delighted that Amazon will create thousands of new jobs. This is great news, not only for those individuals who will find work, but for the UK economy.

"This shows that the UK has the infrastructure and talent to continue to attract major investments from leading companies such as Amazon."

Opportunities at the new centres will include roles in Human Resources, Information Technology, Facilities Management, Learning and Development and a number of operational management areas.

Managing Director of Amazon.co.uk Christopher North said:

"We have created thousands of jobs in the UK over the last few years and are delighted to announce that we plan to create thousands more in the next 24 months.

"We look forward to welcoming thousands of new recruits to the Amazon team.

Programme aims to boost construction success

Olympic Delivery Authority (ODA) to share best practice with industry.

A new programme has been launched to share best practice learnt from the successful construction of the Olympic Park.

Under the Learning Legacy scheme, the organisations involved in delivering the park will help businesses raise the bar in ten areas including design and engineering, planning, procurement and project management. It will build on the ODA's record of setting targets well above industry benchmarks and tackling issues such as getting more women into construction, building better health and safety records and completing projects on time and within budget.

The website is a collaborative project between the ODA, contractors, professional institutes, government bodies and academia, and can be contributed to over time, becoming a comprehensive online library for companies of all shapes and sizes to refer to.

“The Learning Legacy framework is the embodiment of a new benchmark that has been created in delivering Europe’s largest construction project to the ultimate deadline and within budget,” ODA Chairman John Armitt said. “The scale and speed of the coordinated UK effort to build the venues and infrastructure is unprecedented and the

knowledge and lessons gained during construction will both benefit the industry and act as a catalyst for inward investment.”

Culture Secretary Jeremy Hunt said: “The Olympic Park is a showcase for the best of British design, engineering, construction and project management. We want companies to win new contracts off the back of this success story but also to share the best practice across industry as a whole. Learning Legacy will ensure that important lessons are shared throughout the industry.”

The Olympic venues have earned a number of plaudits, in particular the Velodrome, which was listed for the 2011 RIBA Stirling Prize for architecture and won the Prime Minister’s Better Public Building Award 2011.

Stonehenge visitor centre to rise again

A new dawn at Stonehenge

Work has officially begun on improving visitor facilities at the iconic Stonehenge site.

A new exhibition and visitor building will be constructed 1.5 miles west of the much-admired stones at Airman’s Corner.

Heritage Minister John Penrose, who visited the site this morning, said:

“I’m absolutely delighted that work is finally underway to preserve this internationally recognisable prehistoric World Heritage Site, and to improve the visitor experience for those who come to marvel at it too.”

The £27 million project is financed almost entirely by Heritage Lottery Fund money, commercial income and philanthropic donations including significant gifts from the Garfield Weston Foundation, Linbury Trust and the Wolfson Foundation.

Judge rejects claims that work schemes are forced labour

Schemes to help unemployed people get work are not slave labour, a Judicial review has ruled. The judgment means the Department for Work and Pensions can continue to help people get the vital skills and experience they need to get into a job.

Two claimants who had been placed on two different Government schemes were granted permission to seek a judicial review to challenge the validity of the Jobseeker's Allowance (Employment, Skills and Enterprise Scheme) (ESE) Regulations 2011 which underpin these schemes.

The Community Action Programme has been a trial providing mandatory community work for the

very long-term unemployed, while sector-based work academies (sbwa) include work experience and training.

Today's judgement found that requiring participation in the schemes does not breach human rights, that the regulations were lawful and that the Department had provided enough guidance about the policy intentions of the schemes.

The Honourable Mr Justice Foskett was robust in saying that the schemes were not a question of slavery:

".....it does have to be said that the sbwa scheme, and indeed the CAP, are a very long way removed from the kind of colonial exploitation

of labour that led to the formulation of Article 4. The Convention is, of course, a living instrument, capable of development to meet modern conditions, and views may reasonably differ about the merits of a scheme that requires individuals to "work for their benefits" as a means of assisting them back into the workplace. However, characterising such a scheme as involving or being analogous to "slavery" or "forced labour" seems to me to be a long way from contemporary thinking."

Work and Pensions Secretary Iain Duncan Smith said:

"We are delighted, although not surprised, that the Judge agrees our schemes are not forced labour. Comparing our initiatives to slave labour is not only ridiculous but insulting to

people around the world facing real oppression.

"Thousands of young people across the country are taking part in our schemes and gaining the vital skills and experience needed to help them enter the world of work - it is making a real difference to people's lives.

"Those who oppose this process are actually opposed to hard work and they are harming the life chances of unemployed young people who are trying to get on.

"While the Judge found in the Department's favour on the main issues, he did find that the Department should improve the clarity of the letters which warn claimants of a potential sanction should they fail to participate in the schemes without good reason.

"We do not believe there is anything wrong with the original letters and we will appeal this aspect of the judgement, but in the meantime we have revised our standard letters."

UK and Iceland sign energy agreement

Geothermal power from Icelandic volcanoes could supply electricity to the UK under new Memorandum of Understanding

The UK and Iceland today signed an agreement that could pave the way for geothermal power from Iceland's volcanoes to supply electricity to the UK.

This came as UK Energy Minister Charles Hendry visited the Hellisheidi geothermal field, located on an active volcanic ridge in the south west of the country.

The MoU, signed by Charles Hendry and his Icelandic counterpart Oddný G. Harðardóttir, will strengthen the two countries' relationship on energy issues.

Charles Hendry said:

"This agreement will help pave the way for a closer relationship with Iceland, which I hope can yield significant benefits for the UK, including the development of geothermal power, greater use of interconnectors to transport energy under the sea, and developing oil and gas resources.

"This sort of approach can both enhance our energy security and deliver low carbon electricity in an affordable way."

In particular, the two countries pledged to:

- Exchange information on the development of the deep geothermal

sector in the UK, including in the supply of heat to district heating networks;

- Explore the possibility of developing electricity interconnection between Iceland and the UK, including relevant legal and regulatory issues;
 - Work with their respective Ministries for International Development on renewable energy projects in developing countries with a special focus on East Africa;
- and
- Exchange information regarding the development of oil and gas industries, including offshore drilling.

Squatting - new criminal offence

Squatting in homes and all other residential building is to be criminalised for the first time in England and Wales from Saturday 1 September.

It follows on from a public consultation last year on options for dealing with squatting and better protecting homeowners.

The new offence will be punishable by a maximum prison term of up to six months, a maximum £5000 fine or both. Previously, the only option was to seek a civil court order to regain possession of the property, which could be time consuming, expensive and stressful.

Justice Minister Crispin Blunt said: 'For too long squatters have had the justice system on the run and have caused homeowners untold misery in eviction, repair and clean-up costs. Not any more. Hard working homeowners need and deserve a justice system where their rights come first - this new offence will ensure the police and other agencies can take quick and decisive action to deal with the misery of squatting.'

Councils seeing benefits of reducing numbers of empty homes

Bringing thousands of empty homes back into use has unlocked over £63million additional funding that is directly benefiting local communities through the successful New Homes Bonus scheme, Communities Minister Don Foster revealed today.

In a further move towards greater Government transparency, the figures showed which councils have made the biggest reduction in empty homes and the New Homes Bonus that they will have received for doing so.

In total, local authorities have brought nearly 38,000 long-term empty homes back into use over the past two years - helping to tackle the housing shortage

and providing a roof over the heads of hard working families across the country.

The top five local authorities that have seen the biggest reduction in empty homes are:

Birmingham, which has brought 2,151 empty homes back into use, along with:

Manchester, 2,118 homes
Bradford, 1,944 homes
Liverpool, 1,855 homes, and
Salford, 1,582 homes.

On the release of the figures, Don Foster said:

“This information, shown in this way for the first time, lets people see how their councils are embracing the New Homes Bonus

by examining their empty housing stock and turning it back into use.

“I’m delighted we’ve had such a positive start and encourage all councils to work hard in transforming empty properties, which drag down neighbourhoods, and instead turn them into homes fit for families.

“By making councils accountable to their residents, not to Whitehall, we are ensuring local tax-payers have the ability to check that money is being spent efficiently and decisions taken for the benefit of the communities they serve.”

The Government’s powerful and innovative New Homes Bonus scheme rewards councils who increase their

housing stock, either by building new homes or converting empty properties back into use, by match funding the additional council tax raised, with an additional amount for affordable homes, for the following six years.

This has meant that communities are seeing the benefits of growth for the first time - in stark contrast to the previous, top-down system of regional housing targets which Ministers argue pitted neighbourhoods against developers.



Polio: Britain to vaccinate 29 million children

The extra support was welcomed as key step towards the eradication of polio by the UK's Development Secretary

The UK's contribution to a global polio vaccination programme will be stepped up to reach a further 29 million children around the world.

The support was welcomed as key step towards the eradication of polio by Development Secretary Justine Greening at the UN General Assembly .

The latest UK aid for the Global Polio Eradication Initiative (GPEI) continues the pressure from the British Government for international partners to sign up and make similar commitments to tackling polio worldwide.

The announcement comes

ahead of today's high level meeting in New York, which comes in response to the World Health Assembly's declaration of polio eradication as a global public health emergency in May 2012.

International Development Secretary Justine Greening said:

"We are close to living in a polio-free world and this commitment to help vaccinate a further 29 million children gets us a big step nearer to achieving that goal.

"The Prime Minister's leadership has already persuaded countries and other funders to commit an extra £200 million of support since 2011 . The greater the number of funders and countries joining the fight,

the closer we get to realising a future in which no child is paralysed by this disease. The UK is meeting its commitments."

The funding will help the Global Polio Eradication Initiative conduct immunisation activities. In the next two years, more than three billion doses of oral polio vaccine will be needed to immunise young children. Funding is also required for activities such as surveillance and technical assistance.

Since 1988, polio cases have been reduced by more than 99% and the disease is now close to being only the second in history - after smallpox - to be wiped out.

Polio remains endemic in Nigeria, Afghanistan and Pakistan and has re-infected several other countries causing pain and suffering to very young children.

Celebrating the 1500th Inspire project

The West Midlands Fire Service (WMFS) have been awarded the 1500th Inspire mark for two of its community based projects.

Marking the achievement, firefighters and young people from across the area competed against each other by pulling a fire engine.

The event was held as part of a year-long programme of activity which WMFS is hosting in a bid to encourage people from across the West Midlands to be inspired by the 2012 Olympics.

Presenting the award, Sport and Olympics Minister Hugh Robertson said he was "pleased to be in Birmingham to present this Inspire Award to the West Midlands Fire Service for its Fire Fighters Association Sports project and its One Body One Life project that are benefitting the lives of young people in the region."

Britain ‘should feel immensely proud’

The whole country should feel immensely proud of the achievements of London 2012, Sports Minister Hugh Robertson has said today.

Speaking after the Paralympics drew to a close, Mr Robertson paid tribute to the Olympic and Paralympic athletes, Torchbearers, and the army of volunteers and workers who helped deliver the Games.

“London 2012 has been a fantastic Games and the whole country should feel immensely proud of what has been achieved,” said Mr Robertson .
Paying tribute

“Quite rightly our glorious athletes have taken centre stage thanks to their incredible achievements, but we should also pay tribute to the thousands of torch bearers, volunteers and other unsung heroes who have all played their part.

“The closing ceremony may draw the curtain on the Games but we are determined to deliver a genuine and lasting legacy from London 2012.”

London Mayor Boris Johnson was also among those who praised the successful delivery of the Games. “The Olympic and Paralympic Games has taken years in the planning and there is a dedicated cast of thousands to offer our gratitude and without whom this glorious summer would not have been possible,” Mr Johnson said.

“This includes those who kept London working and a huge army of community-spirited volunteers. We must also pay tribute to our fantastic police and emergency services, the Armed Forces and security personnel, Transport for London staff and all transport workers.

Buy heating oil early, urges new campaign

The Government is backing a campaign by industry and consumer groups urging householders to stock up on heating oil now.

Buying oil as soon as possible before the onset of severe weather can mean a cost saving when demand is low and also means householders are guaranteed fuel during the coldest months.

Householders are also being advised to shop around for the best deal by the Buy Oil Early campaign, which is being run by ACRE (Action with Communities in Rural England), Citizens Advice Bureau, Consumer Focus, and FPS (the Federation of Petroleum Suppliers).

A cold snap in November

and December 2010 meant many householders, particularly in rural areas, found it difficult to get supplies as distributors were inundated with orders and deliveries were hampered by snow and ice on the roads.

John Hayes, Energy Minister, said: “I welcome the campaign by consumer groups and industry to encourage heating oil consumers to stock up early this winter.

“Previous severe winters show that it is better to stock up before the cold weather sets in, when suppliers have spare delivery capacity.

“Ordering oil later risks longer delivery times, especially if cold weather increases demand and disrupts deliveries.

“I would also encourage all consumers to save money on heating their homes by ensuring their homes are fully insulated.”

Review of e-lending launched

The best ways of making electronic books available through public libraries in England will be examined, Culture Minister Ed Vaizey has announced.

The review of e-lending will be led by William Sieghart, founder of Forward Publishing and the Forward Prize for Poetry. He will be helped by a panel of experts including Janene Cox, President of the Society of Chief Librarians, and author Joanna Trollope OBE.

The panel will consider issues such as the benefits of e-lending, current levels and expected future demand, and possible consequences for libraries, publishers and the public.

Although some library authorities in England

already use e-lending, there is no common consensus on the best way and publishers can be wary about making their books available for e-lending. Transforming library use

“E-lending is currently in its infancy but growing fast,” Mr Vaizey said. “Just as e-readers are transforming the way people access books, e-lending could help transform the way people use libraries. By acting now we can help influence the growth of e-lending to ensure that libraries, authors, publishers and the public all benefit from this potentially valuable new service.”

Mr Sieghart said: “E-lending is an exciting new development for libraries and their users but there are currently many unanswered

questions about the best way forward. I very much look forward to hearing views about how we can make the most of the growth of e-lending.”

The review panel will issue a call for evidence shortly and has been asked to report back in the New Year.



Museums must think creatively about the future

Ed Vaizey sets out the future policy direction for museums

In a speech to the Museums Association conference yesterday, the Culture Minister said all museums need to develop a stronger instinct for partnerships, commercial ventures and new approaches to funding.

“Those who fund museums and those who govern and lead them need to consider fresh strategies to ensure sustainability in the years to come,” said the Culture Minister.

During the speech Mr Vaizey also paid tribute to the work of the Museums, Libraries and Archives Council (MLA). Echoing the recommendations of the Leading Museums Group, Mr Vaizey spoke of the need for closer working and “cultural convergence”, in sharing collections, expertise and audiences between museums and the wider cultural sector, as well as with the creative industries.

Greater freedoms for people tying the knot

From October, couples tying the knot will be given greater freedom of choice as outdated time restrictions on ceremonies are removed.

People wanting to get married or register a civil partnership will be able to do so any time of the day or night under the protection of freedoms act. Couples were previously restricted to between 8am and 6pm.

Mark Harper, home office minister with responsibility for the general register office, said:

‘The public requested that we repeal this law and we listened.

‘Removing these restrictions will give people greater freedom of choice when planning their big day.’

Measures to allow couples greater freedom when getting hitched bring laws dating back to 1837 into the 21st century.

The time restrictions were introduced when the first general register office was established, in a bid to prevent clandestine marriages. The hours were further extended in 1886 and then 1934. Civil partnerships were then introduced in 2005, with the same time restrictions.

This change is permissive in that neither local authorities or religious groups are required to provide services outside the traditional hours. However, removing these unnecessary restrictions will provide the public with greater choice on when they can get married or register a civil partnership.

Sarah Rapson, registrar general for England and Wales, said:

‘These changes are good news to anyone planning a wedding or civil registration ceremony as they will allow couples to make their day much more personal. They can now choose to say their vows at sunrise or even walk down the aisle at midnight.

‘Following months of preparation, the general register office now stands ready to help deliver this new and more flexible service to the public.’

Many local authorities are already planning for this extension of their services and religious groups have been made aware of the changes.

This change is one of a number of measures being introduced as part of the protection of freedoms act, which received royal

assent in May this year. It was raised by members of the public through a cross-government survey: ‘your freedom’. People had the chance to suggest ideas on restoring liberties that have been lost, repealing unnecessary laws and stripping away excessive regulation. The Act aims to put traditional British freedoms at the heart of the Whitehall agenda.



New business bank to boost lending

Business Secretary Vince Cable announces first steps in a government funded bank to help small and medium sized businesses.



Business Secretary Vince Cable

The new bank will aim to attract private sector funding so that when fully operational, it could support up to £10 billion of new and additional business lending.

The Government will build a single institution that will

address long-standing, structural gaps in the supply of finance, identified in Tim Breedon's report on non-bank finance.

It will bring together in one place Government finance support for small and mid-sized businesses. It will also control the Government's interests in a new wholesale funding mechanism which will be developed to unlock institutional investment to benefit small businesses.

Vince Cable said:

"For decades British industry has lacked the sort of diverse, long-term finance that is quite normal elsewhere. We need a British business bank with a clean balance sheet and a mandate to expand lending

rapidly and we are now going to get it.

"Alongside the private sector, the bank will get the market lending to manufacturers, exporters and growth companies that so desperately need support.

"It will be a lasting monument to our determination to reshape finance so it can finally serve industry the way it should. Its success will not be the scale of its own direct interventions but how far it shakes up the market in business finance and helps to ease constraints for high-growth firms.

"Having a functioning, diverse supply of finance is an integral part of the Government's industrial strategy. It is all about making the right decisions now to secure our long-term industrial success."

The bank will operate at arms-length from Government. It will be professionally run and commercially focused. It will facilitate the provision of loans, including long-term capital, to UK firms through banks and other financial institutions. By harnessing the power of capital markets, it has the potential to transform business finance in the UK.

The new institution will operate through the wholesale markets, it will not have any retail presence and will not displace or subsidise banks.

Its role is to encourage the development of private sector solutions and enable the market to work properly, not compete with it.

More detail on the design of the bank and the types of interventions it will support will be provided in the autumn.



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Dementia campaign launches

The Department of Health has launched a campaign, supported by the Alzheimer's Society, to encourage people to talk to loved ones showing signs of dementia.

The three-month campaign in England, launched on World Alzheimer's Day, will raise awareness of the condition, early signs and symptoms and how to seek help. It includes television and print advertising.

Sir Michael Parkinson, Fiona Phillips and legendary England goalkeeper Gordon Banks have lent their support to the campaign, by sharing their personal experiences of dementia in a series of short films.

The campaign is part of the Prime Minister's Dementia Challenge

It will encourage people to have that first 'difficult conversation' with a friend or family member when they spot the signs and symptoms of dementia, and encourage them to visit their GP.

The Alzheimer's Society has provided advice on how to bring up the topic with a loved one who may be showing signs of dementia.

Jeremy Hunt, Secretary of State for Health, said:

"Our goal is to make this country a world leader in tackling the challenge of dementia. That requires us all to play our part, including being brave enough to start conversations about dementia to get our loved ones the early help we know makes a difference."

Initial signs and symptoms of dementia, which is

caused by diseases including Alzheimer's Disease, may include short-term memory loss that affects daily life, unexplained anxiety or depression and problems thinking or reasoning, such as finding it hard to follow conversations or TV programmes.

Care and Support Minister Norman Lamb said:

"Dementia is one of the biggest challenges we are facing, but while there remains no cure, early diagnosis can help people take control of their condition and plan for the future."

"This campaign sends a clear and important message - if you spot signs or symptoms in your loved ones then have that difficult conversation because diagnosis makes a difference.

Copyright infringement notification system

Secondary legislation on sharing the costs of the Digital Economy Act's measures to tackle online copyright infringement has been laid in Parliament.

"The Digital Economy Act sets out to protect our creative economy from online copyright infringement, which industry estimates costs them £400 million a year," said Communications Minister Ed Vaizey.

"We are introducing a system of mass notification to warn people about the unlawfulness of copyright infringement, explain the harm it does and point them toward legitimate content.

"These measures are expected to benefit industry by around £200 million a year and as rights holders will be the main beneficiaries, we believe our decision on costs is fair to everyone."

In September 2010 the Government announced that under the new legislation consumer notifications and appeals would be borne by rights holder and internet service providers (ISPs) at a ratio of 75:25 respectively.



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welters® Caskets

welters® have designed their own exclusive range of decorative caskets for full burial and cremated remains interment.

The design includes their trademark doves, leaves and butterfly motifs and they are available in antique bronze and polished stainless steel finishes or a combination of the two.

The introduction of these new products not only provides extra choice in quality caskets for the bereaved but also provides a UK manufactured and distributed product for Funeral Directors who traditionally source decorative caskets from the USA.

welters® caskets now offer a viable alternative with UK manufacturing supplying UK business which in turn creates and protects UK jobs.

Sainsbury's pledges to inspire next generation

Investment in inclusive sport for schools will build on the success of the School Games.

Sainsbury's has launched an inclusive PE training programme for teachers which aims to ensure disabled children can take part in sport in mainstream schools.

Sainsbury's Active Kids For All was launched today at Chiswick School in London with Paralympic gold medallist Ellie Simmonds, who joined children to answer their questions.

The supermarket chain is committing £1 million to fund the teacher training courses which will help more than 500,000 disabled pupils and children with special education needs to be included in school PE lessons.

Justin King, CEO of Sainsbury's, said: "While teaching and support staff undoubtedly have the skills, knowledge and competencies to deliver sport to disabled children and young people, not all have the confidence to fully include disabled children within their PE lessons. That is why we have worked with the Home Nations Disability Sport Organisations to develop Sainsbury's Active Kids For All." Paralympic sponsorship extended

Mr King also announced the company will extend its sponsorship of the British Paralympic Association (BPA) to support them through the Sochi Winter Paralympic Games in 2014 and to Rio in 2016.

Today's launch builds on

Sainsbury's £10 million support package for the School Games, which is a fully inclusive competition aiming to encourage competitive sport among young people across the spectrum of abilities.

Sports Minister Hugh Robertson said: "After this country's greatest ever summer of sport we must now do all we can to inspire the next generation of future Olympians and Paralympians. Sainsbury's Active Kids For All, along with the Sainsbury's School Games, will help increase disability sport in schools and encourage all children to get involved."

The programme has been developed in partnership with and will be delivered by the disability sports organisations for England, Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland, alongside the Youth Sport Trust and supported by the BPA.

Rude Britannia

Exhibition of British Comic Art at Tate Britain, 9 June - 5 September

Gasp, cringe, or have a sly chuckle: Rude Britannia will certainly cause a reaction.

Put together with some the country's best-known cartoonists and comedy writers, this exhibition explores British comic art from the 1600s to the present day.

Bringing together a wide array of paintings, sculptures, film and photography, as well as graphic art and comic books, the exhibition celebrates a rich history of cartooning and visual jokes.

Looking at comedy that is both timeless and of-its-time, Rude Britannia contrasts contemporary artists such as Angus Fairhurst with key historical pieces, and covers everything from Hogarth to the YBAs.

