

News story: Notification of charitable bequests – first meeting with charity sector

We held a very positive and productive first meeting with representatives of the charity sector on this issue, and we are grateful to them for their insight on key issues..

It was an invaluable opportunity for us to hear the sector's views on a range of matters, including the vital importance of legacies in funding charitable work and the need for continuity of service beyond the end of Smee & Ford's current notice period.

We were able to reflect that we are working closely with the company through this period and that HMCTS is looking to establish interim arrangements to ensure that charities continue to receive a notification service beyond July 2019 while we consider options for the longer term.

The meeting with the Institute of Legacy Management, Institute of Fundraising/Remember A Charity, National Council of Voluntary Organisations and the Association of Chief Executives of Voluntary Organisations follows a decision to end HMCTS' current arrangement with Smee & Ford, which has provided a paid-for notification service to participating charities for several years. While this was established in good faith, HMCTS has found that it is not consistent with the department's legal duties.

[Susan Acland-Hood's open letter](#) to the charity sector was published on 31 January 2019. A summary of the meeting will be published shortly too.

Press release: 'Missing Link' proposal unveiled for route linking Midlands and South West

The next step in a multi-million pound scheme to upgrade a key route linking the Midlands and South West has been announced by Highways England.

Speech: UK statement at the 63rd Commission on the Status of Women

I believe that every child is born with the potential to make a real contribution to society; and that communities and nations can achieve extraordinary things when the whole of society is truly empowered.

In our hearts we all know this, and yet we all still have some way to go to achieve true gender equality. In the meantime, all of our communities indeed our nations are being prevented from achieving our full potential.

Imagine, for a moment: a world without gender inequality. Imagine: no glass ceilings, no woman or girl cowed by violence or discrimination. Imagine 100% of the population, able to contribute 100% of their talents, 100% of the time. For all governments, this requires us to address the needs of women and girls at home, and to work together collaboratively to spread progress around the globe.

The UK Government will soon publish our new strategy on Gender Equality and Economic Empowerment. We will set out plans to dismantle the barriers that thwart women's progress at each stage of their lives. Our ambition is to ensure that every woman in the United Kingdom has the freedom, has the support, has the skills, and the choice to do what they want to do, and achieve what they are capable of. We are working hard to ensure that women are as likely as men to succeed in the workplace. To tackle the gender pay gap, we introduced legislation last year requiring employers to report their data. We are pleased that 10,000 have done so. This has been a catalyst for a national conversation, and has prompted many employers to take action to close that pay gap. We also remain totally committed to advancing gender equality internationally. It is at the heart of our approach to international development, international diplomacy and defence cooperation.

Mr Chairman, the Sustainable Development Goals will not be realised if we do not achieve gender equality and empower women and girls. Which is why the United Kingdom Government has announced landmark funding to support and empower them. We are now spending more than £1.2 billion over the next five years to expand access to sexual and reproductive health services around the world. We have also made the largest ever contribution to support the African-led movement to end female genital mutilation. The United Kingdom funded Girls' Education Challenge will help almost 1.5 million marginalised girls receive a quality education in some of the most difficult circumstances.

But perhaps most importantly, our world-leading research demonstrates that violence against women and girls is not inevitable, and our interventions can prevent it happening. And therefore we are giving support to women-led organisations, particularly women's rights defenders, to help them transform their own lives.

Preventing Sexual Violence in Conflict remains an enduring priority for the United Kingdom Government. It is a personal priority for me as our Prime Minister's Special Representative on the issue. Which is why I am pleased to announce that the UK will host a major international conference on Preventing Sexual Violence in Conflict from the 18th to the 20th November 2019 – which marks five years since the Global Summit to End Sexual Violence in Conflict. It will be an opportunity to chart progress, address challenges, and secure new commitments for further action.

Mr Chairman, achieving gender equality is a universal global challenge, and one for which each of us shares responsibility. We must all do more, because unlocking the potential of half of the world's population is in everyone's interests. It will lead to a more just, more stable, and more prosperous world. That, Mr Chairman, is a prize worth fighting for. It is a prize worth fighting for today and every day.

Thank you.

Speech: PM statement in the House of Commons: 13 March 2019

Prime Minister Theresa May made a statement in the House of Commons following this evening's vote.

Speech: PM statement in the House of Commons: 13 March 2019

On a point of order, Mr Speaker,

The House has today provided a clear majority against leaving without a deal.

However, I will repeat what I have said before. This is about the choices that this House faces. The legal default in UK and EU law remains that the UK will leave the EU without a deal unless something else is agreed.

The onus is now on every one of us in this House to find out what that is.

The options before us are the same as they have always been:

We could leave with the deal which this Government has negotiated over the

past two years.

We could leave with the deal we have negotiated but subject to a second referendum. But that would risk no Brexit at all, damaging the fragile trust between the British public and the members of this House.

We could seek to negotiate a different deal. However, the EU have been clear that the deal on the table is indeed the only deal available.

Mr Speaker, I also confirmed last night that, if the House declined to approve leaving without a deal on 29 March 2019, the Government would bring forward a motion on whether the House supports seeking to agree an extension to Article 50 with the EU, which is the logical consequence of the votes over the past two days in this House.

The Leader of the House will shortly make an emergency business statement confirming the change to tomorrow's business.

The motion we will table will set out the fundamental choice facing this House.

If the House finds a way in the coming days to support a deal, it would allow the Government to seek a short limited technical extension to Article 50 to provide time to pass the necessary legislation and ratify the agreement we have reached with the EU.

But let me be clear, such a short technical extension is only likely to be on offer if we have a deal in place.

Therefore, the House has to understand and accept that, if it is not willing to support a deal in the coming days, and as it is not willing to support leaving without a deal on 29 March, then it is suggesting that there will need to be a much longer extension to Article 50. Such an extension would undoubtedly require the United Kingdom to hold European Parliament elections in May 2019.

I do not think that would be the right outcome.

But the House needs to face up to the consequences of the decisions it has taken.