

Speech: Chair's speech to the Charity Commission Annual Public Meeting

Good morning, I am grateful to you all for being here today and would like to express my thanks in particular to the Lord Mayor for her very warm words of welcome.

This is the first Charity Commission annual public meeting held outside London for many years – and I am delighted that we're here in Manchester.

I agree with the Lord Mayor in what she has said about this great city, and about the effect of charity within communities, and our society.

The Lord Mayor's reflections on the public response to the horrific attack of 2017 serves as a reminder of an important principle.

Namely that charitable institutions and organisations are the form and structure we give to something that is more important and precious: the charitable instinct itself.

An instinct, an energy that I know is in strong evidence here in Manchester.

It is vital that charitable endeavour can thrive and succeed.

On the most basic level, we need charity to thrive because we are increasingly reliant on the work that charities do.

An ever wider range of public and essential services are delivered through charity, and charities are leading clever, brave solutions to the challenges we face as a country.

An example: yesterday, I had the great pleasure of spending time with the staff, volunteers and beneficiaries of a project called Inspiring Change Manchester.

The project is a collaboration of charities and other agencies, led by Shelter, who are working together to break the cycle of homelessness for people with complex needs and make a lasting difference to their lives.

A small example of the essential, life-sustaining role charities play in our communities and in the lives of the most vulnerable among us.

But aside from the utilitarian need for the services of charities, there is a deeper, more profound reason why we need charitable endeavour to thrive.

At a time of division and uncertainty, charity has a unique potential to bring individuals and communities together.

Not because charity is easy, or fluffy – indeed charity is often involved in difficult debates about how best to tackle problems, how best to grasp

opportunities in our society and how resources should be allocated.

Charity's potential to bring people together lies not in a sameness of world view, but in similarity of those qualities that enjoy universal admiration and respect: selflessness, commitment to a cause greater than ourselves, a sense of public spirit, and of hard graft.

And an attitude that says: we can and must change our communities, our society, for the better.

The way in which Mancunians responded to the horrific experiences of 2017 highlights this: that response has not just been about helping those affected directly by the attack.

It has also been an expression of will on the part of a city that says: those acts do not define or represent us. Wherever our grandparents were born, whatever the colour of our skin, no matter our religion or political affiliation: we are united in a sense of common decency and humanity.

Galvanizing that sense of unity and solidarity is important not just for Manchester.

There are forces at work in our society that are driving a feeling of uncertainty and division.

Technological change that is giving rise to worries for us as citizens in a democracy, as parents, and as employees.

Increasing geographical mobility and uneven economic development that has left some people, in some communities, feeling left behind and forgotten.

Environmental warnings that challenge us to change our way of living and consuming.

And we face more immediate questions about how to heal the divisions that were exposed by the EU referendum and, most worrying, seem to be growing and hardening.

The big institutions and systems that used to provide a sense of belonging are no longer able to do that – affinities of class, of local community, even traditional political tribes are losing their power.

And the small moments and symbols of a shared identity are being lost too. When I was growing up, people of different backgrounds and ages could talk to one another about what was on the telly last night, or about the film showing at the local cinema.

That's now largely a thing of the past.

I'm not suggesting all change is for the worse – I do not look back nostalgically to the golden past. Far from it.

The point I'm making is that the ground beneath our feet is shifting more

profoundly and more quickly than it has for generations.

We need charities to live up to public expectations so that the sector, together, can be a much-needed source of hope, identity and pride.

But we have to face up to the fact that, as fantastic as the work of many charities is, charities collectively are not yet reaching that potential.

It's essential we understand why and respond.

In-depth research that we undertook last year shows that people conceive of charity in lots of different ways, depending on where they live, how old they are, how highly educated they are and so on.

But there is near universal agreement as to the basic expectations people have of charity.

Namely that being a charity is not just about what you say your aims are, or even that you meet them – but how you go about meeting those aims. About who you are, and how you behave.

And what the public want is for charities to show that they understand these expectations.

For charities to show that they are the custodians of something very precious.

The concept or notion of charity is not, and cannot, be defined by the institutions on our Register – because the idea of charity belongs to everyone and is there to be shared.

Julia Unwin's recent inquiry into the role and future of Civil Society made parallel findings: she found that civil society organisations are not, at the moment, living up to their potential as agents of social empowerment and positive change.

They are too often seen as part of an elite, an establishment that makes decisions for people, not with or on behalf of people.

I don't say these things to criticise individual charities or to put anyone in this room down.

I say it because for you to succeed, to deliver maximum benefit to your beneficiaries and society at large, you need the public's support – both explicitly and tacitly.

And I say it because I know you believe in the causes you support, and that you care. Not just for your beneficiaries, but for your communities and your society.

And because I believe charities, and the Charity Commission share, a collective responsibility for meeting legitimate expectations the public have of charity.

If we work together to meet those expectations, the prize for our society, for all of us, will be great.

For us at the Commission, that responsibility starts with recognising that regulation is not an end in itself.

We must fulfill our statutory regulatory functions, of course. But we must amount to more if we want to make a real difference.

Crucially, we must be the voice of the public, and the public interest in charity.

And so we have set ourselves a new purpose: we must help ensure charity collectively can thrive and inspire trust, so that people can change lives and strengthen society.

That purpose is at the heart of a new strategy that comes into effect next month.

That strategy sets out 5 new strategic priorities, which Helen will talk about in a little more detail later.

They are to:

- hold charities to account
- deal with wrongdoing and harm
- give charities the tools they need to succeed
- inform public choice, and
- keep charity relevant to today's world.

Each priority is aimed at helping us deliver on our purpose, and play our part in maximising charity's benefit to society.

I hope that from April and in the months beyond, you will begin to see change in line with our purpose and strategic priorities.

In the meantime, expect to see a more confident Commission.

A Commission that is unafraid to use its voice and authority to encourage behaviour and conditions that help charity thrive.

These interventions may not always be convenient to us, to others in positions of authority, or to individual charities. But they'll always be motivated by our purpose – and in the interest of the public we represent and for whom charity is so precious.

There are some important milestones ahead for us.

Soon, we will publish the findings and conclusions of our investigation into Oxfam. We expect that this will shine a fresh spotlight on charities and the way in which they protect the people who come into contact with them, above all their beneficiaries.

Also in the weeks ahead, we will publish new guidance for charities that have close relationships with non-charitable organisations.

The purpose of the guidance will be to help ensure that all of a charity's decisions are motivated by the best interests of its beneficiaries and the wider public they serve.

Charities must never be captured by uncharitable interests.

And while the primary function of the guidance is to advise trustees, it will also help us hold people to account when they misuse or mishandle relationships that involve charities.

So I hope you'll see a changed, more purpose-driven Commission in the years ahead.

And I expect charities, as well as the public, to hold us to account in the way we deliver against that purpose.

There are practical challenges for us, as there are for charities. I am determined that we do not lose sight of the basics.

That includes the quality of service we provide to charities that need to engage with us – whether as applicants for registration, when filing their annual information, or when they are subject to regulatory interventions.

We will be working hard in the months ahead to make sure we're fulfilling our statutory functions to the best of our ability.

We are tightly resourced, but we are absolutely clear that our financial limits don't give us an excuse not to meet the same standards of operational performance that we demand of those we regulate.

We are working hard to keep improving our efficiency within the resources available to us.

But no matter how driven and focused the Commission is, or how well resourced we might want to be, we can't alone ensure that charity inspires trust, and thrives, and makes the biggest difference possible.

Achieving that will involve charities – all charities – including everyone in this room.

I've been in post as Chair of the Charity Commission for just over a year now, and in that time, I've met with scores of people involved in charity in different ways.

I've met senior leaders in large household name charitable institutions.

I've met volunteers and staff at small, grassroots charities serving geographical communities, or providing very specific services at the national level.

And I've held or attended a wide range of round tables with groups of charities – faith charities, heritage charities, grant-making foundations and more.

I've been struck by the extent to which the sector's leaders recognise the need to do more, to show that their purpose and beneficiaries motivate all decisions, and to change how they operate to deliver those aims.

Recently, I spoke to the leader of a household charity that has significantly reformed its approach to raising funds from the public.

Its trustees and senior leadership team have taken that step, not because it's in the short term financial interests of the charity as an organisation.

In fact it's leading – at least for now – to a decline in funds raised.

They are making the change because they know that, by developing a more respectful relationship with their donors and supporters, they are inspiring long-term trust and confidence – which is in the best interest of meeting their purpose and serving their beneficiaries.

I was delighted to hear that story.

But I'm not the only person who needs to hear it. For that charity to gain the full long-term benefit of the change they've made in terms of growing public support and confidence – they need to be open about it, and explain why that change makes them better able to deliver on their purpose in the public interest.

That may involve saying that the way they used to approach donors was not good enough.

By describing how public concerns are being responded to is how the charity sector will convince the public that change is afoot and their expectations are understood and are being met.

We have become wary of authority of all kinds – politics, corporates, religious institutions. Partly because of a sense that institutions have been captured by a drive above all for self-preservation and self-promotion – of the institution itself, of the people that run them.

I can envisage a better society, where people feel empowered, and live in the expectation that their institutions are driven by what's right for those they serve.

I know that's a vision shared by people across the sector, like those I met at Inspiring Change Manchester.

Charities have the power – collectively – to make and shout about that change and provide examples of a better way of running an organisation.

So let's not leave it to others in our society to signal that change, let's start with charities, whose very purpose is to change lives and strengthen

society for the benefit of all.

Thank you.

Speech: Remarks by His Majesty King Abdullah II at the Jordan: Growth and Opportunity Conference

Development Secretary Mordaunt, your excellencies, distinguished partners and friends, thank you.

I am truly delighted to be with you today.

Jordan and the UK are like old friends who have learnt over the years they can count on each other whatever the weather. Our countries have been friends through sunshine and storm. And I deeply appreciate the UK's commitment, and the hard work of all those who have helped organise today's conference.

Let me also express my very great thanks to all of you who have joined us. Here today are representatives of over 60 countries and major international institutions, and leaders of the global financial and private-sector community. Your participation sends a clear message of support—that the world understands the importance of a strong and prospering Jordan.

And I would particularly like to thank my fellow Jordanians. It is solely because of their resilience and capability that our country has been able to stand strong in the face of external storms. And that same resilience and capability is the source of the opportunities that lie ahead. Young Jordanians, especially, have a leading role, and I am glad to see some of Jordan's dynamic men and women represented at this important event.

My friends, I know today's meetings are focusing in detail on Jordan's economic opportunities. So let me say just a few words about the importance of your work.

There's no question that the past years have been exceptionally challenging. Jordan's commitment to reform was showing success when we, like many others, were hit by the global financial crisis and multiple shocks to global energy prices and sources. Regional turmoil disrupted key trade routes and energy flows. And our situation worsened with the Syrian refugee crisis—a global burden that global assistance has not adequately shared, despite some of the very, very committed international partners that we have.

Yet, throughout these challenges, Jordan remained secure, strong, and a centrepiece for the values that our world depends on—mutual respect,

moderation, steady determination, the dignity of all. We have held out our hands in compassion to desperate refugees, as we have always done. And we have taken difficult, responsible action to tackle the tremendous economic and budgetary strains.

But slow growth cannot take us to the future that we know is possible. It cannot give us the jobs and better lives that my people expect and deserve, especially after so much sacrifice. And supporting our people supports Jordan's positive international role as a durable force for peace, for interfaith harmony, and for positive development in the region and in the world.

So Jordan took a good hard look at our economic agenda, and the result is clear—strategic refocus on our competitive advantages. In the spotlight, first and foremost, is our powerhouse of talented, aspiring young people. Second is our central geo-strategic position, connecting continents and markets. And third is Jordan's respected international role, which stands behind our established trade relationships and numerous FTAs.

As you will hear today, our economic strategy prioritises service sectors that benefit directly from Jordan's high-value human capital. Now these sectors are ripe for growth, provide the better-paying jobs that can meet the pressing needs of Jordanians, and take advantage of our many trade agreements, which give Jordan-based businesses access to a billion customers around the world. We are also aggressively shifting towards green energy, by leveraging Jordan's advantages in solar and wind. And by next year, we expect one-fifth of our energy will be generated through renewables. All of this boosts economic activity and jobs.

Our country has already embarked on more reforms to foster a healthy business climate. And we are actively working with the international community to ensure the fiscal space that is needed for economic growth. Access to concessional financing is essential.

Now our strategy covers five years, to permit predictability and sustainability. But we are not waiting for events to unroll by themselves. You will hear today about ready-to-invest opportunities streamed by our Project Pipeline, a Jordan-led effort, in partnership with the IFC, to develop bankable opportunities with the legal and financial structuring that investors expect.

My friends, this conference is just the beginning of a new programme of transformative economic growth for Jordan, and the benefits of supporting this process run deep. When global economic players like you support people who are doing the right thing, when you grow opportunity, when you respect the hopes of a new generation, and when you help youth shape a positive future; you build a platform for a healthy, stable, ethical global economy on which everyone's future depends.

And if you think I am speaking today as an advocate for Jordan, you are absolutely right.

In the last 20 years, no one has seen more of my people's strength and resilience. No one has listened harder to our families and seen their steadfast labour, generosity, and determination. No one has flown over more of our amazing landscape, or seen more of its diversity up close.

I've watched our cities begin the vital work of renewal, with brilliant urban regeneration projects like Abdali in Amman. I've seen solar power and wind farms open the door to green energy solutions. And I've been to our five UNESCO World Heritage Sites, beacons of regional and global tourism. I've seen our fertile green farms and our blue-water seaport. And I've met with thousands of young Jordanians at work for our future—bilingual computer programmers who have led the region in communications and Arabic internet content; young businesswomen and businessmen building domestic, regional, and global markets; young scientists leading the way at the Middle East's first particle accelerator; and many, many other young leaders and innovators. They are ready for you.

So my friends, the fact is if you haven't been in Jordan recently, you haven't been in Jordan. And I want to invite all of you to visit and join us in an exciting future.

Economic leadership is by its definition forward-looking. And your forward-looking engagement will send a powerful message, a message of hope for my people and for yours.

This conference and its goals have been written with the tagline 'Growth & Opportunity'. Now, you will be writing the full story—writing it by your actions today and in the days ahead. And I wish you all every success.

Thank you very much.

Press release: Horse power slows the flow in the Aire catchment

Horse power is being used at Harden Moor in West Yorkshire, as part of a project to trial natural flood management techniques to reduce the risk of flooding.

Press release: Horse power slows the

flow in the Aire catchment

Ghalm is an 8 year old North Swedish Forest Horse, and has been recruited to the team to help move very large trees around the site to construct leaky dams.

Working horses have been used for thousands of years in industry to help move heavy objects. More recently the horses have been used in coal mining, to deliver beer, pull trams and carriages and move narrow boats around the canals of Europe. Now the Leeds Flood Alleviation Scheme's natural flood management project has the help of Ghalm to prepare the materials required to continue this important work.

Ghalm is one of a team of horses which have been used at other natural flood management sites such as Hardcastle Crags in Calderdale.

Harden Moor is one of the pilot natural flood management sites being delivered throughout the River Aire Catchment as part of the Leeds Flood Alleviation Scheme, led by Leeds City Council in partnership with the Environment Agency, which has a catchment wide approach to flood risk as it enters its second stage.

This £500,000 pilot programme, which has been funded by Leeds City Council, uses natural methods to slow the flow of water from upstream in the catchment. This includes land management to reduce water run-off, woodland creation to increase tree canopy cover and river and flood plain restoration so that the landscape can hold more water in times of flood.

On Harden Moor, the Environment Agency's project team are working in collaboration with Bradford Council to implement and deliver natural flood management on council owned land.

The natural flood management design for the site has been developed by Bradford Council as the lead local partner in the White Rose Forest joint venture. It includes interventions such as tree planting, wetland creation and the installation of leaky barriers to slow the flow of water into Harden Beck which is a major tributary to the River Aire. The wider project aims to reduce flooding downstream including in Bingley, Saltaire, Shipley, Esholt and Apperley Bridge. Native oaks are also being planted at the site to help slow the flow of water.

Chris Milburn, project executive at the Environment Agency said:

We are delighted that this tradition is now being extended to the work at Harden Moor and we are very grateful for the opportunity to work with Ghalm as it will be a huge help to us when delivering our flood alleviation measures. This work at Harden Moor will contribute to local flood risk reduction and wider environmental benefits, slowing the flow of water locally and to downstream communities.

Councillor Alex Ross-Shaw, Executive Member for Regeneration, Planning and Transport at Bradford Council, said:

The design we developed ensures that the improvements to the site are sensitive to the surrounding landscape and existing habitats are retained. It includes blocking drainage features and constructing leaky dams to reduce run-off and surface erosion, as well as creating woodland areas and planting sphagnum to increase water absorption. This land management maximises technique uses natural regeneration and re-wetting of heathland areas so that the landscape can hold more water in times of flood. The use of Horse logging is a really environmentally sensitive way to moving felled and fallen timber whilst reducing damage to flora and watercourses without pollution so it's great that we can use Ghalm in this way on our moorland to benefit areas downstream from Harden which include large areas of the Bradford district before the river reaches Leeds.

Leader of Leeds City Council, Councillor Judith Blake said:

Harden Moor is one of several pilot sites which will allow the team to be able to do monitoring and research of the techniques and gather evidence to increase their understanding and the benefits they give to reducing flood risk. The pilot programme is also being used by the Environment Agency and Leeds City Council to develop a co-design approach to working with landowners, tenants, local authorities and key stakeholders such as the Aire Rivers Trust and the White Rose Forest partnership. This will help to then develop future plans for the catchment.

Working with natural processes to reduce flood risk, known as natural flood management, is an important part of managing and reducing flood risk in a sustainable way alongside more traditional engineering solutions. The interventions will also create habitat for wildlife and help regenerate rural and urban areas through tourism.

Phase 2 of the Leeds Flood Alleviation Scheme has a strong focus on natural flood management, with proposals to create new woodland areas which would more than double canopy coverage in the River Aire catchment.

For more information on the project, visit the [Leeds Flood Alleviation Scheme website](#)

Speech: Remarks by the Prime Minister of Jordan, His Excellency Omar Razzaz, to the Jordan: Growth and Opportunity Conference

Your excellencies, distinguished guests, ladies and gentlemen,

On behalf of the Government of Jordan, and the people we serve, allow me to thank Prime Minister Theresa May and her outstanding team for their efforts to give Jordan this timely platform, which builds on a long and ever-fruitful partnership between Jordan and the United Kingdom.

My appreciation goes to my fellow Jordanian participants, especially the young women and men who came with us, through the Crown Prince Foundation, in order to represent the views of the youth in their localities.

And also, to the friends of Jordan. Let's remember that we have stood together in many fora, over many decades, in the service of peace, prosperity and global stability. I sincerely thank you for being here today, as a testament of your commitment to the Hashemite Kingdom of Jordan and the values we share.

Allow me to start by telling you about a recent archaeological discovery in northeastern Jordan, where the world's oldest piece of bread was found in a stone fireplace, dating back to a 14,500 year-old settlement, 4,000 years before the agricultural era began to take hold.

These oldest known remnants of bread left by our ancestors represent the kind of innovation and determination that we have preserved to this day, and, as Jordanians, we have shared and continue to share our bread with others. These traits have become embedded in Jordan's DNA.

In today's proceedings we hope to share our unique and compelling, even exciting, story with you. For, although we have faced a difficult period, we are at one of the most promising, pivotal points of our history as well. As you all know, Jordan lives in a tough neighborhood.... And while our neighborhood is a matter of 'destiny', what Jordan has chosen to do with its geopolitical circumstances has been a matter of sheer will and determination. In this complex and turbulent region, we have chosen to stick by the simple ethos of 'do well by doing good', for ourselves and for others.

If you recall, when the 2016 'Supporting Syria and the Region' conference was held in London the focus was on the international impact of the unfolding Syrian refugee crisis. For Jordan, that meant 1.3 million Syrians entering Jordan within less than five years. The impact on our infrastructure and economy was tremendous. According to World Bank estimates, our open door policy towards Syrians cost Jordan \$2.5 billion per year.

At the time, His Majesty King Abdullah warned that Jordan had reached a “boiling point”. Gratefully, some aid and support did come from the international community, and in our characteristically resolute, inventive and constructive way, Jordan managed to stabilise the situation and carry on doing good, serving our citizens and including all refugees in our health and education services.

This brings us back to why we are here and what we hope to achieve today. It is now the time for all of us to move forward from crisis management to growth and prosperity realization by working together with old friends and new partners to do good and do well.

Our dear friends, our partners.

First and foremost, Jordan’s immediate focus is to stimulate economic growth in order to provide greater opportunities to our citizens, now and for the future.

Moving forward on this mandate has required a number of tough and swift actions related to macroeconomic stability, stimulating economic growth, bringing down the cost of energy and unleashing the tremendous human capital potential in Jordan. Since coming to office eight months ago, my government has worked with Parliament to introduce a fairly stringent set of measures, including the elimination of certain subsidies, a reduction in public expenditures and the introduction of a new income tax law that fortifies the country’s fiscal foundations. In parallel, the government launched its priority action plan focused on improving people’s lives, which are centered on three main pillars: to strengthen the rule of law and governance; to provide better public services; and to propel economic growth, productivity and job creation.

Within this guiding framework, between January 2018 and February 2019, we have undertaken scores of key reforms, some of which will be presented today, from making sure procurement processes are more efficient and transparent; to strengthening Jordan public officials’ financial disclosure requirements; to introducing bold new labour laws designed to encourage women’s participation in the workforce.

Jordan understands that its path to sustainable and equitable economic growth includes aggressively increasing exports and foreign direct investments and enhancing its operational competitiveness.

For this, we have developed a Five-Year Reform and Growth Matrix, which combines short- and medium-term actions for a realistic economic transformation with key measures and outcomes. This Matrix is devised to create not just jobs, but also an enabling economic environment for the advancement of Jordan’s educated, skilled and motivated population, especially women and youth, in already leading fields in Jordan, such as business services, technology, healthcare, engineering, tourism and logistics, to name a few.

I can say with confidence that Jordan is now well positioned for investment

and growth. Whether this is in business-process outsourcing, reconstruction effort in neighbouring countries or export of goods using our exceptional trade agreements with the US, Europe as well as countries in the region and beyond.

A valuable tool for investors that we have developed in cooperation with our international partners is the 'Project Pipeline Development Facility'. The Project Pipeline is geared towards preparing Public-Private Partnership projects that would attract investments in key sectors such as water, health, ICT, tourism, waste management and transport.

You will hear much more about all of these sectors today, but allow me now to highlight our proven track record in Jordan's very promising, and just barely tapped, energy sector.

Frequent energy supply disruptions from regional sources taught us the importance of energy diversification and self-reliance.

Remarkably, it is in the same decade that we faced the greatest difficulties that we have also made great strides in the right direction. By utilising our abundant supply of renewable energy ... Jordan is well positioned to take advantage of a future full of emerging opportunities.

Now, we see energy as part of the solution, instead of a problem.

Indeed, targeted investments in Jordan's energy sector is setting in motion a virtuous cycle in the national economy, bringing down production costs, greening the economy, and allowing businesses big and small to become more competitive. Energy is just one sector that we, together with our international partners, plan to target in order to unlock Jordan's full potential.

Many other sectors have the same dynamic potential, and you will be hearing a lot more about them in upcoming sessions. Importantly, we want to hear from you because we hope these sessions today are just the beginning of a long-term dialogue and partnership between us.

My friends, the past decade, as difficult as it was, did teach us a few things about resilience, perseverance and growth.

Historically, Jordan has withstood one regional trauma after the other, and, despite this, Jordan has done and will continue to do all it can to do well by doing good, for ourselves, our region and our partners across the globe. We will continue to make bread and share it as we did 14,000 years ago, but also privately provided public goods, business services, innovations, and green solutions.

That's our ethos – it's in our national DNA – and we want all of you to be with us in this exiting journey to make this a better world.

Thank you so much.

[ENDS]