

Speech: Environment Minister speaks at the UN Climate Change Conference

I am delighted to be here at COP23, working with other nations, international organisations and of course Peter Thomson.

I thank Fiji for their leadership in the Presidency and Germany for being great hosts.

We have had feedback that the UK can play a greater role globally and we are happy to do that.

Oceans make up around two thirds of our planet and our lives are inextricably linked with our blue seas. However, our oceans are changing and we must take action to save them.

We now have nearly 300 Marine Protected Areas in UK waters, and by 2020 we will deliver a network of Marine Protected Areas that will cover 25 per cent of the UK's Exclusive Economic Zone. In addition, the UK is on track to protect 4 million square kilometres of ocean across its Overseas Territories by 2020.

The UK continues to be a global leader in protecting oceans and marine life. Action on plastic bag use has been taken across the UK, for instance, the 5p plastic bag charge in England has cut the use of plastic bags by over 80 per cent, or over 9 billion in just one year, and our microbead ban will be one of the toughest in the world.

We recognise the particularly damaging effects of climate change on developing countries. That is why the UK has committed at least £5.8 billion of international climate finance between 2016 and 2020 to help developing countries mitigate and adapt to the impacts of climate change.

One example of this is the £10 million we have committed to tackle mangrove loss in Madagascar that will benefit over 100,000 people in coastal communities by providing protection against natural disasters and supporting their livelihoods. It will deliver around 13 million tonnes of CO2 savings.

It is only by collaboration on a global scale that we can truly address marine climate issues, including ocean acidification.

We have already seen the devastating impact of rising sea levels on our coastal communities. We should be clear that ocean acidification could threaten the very basis of life itself. I say that because acidification threatens the whole basis of the marine ecosystem, as it literally attacks the building blocks of life as key organisms fail to develop fully, which is starting to disrupt the food web.

Earlier this year we published a synopsis of our [UK Ocean Acidification Research Programme](#) and, based on current projections, cold water corals will

be 20-30 per cent weaker, causing reef disintegration and losing the rich biodiversity that they support.

The programme provided an extremely successful collaborative science partnership across the UK and internationally, particularly with the EU European Project on Ocean Acidification and the German BIOACID programme. Science is the spur to action and the more we can collaborate across nations, the more we can innovate.

The UK set up the Marine Climate Change Impacts Partnership (MCCIP) to provide verifiable evidence of the effect of climate change. This brings together scientists, government, its agencies and NGOs and has just published "Marine Climate change Impacts – 10 years' experience of science to policy reporting".

However, there is more that we can do. This is why the UK Government is committed to a new United Nations Agreement for the conservation and sustainable use of marine biodiversity of areas beyond national jurisdiction, which will deliver real protection across the world's oceans.

Oceans Action Day reminds us of the importance of the two thirds of our world and that our blue spaces are just as precious as our green spaces – and that actions on land have consequences for all parts of this blue planet, especially those actions which are altering our climate.

That is why I am pleased to announce that the United Kingdom will today sign up to the "Because the Oceans" declaration and I encourage others who have not done so, to do the same.

Thank you.

Press release: Appointment of new members to the Local Government Boundary Commission for England

Communities Secretary Sajid Javid has today (Monday 13 November) confirmed that, following his recommendation to Her Majesty The Queen, two new commissioners have been appointed to the Local Government Boundary Commission for England.

Andrew Scallan CBE and Steve Robinson have been appointed for a term of 4 years, until 6 November 2021. The Local Government Boundary Commission for England's role is to review and implement changes to the electoral arrangements of local authorities, having regard to the statutory criteria of equality of representation, community identity and effective and convenient

local government.

This involves determining the number of councillors for an individual authority, the boundaries for wards and electoral divisions and the number of councillors for each ward.

Andrew Scallan CBE was the Deputy Chief Counting Officer at the referendum on membership of the European Union in 2016 and also served as Director of Electoral Administration at the Electoral Commission for 10 years until January 2017. Before joining the Electoral Commission, he worked for Manchester City Council in a range of roles including democratic and regulatory services. He is also an Honorary Member of the Association of Electoral Administrators and is a former joint editor of Schofield's Election Law.

Andrew was appointed CBE in January 2016 for services to electoral democracy.

Steve Robinson, who has a background in housing and regeneration, was the first chief executive of the new unitary council in Cheshire West and Chester established in September 2008. Before joining Cheshire West and Chester Council, he was the chief executive of Stoke on Trent City Council and was responsible for the transformation of council services in his previous role as Director of Community Services.

Steve is currently also a member of the Birmingham Independent Improvement Panel that is supporting Birmingham City Council.

Further appointments of Commissioners to the Local Government Boundary Commission for England are expected to be made early in 2018.

The [Local Government Boundary Commission for England](#) is a parliamentary body, independent of both central and local government. However, appointments to the Commission, other than that of the Chair, are made by the Crown on the recommendation of the Secretary of State.

The Commission Board consists of a Chair and at least 4 and no more than 11 other (ordinary) members. With these appointments the board will consist of the Chair and 5 members.

The Commission has a staff of approximately 25. The average annual expenditure, which is funded directly by Parliamentary, is in the order of £2.2 million.

Press release: And, Cut! 10 years

bankruptcy restriction for film producer

An Insolvency Service investigation found Mr Wilkinson, formerly of Brighton and Polegate in Sussex, failed to disclose income of £180,964 during the 12 months in which he was subject to bankruptcy, and the existence of three bank accounts that he held at the date of his bankruptcy.

Mr Wilkinson gave an undertaking to the Secretary of State for Business, Energy, & Industrial Strategy, to be bound for 10 years, by the restrictions until 4 October 2027. In addition, he cannot manage or control a company during this period without leave of the court.

The undisclosed income and bank accounts came to light during the Official Receiver's investigation into Warlord Productions Ltd, a company with which Mr Wilkinson had some involvement. The company was [wound up by the High Court in July 2015](#) on a petition presented by the Secretary of State in the public interest.

In April 2012 Mr Wilkinson entered into an Individual Voluntary Arrangement (IVA). The arrangement failed and so the IVA supervisor presented a petition for his bankruptcy. The bankruptcy order was made in the County Court at Brighton on 1 February 2013. The deficiency to creditors was £5,172,044.

At the date of the bankruptcy order, Mr Wilkinson was in receipt of Jobseekers Allowance, but that ceased shortly afterwards and during the 12 months of bankruptcy he received income totaling £180,964. Because the income and bank accounts were not disclosed by Mr Wilkinson, the creditors have been deprived of a possible return of some money.

Commenting on this case Anthony Hannon, Official Receiver in the Public Interest Unit, said:

Mr Wilkinson attended on the Official Receiver shortly after the making of the bankruptcy order and was made aware of his duty to disclose all his assets. He disclosed the existence of a single bank current account, but failed to disclose three further "wealth accounts" held at the bank.

He was also made aware of his duty to disclose full details of his income during the 12 months that he would be subject to the restrictions of bankruptcy. This duty exists so that the Official Receiver or trustee can decide whether to claim some of the income over and above what is needed for the bankrupt's living expenses for the benefit of creditors.

This ten years restriction should act as a deterrent to him and others from acting in the same way.

The bankruptcy order was made in the County Court at Brighton on 1 February 2013 following a petition presented on 8 August 2012. Mr Wilkinson received his automatic discharge from bankruptcy 12 months later on 1 February 2014.

Mr Wilkinson's date of birth is August 1970.

If the Official Receiver considers that the conduct of a bankrupt has been dishonest or blameworthy in some other way, they will report the facts to court and ask for a Bankruptcy Restrictions Order (BR0) to be made. The court will consider this report and any other evidence put before it, and will decide whether it should make a BR0. If it does, the bankrupt will be subject to certain restrictions for the period stated in the order. This can be from 2 to 15 years.

The bankrupt may instead agree to a Bankruptcy Restrictions Undertaking (BRU) which has the same effect as an order, but will mean that the matter does not go to court.

These are restrictions set out in insolvency law that the bankrupt is subject to until they are discharged from bankruptcy – normally 12 months and include that bankrupts:

- must disclose their status to a credit provider if they wish to get credit of more than £500
- who carry on business in a different name from the name in which they were made bankrupt, they must disclose to those they wish to do business with the name (or trading style) under which they were made bankrupt
- may not act as the director of a company nor take part in its promotion, formation or management unless they have a court's permission to do so
- may not act as an insolvency practitioner, or as the receiver or manager of the property of a company on behalf of debenture holder

Additionally, a person subject to a Bankruptcy Restrictions Order/Undertaking or a Debt Relief Restrictions Order/Undertaking may not be a Member of Parliament in England or Wales.

The Insolvency Service, an executive agency sponsored by the Department for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy (BEIS), administers the insolvency regime, and aims to deliver and promote a range of investigation and enforcement activities both civil and criminal in nature, to support fair and open markets. We do this by effectively enforcing the statutory company and insolvency regimes, maintaining public confidence in those regimes and

reducing the harm caused to victims of fraudulent activity and to the business community, including dealing with the disqualification of directors in corporate failures. Further information about the work of the Insolvency Service, and how to complain about financial misconduct, is [available](#).

BEIS' mission is to build a dynamic and competitive UK economy that works for all, in particular by creating the conditions for business success and promoting an open global economy. The Criminal Investigations and Prosecutions team contributes to this aim by taking action to deter fraud and to regulate the market. They investigate and prosecute a range of offences, primarily relating to personal or company insolvencies.

You can also follow the Insolvency Service on:

[News story: IPO customer visit programme 2016 to 2017](#)

The IPO customer visit team has published its annual report.

The Intellectual Property Office (IPO) customer visit programme is part of a wider schedule of stakeholder engagement. It provides us with an opportunity to meet our customers, share information on our services and collect a wide range of feedback.

The 2016 to 2017 report summarises the issues that were raised this year and provides further information from the IPO.

[Customer visit programme 2016/17](#) (PDF, 722KB, 24 pages)

If you would like us to visit you, please contact:

Reports from [2015](#), [2014](#) and [2013](#) are also available.

[Press release: Charities must do more to promote diversity on their boards, new research shows](#)

New research recommends that charities do more to promote diversity on their

boards and encourage applications from women, young people and people from ethnic minority and socially diverse backgrounds.

The report was commissioned by the Office for Civil Society and the Charity Commission, and delivered by a consortium led by Cass Business School and the Cranfield Trust.

The research finds that men outnumber women trustees on boards by two to one. The majority (92%) of trustees are white, older and above average income and education.

The research also finds that charity trustees, who are overwhelmingly volunteers, feel positively about their role and about the personal reward and satisfaction it gives them. It also highlights that trustees' contribution to charities amounts to a monetary equivalent of around £3.5 billion a year.

The researchers surveyed a sample of 19,064 trustees, via a national survey in January 2017. Around 3,500 trustees responded to the survey.

The report finds that:

- 71% of charity chairs are men and 68% of charity treasurers are men
- the average age of trustees is 55-64 years; over half (51%) are retired
- 75% of trustees have household incomes above the national median
- 60% of trustees have a professional qualification; 30% have post-graduate qualifications
- 71% of trustees are recruited through an informal process
- in 80% of charities trustees play both a governance role and an executive role – they have no staff or volunteers from whom they can seek support
- 70% of trustees are involved in charities with an incomes of less than £100k a year
- trustees report lacking relevant legal, digital, fundraising, marketing and campaigning skills at board level
- trustees are concerned about their skills in dealing with fraud and external cyber-attack
- trustees seek support and advice from one another – 80% of all respondents regard this as their most important internal source of advice and support, with only 6% seeking guidance or training from an external provider
- on average, trustees donate almost 5 hours a week to their trustee roles

The report also recommends that guidance and support for trustees should be reviewed and enhanced and should draw on developments in digital technology.

The Charity Commission, the regulator of charities in England and Wales, has published a [formal response to the research](#), which points to the growing importance of charities to our society, as charities perform a wide range of public functions – such as medical research and animal welfare – and take increasing responsibility for the delivery of public services.

Helen Stephenson, the Commission's chief executive, says that the research findings offer encouragement, but also point to systemic issues around the diversity of and recruitment to trusteeship:

Trustees make a vital contribution to our society and communities up and down the country rely on their voluntary efforts. It is heartening that, despite the demands on their time and expertise, trustees are overwhelmingly positive about their role.

But there is no room for complacency about the state of trusteeship. Trustees do not reflect the communities charities serve. Charities are therefore at risk of missing out on the widest range of skills, experience and perspective at board level – indeed trustees themselves report lacking key skill areas, including digital. Uniformity at board level also puts charities at risk by creating a culture of “group think” where decision making can go unchallenged – something our casework bears out. Diversity of experience, approach and personality helps guard against such problems and enables any organisation to foster a culture that is conducive to good governance.

I welcome this extensive and rigorous research and hope its findings act as a catalyst for action by charities to promote diverse trusteeship, and to better support existing trustees in their work. Trustees tell us that they enjoy their roles and I want more people from different backgrounds to benefit from this important experience

Lead researcher Professor Stephen Lee, Cass Business School said:

This is the first comprehensive research of the Charity Commissions register of trustee roles. The findings contained in this report dispel a number of previously prevailing myths about charity trusteeship.

Contrary to earlier research, over 85% of trustees reported that they were fully or mainly aware of their responsibilities when they were appointed, and this increased to 90% being fully or mainly aware of their legal responsibilities as a board member.

The vast majority of trustees (80%) are located in very small charities with no staff to support them. In practice, this means that these trustees must address both managerial and governance demands if the charities that they represent are to sustain themselves effectively.

Despite this, most charity trustees find the role personally rewarding (90%) and regard it as important or very important to them (94%). The monetary value that their voluntary service delivers to society is estimated at £3.5 billion per annum.

Also published today, as part of the [same research programme](#), is a report by The Cranfield Trust and National Council for Voluntary Organisations (NCVO) which examines the advice and support available to charity trustees.

The report finds that the uptake of formal support by trustees is low, and that trustees report finding difficulty in identifying appropriate support. Organisations providing trustee services confirm the findings of the Cass research that trustee recruitment is largely informal, and raise questions about whether existing support offerings are tailored to the needs of trustees.

Amanda Tincknell, CBE, CEO of The Cranfield Trust says:

The study of organisations providing services to trustees and boards identifies opportunities which are also highlighted in the survey of individual trustees. Informal trustee recruitment is the norm, and joining a board is a point when people becoming trustees could be most receptive to information and learning about the role.

Encouraging charities to use open recruitment approaches and improving signposting among support organisations will help trustees and the organisations they serve to develop their knowledge and skills. There's a real opportunity to reach many more trustees and strengthen individuals and boards in their critical role.

The two reports were commissioned by the Charity Commission and the Office for Civil Society.

Report I: Taken on Trust, the awareness and effectiveness of charity trustees in England and Wales was partly funded by the Worshipful Company of Management Consultants. The authors are Professor Stephen Lee, Professor of Voluntary Sector Management, Centre for Charity Effectiveness, Cass Business School, Dr Bob Harris, Pro-bono Consultant, Worshipful Company of Management Consultants, Nikki Stickland, Charity Commission, and Silvani Pesenti, Cass Business School.

Report II: Taken on Trust, the provider perspective on advice and support for charity trustees was delivered by NCVO with the Cranfield Trust.

Ends

Notes to Editors

The Charity Commission is the independent regulator of charities in England and Wales. To find out more about our work, see our [annual report](#).

[Cass Business School](#), which is part of City, University of London, is a leading global business school driven by world-class knowledge, innovative education and a vibrant community. Located in the heart of one of the world's leading financial centres, Cass has strong links to both the City of London

and the thriving entrepreneurial hub of Tech City.

[The Cranfield Trust](#) is the UK's leading provider of free management support to the voluntary sector. Working with a register of 1,000 professionals from the commercial sector, the Trust supports over 400 voluntary organisations with strategic, tailored consultancy projects each year. Services also include online HR information and advice, and a national series of masterclasses and learning events.

[The Worshipful Company of Management Consultants \(WCOMC\)](#) is a modern Livery Company in the City of London, founded in 1992. Its members have extensive experience in the management consultancy profession. WCOMC was instrumental in establishing the Cass Centre for Charity Effectiveness (Cass CCE) and has worked with Cass CCE on many initiatives over the past decade. As well as providing grants from a modest Charitable Fund, the WCOMC also has a vibrant Pro-Bono Programme whereby experienced management consultants provide pro-bono support to charities and other not-for-profit organisations in London, the UK and internationally. This research study was supported by the WCOMC Pro-Bono Programme.