

[Press release: PM call with Chief Minister of Gibraltar: 2 April 2017](#)

The Prime Minister called the Chief Minister of Gibraltar, Fabian Picardo, this morning.

She reiterated our long-standing position that the UK remains steadfastly committed to our support for Gibraltar, its people and its economy. The Prime Minister said we will never enter into arrangements under which the people of Gibraltar would pass under the sovereignty of another state against their freely and democratically expressed wishes, nor will we ever enter into a process of sovereignty negotiations with which Gibraltar is not content.

The Prime Minister said we remain absolutely dedicated to working with Gibraltar for the best possible outcome on Brexit, and will continue to involve them fully in the process.

[Press release: Millicent Fawcett to be honoured with first statue of a woman in Parliament Square](#)

A statue of Millicent Fawcett, one of the leading figures in the campaign to win women the vote, is to be erected in Parliament Square

A statue of Millicent Fawcett, one of the leading figures in the campaign to win women the vote, is to be erected in Parliament Square – making her the first-ever woman to be honoured in this way. As president of the National Union of Women’s Suffrage Societies, Dame Millicent Garrett Fawcett, GBE, led the peaceful campaign for women’s suffrage. She also campaigned for women’s rights in many other areas, including access to higher education. The statue will form part of celebrations to mark the centenary of the Representation of the People Act 1918, which was introduced thanks to Fawcett’s campaigning and which first gave some women the right to vote. Full equality at the ballot box was not achieved until a decade later, just a year before Fawcett’s death.

Prime Minister Theresa May said:

The example Millicent Fawcett set during the struggle for equality continues to inspire the battle against the burning injustices of

today.

It is right and proper that she is honoured in Parliament Square alongside former leaders who changed our country.

Her statue will stand as a reminder of how politics only has value if it works for everyone in society.

Communities Secretary Sajid Javid said:

Millicent Fawcett was one of the great campaigners for equal rights and all of us – women and men alike – owe her a debt of gratitude

This statue will be a fitting tribute to Fawcett and all she achieved. Standing in front of Parliament, it will remind us all of the sacrifices Fawcett made and the journey that we as a country have come on over the past 100 years.

The statue will be funded from the £5 million fund provided at the Spring Budget to support projects marking the anniversary.

[Press release: Flood-hit farm groups given £800,000](#)

The focus of this round of the [Facilitation Fund](#) is on developing a new approach to natural flood management, to help communities hit by the winter storms of 2015 and early 2016.

Organisations such as the National Trust, Yorkshire Dales National Park and the Rivers Trust are joining forces with farmers. They will plant trees, create water meadows and restore rivers to their natural meanders within river catchments in Cumbria, Lancashire, Greater Manchester, Northumberland, County Durham and Yorkshire.

In the 2 years since the scheme began 61 groups with 1218 land managers have been supported, covering more than 273,000 hectares of land.

Farming Minister George Eustice said:

We are committed to helping farmers better protect their land, and surrounding communities, from flooding.

We're already investing £15 million in natural flood management

schemes across the country, making sure we protect homes and businesses as well as protecting our precious wildlife.

This exciting scheme is a win-win and will see us build-up flood resilience while at the same time achieving some real benefits for our rich natural habitats including our ancient woodlands, grasslands and moorlands.

This is the latest in a series of natural flood management projects which demonstrate the government's commitment to using the best available mix of flood protection measures.

It builds on £15m already committed to similar schemes across the country.

Chief Executive of Natural England James Cross said:

The Facilitation Fund is enabling farmers to use natural flood management techniques, such as slowing the flow through river restoration and tree planting, which not only help to cope with the extreme climatic events that the environment is throwing at us but also benefit nature.

We've relied heavily on local knowledge from our area advisers and the expertise of our partners to help groups put forward plans that will benefit nature at the same time as reducing the risk of flooding.

The scheme is designed to work with nature in [flood-hit communities](#), in response to priority actions identified in [Flood Action Plans](#).

The [projects funded this year](#) add to our learning around managing extreme climate events through natural flood management. This technique uses nature-based solutions to address flood management through activities such as:

- restoring ancient and native woodland
- creating more wet woodland
- management of grasslands, including traditional hay meadow
- management of moorlands to restore blanket bog and wet heathland
- restoration of river habitat
- improved soil management

Across England a total of £5.4 million has been committed through the Countryside Stewardship Facilitation Fund for groups of land managers to improve their local environment at a landscape-scale. This builds on the principles of partnership working to deliver ambitious, evidence-based actions that will deliver for the environment, business and local communities.

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[News story: Pre-payment meter price cap comes into effect to protect millions of consumers](#)

Today the CMA's price cap on pre-payment meters has come into force to the benefit of around 4 million households.

Last June, following a [two-year investigation](#) into the energy market, the Competition and Markets Authority (CMA) decided to put in place a temporary price cap to protect some of the most vulnerable households in Britain.

The temporary cap is expected to reduce bills across Britain and will save the average household £80 a year. The CMA found that people using pre-payment meters had less choice and were paying disproportionately higher bills than customers paying by other means – including direct debit.

The price cap will remain in place until the end of 2020 when the smart meter roll-out – combined with other changes imposed on the industry by the CMA – is expected to tackle issues that prevent such customers accessing the better deals available to others.

Andrea Coscelli, Acting Chief Executive of the CMA, said:

Households across the UK deserve to get a fair deal on their energy bills.

On top of a number of measures to get competition working better, the CMA's pre-payment meter price cap means that more than 4 million consumers, many of whom are vulnerable, and who can't easily shop around for a better deal, will see their bills cut by around £80 a year each, saving British customers a total of £320 million per year.