

[News story: Natural England reduces red tape on badger class licences](#)

Natural England's new [class licence](#) will mean badgers continue to have the same high level of protection when it is necessary to move an active sett.

This new licence will reduce paper work delays on building sites. Currently applications take up to 30 working days to process; the new licence is expected to take just five working days.

Natural England is asking ecological consultants, who apply for such licences on behalf of developers, local authorities, churches and other public bodies, to sign-up now so pre-registration checks can be completed before July. Licences are only issued between July and November to avoid moving badgers caring for cubs.

This new approach is a change to the administration of the licence – the powers for moving badgers remain the same.

Where the licence is for the purpose of development, work to exclude badgers will only begin once an artificial sett has been constructed nearby and 'discovered'.

Only specialists, with the required high level of knowledge and experience in excluding badgers, will be able to register to act under this licence. The class licence is not for individual homeowners.

Badgers and their setts are protected under the Protection of Badgers Act 1992. This level of protection is unaffected by the class licence.

[Scottish Conservatives to oppose SNP's independence bid](#)

- [Home](#)
- [All News](#)
- Scottish Conservatives to oppose SNP's independence bid

20 Mar 2017



The Scottish Conservatives will vote against the SNP government's plan to take Scotland back to an immediate referendum campaign.

Ahead of the two-day Holyrood debate, the party said a majority of Scots did not want a separation re-run, and it was the wrong course of action to take.

Scottish Conservative leader Ruth Davidson said:

“The SNP’s motion makes it clear that Nicola Sturgeon is determined to fire the starting gun on another divisive referendum campaign this week.

“At a time when we should be coming together as a country, it is the wrong course of action to take.

“A clear majority of Scots say they don’t want to go through the uncertainty of another referendum at this time.

“Worse, Nicola Sturgeon wants to trigger an immediate campaign while still hiding the facts on independence, such as the currency, EU membership and the price tag it would entail.

“Nicola Sturgeon wants to set a date but she won’t tell us the plan. It is utterly irresponsible.

“We all had a vote on our membership of the UK three years ago. The SNP promised to respect that result. Yet now Nicola Sturgeon is using Brexit as an excuse to take us back to the division and uncertainty of the past.

“We believe a referendum cannot happen while the Brexit process is being played out.

“And we believe a referendum should not happen when there is no public or political consent for it to happen.

“It is a reasonable and rational position to hold. Scotland is saying loud and clear to Nicola Sturgeon – now is not the time.”

Press release: New support to boost grassroots British charities

The UK will champion the passion and experience of grassroots British charities working on the frontline to deliver for the world’s poorest, International Development Secretary Priti Patel said today.

Speaking at the Bond annual conference Ms Patel announced an innovative fund dedicated to supporting small development and humanitarian organisations to scale up the excellent work they already do to help the poorest and most vulnerable communities in the world.

This fresh new approach to supporting small UK charities will increase the

reach of their interventions to deliver even more effectively for the world's poorest and most marginalised people.

International Development Secretary Priti Patel said:

Britain's small charities do amazing, often highly innovative work in some of the world's poorest places. Often staffed by volunteers, their dedication to the most disadvantaged in the world is remarkable.

Giving Britain's small charities financial support will give a real boost to the excellent work they do. I will increase DFID's support for these grassroots charities as I believe that smaller charities are a crucial part of the Great British offer on international development.

The Secretary of State also announced a new partnership between the DFID, the Charity Commission and the wider sector. This new partnership will provide training to small and medium sized organisations working overseas on development to build their skills and capabilities and increase their effectiveness, at the same time as increasing public trust and support for development work.

Chairman of the Charity Commission William Shawcross said:

We are delighted to be working closely with DFID on this project. British charities have a proud history in the delivery of overseas aid and development in dangerous places.

Helping small and medium sized charities deal with today's huge risks is crucial. This work will be key in building capacity to ensure these charities can operate to the highest standards. We hope this new project with DFID will lead to even deeper co-operation between us.

Dhaka Ahsania Mission UK (DAM UK) Programme and Fund Manager Emma Crump said:

As the sole employee of a small UK registered international development NGO working in Bangladesh, we fully welcome a fund specifically tailored to charities like ours. Small NGOs like Dhaka Ahsania Mission UK (DAM UK) often have minimal staff and resources yet carry out vital and unique work reaching some of the most marginalised and vulnerable communities around the world. Small NGOs often have a greater degree of adaptability and specialist knowledge that is directly informed from the communities they work closely with.

Many charities in a similar position to us are funded by dedicated

supporters who feel passionate about our work and are essential in assisting that work to continue. Small charities often dedicate their minimal staff and resources towards sourcing larger or multi-year funds, yet for many, the scale and complexity of the application process renders it an unsustainable option. This is despite the work the charity is doing being of great value and often distinctive.

Accessing tailored UK aid funding for small NGOs would enable us to scale up our work, carry out longer term initiatives and focus on sharing our learning. We would feel much more confident in applying for a fund that recognises the challenges faced by small NGOs. An opportunity such as this has great potential to help small NGOs build their organisational capacity and become more robust.

Notes to editors:

- DFID will be launching the new Small Charities Challenge Fund this summer. This Fund will be specifically targeted at small UK-registered civil society organisations with an annual income of less than £250,000.
- This will be the first time DFID has set up a fund dedicated purely to charities of this size.
- The launch of the Small Charities Challenge Fund is in response to the consultation with smaller charities during DFID's [Civil Society Partnership Review](#).
- Smaller organisations are a crucial part of the great British offer on international development.
- DFID's new partnership with the Charity Commission will provide support to strengthen small and medium sized organisation's skills and capabilities when it comes to managing humanitarian and development projects overseas.

Following publication of the [Civil Society Partnership Review](#), DFID's main funding for civil society organisations are:

- [UK Aid Match](#) – a scheme that match-funds public donations to charity appeals for projects to reduce poverty in developing countries, giving the British public a say in what international development issues are important to them. Doubling UK Aid Match is a manifesto commitment.
- [UK Aid Direct](#) – providing grants to small and medium-sized civil society organisations, primarily for work to directly tackle poverty in poor communities around the world.
- UK Aid Connect – a new partnership approach that will allow civil society organisations to work collaboratively, bringing together knowledge, practice and expertise for solutions to some of the most difficult development problems.
- UK Aid Volunteers – which will include the manifesto commitment to triple in size the International Citizen Service (ICS) youth volunteering scheme and provide opportunities for new partnerships with volunteering agencies.

[Green Party: Invest in public transport instead of new roads to fight congestion](#)



20 March 2017

The Green Party is calling on the Government to invest in public transport, walking and cycling after a study revealed new roads built in England have almost all failed to either relieve congestion or boost local economies [1].

Caroline Russell, Green Party transport spokesperson and London Assembly member, said:

“Constant expansion of the road network will trap more and more people into depending on cars for their daily journeys, which simply creates new gridlock in different places and drives a perpetual cycle of demand for ever more roads.

“We need a complete rethink of our transport system with serious investment in buses, trams and trains along with safe routes for walking and cycling. People need an alternative to car use and we must protect our towns, cities and countryside from the pollution and congestion that comes with new roads.”

Notes:

1. https://www.theguardian.com/world/2017/mar/20/new-roads-create-more-traffic-fail-local-economies-cpre?CMP=Share_AndroidApp_Tweet

[Tweet](#)

[Back to main news page](#)

[Let's block ads! \(Why?\)](#)

[Green Party: Urgent investment needed to fix social care crisis](#)



20 March 2017

The Green Party has responded to a BBC investigation which revealed care firms have cancelled contracts with 95 UK councils, saying they cannot deliver services for the amount they are being paid [1].

Jonathan Bartley, Green Party co-leader, said:

“We are staring down the barrel of a social care crisis and the only way to fix it is proper investment. It is ludicrous that the Government keeps starving councils of funding and still expects them to deliver high quality social care and other vital services like libraries and youth centres.

“The £2bn over three years added in the budget for social care is simply not enough to sustain a system that is already on the verge of collapse because of the Government’s failure to act. Proper social care for the elderly should be a red line.

“The Green Party is the only party proposing that we make the right choice to invest in a secure future for our older people with free social care for everyone over 65.”

Notes:

1. <http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/uk-39321579>

[Tweet](#)

[Back to main news page](#)

[Let's block ads! \(Why?\)](#)