

[News story: Stronger Together](#)

Ben Lowery, Technical capability lead, Sellafield Ltd recently lost his wife, Yvonne, after a battle with a rare form of cancer.

In this video, Ben tells us how he and Yvonne were supported by the Stronger Together cancer support group.

[Stronger Together](#)

The Stronger Together group holds monthly meetings and provides support for Sellafield employees who have been affected by cancer, whether that be their own battle or through a loved one. The group works in partnership with various groups including [Macmillan Cancer Support](#).

Monthly meetings are held 13:00 – 15:00 on the first Tuesday of each month, anyone working for Sellafield is welcome to come along.

Ivy House

Bransty

Whitehaven

Cumbria

CA28 6PL

For further information on this group please contact Sam Pollen 07770 876201 or Sharon Reynolds 07736 796392.

[Press release: Grants for Peatlands Restoration](#)

A new injection of £10m of government money will help restore more than 10,000 football pitches-worth of England's iconic peatlands.

Peat bogs and fens are important habitats that provide food and shelter for wildlife, help with flood management, improve water quality and play a part in climate regulation. The new funding will help deliver commitments in the Government's flagship [25 Year Environment Plan](#) to create a new ambitious framework for peat restoration in England.

The total area of 6,580 hectares of upland and lowland peatlands that these grants will support work on is equivalent to 10,613 football pitches. The work will be delivered through four local partnership projects and will reduce greenhouse gas emissions making their way into the atmosphere by creating a natural store for carbon.

This vital work will abate and store an estimated 23,000 tonnes of carbon per year contributing to the UK's climate change goals.

A panel of experts and Defra officials assessed the projects and awarded the funding based on the potential for carbon abatement.

Environment Minister Thérèse Coffey said:

Peatlands are an iconic aspect of the English landscape which are not only a haven for wildlife but also provide us with clean water and help reduce greenhouse gas emissions.

The 25 Year Environment Plan sets out the Government's commitment to improve peatlands and grant schemes such as this one will enable us to leave our environment better than we inherited it.

Defra has allocated a total of £10 million between the four projects.

The [North of England Peat Partnership](#) led by the Yorkshire Wildlife Trust will restore 394 ha of lowland raised bog and 1679 ha of blanket bog across 21 peatland sites in the north of England.

Dr Tim Thom, Peat Programme Manager at Yorkshire Wildlife Trust, which co-ordinated the bid, said:

It's fantastic to see peatlands on the Government's agenda and getting the recognition they deserve – both in terms of the benefits they bring and the parlous condition we have let so many of them reach. I'm thrilled that our bid has been successful and I know I speak for all of our partners when I say I cannot wait to get started.

This funding will enable us to restore some of the most important and beautiful sites across the north of England – from England's largest lowland raised bog in South Yorkshire all the way up to Northumberland's highest point near the Scottish border – over 2,000 hectares of peatland will be repaired, locking up carbon, filtering our drinking water, managing flooding and providing habitat for some fascinating species.

The South West Peatlands Bid led by South West Water will be delivered through local partnerships.

The focus is on 1,680 ha of upland peat across Bodmin Moor, Dartmoor and Exmoor. To date very little of the peatland on Dartmoor and Bodmin Moor has been restored. Exmoor has had over 1,900 ha of restoration to date.

Morag Angus, [Exmoor Mires Partnership](#) Manager said:

This peatland grant from Defra presents a real opportunity to make a significant difference to deliver peatland restoration across Bodmin Moor, Dartmoor and Exmoor.

The peatlands of south-west England are very important for water quality, carbon storage, biodiversity, cultural history, recreation and farming but they are the most vulnerable in the UK to the impacts of climate change, due to their southerly position. Working with our partners in these three moors enables these nationally and internationally important habitats to be restored for the benefit of all and future generations.

[Meres & Mosses Carbon Capture Project](#) led by Shropshire Wildlife Trust aims to restore a mix of nine lowland and upland peatland sites covering 98 ha across the Meres & Mosses Natural Area.

John Hughes, Development Manager, Shropshire Wildlife Trust said:

The Mosses of Shropshire, Cheshire and Staffordshire are one of the least known, but most ecologically important, suites of peatbogs. Our partnership is delighted that this Defra funding will allow us to carry out even more work in our mission to restore them to favourable condition.

[Moor Carbon](#), led by the Peak District National Park Authority, will be working in the [Peak District National Park](#), West Pennine Moors SSSI, and Rossendale Gap to restore over 2,000 hectares of blanket bog.

Chief Executive, Sarah Fowler, said:

We are delighted to have been awarded this funding from Defra; helping to achieve an early win for Defra's 25 Year Environment Plan. The project will deliver vital conservation work on more than 2,100 hectares of blanket bog in the UK's original National Park. The work will help to reduce over 4,500 tonnes of carbon dioxide loss into the atmosphere every year. We are proud to play a role in helping to achieve the Government's aspiring climate change targets.

As well as carbon storage, this innovative partnership project will provide a wealth of benefits to both people and animals. Work will help to improve the quality of the water that we consume; and enhance the precious home of rare birds and mammals. Bare peat re-vegetation and blocking eroded gullies on the moors will help to slow the flow of water when it rains; reducing the threat of flooding in local at-risk communities. The Partnership has a proven track-record of undertaking moorland conservation projects on such a large scale. We work together to help care for these stunning wild spaces that mean so much to so many people; and to ensure that they are protected for generations to come.

Photos of peatlands are on Defra's [Flickr account](#).

[News story: UK response to violence in Gaza](#)

Alistair Burt said:

The violence today in Gaza and the West Bank has been shocking. The loss of life and the large number of injured Palestinians is tragic, and it is extremely worrying that the number of those killed continues to rise.

Such violence is destructive to peace efforts. We have been clear that the UK supports the Palestinians' right to protest, but these protests must be peaceful.

It is deplorable that extremist elements may have been seeking to exploit these protests for their own violent purposes. We will not waver from our support for Israel's right to defend its borders. But the large volume of live fire is extremely concerning. We continue to implore Israel to show greater restraint.

The UK remains committed to a two-state solution with Jerusalem as a shared capital. All sides now need to show real leadership and courage, promote calm, refrain from inflaming tensions further, and show with renewed urgency that the path to a two-state solution is through negotiation and peace.

Speech: UK briefs Security Council on mission to Bangladesh and Burma

Thank you very much indeed Madame President, and as it's the first time I personally take the floor, allow me to congratulate you on assuming your new role. I'd like to join my Peruvian colleague in particular in thanking the governments of Myanmar and Bangladesh, but also our Kuwaiti colleague for all the excellent arrangements. Without that, we would not have been able to cover so much in our trip. And like my Kuwaiti and Peruvian colleagues, we really did appreciate everything we saw from the UN teams on the ground and the help we had from the Secretariat. And I think, if I can speak for all the Council, I think all Council members found it a very productive and interesting, if difficult, visit.

Madame Chairman, I will speak about what we did on the third day with our field visit to Northern Rakhine. We had a briefing on one made by the Chief Minister of Rakhine state and we took a helicopter trip over Northern Rakhine. We were accompanied by the Union Minister for International Cooperation U Kyaw Tin and the Chief Coordinator of the Union Enterprise for Humanitarian Assistance, Resettlement and Development, which is known as the UEHRD, and that was Dr Aung Htun Thet.

The members of the Security Council on that trip flew over an area that showed widespread devastation of land and villages and it was clear Madame President that these had been burned out. We saw physical arrangements for return being prepared by the Myanmar government. This included a reception center and a transit center at Talaat. This was intended to accommodate up to 30,000 people.

We met members of local communities in Northern Rakhine. We had a town hall meeting with Rakhine Muslim and Hindu groups. We met community members who had seen their families be victims of ARSA attacks, and we met a Rohingya community whose homes have been rebuilt by the authorities. We were also able to have a meeting with members of civil society at Sittwe airport, though our time was unfortunately brief.

In line with my colleagues, I'd like to offer the Council some reflections on what we saw. I think the first reflection I have is the sheer scale of the devastation. I have only ever seen one camp like it in my professional life before and I was very struck by the magnitude of what the refugees face and what the governments face and what the UN faces as they try to get the people home. We did see widespread devastation from the air and this is obviously one reason for the scale of the refugee camps in Bangladesh.

I think the second reflection would be the need for the Burmese authorities to increase the scale of their response and to allow the UN in with unconditional access to assist them. Only the UN has the technical expertise and know-how to deal with an event of this magnitude.

Myanmar has two reception centres. Together they can receive at best 300 people a day.

There are some 90,000 refugees, Madame President, so nowhere near the scale that would be required to bring so many refugees home. And as I said, the UN needs to be involved because it is the only institution in the world that has the ability to provide assistance at the scale required.

My third reflection would be that we didn't receive enough information about the prospect for long-term solutions. Council members heard that refugees would be housed only temporarily in the transit centre, but there was no convincing explanation about how they would actually get back to their villages and on what timeframe. And we did note, I think the Council was struck by the fact that the IDP camps in Sittwe have been there since 2012.

My fourth reflection: an emphasis on the physical arrangements and development as opposed to the underlying political issues. Council members heard about UEHRD development plans which are privately financed and about the physical arrangements for repatriation. But two points, if I may, on that Madame President: there are risks to private financing, and anything delivered without Rohingya participation risk reinforcing displacement, not resolving it. I think we accept that the Myanmar authorities have a very deep concern about development issues in Rakhine state as a whole and I think the Council believes that that is one aspect that will need to be addressed. But it is not the foremost aspect in getting the Rohingya to start going back to their homes in safety and security, Madame President, and I think I was particularly struck again by the contrast between what is being offered on the ground in Myanmar and the scale of the problem.

There is little progress on tackling the political issues, as my two colleagues noted in the meetings they described. Many of these political issues were raised in the Annan Commission recommendations. They centre around community reconciliation, around regularising citizenship status of Rohingya, around human rights such as freedom of movement and access to education and livelihoods, and holding the perpetrators of violence to account. Again Madame President, we heard from some of the other villagers and officials about attacks on them from the ARSA. So it is clear to me speaking nationally that there does need to be an accountability mechanism for all the alleged violations of human rights committed, violations and abuses of human rights committed in Northern Rakhine. But again I start from the point that it is the Rohingya that the Council went to examine and it is the Rohingya that is overwhelmingly the largest part of the problem.

And lastly, Madame President, we have in recent days been very concerned by reports that Myanmar security forces have threatened Rohingya villages not to talk openly with the Security Council delegation and that the people who did so are being looked for by security forces now. It's obviously unacceptable that anyone should feel intimidated from talking to the Security Council who after all undertakes these missions on behalf of the international community. And I would be most grateful if the Myanmar authorities could clarify that as a matter of urgency.

Thank you very much indeed, Madame President.

I would like to just make one last point if I may. I was struck by the unity of the Council throughout the trip, and I think my colleagues were as well. And I think we all would like to find a way to preserve that unity as under your direction, Madame President, we go forward.

Press release: PM bilateral meeting with President Varela: 14 May 2018

A Downing Street spokesperson said:

The Prime Minister held a bilateral meeting with the President of Panama, Juan Carlos Varela, at Downing Street earlier today.

They discussed the importance of the international community continuing to come together to uphold the global prohibition on the use of chemical weapons, particularly in the wake of the attack in Douma, Syria, and the attempted murder of the Skripals in Salisbury.

They discussed regional security cooperation, agreeing on the importance of our joint work to address cross-border threats including the trafficking of narcotics, people, contraband and counterfeit goods, and illicit finance.

They discussed joint anti-corruption efforts, and the Prime Minister noted the importance of seeing further progress in introducing anti-corruption legislation and criminalising tax evasion in Panama.

They also discussed education, noting the strong teacher training links between our two countries and the centrality of education to development.

Finally, they discussed trade, agreeing trade links between the UK and Panama would continue to go from strength to strength as the UK leaves the EU. In particular, they welcomed the approach agreed at the March European Council to provide continuity during the implementation period for international agreements, which could be swiftly transitioned into new bilateral agreements once the implementation period ends.