

Press release: Welsh Secretary to mark resurrection of London Welsh rugby club on eve of Wales v England showdown

Secretary of State for Wales Alun Cairns will laud the “unyielding and commendable efforts” of all involved in the resurrection of one of Britain’s oldest and most famous rugby clubs when he attends a dinner at London Welsh rugby club this evening (9 Feb).

Mr Cairns will be joined at the dinner at the club’s Old Deer Park ground by Welsh Rugby legend Sir Gareth Edwards who will look back on his career and reflect on some of the great players and rugby that defined one of the oldest and most famous clubs in the world.

The event comes in the wake of a challenging year for the club which saw them cease to exist as a professional club, only to be brought back to life through the belief, commitment and dedication of its supporters, staff and sponsors.

Secretary of State for Wales Alun Cairns will say:

London Welsh rugby club is a place where we celebrate Welsh people’s passion for the game – a real home from home for Welsh people living in London.

And the fact that we will gather in Old Deer Park this evening is made even more poignant when we consider the challenges this club has faced over the past year.

I want to applaud the unyielding efforts of everyone involved – both on and off the field – who have overcome the hurdles in front of them to bring the club back to life and to bring it back to its legions of fans.

It is clear that this club gets into your blood and each and every supporter, player, staff member and sponsor should be commended for what you have achieved.

The Welsh Secretary will be speaking at the dinner on the eve of Wales’ second Six Nations Championship match. Warren Gatland’s men will head to Twickenham fully charged following their bruising defeat over Scotland, and aiming for a second tournament win on the bounce when they take to the field against England.

The event is being held ahead of the [Wales Week in London](#) festival – an

annual series of activities and events that celebrate and promote everything that's great about Wales.

Through a calendar of events around St David's Day, which galvanises existing Welsh communities in London, Wales Week in London builds a positive momentum across the capital that is distinctly about Wales.

Mr Cairns added:

Wales Week in London is a fortnight centred around St David's Day where the very best of Welsh business, sport, culture and public life come together in the capital to celebrate everything that's great about Wales.

Businessmen Dan Langford and Mike Jordan – who each have business in Wales – have cultivated this festival of celebration to create a buzz about Wales and all it has to offer.

I would strongly encourage Welsh men and Women who have made their home in the UK's capital to visit the Wales Week in London website and sign up to attend some of the brilliant events they have planned to celebrate our great nation.

News story: Countryside Stewardship Facilitation Fund provides conservation boost

The fourth round of the popular Facilitation Fund has been one of the most successful yet, with 37 new groups of farmers from Cornwall to Northumberland signed up to agreements after a competitive application round, which closed in November 2017.

The Countryside Stewardship Facilitation Fund rewards groups of farmers for coming together to work out the best ways to improve the natural environment across their land, providing habitats for wildlife on a landscape scale to better aid conservation of important species.

There are now 98 groups working across England with the common goal of better delivering environmental improvements on their land, and the land of their neighbours.

A number of high quality applications were received in this latest funding round, which meant the funding pot was increased by £600,000 to ensure that

groups with important work to deliver could access the funding to do so.

All 37 groups have now received their agreements and will be able to receive funding for working together and sharing knowledge to improve the landscape. The addition of these groups to the scheme means that now over 450,000 hectares of holdings in England are delivering landscape-scale measures for wildlife, water management and the historic environment.

Farming Minister George Eustice said:

I am very pleased to see thirty seven new nature conservation groups established with over 700 members involved. The facilitation fund we have established aims to support partnership working and bring together farmers and other land managers to deliver local conservation projects.

It is particularly encouraging to see how many high quality applications we received, which we hope to replicate across the Countryside Stewardship scheme following the steps we have taken to simplify the wildlife packages.

Press release: Prime Minister's meeting with Roberto Gualtieri MEP: 8 Feb 2018

This afternoon the Prime Minister hosted Roberto Gualtieri MEP at Downing Street.

The second in a series of engagements between the Prime Minister and key representatives from the European Parliament, Mrs May and Mr Gualtieri discussed the Brexit negotiations, with both recognising the importance of the terms of the implementation period being agreed by the March European Council.

The Prime Minister also set out her vision for a bold and close economic partnership with the EU in the future. Mr Gualtieri highlighted his appreciation of the Prime Minister's speech in Florence which he attended.

On citizens' rights, Mrs May and Mr Gualtieri agreed that certainty should be given to people and businesses as soon as possible. Finally, they agreed on the importance of avoiding a hard border between Northern Ireland and Ireland.

The Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster David Lidington and the Permanent

Representative of the United Kingdom to the European Parliament Sir Tim Barrow also attended the meeting. Mr Gualtieri met with the Brexit Secretary David Davis, Chancellor Philip Hammond and Home Secretary Amber Rudd earlier in the day.

Press release: Cyanide spill in Derbyshire still being assessed

Environment Agency officers are continuing to investigate and monitor the impact on the local environment following an accidental chemical spillage at an industrial unit on Adams Close, Heanor, Derbyshire. The accident caused a spill of around 400 litres of liquid cyanide, some of which leaked into a nearby pond.

The incident happened on Tuesday 6 February and Environment Agency officers were immediately on the scene along with colleagues from Derbyshire Fire & Rescue Service, Severn Trent Water and Derbyshire County Council to manage the spill and minimise the risk to the environment.

Environment Agency officers are now in their third day at the scene and are continuing to take water samples and are assessing any potential environmental impacts this spill has had on the local watercourses and ponds.

Penny Thorpe, Area Duty Manager at the Environment Agency said:

Our officers have been on site since the incident occurred on Tuesday and have worked alongside Derbyshire Fire and Rescue and Derbyshire County Council to contain the spillage in order to minimise any effects on the environment and wildlife in the surrounding area.

A temporary dam has been created in order to stop the spillage leaving the pond and to prevent any further contamination and our officers will continue to monitor the environment for any other impacts from this spillage.

We have taken water samples from Adam's pond and the brook further upstream to help us establish the best way to clear the environment of any contaminants that may remain, we will also be investigating the cause of this spill and following up with action as necessary.

Our staff work 24/7 to protect people and wildlife from pollution incidents, if you see pollution in your local river, call our incident hotline on 0800 80 70 60.

Press release: Prime Minister's roundtable with senior representatives of Japanese businesses

Alongside the Chancellor, Business Secretary and International Trade Secretary, the Prime Minister discussed the role of our modern Industrial Strategy in making the UK an even more attractive destination for Japanese and international investment, as well as the UK-Japan trade and investment relationship.

Discussions also covered the opportunities and challenges presented by the UK's exit from the EU.

The Prime Minister set out her vision for an outward looking, global Britain, and the long-term opportunities presented by the modern Industrial Strategy.

The strength of the trade, investment and cultural relationship between the UK and Japan was discussed. The Japanese businesses present spoke of their desire to continue trading with, and investing in the UK.

The Prime Minister reaffirmed the Government's commitment to securing a new deep and special partnership with the EU as the UK leaves the EU.

She reiterated her commitment to global free trade, and she recalled her discussions with Prime Minister Abe in Japan in August last year, and their agreement that, as the UK exits the EU, the UK and Japan will work quickly to establish a new economic partnership based on the final terms of the EU-Japan Economic Partnership Agreement.

Business representatives expressed their appreciation for the opportunity for constructive dialogue with the Government, and agreed on the importance of the time-limited implementation period in providing clarity and certainty for people and businesses.

There was also agreement on the importance of moving quickly in the negotiations to secure a trading relationship with the EU that is as tariff-free and frictionless as possible following the implementation period.

In closing, the Prime Minister committed to maintaining a constructive dialogue between Government and business as EU exit negotiations progress.