

News story: Appointments to the advisory committee on business appointments

Jonathan, Susan and Richard have been appointed following an open competition run in accordance with the Commissioner for Public Appointments' Code of Practice.

The Advisory Committee on Business Appointments was established by the Prime Minister in 1975. The Committee independently advises former Ministers, the Prime Minister, First Ministers for Scotland and Wales, Foreign Secretary, Defence Secretary, and departmental Permanent Secretaries on applications referred to it, under the Government's Business Appointment Rules (the Rules).

Committee members receive an annual honorarium of £3,000. Members are also eligible to claim any reasonable travel and subsistence expenses incurred in the course of their work.

The appointment of Jonathan Baume, Susan Liautaud and Richard Thomas was made fully in accordance with the Commissioner for Public Appointments Code of Practice. All appointees have declared no political activity within the past five years.

Additional information about the Committee and its work is available on [its website](#).

The membership of the Committee with effect from 1 February 2018 will be:

- Chair
- Baroness Angela Browning

Members:

- Sir Alex Allan
 - Jonathan Baume
 - Lord Michael German OBE
 - Terence Jagger
 - Susan Liautaud
 - The Rt Hon Baroness Liddell of Coatdyke
 - Richard Thomas CBE
 - John Wood
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Press release: Strengthened planning rules to protect music venues and their neighbours

Housing developers building new homes near music venues should be responsible for addressing noise issues in a move to protect both music venues and their neighbours, the Housing Secretary has said.

With late-night venues and community sports clubs being forced to make high cost changes following when new residents move into the area, Mr Javid has committed to working closely with the music industry to help strengthen planning policy.

The National Planning Policy Framework, which local authorities are legally bound to comply with, will now be clarified to include a specific mention of the 'Agent of Change' principle, and will be consulted on in spring.

The move means developers will be responsible for identifying and solving any sound problems, if granted permission to build, and avoid music venues, community and sports clubs and even churches running into expensive issues as a result of complaints from new neighbours.

Housing Secretary Sajid Javid said:

Music venues play a vital role in our communities, bringing people together and contributing to the local economy and supporting the country's grass roots music culture.

I have always thought it unfair that the burden is on long-standing music venues to solve noise issues when property developers choose to build nearby.

That's why I consulted on this in February last year as part of the housing white paper. I am pleased to finally have an opportunity to right this wrong and also give more peace of mind to new residents moving into local properties.

With strong backing from the music industry including the Music Venue Trust, the Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government has been working with John Spellar MP following his private member's bill on this subject to ensure that planning policy reflects what the industry needs.

The government consulted on a proposal to amend national planning policy to give greater emphasis to this matter as part of the housing white paper published on 7 February 2017.

The proposal was that planning policies and decisions should take account of

existing businesses and other organisations, such as churches, community pubs and music venues, when locating new development nearby and, where necessary, to mitigate the impact of noise and other potential nuisances arising from existing development.

This will be incorporated into the updated National Planning Policy Framework.

[News story: Bird flu prevention zone extended to cover whole of England](#)

A bird flu prevention zone has been declared across the whole of England, Chief Veterinary Officer Nigel Gibbens has confirmed today.

This means it is a legal requirement for all bird keepers to follow strict biosecurity measures. It comes as 13 dead wild birds were confirmed to have the virus in Warwickshire.

Last week [17 wild birds tested positive in Dorset](#) and a total of 31 infected birds have now been identified at that site. Defra took swift action to put a local prevention zone in the area on Friday (12 January). However, as these latest results show the disease is not isolated to a single site the decision has been taken to extend the prevention zone across the country on a precautionary basis.

Testing of the birds found in Warwickshire is ongoing, however, it is highly expected that this will be the same H5N6 strain of the virus which has been circulating in wild birds across Europe in recent months. Public Health England have advised the risk to public health remains very low and the Food Standards Agency have said that bird flu does not pose a food safety risk for UK consumers.

Chief Veterinary Officer Nigel Gibbens said:

Following the latest finding of bird flu in wild birds in Warwickshire, we are extending our action to help prevent the virus spreading to poultry and other domestic birds.

Whether you keep just a few birds or thousands, you are now legally required to meet enhanced biosecurity requirements and this is in your interests to do, to protect your birds from this highly infectious virus.

Biosecurity measures

The prevention zone means bird keepers across the country must:

- Ensure the areas where birds are kept are unattractive to wild birds, for example by netting ponds, and by removing wild bird food sources;
- Feed and water your birds in enclosed areas to discourage wild birds;
- Minimise movement in and out of bird enclosures;
- Clean and disinfect footwear and keep areas where birds live clean and tidy;
- Reduce any existing contamination by cleansing and disinfecting concrete areas, and fencing off wet or boggy areas.

Keepers with more than 500 birds will also be required to take some extra biosecurity measures including restricting access to non-essential people, changing clothing and footwear before entering bird enclosures and cleaning and disinfecting vehicles.

The prevention zone will be in place until further notice and will be kept under regular review as part of our work to monitor the threat of bird flu.

Poultry keepers and members of the public should report dead wild birds to the Defra helpline on 03459 33 55 77 and keepers should report suspicion of disease to APHA on 03000 200 301. Keepers should familiarise themselves with our [avian flu advice](#).

There are no plans to carry out any culls or put movement restrictions in place.

Background

- Trade should not be affected following the findings in wild birds, according to the rules of the World Animal Health Organisation (OIE).
- The risk to poultry and other captive birds depends, amongst other things, on the level of biosecurity on the premises and the likely contact between kept birds and wild birds, which is why it is now mandatory that all keepers ensure they practice the highest standards of biosecurity.
- [Keep up to date with the latest avian influenza situation](#)

- There are currently no findings of bird flu in Scotland, Wales or Northern Ireland and the prevention zone is for England only

[News story: First MoT test to remain at 3 years to protect road safety](#)

Ministers put road safety first as they today (18 January 2017) decided to maintain the period before a car's first MoT test at 3 years.

The move comes after a Department for Transport [consultation last year to consider changing the wait before the first test to 4 years](#).

Most of those responding to the consultation were against the proposals on safety grounds, arguing that the savings to motorists were outweighed by the risk to road users and the test often highlights upcoming issues affecting the vehicle. A public survey for DfT by Populus also showed fewer than half of people were in favour of the change.

Roads Minister Jesse Norman said:

We have some of the safest roads in the world, and are always looking at ways of making them safer.

Although modern cars are better built and safer than when the MoT test was last changed 50 years ago, there has been a clear public concern that any further changes don't put people's lives at risk.

We are looking at further research to ensure the MoT test evolves with the demands of modern motoring.

By law, all vehicles must be roadworthy, regardless of whether they have passed an MoT, and the content of the tests will not be changed.

The test was introduced in 1960, requiring vehicles to undergo a first check after 10 years. It was changed in 1967 to 3 years.

In 2016 (the most recent figures available), more than 2.4 million cars had their first MoT test, which costs owners a maximum of £54.85. The pass rate was about 85% and the most common reasons for failure include lighting, tyres and braking faults.

Changing the time period until the first test would have saved motorists more than £100 million a year.

Press release: Government sets out minimum wage rights for seafarers in UK water

- seafarers in UK internal waters must be paid at least the minimum wage, government warns
- UK Border Force will hand out information in over 50 languages promoting seafarers' workers' rights
- new Business Minister affirms workers playing a 'vital' role in UK waters should be paid fairly

All seafarers working in UK waters must be paid at least minimum wage rates, the government warned in new [guidance](#) published today (18 January 2018).

It comes after concerns about unfair competition, following reports that some ships registered abroad were underpaying their workers in UK waters, undercutting UK crews.

UK Border Force patrols will be handing out information to seafarers and employers in more than 50 languages promoting minimum wage law.

Employers failing to pay at least National Minimum Wage and National Living Wage can face fines of up to 200% of the underpayment, public naming and, for the worst offences, criminal prosecution.

Business Minister Andrew Griffiths said:

Seafarers' work is vital to key UK industries such as fishing, oil and gas. We are determined to ensure they are paid fairly for the work they do, often in challenging conditions.

Today we are making it crystal clear that if you work in UK waters you are entitled to at least the minimum wage and all employers – no matter where they're from – must pay it.

Border Force's Modern Slavery Maritime lead Rob Meyer said:

Border Force takes its role of tackling exploitation and protecting vulnerable people very seriously. We have run a number of maritime operations targeting unscrupulous employers in the sector, and are working with government enforcement agencies to take action taken against the minority of employers who do not treat their workers in line with UK law.

Minimum wage law applies to seafarers:

- when they are working on ships within UK waters and ports regardless of where the ship is registered, or where the worker ordinarily works or lives
- on a foreign ship for work performed outside the UK if they ordinarily work in the UK
- on UK registered ships if some of their work is in the UK and they live in the UK

If anyone is concerned that they are not receiving at least the minimum wage, they can [check their pay online](#), or contact [Acas](#) in confidence, on 0300 123 1100.