

[Press release: Helping pupils prepare for flooding](#)

Around 800 school children are better prepared for flooding following vital Environment Agency information sessions.

Community Engagement Officer for Cleveland, Sarah Pearce, led assemblies at schools across the area last week to help pupils understand flood risk and know what to do in a flood.

The schools involved were Handale Primary School at Loftus, Rift House Primary School in Hartlepool and Oxbridge lane Primary School in Stockton-on-Tees.

She was joined at Rift House by Coun. Marjorie James, Hartlepool Council's representative on the Northumbria Regional Flood and Coastal Committee.

Sarah also launched a competition for school pupils to design a new logo which will be worn by Community Flood Wardens throughout the North East.

Awareness raising

Sarah said:

It's hoped that through these sessions with children I will raise awareness of flooding and issues associated with flooding and will be able to pass on key safety messages to young people.

Working with schools means children can be educated about what it means to be flood resilient and ensure the messages delivered have a long-term impact in flood risk areas.

It's absolutely vital that future generations understand flooding, what we do during a flood and what they can do to stay safe.

The Flood Warden Logo competition is being run right across the North East with schools taking part from the whole area. Once the winning design has been selected this will be printed on to the new Flood Warden jacket which will be presented to all flood wardens to wear during a flood incident.

Helping communities be resilient

Sarah is one of four Community Engagement Officers for the North East appointed by the Environment Agency to help communities to be more flood resilient.

Funded by the Northumbria Regional Flood and Coastal Committee (NRFCC) for the next four years, the officers are working alongside partner organisations

to help support communities.

Sarah works closely with Cleveland Emergency Planning Unit, and her work includes helping businesses and residents to understand their risk of flooding and ensuring those in flood risk areas are signed up to receive free flood warnings.

She's also helping communities prepare themselves for flooding, such as supporting them to develop community flood plans and recruit volunteer Flood Wardens in at risk communities.

To find out more about your local flood risk and sign up to the Flood Warning Service Visit [the.gov.uk website](http://the.gov.uk)

[News story: CIC Webinar: Thursday 5 October 2017 11:00am – 11:30am](#)

[unable to retrieve full-text content]This is your chance to learn how to incorporate a CIC and ask questions. Interested? Sign up to take part.

[News story: David Davis' closing remarks at the end of the fourth round of EU exit negotiations in Brussels](#)

There is no doubting that this was a vital round of negotiations – taking place just days after an important intervention by the British Prime Minister.

Theresa May's speech in Florence had at its heart a desire to drive progress this week. It was intended to change the dynamic and instil real momentum.

It set out a clear, pragmatic approach designed to help secure an agreement that works for all sides.

It built on the hugely significant work that has gone on across Government over the last year that has seen us publish 14 papers covering technical negotiation detail and the United Kingdom's vision for the future relationship, the Article 50 letter and two crucial White Papers.

So this week my negotiating team came to Brussels armed with the detailed thinking that underpins the proposals set out by the Prime Minister.

And while – inevitably – this requires further discussion, I believe that thanks to the constructive and determined manner with which both sides have conducted these negotiations we are making decisive steps forward.

After four rounds, when I look across the full range of issues to do with our withdrawal from the EU, I am clear that we have made considerable progress on the issues that matter:

Increasing certainty for citizens and businesses;

Providing reassurance to our EU partners in regards to our mutual financial obligations

And agreeing on some of the key principles in relation to the issues arising for Northern Ireland and Ireland.

Now I make no secret of wanting to talk about the future, and the importance of this to business and citizens both in the European Union and the United Kingdom.

The Prime Minister's speech sets out the scale of our ambition here as well as our proposal for a simple, clear, time-limited period of implementation.

This period, based on current terms, will ensure people, businesses and public services only have to plan for one set of changes. I believe this should be quick to agree, once Michel has a mandate to explore it with us.

As the Prime Minister said last week, our shared future can only be founded on partnership, friendship and most importantly trust. This is what discussions this week have been about.

Which brings me to the detail of our discussions.

Citizens' rights

On citizens' rights, we have made real progress on issues which will enable citizens on both sides to continue to live their lives broadly as they do now.

We will publish an updated table later today which shows many areas of agreement.

So I am pleased to report that we have agreed most aspects of social security coordination, building on the progress in the last round, which I told you about last time.

The United Kingdom thinks that in some cases we must go beyond the strict requirements of current EU law in order to protect citizens. For example we have offered the European Union guaranteed rights of return for settled EU citizens in the UK, in return for onward movement rights, right for onward

movement, for our UK nationals who currently live within the EU27.

And I look forward to the response of the Commission to this offer, once they have consulted with the Member States.

But we must also acknowledge that a major question remains open between us – it relates to the enforcement of citizens' rights after we leave the European Union.

The UK has been clear that, as a third country outside of the European Union, it would not be right for this role to be performed by the European Court of Justice.

But we have listened to the concerns that have been raised – and as a direct result of hearing those concerns the United Kingdom has committed to incorporating the final withdrawal agreement fully into UK law. Direct effect if you like.

We also recognise the need to ensure the consistent interpretation of EU law concepts.

We have not agreed the right mechanism for doing this yet but discussions this week have again been productive.

And we have provided further reassurance on how European Union citizens will be able to apply for a new status, once we leave.

And we know that those already holding permanent residency documents should not have to go through the full process.

So we presented early thinking on detailed processes and plans on how we might ensure this does not happen.

It's all about providing certainty, clarity and stability for EU citizens living in the UK and UK citizens living in the EU27. And represents pragmatic compromises to our shared challenge of ending anxiety for those citizens.

The shape of a deal is becoming clearer. We need to continue to work to address this in the interest of citizens on both sides.

Financial settlement

In her recent speech, the Prime Minister reassured our European partners they'll not need to pay more or receive less over the remainder of the current EU budget plan, as a result of our decision to leave.

The UK has explained this reassurance in detail to the Commission.

The Prime Minister also made clear that the UK will honour its commitments made during the period of our membership.

We are not yet at the stage of specifying exactly what these commitments are. That will need to come later.

Nevertheless, our negotiating teams have held very constructive discussions this week on detailed technical issues relating to that.

This work is necessary so that when the time comes we will be able to reach a political agreement. And discussions will continue.

Ireland

On the issues that arise from the UK's withdrawal from the EU in relation to Northern Ireland and Ireland, we have had a constructive discussion and made progress in some areas.

Both sides recognise that the unique situation and the special circumstances on the island of Ireland must fully inform any solutions.

We welcome the EU's recent guiding principles paper which reaffirms the high degree of alignment between us on this vital strand.

Specifically, this week, we have begun drafting joint principles on preserving the Common Travel Area and associated rights.

We have both agreed that the Good Friday Agreement citizenship rights must be upheld and we are working together on how this commitment is best codified.

The joint work which we agreed in the August negotiating round on preserving the North-South cooperation strand is moving along at pace.

We are addressing complex issues here but both are resolved to finding imaginative solutions.

We owe it to the people of Northern Ireland – and across the island of Ireland – to see these commitments through.

Separation issues

We remain firmly committed to making as much progress as possible on those issues that are related to our withdrawal from the EU institutions and must be resolved before our departure from the European Union.

I am encouraged by the progress we have made this week on issues relating to Euratom.

The EU welcomed our clear statement that we will maintain the same standards in our future nuclear safeguards regime which will be run by our existing nuclear regulator, the Office for Nuclear Regulation.

We are now close to reaching agreement on the vast majority of issues set out in our position papers on this issue.

Of course, we want to have a close and effective relationship with Euratom in the future and the best way to secure that is to press on with discussions on the details of this new partnership.

On a number of other issues – goods, union and Member State procedures, privileges and immunities and ongoing confidentiality obligations – we have had constructive discussion on technical issues and in some areas, reached agreement on the core issues.

At the beginning of the week, I mentioned the UK's real and ongoing commitment to our European friends and allies.

Our commitment to that ideal has been clear in these negotiations on those issues which relate to our departure from the institutions.

Conclusion

As I said at the start – this round was a vital one.

We've made important progress and capitalised on the momentum created by the Prime Minister's speech.

We are working quickly through a number of complex issues, yet there remain some points where further discussion – and pragmatism – will be required to reach agreement.

It is true that there are differences of opinion. But with the continued diligence and creativity of our teams, I am confident we can resolve these.

While the UK's departure from the European Union is inevitably a complex process, it is in all of our interests for these negotiations to succeed.

We must never forget the bigger picture. Britain wants to be the European Union's strongest friend and partner.

We want us both to thrive side by side.

I leave Brussels optimistic about this future and I look forward to continuing the negotiations.

Thank you.

[Press release: New inter-tidal habitat planned for Poole Harbour](#)

The Environment Agency is working with the RSPB and Natural England to explore how to adapt approximately 150 hectares of the Moors at Arne into a diverse wetland habitat. The scheme is necessary to compensate for the loss of inter-tidal habitats around Poole Harbour due to rising sea levels and the need to improve and maintain coastal defences.

Next week's drop-in event will be held on Tuesday (3 October 2017) at Wareham Town Hall from 2.00pm to 7.00pm.

When finished, the coastal change project will enable the Environment Agency and its partners to continue to protect properties around Poole Harbour from the increased risk of flooding due to climate change. It is predicted up to 10,000 local properties could be at risk within 100 years.

Important freshwater habitat and the Arne Road will continue to be protected from flooding as part of the scheme.

The loss of inter-tidal habitats through climate change and improved sea defences is known as 'coastal squeeze'. Compensatory habitats are needed to ensure birds and other wetland species are protected and still have places to rest and feed.

Neil Watson, for the Environment Agency, said:

It is important to us the local community is involved in this project right from the start, so please come along to the drop-in session and find out more about this exciting project. We would like to hear your views.

Tony Whitehead, speaking for the RSPB, said:

We're really looking forward to meeting people in Wareham and discussing the future of the Moors at Arne. During the day we'll share more on the reasons why the proposals are being made and the implications for people, wildlife and landscape in this special part of Dorset.

[News story: Drones – are you flying yours safely? \(and legally?\)](#)

Most people will either have flown or seen a Quadcopter type drone being flown about. But how many of you are aware that drones present a hazard to aviation and are subject to the law through the Air Navigation Order?

What is meant by the word 'drone'? The public and press use the phrase for almost anything that flies and does not have a pilot – we in the services generally prefer the terms; Remotely Piloted Air System (RPAS) or Unmanned Air System (UAS), you may even hear Unmanned Air Vehicle (UAV). This article however is not about the RPAS', UAVs or UAS used by the military, these

systems (from the large (Reaper) down to the very small), are generally well regulated, procured correctly and flown/operated by trained individuals who understand the hazards involved. This article and the use of the phrase 'drone' focuses on those systems that are affordable, commercially available and weigh no more than 20kg, though the majority weigh considerably less.

A Black Hornet nano helicopter unmanned aerial vehicle (UAV). Crown Copyright. Photo: via MOD.

Most of the commercial drones come in the form of Quadcopters, Hexacopters or even Octocopters, and vary in price and capability. At the bottom end of the market are models that are simply toys, small very lightweight, with limited range and endurance. About £100 will get a Quadcopter with a camera, whilst not of 'professional' quality these drones can weigh in the region of 1kg and can have a range that takes them beyond the operator's line of sight. For several hundred pounds, you can purchase a drone which has full HD video, a range of beyond 1km and decent battery endurance. These drones weigh in the region of 3kg, perhaps more if purpose built or exceptionally capable. Almost all of these drones, with the exception of the very small toys, have the capability to fly to several thousand feet.

In addition to the standard drones – controlled by a hand held 2 stick controller and operated by eye, increasingly there are those which are operated by what is called 'First Person View'. This is where the operator will fly the drone using a normal controller but will be viewing images transmitted by the drone either through a set of goggles or on a screen.

It ought to be mentioned that legally, model aircraft are also considered drones. These range in size from small light weight models to gas-turbine powered scaled replicas – capable of very fast speeds and weighing close to 10kg.

Drones are readily available on the high street and internet, and are being sold in their thousands, and it is not hard to see why. Not only are they affordable and capable, but they are great fun to fly or operate, and have great utility. Whilst most people use them for personal recreation, they are also very popular with photographers and those that use photography in their business, like estate agents or the media. Those who work at height now use them to get information before climbing or instead of climbing, survey companies use them and large parcel delivery companies have an aspiration to use them for deliveries.

So, drones are here to stay, but what is the problem? In simple terms, for the vast majority of drone users, there isn't one, but there are those who operate their drones too high or too close to airfields. In 2016 there were over 50 reports from pilots of commercial airliners that their aircraft had almost hit a drone. Military aviation is not immune, there have been near misses with Chinooks at Benson and Odiham, likewise for fixed wing aircraft at Cranwell, and in 2016 a Navy Lynx at 2000ft missed a drone by an estimated 30-50 feet. Whilst there is work ongoing within the aviation industry to fully understand the implications of a drone hitting an aircraft, it doesn't take much imagination to understand the likely consequences of 3kg of metal

and plastic, including the lithium-polymer battery, hitting a helicopter windshield or, perhaps worse, the tail rotor at 100mph. Likewise for a fixed wing aircraft but at greater speeds, hitting the canopy or disappearing into an engine intake. So if you or members of your family are one of the many owners of a drone, or are thinking of buying one then you need to read on.

If you are using a drone for personnel use then you are governed by the Civilian Aviation Authority (CAA) [Air Navigation Order 2016](#), specifically Article [241](#) (endangering the safety of any person or property), Article [94](#) (small unmanned aircraft) and Article [95](#) (small unmanned surveillance aircraft). This is the law and you can, and individuals have been, prosecuted for breaking it. The new Drone Code is available to download at <http://dronesafe.uk/> along with a useful Drone Assist App created by the CAA and air traffic control body National Air Traffic Service (NATS) to help individuals understand their responsibilities.

Quadcopter with a camera. Crown Copyright. All rights reserved.

Essentially your responsibilities are:

- to know how to fly your drone safely, and do so within the law
- to understand that the operator is legally responsible for every flight
- to keep your drone in sight at all times – stay below 400ft
- not to fly your drone over a congested area, never fly within 50 metres of a person, vehicle or building not under your control
- ensure any images you obtain using the drone do not break privacy laws
- avoiding collisions – you should never fly a drone near an airport or close to aircraft. It is a criminal offence to endanger the safety of an aircraft in flight

There are several other things to think about – what is your drone going to do if it runs out of power or fails? Is it going to land/fall somewhere safe? Are you far enough away from people, buildings and more importantly airfields if you lose control of your drone? Also bear in mind that you can be several miles away from an airfield and still be a hazard to manned aviation. Height is very difficult to judge from the ground, you might still be able to see your drone, just, and yet be well above 400ft. You should also consider that many military helicopters will often return to an airfield from all directions at 500ft and fixed wing aircraft can start descending from 1000ft about 3 miles away. So the message is this – if you are going to use drones, have a really good think about where you are, keep your drone in sight, consider what aircraft might be flying about and keep clear – it is your responsibility.

For those who wish to use drones commercially, i.e. for commercial gain, then permission is required from the CAA. They will expect you to attend an accredited course that will train you and assess your ability to safely operate drones. The courses include flying competence, knowledge of the law, risk assessments, decision making and more. They exist to ensure that those who wish to legitimately use drone technology in their business can do so safely and not expose the general public or aviation to unnecessary danger. Further information can be found on the [CAA website](#).

Finally, we all know how useful drones are on operations and some units may consider that these commercially available drones can be put to use to meet service non-core aviation requirements – photography, multimedia applications, surveys etc. If you are considering this, then you need to know that in this instance any drone use for the MOD, will be regulated by the [Military Aviation Authority \(MAA\)](#). Specifically, Regulatory Articles [1600](#), [2320](#) and most pertinently [2321](#). The requirements in these regulatory articles are similar to those required by the CAA. If your unit does not have any aviation expertise you may wish to consult the MAA direct for advice, or, for those with access to the Defence Intranet – view Defence Instructions and Notice (DIN) [2015DIN06-023](#); Alternatively DINs [2016DIN07-112](#) and [2016DIN04-178](#) issued by 700X Naval Air Squadron are a good starting point.

In summary, drone technology is extremely useful, great fun to use and is here to stay. But used wrongly it does pose a genuine hazard to manned aviation, so make sure you know the law, stay within the law and fly safe.

10 things you need to know about flying drones

1. drones can and do present a very real hazard to manned aircraft – pilots (including military pilots) have reported over 50 near misses with drones last year alone
2. drones (including model aircraft) are subject to the law through the Air Navigation Order
3. it is your responsibility to fly safely and within the law – if you don't (and individuals have been) you could be prosecuted.
4. never fly a drone near an airport/airfield or close to aircraft. It is a criminal offence to endanger the safety of aircraft in flight
5. keep your drone in sight and below 400ft
6. do not fly over congested areas and never fly within 50m of a person, vehicle or building not under your control
7. if you wish to use a drone for commercial purposes (get paid) then you need to have permission from the CAA
8. ensure any images obtained do not break privacy laws
9. if your unit wishes to buy a commercially available drone for Defence activities (photographs, multimedia, and surveys at height) it becomes regulated by the MAA and you must follow their rules
10. finally, Follow the [Drone Code](#), have fun and fly safe