

Press release: Change of Her Majesty's Ambassador to the Republic of Korea

From:

First published:

3 February 2017

Part of:

Mr Simon Smith CMG has been appointed Her Majesty's Ambassador to the Republic of Korea.

Mr Simon Smith CMG has been appointed Her Majesty's Ambassador to the Republic of Korea in succession to Mr Charles Hay MVO, who will be transferring to another Diplomatic Service appointment. Mr Smith will take up his appointment during March 2018.

Curriculum Vitae

Full name Simon John Meredith Smith CMG

Married to Sian Rosemary Stickings MBE

Children Two daughters

2016 – present Language training (Korean)

2015 – 2016 FCO, Leader, Review of Buildings Security

2012 – 2015 Kyiv, Her Majesty's Ambassador

2007 – 2012 Vienna, Her Majesty's Ambassador & UK Permanent Representative to the UN

2004 – 2007 FCO, Director, Russia, South Caucasus and Central Asia Directorate /Head of Eastern Department

2002 – 2004 FCO, Head of North East Asia & Pacific Department

1998 – 2002 Moscow, Counsellor (Economic/Commercial)

1997 – 1998 Language training (Russian)

1995 – 1997 FCO, Deputy Head of Southern Europe Department

1994 – 1995 FCO, Speechwriter to the Foreign Secretary

1992 – 1994 FCO, Head of Nuclear Policy Section, Security Policy Department

1989 – 1992 Tokyo, Second Secretary, later First Secretary

1987 – 1989 Language training (Japanese)

1986 – 1987 FCO, Assistant Desk Officer, East Africa Department

1986 Joined FCO

1981 – 1986 Department of Employment

Further information

[Press release: Major upgrade to Leeds junction gets underway](#)

As part of the £8.3 million scheme Highways England will be widening some of the approaches to the M1 roundabout and adding an extra lane to sections of the roundabout itself, increasing it from 2 to 3 lanes.

Most of the work for the 30 week scheme will be carried out during the day. However, some overnight closures will be required with the first taking place tonight, Thursday 2 until Saturday 4 February between 7pm and 6am.

During the overnight closures the M1 southbound carriageway between junctions 46 and 44, and all the approaches to the M1 junction 45 roundabout will be closed so narrow lanes can be installed. While the scheme is ongoing there will also be a reduced speed limit of 50mph on the M1 and a 30mph limit on the slip roads and roundabout.

Highways England project manager Derek Dobinson said:

We are investing more than £15 billion in over 100 schemes across England that will enhance, renew and improve the network. We recognise that this is an important junction which serves a major route into Leeds city centre and is the main access for a number of major businesses and that is why we are investing £8.3 million to improve it.

This scheme, once complete, will improve capacity, reduce congestion and improve the safety for drivers. Predominantly work will be carried out during the day during off peak hours but they may be the occasional overnight closure of the slip roads and the M1.

As well as carrying out improvements to the roundabout, new traffic signal crossings, and improved cycle and pedestrian routes will be installed.

Further information can be [found on the scheme website](#).

Similar improvements have recently been completed at junction 26 of the M62 where it meets the M606. The extra lane was opened to traffic back in December around Chain Bar roundabout and the new traffic signals were installed this month.

Over the next few weeks, contractors will be taking down the old traffic

signals and completing the landscaping and pedestrian and cycle route work. These will be carried out at night when traffic levels are at their lowest.

General enquiries

Members of the public should contact the Highways England customer contact centre on 0300 123 5000.

Media enquiries

Journalists should contact the Highways England press office on 0844 693 1448 and use the menu to speak to the most appropriate press officer.

[Press release: Heineken paying £160,000 over pollution incident](#)

From:

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The Environment Agency has accepted an enforcement undertaking from a major brewer following a pollution incident on a Herefordshire Brook.

The Environment Agency has accepted an offer of £160,000 for an enforcement undertaking from brewer Heineken UK following a pollution incident at their cider factory in Hereford, which saw several thousand fish killed.

Heineken have also paid more than £12,000 to cover the Environment Agency's legal costs.

The incident, at their Bulmer's cider plant in August 2014, was caused when a container of ammonia-contaminated water was emptied to a surface water drain which connected to the Widemarsh Brook.

At the time it was estimated that between 2,000 and 3,000 fish were killed including bullhead, minnows, juvenile chub & dace.

Environment Agency spokesperson Dave Throup said:

It's very unfortunate that a significant pollution of one of Hereford's main watercourses happened as a result of Heineken's actions.

However, we are pleased that the company is planning to make a positive contribution to the county's environment by offering this enforcement undertaking.

As a result of the enforcement undertaking, £150,000 will go to the Wye & Usk foundation and £10,000 to Yazor Widemarsh & Eign Brook restoration project.

[Press release: New charity investigation: The Suyuti Institute](#)

From:

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3 February 2017

Part of:

The Charity Commission has opened a statutory inquiry into The Suyuti Institute (registered charity number 1151600).

The Charity Commission, the independent regulator of charities in England and Wales, has opened a statutory inquiry into [The Suyuti Institute \(registered charity number 1151600\)](#). The inquiry was opened on 16 January 2017.

The charity has objects to advance the Islamic Faith through education and distributing literature.

Concerns were raised with the Commission about a lecture given by a trustee of the charity and whether the content of that speech was appropriate and furthered the charity's purposes. As a result of these concerns the regulator met with the trustees and conducted a visit and books and records inspection at the charity on 1 November 2016.

At the visit, the Commission learnt that the charity had taken over a private trust linked to one of the trustee's late mother, which included all of its assets and liabilities. The Commission has specific concerns relating to the management of conflicts of interest and whether the trustees have acted in the best interests of the charity to accept the assets and liabilities of the private trust. The Commission is also concerned that this decision has exposed the charity to significant financial risk.

As a result of these serious concerns the Commission has issued an order restricting transactions from the charity's bank account and directed the trustees to provide information and documents to the Commission – [see notes to editors](#).

The inquiry will examine the administration, governance and management of the charity by the trustees, in particular:

- whether the trustees have properly exercised their legal duties and responsibilities under charity law in the administration of the charity
- the financial management of the charity, in particular with regard to the decision to accept the assets and liabilities of the private trust
- whether there has been any private benefit to the trustees of the charity
- whether the trustees have operated the charity in furtherance of its charitable objects for the public benefit
- whether there has been misconduct and/ or mismanagement by the trustees

It is the Commission's policy, after it has concluded an inquiry, to publish a report detailing what issues the inquiry looked at, what actions were undertaken as part of the inquiry and what the outcomes were. Reports of previous inquiries by the Commission are available on its website.

The charity's details can be viewed on the Commission's [online charity search tool](#).

Ends

PR 09/17

Notes to editors

1. The order to freeze the bank accounts of the charity was made on 18 January 2017 under section 76 (3) (d) of the Charities Act 2011. The Direction to the trustees to provide information to the Commission was made on 19 January 2017 under section 47 of the Charities Act 2011.
 2. [The Charity Commission](#) is the independent regulator of charities in England and Wales. To find out more about our work, see our [annual report](#).
 3. Search for charities on our [online register](#).
 4. Section 46 of the Charities Act 2011 gives the Commission the power to institute inquiries. The opening of an inquiry gives the Commission access to a range of investigative, protective and remedial legal powers.
 5. The Commission's decision to announce the opening of a statutory inquiry is based on whether it is in the public interest to do so and with consideration of our objective to increase public trust and confidence in charities.
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News story: Government announces efficiency savings for 2015/16

The Government saved £3.3 billion for the taxpayer during the last financial year through greater efficiency in the procurement of common goods, services and information technology; more efficient management of office space and the disposal of surplus government property; and through tackling fraud, error and uncollected debt in welfare spending.

These savings were delivered across government and the Cabinet Office is continuing to improve capability and performance in key areas, helping departments collaborate to save money on everything from web servers to office buildings.

Savings in 2015/16 consist of:

- £1.2 billion of operational savings from reforming government's commercial activities through improving government's ways of purchasing, improving the provision of specialist expertise in complex commercial procurements, negotiations and disputes, and reducing the cost of the government's property estate
- £339 million through setting standards and providing assurances through the Government Digital Service
- around £805 million in savings from a number of cross-government reform packages aimed at tackling fraud, error and debt
- £973 million through the sale of surplus government property.

After the progress made in the last Parliament, where the Government announced total savings of £52.2 billion*, many of the more straightforward savings have already been achieved.

Some of the larger savings that the Government is targeting will only be achieved by total service transformation, much of it enabled by digital. That means making some early investments at the beginning of this Parliament to achieve considerable gains at the end.

This is the first time the Government has measured efficiency including savings delivered in the current Parliament and represents a significant step toward enabling greater efficiency in the way government works for years ahead.

Minister for the Cabinet Office Ben Gummer said:

Ensuring that our public finances are on a sustainable path is vital to securing a strong and stable economy that works for everyone. We have made significant steps forward in tackling fraud, selling off redundant government property such as the former Civil Service College in Sunningdale and making better use of modern digital technology to drive savings.

The Government is committed to delivering value for money for taxpayers and the Cabinet Office will continue to drive savings right across departments as set out in the Spending Review in 2015.

The Government is maintaining relentless focus on efficiency. It is committed and is on-track to deliver the manifesto commitment of £15 billion to £20 billion of annual efficiency by the end of the Parliament.

Ongoing improvement in efficiency should be part of business-as-usual activity across the public sector.

As announced at Budget 2016, the Government intends to identify an additional £3.5 billion of savings in 2019/20. This will be done through the Efficiency Review, which will report in autumn 2017. The Efficiency Review will look to embed a culture where incremental improvements in the efficiency of public services are made year on year.

Savings examples

Commercial

We saved £1.06 billion in 2015/16 from reforming government's commercial activities. This includes £182 million from improving the way departments across government purchase common goods and services, encouraging collaboration to achieve better value for money, and £879 million from improving the provision of specialist expertise in complex commercial procurements, negotiations and disputes.

For example in the Department of Health the Complex Transactions team has worked on the negotiation of extension to current NHS Supply Chain contract with significantly improved terms that deliver value to the NHS customers through savings in product costs. This work realised savings in 2015/16 of £76.7 million.

Digital

The Government Digital Service (GDS) helps government departments work together to transform government, meet user needs and deliver value for money in the purchase of technology goods and services. Through setting standards and providing assurance, GDS realised £339 million in 2015/16 from controlling costs and the implementation of their ICT strategy by Departments.

For example, GDS Spend Controls, in line with the Government's Technology Code of Practice, have collaborated and helped the Department for Work and Pensions (DWP) to save Her Majesty's Government over £875,000 in 2015/16. This was achieved across several of their digital services where GDS helped to either deliver the outcome in a more efficient way or reduce spend on part of a whole project because the user need had changed.

Fraud, error and debt

The Fraud, Error, Debt and Grants (FEDG) function works with Government departments to identify initiatives that will reduce financial loss and waste in this area. It also agrees cross-government standards for fraud, error, grant and debt activities. Across Government, several specialist programmes, mainly focused in DWP and HMRC, realised benefits worth £803m in 2015/16. Some of these have been led by programmes within departments, others by programmes, such as the Debt Market Integrator and National Fraud Initiative, that are led by the Cabinet Office.

Property

The Government Property Unit (GPU) has central oversight over all government land and property. GPU work across the Civil Service to create a more effective, efficient, and better value government estate. In 2015/16 GPU facilitated the selling of surplus property worth £973 million and fully realised annual savings of £95 million from exiting (in 2014/15 and 2015/16) property leases and negating running costs such as rent, rates and facilities management.

For example, the sale of the famous Admiralty Arch building that straddles the entrance to the Mall and Trafalgar Square generated capital receipts worth £66 million in 2015/16.

Information about the savings data

The Cabinet Office ensures departments work together to address waste and improve accountability across a range of areas, including IT, procurement and property.

In the last year of the previous Parliament the Cabinet Office helped departments across Whitehall save £18.6 billion against a baseline year of 2009/10. For this savings data, as much as possible we updated the baseline year against which we measure savings to 2014/15. This is to reflect the efficiency and reforms made in the previous Parliament which have been embedded into how government works.

These savings figures are not national or official statistics: they are based on management information evidence in department reports and other supporting evidence.