

Press release: Church Commissioner Appointment: Suzanne Avery

The Queen has appointed Suzanne Avery as a Church Commissioner.

The Queen has approved that Suzanne Avery, BA, be appointed a Church Commissioner for three years effective from 2017 in succession to Harry Bimbo Hart, who resigned on 31 December 2016.

Suzanne Avery began her career in corporate banking and quickly moved in to real estate and housing. She worked for NatWest in senior roles culminating in leading the mid-market real estate & construction finance business in 2002.

She was then appointed as head of the RBS Real Estate and Retail Group in 2004 and went on to hold various managing director roles at RBS, including Managing Director of Real Estate Finance Group & Sustainability and was responsible for the REITs, private equity and institutional funds, London Estates and private property companies.

She was chair of the London Real Estate Finance Board and from 2008, a member of the UK Real Estate Management Committee, responsible for strategy, governance and management for the Real Estate Finance Division, a £25 billion portfolio with 400 employees.

Green Party: Grammar school expansion is height of evidence-free policymaking



7 March 2017

*** Jonathan Bartley: “Theresa May should be getting rid of current grammar schools – not paving the way for new ones.”**

The Green Party has accused the Government of “evidence-free policymaking” after the announcement that the budget will pave the way for new grammar schools.

Research from the Sutton Trust has found selective schools benefit those who are already advantaged the most, while failing to serve the needs of those who most need support. [2]

Jonathan Bartley, co-leader of the Green Party, said:

“This is the height of evidence-free policymaking that we know will entrench inequality in an already divided society.

“If Theresa May was serious about making sure every child has a good school place she would be getting rid of current grammar schools – not paving the way for new ones.

“The evidence shows grammars benefit the already advantaged and fail those who need the most help. Instead of ploughing money into selective education the Prime Minister should be investing in our state schools and creating far more places than this scheme will provide.

“We need education policy that gives every single child the best education possible – not just those whose family can afford a tutor.”

Notes:

1. <http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/education-39183815>
2. <http://www.suttontrust.com/researcharchive/poor-grammar-entry-grammar-schools-disadvantaged-pupils-england/>

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[Speech: British High Commission in Lusaka celebrates International Women's Day](#)

I am pleased to host this event, here at the British Residence, anticipating this Wednesday's International Women's Day. We are due to hear from our guest speaker, watch a couple of short videos, and hold a short panel discussion. You will then have earned the chance to mingle over some drinks and snacks.

Foreign Secretary, Boris Johnson, on 27 February addressed an audience of 350 key policy makers at a reception at the Foreign Office in London, ahead of International Women's Day. The UK's chosen theme this year is leadership and empowerment. He announced a new Special Envoy for Gender Equality, Joanna Roper. Joanna will spearhead the UK's efforts to deliver a coherent international approach to ensuring the rights of women and girls, working closely with Whitehall departments, civil society, academics, and other governments.

The Foreign Secretary spoke of his personal commitment to addressing gender inequality in all its forms. He argued in particular that unequal access to education, itself flowing from gender prejudice and discrimination was a major barrier to women's empowerment. Speaking at the event, the Foreign Secretary said:

The sombre truth is that today 61 million girls between the ages of 6 and 14 do not have the chance to go to school. They have the same right to an education as anyone else – and at least as much potential and ability – but too many girls in too many countries endure the supreme injustice of being denied the opportunity to attend school.

If you want to increase prosperity; stabilise population growth; improve child nutrition; and reduce child marriage, the single most effective remedy is to ensure that all girls go to school.

I hope that every national leader will wake up to the benefits – and the essential justice – of educating the daughters of their country just as surely as they educate their sons.

Justine Greening, Minister for Women and Equalities, described the continuing efforts to promote gender equality in the UK. We now have record numbers of women in work, and we have more women than ever before on the boards of the UK's top companies. By marrying up the domestic and international aspects, she said, we can showcase UK leadership in this field giving us greater credibility to encourage like-minded partners around the world.

Here in Zambia, it is important to stress that addressing these issues is not only the morally right thing to do. It makes economic sense too. Estimates indicate that up to \$28 trillion could be added to the global economy if women took their equal place in the economy. Addressing inequality is not a "nice to have", or an "add on" to our core work; it is firmly in the UK national interest – and in Zambia's – and so is central to good policy and programming. Empowering women and girls improves peace and stability, good governance, economic growth and poverty reduction.

The relevant Global Goal for Sustainable Development is Goal 5, to 'achieve gender equality and empower all women and girls'. This contains targets to end harmful practices such as Violence Against Women and Girls, Female Genital Mutilation, and Child and Early Forced Marriage. The UK played an instrumental role in advocating for, and achieving this goal and targets. We are now committed to playing our part in ensuring that the commitments made to the SDGs are delivered upon.

Through UKAid we are backing this aspiration with practical support. For example, in 5 years to March 2016, UKAid:

- Supported 5.3 million girls in primary and lower secondary education;
- Helped to save the lives of 103,000 women in pregnancy and childbirth;
- Improved access to financial services for over 36 million women.

In Zambia, the UK is proud to work in partnership with the government, civil society and business, to support women reach their potential, thrive in business and politics, and take their place as leaders who champion Zambia's development.

We work with the Ministry of Gender to improve women's leadership in politics and the public sector, and to challenge attitudes and behaviours that limit women's development. We also work with the private sector to increase opportunities for women to get decent jobs, to thrive as entrepreneurs with increased access to finance and business know-how.

This collective effort is starting to pay off. The 2016 election saw an increase in the number of women elected as MPs and Councillors, and we are joined this evening by women who have demonstrated leadership in public service, business and voluntary sectors.

Whilst much has been achieved, and tonight is an opportunity for us to come together and celebrate this great progress, there is still much more to be done. Almost half of Zambian women have experienced violence in their lifetime; high rates of child marriage and teenage pregnancy contribute to high dropout levels in secondary education; women are less likely to own land; and they find it harder to get access to finance. When women are able to overcome these barriers, they are still so often met with the message that certain careers are not for them, that their role is in the home, and that they cannot be successful in their ambitions.

The women here this evening are testament to the fact that this is not the case, and serve as great role models for the next generation of girls who will have a vital role to play in securing Zambia's equitable economic development.

Press release: Waste firm AWM fined £125,000 for causing odour pollution

Waste firm Associated Waste Management Ltd has been fined £125,000 for causing odour pollution at its sites in Leeds and Bradford.

The company was sentenced at Leeds Crown Court on 6 March 2017 after previously admitting two environmental offences relating to its waste transfer facilities in Gelderd Road, Leeds and Canal Road, Bradford.

The Environment Agency prosecuted the company following repeated odour problems that had a detrimental effect on local residents.

Austin Stoton, prosecuting for the Environment Agency, told the court that AWM's Leeds site caused repeated odour problems between June 2012 and October

2013. During this time, Environment Agency officers carried out around 75 odour assessments, and most of them recorded smells that were likely to cause offence to human senses.

In October 2013 the Environment Agency suspended the company's permit for the Leeds facility, preventing it from bringing any more waste onto the site until it had made improvements to its odour management plan. This new plan was approved that month and the permit was reinstated.

In the same year, between March and July, AWM's Bradford site was also the cause of odour issues. These prompted local residents to complain on 49 separate dates.

One resident had complained that the odour was so bad that it had made him feel sick. He also said that if there was a smell present, he couldn't open windows and his family couldn't spend time in the garden. Another resident said at the time that he and his family had found it virtually impossible to have any enjoyment from their garden.

An inspection visit in March 2013 revealed that the company was not closing the shutters on a tipping shed used by bin wagons, which allowed the smell of rotting waste to leave the site.

In July, the Environment Agency served an enforcement notice on the firm that required it to improve its odour management plan for the site. The company's first revision of this document, submitted in August, was rejected as inadequate and it wasn't until October that a new plan was approved.

A spokesperson for the Environment Agency said after the hearing:

Waste sites like those managed by AWM can have a detrimental impact on local communities if they are not managed properly. That's why it is vital that operators adhere to environmental regulations and the conditions on their environmental permits.

In this case, AWM failed to maintain high standards of odour management at its facilities in Leeds and Bradford, and local residents suffered as a result. We hope today's outcome demonstrates that odour pollution is not acceptable and that the Environment Agency will take action against businesses that fail to adhere to permitting rules.

In mitigation, the company told the court that it had relied upon an external company that had approached it regarding odour suppression equipment, which had not worked.

AWM was fined £75,000 for the Leeds offence, and £50,000 for the Bradford offence. It was also ordered to pay £75,000 in legal costs.

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