

[Letter to Parliamentary Parties Panel on lockdown campaigning](#)

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[Baby red squirrels born on Ballykinler Training Area](#)

Red squirrels have struggled to populate in Northern Ireland due to grey squirrels forcing them out of their home territory. In April 2015, Defence Infrastructure Organisation (DIO) was approached by Northern Ireland Environment Agency (NIEA), Belfast Zoo and Northern Ireland Squirrel Forum (NISF) to support the re-introduction of red squirrels through a special breeding programme.

Ballykinler Training Area was used as there are no grey squirrels or pine martens on site allowing the red squirrels to safely acclimatise to the outside world and develop survival skills before widening their horizons into other forests across Northern Ireland. Staff at DIO set up a nursery area, feeding and water stations, nesting boxes and cameras to monitor the squirrels.

The squirrel kittens were initially placed in a soft release pen with a safe access to allow them to acclimatise to their new environment. They were then released into managed wild habitats within the site's training grounds after a week to allow them to take their first steps into the outside world and adjust to life in the wild in a safe and secure environment.

Tony Canniford, DIO's Senior Training Safety Officer for Ballykinler Training Centre said:

DIO plays a vital role in protecting and increasing the population

of red squirrels in Northern Ireland and it's great to see the first set of new-born baby squirrels venturing out into the wild into managed wild habitats within the site's training grounds. Ballykinler is a diverse site offering the ideal location and environment for red squirrels to breed and adapt to the outside world.

Alyn Cairns, Zoo Manager from Belfast Zoo said:

We are delighted that red squirrels released into Ballykinler as part of a breeding programme have now produced kittens. This is a successful step forward in ensuring the conservation of this iconic native species and we hope the population will continue to grow in future.

Belfast Zoo has worked with DIO and a range of partners in the Northern Ireland Squirrel Forum since 2015 and to date we have released 30 red squirrels into the wild. Ballykinler is one of six sites in Northern Ireland where Belfast Zoo-born red squirrels have been released.

To be part of such a passionate conservation-focused programme is a huge honour for Belfast Zoo. Belfast Zoo cares for some of the world's most endangered species that are facing increasing threats in their natural habitats and it's vital that we play a leading role in protecting Northern Ireland's very own wildlife on our own doorstep.

Dr Declan Looney, Senior Wildlife Inspector with the Northern Ireland Environment Agency and NISF Chair said:

This is an exciting development in the battle to conserve our native red squirrels. Ballykinler has provided a unique closed environment in which to release and monitor this species.

We have worked with Belfast Zoo and other partners in the Northern Ireland Squirrel Forum to use a combination of both captive bred and wild caught animals to expand the species habitat range across Northern Ireland. The staff at Ballykinler have done a great job in maintaining feeders and ensuring the young kits have the best possible environment in which to develop their survival skills.

The squirrels will spend a year getting accustomed to the environment, before being re-captured and released into the woodlands of Northern Ireland. It is hoped that they will thrive with further successful breeding and build up a robust red squirrel population throughout Northern Ireland.

Charity Commission Chair welcomes new board member

Press release

A new non-executive director based in Yorkshire, who is a professional accountant, chair of a housing association and former chair of a local hospice joins the Commission's board



A new non-executive director based in Yorkshire, who is a professional accountant, chair of a housing association and former chair of a local hospice joins the Commission's board.

Baroness Stowell of Beeston MBE, Chair of the Charity Commission, has welcomed the appointment of Will Lifford to the regulator's Board.

The Department for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport today announced his appointment by the Secretary of State. Will Lifford's three year term began on 18th January 2021 and he replaces Mike Ashley, whose term of office ended in November 2020.

Will Lifford is a Chartered Accountant who for 25 years was a partner at Grant Thornton, retiring in 2007 as UK Senior Audit Partner. In the last 13 years he has held a number of non-executive board positions in the charitable and wider public sector. These include: Chair of Martin House Children's Hospice (until 2017), board member of the Agriculture & Horticulture Development Board (until 2020) and Entrust, regulator of the Landfill Communities Fund (until 2015).

Will Lifford is currently Chair of Yorkshire Housing, a housing association with 18,000 homes across Yorkshire. He is also a board member of the Independent Parliamentary Standards Authority and chairs its audit and risk assurance committee.

Baroness Stowell said:

I am really pleased to welcome Will to the Commission. He brings more regional diversity to the Board and together with his extensive knowledge and experience in the fields of accountancy and audit, as well as his experience of strategic leadership in the voluntary sector and regulation, will make a vital contribution to the Commission as we continue to ensure charity can thrive and inspire trust – all the more important during these challenging times.

Will Lifford said:

I am delighted to have been appointed to the Charity Commission and look forward to working with the rest of the Board and the executive team. The Commission plays a vital role in ensuring charities maximise their impact in society, and I look forward to helping ensure the Commission delivers on its ambitious strategy in the years ahead.

ENDS

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[The Secretary of State has appointed Will Lifford as a Board Member of the Charity Commission](#)

News story

Will Lifford has been appointed by the Secretary of State for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport as a Board Member of the Charity Commission for three years from 18th January 2021 to 17th January 2024.



Will is a Yorkshire based Chartered Accountant who for 25 years was a partner at Grant Thornton, retiring in 2007 as UK Senior Audit Partner. In the last 13 years he has held a number of non-executive board positions in the charitable and wider public sector. These include: Chair of Martin House Children's Hospice (until 2017), board member of the Agriculture & Horticulture Development Board (until 2020) and Entrust, regulator of the Landfill Communities Fund (until 2015).

Will is currently Chair of Yorkshire Housing, a housing association with 18,000 homes across Yorkshire. He is also a board member of the Independent Parliamentary Standards Authority and chairs its audit and risk assurance committee.

This role is remunerated at £350 per day. This appointment has been made in accordance with the Cabinet Office's [Governance Code on Public Appointments](#). The process is regulated by the Commissioner for Public Appointments. The Government's Governance Code requires that any significant political activity undertaken by an appointee in the last five years is declared. This is defined as holding office, public speaking, making a recordable donation or candidature for election. Will Lifford has not declared any activity.

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[HM The Queen has appointed Nick Hurd, Jacquie Nnochiri and Deborah Tavana as Board Members of the National Citizen Service Trust](#)

Nick Hurd

Nick served as a Member of Parliament for fourteen years before standing down in December 2019. During that time he served three different Prime Ministers

as a Government Minister over more than 8 years. Ministerial roles included Minister for Civil Society; Minister for International Development; Minister of State for Climate Change and Industry; Minister of State for Police and Fire Service; Minister of State for Northern Ireland and Minister for London and Grenfell Victims. He is a lifelong Member of the Privy Council and continues, on a voluntary basis, as the UK Prime Minister's Independent Adviser on Grenfell.

Before politics, Nick spent 18 years in the private sector, divided between investment banking and the development of young growth businesses. This included the experience of setting up a business in Brazil for a British investment bank.

He serves as Chairman of Access – The Foundation for Social Investment and is a Senior Adviser to a number of companies and campaigns that are looking to make a positive social or environmental impact. He is a Global Ambassador for the Global Steering Group for Impact Investment (GSG) and serves on the Advisory Council of the UK Institute for Impact Investment.

Jacquie Nnochiri

Jacquie is an educational leader having worked in education for over 20 years. She is currently Head of Department and Head of Year 11 at a West London Pupil Referral Unit (PRU) where she is responsible for pastoral and career needs of students in their final year of statutory education. Jacquie monitors each students' academic achievements, wellbeing, and safeguarding needs.

Jacquie is passionate about ensuring young people (especially vulnerable students) have access to educational tools to improve and enhance their further educational and future work opportunities and emphasising the need to develop the necessary skills students will need to help widen their networks.

Jacquie has strong links with her local community and serves as a Referral Order Panel Member with the Harrow Youth Offending Team. Jacquie also serves on her local Safer Neighbourhood Panel. As a keen advocate of mentoring young people to enable students to develop their employability skills and gain confidence for future job roles, Jacquie is currently mentoring student(s) at the School of Business Management, Queen Mary University College London. Jacquie serves as a NASUWT (The Teachers' Union) representative at her place of work.

Deborah Tavana

Deborah started her career with Legal & General and has held executive roles in Williams & Glyn Bank, Resolution, Swiss Re and General Electric. She has experience in a range of leadership roles covering Human Resources, Communications, Governance, Legal and Operations and has also undertaken consulting and advisory work on both a regional and global basis. In addition, Deborah served for 13 years as a member of the Employment Tribunals.

Her career has always been guided by a belief in the importance of creating organisation cultures that value the whole person, whether colleague, customer or client. Deborah now works independently as an executive coach and management consultant. She also serves in a Non-Executive capacity as a trustee on the board of United Response.

Deborah is a graduate of the University of Bristol, holds an MSc from the University of Manchester Institute of Science and Technology and is a Chartered Fellow of the CIPD.

These roles are not remunerated. The appointments have been made in accordance with the Cabinet Office's [Governance Code on Public Appointments](#). The appointments process is regulated by the Commissioner for Public Appointments. Under the Code, any significant political activity undertaken by an appointee in the last five years must be declared. This is defined as including holding office, public speaking, making a recordable donation, or candidature for election. Nick declared he was elected as a Conservative Member of Parliament. Jacquie declared she canvassed on behalf of the Labour Party in 2016. Deborah has not declared any activity.