

Alok Sharma becomes full-time COP26 president and Kwasi Kwarteng is appointed as Secretary of State for Business

The Prime Minister has appointed Alok Sharma as full-time President of the UN COP26 climate conference in Glasgow this November, with Kwasi Kwarteng appointed as Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy.

COP26 will be the largest summit the UK has ever hosted, bringing together representatives from nearly 200 countries, including world leaders, experts, and campaigners.

To meet the high ambitions for the summit in the year of COP26, Alok Sharma will solely focus on driving forward coordinated global action to tackle climate change. A successful summit in November will be critical if we want to meet the objectives set out by the Paris Agreement and reduce global emissions. The UK has set a high bar, with our recent commitment to reduce emissions by at least 68% by 2030, but we also need other countries to do their bit.

Alok Sharma has been a leading force behind the UK's climate diplomacy, since assuming the role in February 2020. The Climate Ambition Summit co-hosted by the UK in December last year saw 75 world leaders set out new commitments to climate action.

The COP26 President will be based in the Cabinet Office, continuing as a full member of Cabinet, and will chair the Climate Action Implementation Committee to coordinate government action towards net zero by 2050 in the run up to COP26.

COP26 President Alok Sharma said:

The biggest challenge of our time is climate change and we need to work together to deliver a cleaner, greener world and build back better for present and future generations.

Through the UK's Presidency of COP26 we have a unique opportunity, working with friends and partners around the world, to deliver on this goal.

Given the vital importance of tackling climate change I am delighted to have been asked by the Prime Minister to dedicate all my energies to this urgent task.

Kwasi Kwarteng has been appointed Secretary of State for Business, Energy and

Industrial Strategy.

With a wealth of experience working in the department, with industry and across government in his previous role as Minister of State, Kwasi Kwarteng will lead and bring together work on business, science and innovation to unleash investment and growth in his new role as Secretary of State.

Anne-Marie Trevelyan will become Minister of State for Business, Energy and Clean Growth, taking forward climate and energy policy, including implementing plans in the Prime Minister's Ten Point Plan for a Green Industrial Revolution.

She will also continue in her role as UK's International Champion on Adaptation and Resilience for the COP26 Presidency, supporting countries vulnerable to climate change to adapt to its impacts and build resilience.

The UK continues to lead by example in cutting emissions by more than any other similar developed nation – and at the fastest rate. The Prime Minister's Ten Point Plan sets out how we will go further and faster towards a greener future, including committing to end the sale of new petrol and diesel vehicles by 2030, supporting renewable energy projects across the UK, investing in technology and transforming the energy efficiency of the UK's homes and public buildings.

[Statement on media freedom in Uganda](#)

Press release

Statement on media freedom in Uganda from the undersigned members of the Media Freedom Coalition.



The undersigned members of the Media Freedom Coalition express their concern about the situation for journalists and media freedom in the lead-up to the Ugandan elections of January 14, 2021.

People need free, independent, and impartial media to provide them with accurate and reliable information and informed analysis if governments are to be held to account.

We are concerned by reports of attacks and harassment of journalists, including those covering the country's election campaigns. We join the international community in expressing serious concerns about the impact of these attacks on the development and maintenance of a healthy civic space in the run-up to the elections.

We note that it is important for journalists to be granted accreditation in order to cover the elections. We encourage the Government of Uganda to uphold the right to freedom of expression and opinion in Uganda and ensure a vibrant media space.

We ask that the Ugandan authorities investigate any attacks on the press and hold those responsible to account, and ensure that journalists are provided with the necessary protections, accreditation, and access that they need to do their jobs.

Australia, Austria, Bulgaria, Canada, Costa Rica, Czech Republic, Denmark, Estonia, France, Germany, Iceland, Latvia, Luxembourg, Netherlands, Slovenia, Switzerland, the United Kingdom, and the United States of America

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Traders must act now with border traffic expected to increase next week

- Traders urged to ensure they are fully ready under new rules as lorries expected at GB-EU border will reach pre-Christmas levels next week;
- Compliance with new rules remains high, however, increased border traffic raises possibility of disruption;
- So far 18,000 Kent Access Permits have been issued, around 700 lorries have been turned away from the border and circa 150 fines handed out for non-compliance.

Businesses and hauliers trading between Great Britain and the EU have been

urged to ensure they meet necessary requirements before travelling to the border, as the Government warns that expected traffic could increase next week.

Exporters must provide the right documentation to hauliers, including export declarations and the extra certificates needed for products like plant and animal products, and hauliers heading to Kent must get a negative Covid test and obtain a Kent Access Permit before heading to port, or risk facing a fine and being turned away.

Since the end of the transition period the flow of lorries heading through Kent to the GB-EU border has been low. Over the last week there has been an average of 1584 lorries per day attempting border crossings, which is only around 40% of historical norms. This time last year, we were seeing an average of 4067 lorries crossing the border each day.

Compliance has also been relatively high with around 700 lorries turned away from the border since the end of the transition period – the majority of which were based on the lack of a negative covid test. We've also seen strong compliance with the requirement to obtain a Kent Access Permit with 18,000 issued in total so far.

The combination of low border traffic, and good compliance, has kept disruption at the border to a minimum.

However, we are seeing the volume of HGV traffic steadily increase by around 20% each day. As a result from next week we are expecting that volumes will reach their business as usual levels for this time of year, which equates to c. 5000-6000 vehicles per day. This means border and trader readiness is critical. By the fourth week of January we expect to see around 40,000 trucks heading to France each week.

These increased flows have the potential to cause significant disruption if traders and hauliers have not taken the necessary steps to comply with the new rules.

The Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster, Michael Gove said:

I'd like to thank hauliers, traders and our key industry partners for the hard work they have been putting in to make sure that they are compliant with the new rules.

The preparations they have made have paid dividends and disruption has been minimal so far, but the real challenge and potential for significant disruption starts next week when we expect that the number of lorries heading to the border may return to normal levels.

We have always been clear there would be changes now that we are out of the customs union and single market, so full compliance with the new rules is vital to avoid disruption, and the best way to ensure readiness is to follow the guidance on gov.uk and use the

[‘Check an HGV’](#) service.

We stand ready to help keep goods flowing smoothly as we adjust to our new relationship with the EU and ensure we take advantage of the opportunities it brings.

Exporters must provide the right documentation to hauliers – including export declarations and the extra certificates needed for things like plant and animal products – to avoid goods being held up at the border.

Hauliers heading to Kent must get a negative COVID test within 72 hours of crossing and obtain a Kent Access Permit before heading to port. They can get the permit and find out what documents traders should give them by using the [Check a HGV is ready service on GOV.UK](#).

Failure to secure either a test or Kent Access Permit will mean the driver cannot cross the border and will be fined £300. Around 150 fines have already been handed out due to non-compliance with the Kent Access Permit requirement, and for attempting to queue jump at the border.

For full details on what you need to do to comply with the new procedures, please visit www.gov.uk/transition.

[MOD archaeologist awarded MBE in New Year’s Honours list](#)

Richard joined DIO in 2004 and has led the archaeology team for a number of years. He and his team look after around 770 Scheduled Monuments, parts of 10 World Heritage Sites, and other historical sites owned by the MOD.

These range from the remains of Roman villas to First World War training trenches. It is important to the MOD to protect these sites and monuments so the work of Richard and his team is vital to allow military training and historic preservation to co-exist.

The MBE is also in recognition of Richard’s role as co-founder of the award-winning Operation Nightingale. In 2011, he worked with The Rifles to arrange for wounded, injured and sick service personnel and veterans to take part in archaeological digs on the Defence estate. The project has only grown since then, with Richard and other archaeologists leading hundreds of participants in dozens of digs over the years.

Richard Osgood talking to soldiers from the Royal Military Police at Rat Island, Portsmouth. (Copyright Holloway Photography)

Operation Nightingale gives participants the chance to spend time with people who understand their experiences while learning new skills, and its excavations have shed light on the history of several areas. For example, in 2013 the team excavated the remains of a Spitfire shot down in 1940 over Salisbury Plain. The pilot, Paul Baillon, was able to escape by parachute but was sadly killed in action mere weeks later. His daughter, Rosemary, attended the dig and Richard was able to talk her through the finds.

In 2019, Current Archaeology magazine named Richard their Archaeologist of the Year in recognition of his work on various excavations and for his role with Operation Nightingale.

Richard also spends some of his time educating people and promoting the importance of archaeology on the Defence estate through his work with the media, including as a contributor to Channel 4's Time Team and the BBC's Digging For Britain. He also advised Philip Pullman on archaeology for his popular series of novels, His Dark Materials.

Richard said:

I was flabbergasted when I heard the news; I genuinely thought that this might have been a practical joke by one of the veterans I had worked with over the last few years. It was a lovely surprise to hear at the end of what had been a trying year for everyone. I genuinely feel extraordinarily privileged to work in a discipline that still excites me, with people I admire, and in a landscape I adore. The award is a testament, I think, to the way that DIO looks to care for the historic estate with which we are entrusted. Additionally, the astonishing achievements of men and women I have seen on Op Nightingale are woven through all the work that I am most proud of and they are partners in this award.

Richard was nominated by his line manager, Richard Brooks, DIO's Head of Technical Services. He said:

Richard has been DIO's Senior Archaeologist for over ten years. He has contributed enormously to our understanding of the archaeology and heritage on the Defence estate and has worked extremely hard to protect it. He's very well regarded in his field, having been named 2019's Archaeologist of the Year, and has also done great work with the media explaining the importance of looking after Defence heritage. Perhaps most importantly, he is a huge part of Operation Nightingale which has genuinely changed the lives of many wounded, injured and sick service personnel and veterans for the better. Supported by others I nominated him for all of these reasons, and I'm thrilled to see him recognised for his work.

Dickie Bennett has known Richard for years, first as an Op Nightingale participant and more recently as Director of Breaking Ground Heritage. He

said:

Richard is responsible for influencing the lives of so many veterans in such a positive way. It's hard to lose your career or sense of being and have nothing to look forward to, but Richard found a way around that for many of us, showing us alternative routes in our lives that were just as fulfilling. I, amongst others, owe Richard a great deal of gratitude and I am proud to call him my mentor and friend.

Graham Dalton, DIO's Chief Executive said:

I was delighted to hear of the award of MBE to Richard in the Queen's New Year Honours list. Richard is an outstanding expert who ensures that DIO does all that it can to protect and to understand the archaeology of the Defence Estate. But he does much more too – bringing archaeology to life, and working with ex-service men and women so that they too can benefit from the insights that archaeology gives on how their predecessors lived and trained on today's military land. A genuinely inspirational professional, and recipient of a well-deserved honour.

DIO is the part of the MOD which manages the military's land and buildings.

[Inclusion, partnership and an international approach to fragility and security](#)

Mr President, thank you for convening this timely debate. My thanks also to Secretary-General Guterres, Mr Faki and Mrs Johnson Sirleaf for clearly outlining the challenge.

We see, all too often, the devastating impact of conflict on a country and its neighbours. As the war in Syria rages on, over 9 million of its people cannot afford basic food supplies.

More than 6 million – including 2½ million children – are refugees far from home. On either side of the border, COVID-19 has only made their situation more precarious.

This fragility is a key challenge to the peace and security we all desire. By 2030, 80% of the world's extreme poor will live in fragile states and

regions.

While our attention is still on the health impact of COVID-19, we know its social and economic effects will magnify that trend.

We also know that sustainable development and economic growth are just not possible without peace.

Mr President, I want to highlight three key elements to maintain international peace and security: inclusion, partnership and an integrated approach to fragility and security.

To my first point: peace processes are often the domain of a small number of well-connected men. But we know that peace will not last, if half the population aren't represented at the negotiating table.

Women and community leaders must have a seat from the start. Their meaningful participation can prevent conflict, support conflict resolution and maintain peace.

We need to protect and clear the path for women who speak up for their rights, their communities and their futures.

The UK has supported the International Civil Society Action Network to develop the Protection Framework for women peacebuilders.

As the Council's penholder on the Women, Peace and Security agenda, we urge all member states to commit to its recommendations.

To my second point, the UN and African Union are stronger together as partners for peacebuilding.

The collaboration that delivered the Central African Republic peace agreement, and AU mediation in Sudan are just two examples of how our partnership promotes peace.

I commend the progress made by the African Union on Silencing the Guns, bolstering the African Peace and Security Architecture, the Panel of the Wise and FemWise.

Through the UN, the UK is helping train African peacekeepers, and we recently deployed 300 military personnel to MINUSMA.

I also welcome the recent extraordinary meeting of IGAD heads of state to discuss regional security concerns. However, resolution will come not only with discussion, but with difficult choices and action.

Thirdly, I want to state the importance of an integrated approach to prevent conflict. The recent Twin Resolutions on Sustaining Peace show the international community's determination to address the causes before the guns start firing.

We have mechanisms to help us, like the African Union's Continental Early

Warning System, which the UK supports.

Effective interventions need to span humanitarian, development and peacebuilding operations. The UK worked with the OECD to develop the Recommendation on the Humanitarian-Development-Peace nexus, which will guide future interventions.

It is also important that the UN and International Financial Institutions continue developing their working partnership. We welcome the cooperation between the UN, World Bank, EU and Government of Burkina Faso that helped unlock \$700 million of World Bank funding.

To sum up, the challenges to maintaining peace continue to grow and the costs of excluding women and failing to think holistically become ever more apparent.

But there is light. The UN has taken positive steps in its ability to maintain peace in fragile settings, including the Secretary-General's reform agenda.

The UN's capacity to prevent and respond to conflict has been bolstered through the Peacebuilding Fund, the Multi-year Appeal and the Peace and Development Advisors.

The Peacebuilding Commission is now a critical forum for international cooperation on fragile states and regions.

Crucially, we better understand the importance of inclusive peace-making and peacebuilding. We know we are more effective when we work with regional partners on complex challenges. And we know the value of tackling the drivers of conflict before a shot is fired.

In an evolving world, as we continue to adapt, our partnerships are our strength, inclusion is our security, and the prize is peace.