

An update on the Presidency of UK COP26: 31 January 2020



Claire Perry O'Neill will no longer be UK COP26 President.

The Prime Minister is grateful to Claire for her work preparing for what will be a very successful and ambitious climate change summit in Glasgow in November.

Preparations will continue at pace for the summit, and a replacement will be confirmed shortly.

Going forward, this will be a ministerial role.

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Northern Ireland Troubles-related incident victims payments scheme

The Secretary of State for Northern Ireland, the Rt Hon Julian Smith CBE MP, has today signed new legislation establishing a victims payments scheme.

This scheme acknowledges the harm caused to those people injured through no fault of their own in the Troubles through annual payments of c. £2,000 to £10,000 for the rest of their lives.

Following consultation, changes have been made to the scheme to increase the number of injured people who will qualify, and to benefit spouses and carers looking after those who were seriously injured. It will not apply to those who were injured due to their own actions or who committed serious criminal offences. An independent judge-led board will make decisions on whether payments should be made where there is compelling evidence that a payment

would not be appropriate.

Secretary of State Julian Smith said: "The Troubles had a devastating impact on many, and the time has come to implement a victims payments scheme to deliver for those who need it most and for those injured through no fault of their own.

"I would like to pay tribute to the courage of those people who have fought long and hard to see such a scheme.

"We have talked about this for long enough. It is time to get it done."

The Troubles had a profound and often devastating impact on too many people, in Northern Ireland and beyond. When we speak about the Troubles we rightly talk about the many violent deaths, but it is also vital that we do not overlook the harm caused to those who were seriously injured in Troubles incidents.

Many of the people who were injured have to live with a daily reminder of the impact of that terrible event or events – whether through loss of mobility, loss of limbs, psychological trauma or some other life limiting health condition or disability.

Following the recent consultation, the Secretary of State has introduced new rules for the scheme, so that the needs of those injured in the Troubles through no fault of their own receive the recognition that they deserve.

The new scheme will mean:

*The payment can be transferred to a spouse, civil partner, cohabiting partner, registered carer or anyone who provided a substantial amount of care on a regular basis for ten years on death of the injured person.

*The date parameters for the scheme will be Jan 1966 – Apr 2010, but an independent Board will also have discretion to consider applications for incidents outside these dates which they consider it would be in line with the purpose of the scheme to include.

*Awards may only be adjusted for historic compensation where that historic compensation is higher than a threshold.

*Payments through the scheme will not impact income-related benefits or tax (including income tax, capital gains tax and inheritance tax).

*Anyone injured anywhere in the UK who meet the other eligibility criteria will be eligible for the scheme (regardless of residency). And any UK citizen, or person of NI, injured in Europe will be eligible.

The discussions and delay of the past few years have gone on long enough. The time has come to get this done and deliver for those people who will benefit most.

The new Regulations will mean that from May, victims can apply for payments,

and the system has been designed to support those seriously injured and traumatised in the Troubles.

This new scheme and legislation being introduced today puts victims and their needs at the heart of Government's approach to dealing with the legacy of the Troubles.

Click here for more more information on the [regulations](#)

[Possible Israeli annexation of the West Bank: Foreign Secretary statement](#)



Foreign Secretary Dominic Raab has responded to reports that Israel could begin to immediately apply Israeli laws over the Jordan valley and key strategic areas of the West Bank.

Foreign Secretary Dominic Raab said:

The United Kingdom is concerned by reports of possible moves toward annexation of parts of the West Bank by Israel. Any such unilateral moves would be damaging to renewed efforts to re-start peace negotiations, and contrary to international law. Any changes to the status quo cannot be taken forward without an agreement negotiated by the parties themselves.

Further information

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Construction of Helston's new £2million flood defence begins this month



St Johns Road, Helston, 22 January 1988

The Environment Agency will hold a public drop-in session on Thursday 6 February 2019 at the Old Cattle Market, Helston from 2.30pm to 6.30pm.

At the drop-in you will be able meet the team behind the new Helston (River Cober) flood defence scheme and find out more about the construction plans and timescales.

The Environment Agency will start work on the new £2million scheme this month. It will include new flood defences along the east side of the River Cober, a road ramp at the end of Mill Lane, earth embankment from Mill Lane to St Johns Road Bridge and rendered flood wall from St Johns Road Bridge to County Bridge.

The combined benefit of the new Helston scheme and the recently completed Loe Bar scheme means a total of 121 homes in Helston will be better protected from flooding.

St Johns Road, Helston, 15 February 1979

Environment Agency Project Manager David Harker said:

We are delighted to be building this flood defence scheme for the residents of Helston. Helston has a long history of flooding from the River Cober and Loe Pool. Once complete these defences combined with the defence at Loe bar will reduce flood risk to 1 in 100 years. We hope people will come along on Thursday to meet us and see how we plan to build the scheme.

The Environment Agency has appointed Kier as the principal contractor on site. Kier will start work in February and expect to finish construction in autumn this year, with final planting during the winter season.

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School sponsored by LLW Repository Ltd reach national Lego League final

The LLWR sponsored Gosforth Primary School are making the long journey to Bristol for the England and Wales final of FIRST Lego League after winning the regional tournament.

LLWR's Tom Fletcher, a volunteer with Team Gosforth, said the win, at Lakes College, near Workington, was well deserved.

"Team Gosforth put in a lot of effort, and team members proved themselves thoughtful, cheerful and conscientious along the way, thinking about big issues like accessibility and climate change as they addressed a local problem," he added.

"They're now headed to Bristol to compete at the national tournament. The LLWR coaches could not be prouder."

Hard on their heels were a second LLWR backed school, Millom, who finished runner up on the day, with the support of LLWR volunteer Becky Ruddy.

Lego League comprises 3 strands: the project; the robot challenge and Core Values. Each is assessed separately, and then results are compiled to identify an overall winner.

This year, the tournament theme was 'City Shaper', and the teams had to run a project about a problem faced by a local building or community space.

Team Gosforth chose the problem of parking in their village and had worked hard since September to investigate the issue. They interviewed local businesses and councillors, completed questionnaires with nearby office workers, conducted fieldwork and compared the costs and benefits of different solutions.

In the end they put forward the idea of a delivery van that would enable continued access to shop services, whilst taking cars off the road. Meanwhile, the team also had to learn how to programme a robot to complete various city themed challenges.

Paul Pointon, LLWR Managing Director, said: "Four years ago, when Pete

Woolaghan, of REACT Engineering, asked us to get involved in First Lego League we were happy to accept and contribute to his vision of one day having 100 Cumbrian schools take part.

“Lego League’s Core Values, Discovery, Innovation, Impact, Inclusion, Teamwork and Fun, are exemplary, and getting involved has put us at the heart of our community. We’re proud to play a part in shaping the engineers and problem solvers of tomorrow.

“We’ve shown our commitment with a £25,000 contribution, over 5 years, and we also utilise Lego League as a developmental tool for employees. Several of our apprentices volunteered this year, including 3 at Gosforth, and this can only be beneficial in their roles at LLWR.

“Best of luck to Gosforth in the final, but, along with Seascale and Millom, they are already winners to us.”

Sarah Layzell, Assistant Head Teacher of Gosforth Primary, said: “I was in utter disbelief when it was announced we had won, and the children were so pleased, they couldn’t believe it.”

The national final will be held on 22nd February and Team Gosforth will use the intervening period to hone their skills. But Sarah is not getting her hopes up.

“We are going there for the experience,” she said.

LLWR volunteers assisting Gosforth during the season were Tom Fletcher, Leona Middlehurst, Danielle Boyd and apprentices Chloe Glaister, Amy Fox and Jade Murphy.