

[Press release: Faith Minister launches national tour to celebrate the role of faith communities](#)

Faith Minister Lord Bourne today (4 December 2018) embarked on his latest national Faith Tour to shine a spotlight on the central role faith institutions play in building strong, resilient communities.

The tour – ‘Belief in communities: bridging divides and strengthening communities’ – will commence with a visit to the Highway of Holiness Church in Tottenham and will be followed by monthly flagship visits across the country to engage directly with faith communities.

This will include meeting volunteers and faith leaders to understand the key success factors that could be applied elsewhere.

Minister for Faith Lord Bourne said:

Large or small, faith communities are often at the heart of a local area – the glue that binds our society together.

The length and breadth of this country, faith institutions form community hubs and support centres, as well as places of worships.

The Highway of Holiness Church in Tottenham is a shining example of this – providing support to its community with a homeless shelter for those most in need.

Many faith-based organisations provide support to their community above and beyond their day-to-day work. Lord Bourne’s tour will serve to recognise and promote this, whilst strengthening and extending the positive impact many faith institutions have as this government continues to celebrate its faith communities.

This follows the launch of ‘[Belief in communities: bridging divides and strengthening communities](#)’. This report details Lord Bourne’s tour of 55 places of worship across 15 towns and cities throughout 2017 to 2018 and calls upon faith groups to ‘bridge the divide’ by strengthening inter faith networks.

Case study

The Highway of Holiness Church, Tottenham is a community-oriented Evangelical Pentecostal church working to support the most vulnerable in our society. Pastor Alex set up a 24/7 homeless shelter in 2009.

Predominantly funded through donations from the congregation, the shelter has

helped 900 men in the 7 years that it has been open. The value of its work has been widely recognised with research showing that for every £1 invested in Highway House, £5 to £8 is returned to society.

Statement to parliament: Rail update: Govia Thameslink Railway

I wish to inform the House that the Department for Transport has completed its analysis of the events surrounding this year's May timetable introduction on the GTR network. In line with [Professor Stephen Glaister's interim report](#), it has concluded that the disruption on this network was caused by a series of mistakes and complex issues across the rail industry.

I can announce today (4 December 2018) that the government is holding GTR to account for their role in the [unacceptable performance following the introduction of the May timetable](#). GTR will make no profit from its franchise in this financial year and looking ahead, we have also capped the amount of profit that the operator is able to make for the remainder of its franchise, which is due to expire in September 2021.

Furthermore, GTR will be contributing £15 million towards tangible improvements for passengers. This is in addition to the £15 million the operator has already contributed towards compensation for passengers since the May timetable disruption. GTR has agreed to work with the rail user groups representing passengers of Thameslink, Southern and Great Northern, who will determine what improvements this package will fund.

The department has concluded that a termination of the franchise would cause further and undue disruption for passengers and is not an appropriate course of action.

Performance after the May timetable change was unacceptable. This action announced today holds GTR to account appropriately and will benefit passengers. The department will continue to monitor closely the performance of GTR, particularly during the upcoming December timetable change. These measures do not make GTR immune from further sanctions in the event of any subsequent failure to perform.

[Press release: Magic beans and buzzing coffee win international science award](#)

The annual £1 million [Newton Prize](#) recognises pioneering research and innovations that come from international partnerships between the UK and Newton Fund partner countries around the world, with each project helping to solve global development challenges.

Business Secretary Greg Clark said:

These prize winning international projects are uniting the brightest and best minds from across the globe to transform lives now and for generations to come. The Newton Prize and Newton Fund create, cultivate and celebrate these partnerships and I congratulate all the winners on their excellent work.

This year the Newton Prize focussed on partnerships between the UK and Brazil, Chile, Colombia and Mexico. The 2019 Newton Prize will celebrate partnerships between the UK and China, Indonesia and the Philippines.

Winning projects

The winning 5 projects are:

Improving the lives of the Guarani people by saving the Atlantic Forest (awarded up to £200,000)

This project between researchers at University College London and the Indigenous Work Centre in Brazil is helping the indigenous Guarani restore the Atlantic Forest in their territory. By drawing from Guarani ancestral agricultural knowledge and established agroforestry techniques, and by promoting a better understanding of the importance of indigenous peoples for environmental conservation, the team are supporting the preservation and restoration of the forest and improving the wellbeing of Guarani communities. The results of the project could also inform conservation efforts elsewhere.

Strengthening energy infrastructure to withstand extreme weather and natural disasters (awarded up to £200,000)

Scientists at the University of Manchester and University of Chile are using mathematical models to strengthen power systems in Chile and other countries vulnerable to environmental hazards, helping energy providers prevent or reduce widescale electricity outages. It will inform planning practices to help shape a robust, cost-effective and low-carbon Chilean transmission network. National and international networks developed through the project have built the capacity of researchers in the wider region, and the potential impact of this project could benefit countries affected by extreme weather

and natural hazards worldwide.

Turning environmentally damaging coffee waste into electricity (awarded up to £98,327)

Researchers from the University of Surrey and University of Antioquia in Colombia have found that environmentally damaging coffee waste could be turned into electricity. They discovered that if they fed coffee waste to microbes, the tiny creatures would eat it, producing energy. This energy could then be captured in the form of electricity. The researchers are now developing small fuel cell devices, and they hope to engage with large coffee companies in Europe to adopt the same approach to treating their waste if used successfully in Colombia.

New drought resistant beans for sustainable food supply in Mexico (awarded up to £199,019)

Researchers from the University of Sheffield and the Institute of Biotechnology at the National Autonomous University of Mexico are developing bean varieties to combat drought-related crop losses. The researchers have potentially found out how to reduce bean water use by up to 40 percent, potentially saving up to three percent of Mexico's entire agricultural water use. The project has the potential to secure a reduction in rural poverty, while improving bean yields and minimising fertiliser use will also benefit soils, reduce desertification and improve water quality.

Documenting the past for a more peaceful future (awarded up to £192,400)

The final Newton Prize, the Chair's Award, was given to a project between Goldsmiths University of London and the Alberto Hurtado University, in Chile. The research team has shown how the act of documenting politically-motivated imprisonment, torture or execution is an important way of resisting human rights violations. It allows affected societies to appreciate – often for the first time – the depth and scale of the trauma suffered by fellow citizens. This new line of research will support public policy and measures that help to move towards a more peaceful future.

Newton Prize

This is the second year of the Newton Prize, which is part of the Newton Fund. The Newton Fund builds research and innovation partnerships with 17 partner countries to support their economic development and social welfare, and to develop their research and innovation capacity for long-term sustainable growth. The prize allows researchers to take their existing Newton Fund projects to the next level.

Further information is available on the [Newton Fund website](#).

Notes for Editors

- The Newton Fund is managed by the UK Department for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy (BEIS), and delivered through 7 UK delivery partners, which includes UK Research and Innovation (comprising the 7 research councils and Innovate UK), the UK Academies, the British Council and the Met Office.

[Press release: PM bilateral with First Minister Nicola Sturgeon: 3 December 2018](#)



A Downing Street spokesperson said:

This afternoon Prime Minister Theresa May met with Scotland's First Minister Nicola Sturgeon where they discussed the latest in the UK's exit from the European Union.

The Prime Minister spoke about the support she has received from fishermen, farmers and business leaders – like Sir Ian Wood – who back the deal as it gives them the clarity and certainty they need to protect jobs and living standards. The Prime Minister urged the First Minister to listen to these voices in their support of the deal as opposed to risking a no-deal Brexit or going back to square one of negotiations.

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[Press release: SpaceX launches pioneering UK maritime communications satellite](#)

The first of its kind satellite was launched this evening (03 December) into a 575 km sun-synchronous orbit as part of Spaceflight's SS0-A SmallSat Express mission on-board a SpaceX Falcon 9 rocket from Vandenberg Air Force Base, USA, at 18:30 GMT.

VESTA ('VdES Transmitting sAtellite system) will support new two-way maritime information services between ship and shore. The payload was designed and built by [Honeywell UK](#) in Aylesbury and the spacecraft by [Surrey Satellites](#) (SSTL) in Guilford.

Dr Graham Turnock, Chief Executive, UK Space Agency said:

There are still vast areas of the Earth where communication remains difficult, none more so than out at sea.

Satellites can bridge this gap, however testing new technology is risky and expensive. That's why the UK Space Agency is helping to fund promising UK technologies like VESTA as part of the government's Industrial Strategy, to kick start innovation and growth, while delivering safety at sea and jobs back home.

The mission was made possible through £1 million flagship funding from the [UK Space Agency's National Space Technology](#) programme which aims to accelerate innovation and better position UK organisations to enter and expand within both institutional and commercial space markets, growing the UK space economy.

Chris Bee, a Business Manager at Honeywell Aerospace UK said:

While leading the way in demonstrating small data packet transfer from a small payload into remote maritime locations beyond our phone networks, this mission is also leading us into an even broader range of remote communication scenarios to increase the connectivity of our world.

VESTA will demonstrate:

- Broadcasting vessel traffic information, such as the delivery of ice-maps to shipping in the polar regions and;
- two-way communications to support commercial fleet monitoring by relaying real-time ship engine, emissions and fuel data to operators as

well as provision of specific meteorological data.

Spaceflight's SS0-A mission is the largest single rideshare mission from a U.S.-based launch vehicle to date. The company has contracted with 34 different organisations to launch 64 spacecraft on just one rocket.

The UK's space sector is going from strength to strength, employing around 40,000 people and carrying our world-class science while growing the economy.

Last month (19 November) a [contract worth several hundred million-pounds](#) was signed for Eutelsat to procure two innovative new telecommunications satellites from Airbus, with much of the work taking place in the UK, at manufacturing sites in Portsmouth and Stevenage.

This is all supported by the Government's Industrial Strategy, with major initiatives such as the National Satellite Test Facility at Harwell and the development of the proposed commercial spaceport in Sutherland, Scotland.