

Press release: New Charity

Investigation: Croydon Tabernacle

The Charity Commission, the independent regulator of charities in England and Wales, has opened a statutory inquiry into Croydon Tabernacle ([1070276](#)). The inquiry was opened on 14 March 2018.

The charity's objects include advancing the Christian faith, relieving people who are in conditions of vulnerability or hardship and promoting charitable purposes which might benefit the areas of Surrey, Greater London and other parts of the United Kingdom or the world.

The Commission examined the charity's financial information and found cause for serious regulatory concern. This included substantial unexplained expenditure and potentially conflicted payments to people connected with the charity. As a result of its concerns, the Commission has frozen a bank account controlled by the charity.

The Commission has been engaging with the charity since November 2016 to examine its concerns; this included a meeting with the charity in February 2017. However the engagement did not resolve the regulatory concerns so a statutory inquiry has been opened.

The inquiry will examine the extent of risks to charity property and whether:

- there has been misconduct or mismanagement in the administration of the charity and/or breaches of trust or non-compliance with charity law
- potential conflicts of interest have been adequately identified or managed
- connected party payments or transactions have been properly authorised

It is the Commission's policy, after it has concluded an inquiry, to publish a report detailing what issues the inquiry looked at, what actions were undertaken as part of the inquiry and what the outcomes were. Reports of previous inquiries by the Commission are available on [GOV.UK](#).

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Notes to editors

1. The Charity Commission is the regulator of charities in England and Wales. To find out more about our work see the [about us](#) page on GOV.UK.
2. Search for charities on our [check charity](#) tool.
3. Section 46 of the Charities Act 2011 gives the commission the power to institute inquiries. The opening of an inquiry gives the commission access to a range of investigative, protective and remedial legal powers.

[News story: Fidel develops new way for consumers to be rewarded for loyalty](#)

Customer loyalty schemes, such as Tesco Club Card, Boots Advantage Card and Nectar, are popular with shoppers and proven to encourage customer retention and increase sales, yet only 20% of offline retailers have a loyalty scheme.

With 280,000 retailers in the UK generating £300 billion in revenue every year, London-based startup, [Fidel](#), saw an opportunity to rethink the way shoppers can be rewarded for their custom.

Fidel's goal was to make loyalty and retention marketing simple for both merchants and consumers, and to enable retailers to increase revenues. The company developed a platform that makes it easier for consumers to receive rewards for their purchases. Instead of having to carry different loyalty cards or coupons for each store, they can use their normal debit or credit cards and rewards are allocated automatically at the point of sale.

Turning a vision into global sales

Subrata Dev, Fidel's founder and CEO, said:

When Fidel applied for the Innovate UK grant, we had little more than a vision. We were operating a customer engagement platform for SMEs and wanted to find a seamless way for customers to collect points and rewards without having to scan cards, key rings or mobile apps.

I'm very excited about the progress we've made and where this is heading. The demand has been phenomenal and beyond our expectations. We had so much interest in the platform we were building, before the project had even ended, that we managed to secure further capital from one of the largest venture capital firms in the world, [Horizons Ventures](#).

This additional capital will now help us grow and commercialise the service in UK and internationally.

The platform Fidel created makes it easy for developers to build innovative loyalty applications and services that are linked with payment cards, without having to integrate directly with each payment network (Visa, Mastercard and Amex). Fidel's mission is to speed up the adoption of 'card-linked loyalty' by making the technology more accessible.

Subrata Dev added:

We take care of all the heavy-lifting in the background whilst our partners can focus on building cool products that will ultimately drive transaction volumes and contribute towards the growth of the ecosystem.

A steady increase in customers

Today, the Fidel API is powering several businesses, including [Avios](#) (British Airways). Customers will soon be able to earn Avios points automatically while shopping at their local supermarkets, restaurants, airports and coffee shops using any bank card.

Other customers include TopCashBack, Perkbox, Airtime and Percent. Some of the merchants who are already connected to the platform include household names such as Debenhams, Gap, Burger King, House of Fraser, Cafe Nero and Subway.

Fidel has also been invited by Japan's 3 biggest banks to support the Japanese government's aim of increasing card usage from 18% to 40% by 2020. By introducing Fidel's technology platform, the banks hope to encourage more of their customers to take up cashless shopping.

Fidel is expanding the service globally to Ireland, Sweden, Norway, Finland, Australia and the US, and has doubled the size of its team since completing the grant project in November 2017.

Providing a secure interface for users

The company has been careful to build in safeguards for consumers. It is PCI DSS (Payment Card Industry Data Security Standard) level 1 certified. The company handles and transmits all sensitive data via secure bank-level encryption methods.

No personal information, such as a card number, is ever stored. The company cannot monitor transactions without explicit opt-in consent from cardholders and they monitor qualified transactions at participating merchant locations only to fulfil rewards. All data is stored on an anonymised and aggregated basis and the company never analyses or shares this data with third parties.

[Speech: A revitalised and relevant Commonwealth: article by HMA James](#)

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46 Heads of Government, over 50 Ministers and 15,000 delegates attended. Heads of delegations met in London and at Windsor Castle, while Ministers and other participants took part in forums for women, youth, civil society and business, and dozens of side events and multilateral and bilateral meetings.

Discussions focused on the theme “Towards a Common Future” for the citizens of the Commonwealth and considered how the organisation needs to change and grow in order to remain relevant to their aspirations.

The Commonwealth is a unique institution built on deep partnerships. CHOGM 2018 reconfirmed the value of the Commonwealth as a modern forward-looking organisation, responsive to the global challenges we all face today, and will face in the future. The meeting showed how effectively the Commonwealth can unite its 53 Member States around issues of common concern, issues like equal access to education and environmental sustainability, both of them tremendously important to the billion young people who live in Commonwealth countries as they look to the future.

Commonwealth members used the opportunity to give further substance to commitments on limiting climate change with the launch of the ‘Commonwealth Blue Charter’ to protect the oceans, supported by a ‘Clean Oceans Alliance’ to tackle plastic pollution, which Sri Lanka joined. Sri Lanka will lead work on the conservation of mangroves in Commonwealth countries.

The Commonwealth’s uniqueness lies in its human networks. People-to-people links define the institution and we need to recognise and nurture them. President Sirisena in his address to the Commonwealth Business Forum highlighted how the government’s “Blue-Green” economic plan will aim to advance the full utilization of the ocean and the other natural resources of Sri Lanka in an environmentally-friendly and sustainable way. In his address to business leaders he commented on the importance of finding solutions to common problems: “There is no standard approach for implementing the Sustainable Development Goals, and each country decides its own path. However the approach led by our countries should be people centred”, he said.

Leaders discussed the need for increasing cooperation across security challenges and committed to implementing global programmes that will facilitate better coordination of efforts. Agreement on the ‘Commonwealth Cyber Declaration’, the world’s most geographically diverse intergovernmental commitment on cyber-security co-operation, illustrated the opportunity for the Commonwealth to bring its members together to meet emerging challenges and threats to the security of all our countries. Commitments relevant to the provisions of the Chemical Weapons Convention also illustrated how the Commonwealth can bring members together behind approaches to common global security problems.

The Summit also provided the opportunity for discussions on boosting trade and investment within the Commonwealth. The Commonwealth contains some of the

world's fastest growing economies and its members account for one-fifth of global trade. Part of its strength lies in so many of its members shared instincts about the importance of open societies and open economies.

Sri Lanka pledged financial support as an anchor investor in the Commonwealth Small States Trade Financial Facility which will help small, vulnerable countries access global markets. Commonwealth small states are expected to have access to USD 300 million of incremental trade finance over a three-year period from this programme.

Sri Lanka leading the way in this endeavour demonstrates another truth of the Commonwealth – that the size of a country is not a limit to ambition and impact. In thanking Her Majesty The Queen for her years of dedicated and unfailing support the British Prime Minister, Theresa May, summarised this. The Commonwealth is a grouping in which “the voice of the smallest member country is worth precisely as much as that of the largest; [in which] the wealthiest and the most vulnerable stand shoulder to shoulder”. In the many outcomes of CHOGM 2018 we saw this reaffirmed.

[Press release: New Housing Secretary appointed](#)

New Housing Secretary appointed – GOV.UK

James Brokenshire has today been appointed as Secretary of State for Housing, Communities and Local Government.



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James Brokenshire said:

I am honoured to have been asked by the Prime Minister to serve as

Secretary of State for Housing Communities and Local Government. I am determined to get Britain building the homes our country needs so everyone can afford a place to call their own.

One of my top priorities is going to be ensuring everyone affected by the Grenfell Tower fire gets the support they need and we learn lessons from the tragedy so something like this can never happen again.

As the son of a former chief executive of a council local government is in the blood for me. So I look forward to working with councils across the country by supporting them to deliver quality public services and build strong integrated communities.

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Thank you for your feedback