

Press release: PM call with President Xi on 19 April 2018

The Prime Minister called President Xi of China earlier today.

They agreed the Prime Minister's visit to China in January had been a great success, reinvigorating our commitment to a "Golden Era" of UK-China relations and a deeper strategic partnership.

They discussed the appalling chemical weapons attack in Douma. The Prime Minister explained our strikes had been proportionate, legal and responsible, and aimed at alleviating humanitarian suffering by degrading the Syrian regime's chemical weapons capability and deterring their willingness to use them in the future.

The Prime Minister set out that Russia's blocking of diplomatic action underlined the importance of the international community working together to re-establish an independent mechanism that attributes responsibility to the perpetrators of attacks such as the one in Douma.

The Prime Minister noted that the use of a nerve agent against Yulia and Sergei Skripal in Salisbury was a grave attack on the sovereign territory of the UK, and the first use of nerve agents on European soil since the Second World War. They agreed that the use of chemical weapons by anyone, anywhere, for any purposes was unacceptable.

The Prime Minister reaffirmed the UK's commitment to free and fair trade, open markets and upholding and strengthening the multilateral global trading regime.

The leaders welcomed progress on deepening the UK-China trade relationship. They agreed that the UK and China would continue to work together to identify how best we can cooperate on the Belt and Road initiative across the region and ensure it meets international standards.

The Prime Minister also noted the need to recognise and respect the international law of the sea, in the context of adherence to the wider rules-based international system.

Speech: PM opening statement at first CHOGM Executive Session: 19 April 2018

Prime Minister Theresa May said:

Good morning everybody, can I welcome you again to London, and welcome you to the first session of the 2018 Commonwealth Heads of Government Meeting.

This is the 25th time the leaders of Commonwealth nations have gathered to address the great issues of the day – although for many of us, myself included, this is the first time we’ve attended as heads of government. So let me extend an especially warm welcome to all the first-time attendees, and in particular to President Adama Barrow, bringing The Gambia back into the Commonwealth fold. Welcome.

I’d also like to formally thank Prime Minister Joseph Muscat of Malta for his work as Chair-in-Office. Your steady leadership delivered a very successful tenure, and it’s a pleasure to receive the baton from you at today’s meeting. Thank you.

It’s a meeting that takes place at a time of significant global challenges. The rules-based international system, which has consistently delivered both prosperity and peace, faces threats in many forms and on many fronts. Climate change and extreme weather continue to take lives and damage livelihoods across the Commonwealth. And the new opportunities afforded by the digital world have brought with them new risks, with our cyber security under attack from individuals and state actors.

All these issues and more will be addressed in a series of meetings over the next two days, both here at Lancaster House and in the retreat at Windsor.

The great strength of the Commonwealth is that all our members have equal status, an equal voice, and an equal right to make that voice heard. So as we tackle these challenges, I want to hear from everyone, and everyone will have chance to speak.

We face many challenges in the world today. But the Commonwealth is a unique organisation and, at this summit, we have an opportunity to deliver lasting change that benefits all of our 2.4 billion people. I’m looking forward to working with you all as we move the Commonwealth towards our common future.

Press release: Lord Bourne: “The Mint is a shining example of global export success”

UK Government Minister Lord Bourne will visit the Royal Mint’s headquarters in Llantrisant today (19 April) as part of ongoing engagement with the HM Treasury-owned coin production company.

The Royal Mint in Llantrisant was opened in 1968 and now employs more than

850 staff across its 35 acre site. The current Chief Executive and Deputy Master, Anne Jessopp, was appointed earlier this year and is the first woman to hold the role in the Mint's 1,100 year history.

The Mint's core function is the production of the UK's coins, blanks (the metal discs minted into coins) and official medals. The company aims to provide financial return to the UK Government via its commercial operations, and has produced coins and medals for around 60 countries outside the UK.

Lord Bourne will reaffirm the UK Government's continued backing of the world's leading export mint by supporting the development of its overseas operations and new business ventures.

The mint currently holds a 15 per cent global market share and allows customers to trade bullion (gold, silver, and platinum) in the form of coins and bars, and store it in its own secure storage facility (The Vault). The site in Llantrisant is also home to The Royal Mint Experience, which opened in 2016.

UK Government Minister Lord Bourne said:

The Royal Mint is a crucial asset that adds real value to the makeup of South Wales' economy; employing hundreds of staff, attracting thousands of visitors to its tourist attraction each year and putting Wales on the map via its extensive overseas operations.

As Britain prepares to leave the European Union, there has never been a better time to explore new opportunities for trade and export further afield. The UK Government will fully support all Welsh businesses who are eager to seek out new markets overseas.

Anne Jessopp, CEO of The Royal Mint, said:

I am pleased to host Lord Bourne to look at how The Royal Mint can work with Government and other partners to identify new business opportunities in the UK and beyond.

The Royal Mint is an established British brand. As the market for some of our traditional products changes, we are building on our reputation for trust and authenticity to move into new and exciting areas of business. Our focus is on innovation and partnership across a portfolio of products, ensuring that The Royal Mint remains a sustainable and relevant business for the 21st century.

Exports from Wales rose by 12.3% to £16.4 billion in the latest year on year figures, and Wales is home to nearly 4,000 exporters with an average value per exporter of more than £4.2million.

The UK Government has developed the Wales Export Guide – a document that sets out the full range of support available to Welsh businesses from the UK Government and contains inspiring stories of companies based in Wales that are successfully exporting.

You can download a copy of the guide [here](#).

ENDS

[News story: Treasure Valuation Committee appointment Gail Boyle](#)

Treasure Valuation Committee appointment Gail Boyle – GOV.UK

The Rt Hon Matt Hancock MP has appointed Gail Boyle as a Trustee to the Treasure Valuation Committee for a term of 5 years, commencing on 30 March 2018.



Gail Boyle is Senior Curator (Archaeology and World Cultures) for Bristol Culture and has played a leading role in the delivery of a wide variety of innovative and complex museum projects including the delivery of Bristol's 'M Shed'. In the wider sector, Gail chairs the Society for Museum Archaeology (the UK-wide Subject Specialist Network for British Archaeology) and in doing so provides professional advice and support on best practice and helps to shape future strategy at a national level. She also sits on several national heritage-related advisory boards, including the Portable Antiquities Advisory Group and Historic England's 'Historic Information Access Strategy' Advisory Board, is a Bristol & Gloucestershire Archaeological Society Council member and Fellow of the Society of Antiquaries of London. She has long-standing collaborative and teaching relationships with both the University of Bristol and the University of the West of England and until recently was a member of the Board of Trustees at Dr Jenner's House, Museum and Garden. Away from the museum world Gail is an elected member and Vice Chair of Pucklechurch Parish Council.

The role is not remunerated. This appointment has 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. Gail has declared that she was elected (without contest) as Parish Councillor for Pucklechurch Parish Council in May 2015. She has no party affiliation and stood for election as an independent candidate. She remains independent of any party.

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Thank you for your feedback