

Press release: Fish stocks boost for north east rivers

Thousands of fish were released into the River Pont at Ponteland and Matfen as well as tributaries of the rivers Wear and Tees.

It's part of the Environment Agency's ongoing plans to develop and restore rivers in the region.

The fish were reared at the Environment Agency's fish farm near Calverton, Nottinghamshire, using funding from rod licence sales.

Fisheries Technical Specialist Phil Rippon was out releasing some of the grayling in the south of the region today. He said:

We're pleased we can provide these fish for restocking as part of our commitment to rod licence paying anglers and to help the process of natural recovery in impacted waters.

While it's a really important aspect of our work, it's one of many things we do together with our partners to develop fisheries, including reducing the effects of pollution, improving habitat and removing barriers to migration.

Rivers have improved dramatically

The Environment Agency releases fish into our waterways annually. Fisheries officers target fish stocking activity in response to impacts on local rivers and using data from national fish surveys to identify where there are problems with poor breeding and survival.

Many of our industrialised rivers have improved dramatically in water quality in the last 30 years and targeted and appropriate restocking has helped the restoration of natural fish stocks and viable fisheries.

Angling is a great way for everyone to keep healthy and enjoy the natural environment. All rod licence income is used to fund work to protect and improve fish stocks and fisheries.

Scottish Government cabinet WAS told

about farm payments delay

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- Scottish Government cabinet WAS told about farm payments delay

28 Jun 2017



The Scottish Government's cabinet was told about plans to seek an extension in processing vital farming payments, days before both Nicola Sturgeon and the rural affairs secretary evaded the issue.

It was revealed in Holyrood today that Fergus Ewing informed members of the cabinet that he was likely to seek permission from Europe to extend the deadline for delivering CAP payments to Scotland's farmers.

This is despite the fact, on Wednesday and Thursday last week, both he and the First Minister – when directly asked – dodged the question.

It means the Scottish Government's most senior members – including the First Minister – would have had this information before the issue was publicised at the end of last week.

At today's rural economy and connectivity committee, following questioning from Scottish Conservative MSP Jamie Greene, Mr Ewing conceded cabinet had been informed that the extension would be requested.

He then added he was unsure if Nicola Sturgeon herself was present at the meeting, though she will have been informed of what was discussed. Scottish Government cabinet meetings take place every Tuesday.

At today's committee, Mr Ewing also admitted payments would not be made by the Friday deadline, meaning farmers have been left waiting for cash for two years running.

Scottish Conservative shadow rural affairs secretary Peter Chapman said:

"We now know that the Scottish Government's cabinet was told that this extension would be requested.

"Despite knowing this, both Fergus Ewing and Nicola Sturgeon pleaded ignorance last week, even after the disclosure had been made to cabinet.

"This is yet another incident of the SNP completely lacking in transparency.

"It's simply not good enough for figures as senior as the First Minister to shrug her shoulders when repeatedly asked something, even though her cabinet had already been informed.

"It's insulting to the parliament and, more seriously, a slap in the face to thousands of farmers who are yet again waiting for crucial CAP payments."

Scottish Government cabinet meets on Tuesdays.

Today, Fergus Ewing said he had informed cabinet that the extension would be sought.

But last Wednesday, when asked by shadow rural affairs secretary Peter Chapman if the extension had been requested, he refused to say.

A day later, Ruth Davidson repeatedly asked Nicola Sturgeon the same question. She also declined to tell MSPs.

<http://www.scottishconservatives.com/2017/06/sturgeon-must-come-clean-on-second-cap-crisis/>

Record year for Armed Forces Day 2017

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The RAF made a full show of force with multiple displays, performances and public engagement at the Armed Forces Day 2017 National Event. Hosted by the City of Liverpool, the event led the nation in the annual opportunity for members of the public to say thank you to the entire Armed Forces community for the outstanding work they do. All three Services were represented along with reserve and cadet forces plus members of the veteran community.



This year was a record Armed Forces Day with over 300 events being held across the UK and overseas. In Liverpool the Lord Mayor highlighted during his closing address that an estimated 200,000 people had visited the Armed Forces National Event over the weekend. This level of support from the public shows their appreciation for those serving personnel who dedicate their lives to defending our country and keeping British people safe. It also demonstrates the public's gratitude to the veterans who in their turn gave so much.



In Liverpool more than 300 RAF personnel were involved with the event.

The Queen's Colour Squadron marched in the grand parade accompanied by the Band of the RAF Regiment and flypasts were performed by the Typhoon, the Red Arrows and the Battle of Britain Memorial Flight. On the ground the 'RAF Military Village' was sited in a prime location on the Pier Head in front of Liverpool's three iconic buildings and was visited by the Earl of Wessex, the Prime Minister, the Defence Secretary, VCDS along with the Lord Mayor of Liverpool and many other local dignitaries. The RAF Village, manned by 90 personnel, was an extremely vibrant place to be and here visitors could get a close look at the equipment currently used by the RAF plus the public also had the chance to talk to serving men and women from the RAF and RAuxAF.



Wing Commander Chris Lindsay, the RAF lead for the National Event, said "I am so proud of everyone who took part. The people of Liverpool have made us all feel very welcome and valued for what we do".

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Speech: RUSI Landwarfare Conference

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Yet, if we really want to understand what the phrase means, we need to take a step back.

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It did so with unprecedented courage amidst the mud and blood of monumental battles such as Passchendaele which we will commensurate shortly.

But the Cold War introduced another level of threat – the shocking prospect of nuclear war.

Our deterrent relied not just on nuclear submarines, or NATO partnerships, but also we shouldn't forget the physical presence of our troops, ranging ever ready along the frontiers of the iron curtain.

Yet globalisation and the relentless advance of technology are today posing our nations a very different set of problems.

We have state aggressors like Russia testing our allies along Europe's eastern border using proxies to destabilise Ukraine and annex Crimea and deploying hybrid means to undermine democracy in countries far and wide.

And then we have non-state actors.

Those lacking the power to threaten our nation as a whole, but intent on causing us as much carnage as possible as we've seen so recently – in Westminster, Manchester, London Bridge and Finsbury Park.

And we have anonymous cyber foes – often sponsored by state or non-state entities, lurking behind a veil of encryption targeting our national infrastructure as we saw with the recent cyber strike on Parliament.

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Instead the real question is how we retain enough room for manoeuvre, as equipment costs escalate and the demands, from a multitude of diverse, complex and concurrent dangers, grow.

And my thesis today is that the only way our armies can prepare for the battlefields of tomorrow is by placing innovation and adaptability at their core.

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That will require investment.

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It has always been, it always will be a question of prioritisation.

Thanks to the delegated model Service Chiefs have responsibility, accountability and authority for their own budgets.

And I know that the Army feels incentivised to review its processes and structures to find more efficient, smarter and more productive, ways of doing things so they can reinvest in new projects to keep us on the cutting edge.

At the same time, the Service Chiefs know that delivering some programmes will be contingent on making efficiency savings.

This helps us focus so, by the time, we reach our Annual Budget Cycle we are concentrating not on the nice-to-haves but having more money for the things we need the most.

And thanks to those decisions we now have a much clearer sense of the things that really matter:

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air for miles around. Capable of detecting the invisible signs of cyber disturbance. Able to offer a more complete picture of an increasingly dispersed battle space, while co-ordinating our response with the wider force.

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In a data driven era investment in vehicles of course must go hand in hand with an investment in networks

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We've already taken the first step.

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In the longer-term, our Land environment tactical command and information system will eventually connect all of our sensors and systems.

2. PEOPLE

Of course, great kit alone doesn't guarantee an agile and adaptable Army.

So the second major investment has to be in people.

Before I continue I want to say that our thoughts and prayers are with the families and friends of Corporals Matthew Hatfield and Darren Neilson of the Royal Tank Regiment who died after a live firing exercise in Castlemartin on 14th June, and the other two soldiers who were injured in the same deeply sad incident.

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So we will maintain an Army that remains one of the very few nations in the world capable of fielding that warfighting Division.

And when it comes to Reserves our confidence in our Reserves plans is reflected by the fact that the Infrastructure and Projects Authority has recently taken the Army Reserves Programme off its books – the only programme to be so assured in the last 5 years.

But, in a more competitive labour marketplace, it becomes even harder to retain, retrain and recruit the right people with the right mix of skills.

So let me say a word on each of these.

On retention – our flexible engagement reforms championed by Sir Nicholas Carter...are key. Our new legislation will be published tomorrow.

We are going to make it easier for personnel to temporarily change the nature of their service, to give them a chance to work part-time or be temporarily protected from deployment to support an individual's personal circumstances where operational need allows. That's retention.

On to training.

The battle for information and influence will increasingly matter, so our soldiers will need to have a raft of new skills.

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More aware of what that information means.

More able to make swifter, better informed decisions

And we will need to increase our training in counter reconnaissance, because the information environment is far from being a passive space is now a hotly contested battleground, where we are constantly competing to correct the false narrative of our adversaries with a faster truth.

For that to happen, the Army will need to keep adapting its structures.

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I can announce that we are now bringing the Royal Signals and Intelligence Corps together under a shared command.

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Those who put apps above artillery, who prize brains above bayonets.

We know we have to maintain the Army as an attractive proposition for those who might not have normally considered a military career – the cyber geeks and tech wizards.

The question is how do we attract that element in the new generation?

Let me put forward a few initial thoughts to frame your discussions.

We'll need to do more with our Reservists, more with our Whole Force of civilians and industrialists because they bring a fresh injection of new ideas, new approaches and outside expertise.

Second, we must also be more open to challenge from the younger generation

The Army is an institution. rightly reveres its great traditions but when they tell us, for example, that there are savvier ways for us communicate – let's listen.

I'm glad that in the earlier session we laid down a marker here by inviting our juniors delegates to come up and show us a thing or two.

3. PARTNERSHIPS

My final point is that an agile Army of the future requires strong partnerships sharing the burden of complex global challenges.

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So, even as we step back from the political framework of EU, you will find us sticking by that plan and stepping up to confront those global challenges.

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So platforms, people and partnerships are the key to us, the agile edge we need in this era of constant competition.

But we need to take the public with us on this journey.

Since the end of our Afghanistan and Iraq fighting campaigns, the public no longer has the same level of awareness about what our Armies are up to.

As the threats become ever greyer and murkier, as our responses necessarily become sometimes more opaque, as our adversaries become ever more effective at using misinformation to play upon public fears, it's all the more incumbent on us to shine the light of transparency.

On this new greyer dawn, reassuring people that we're on the case, showing them we do have the means to respond, that there is not simply a cost but a real value to what we do.

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CONCLUSION

A century ago, after years of stalemate, that Mark IV tank burst through the Hindenberg Line.

An event that wouldn't just lead to the Allied Armies winning the war but to war itself being transformed.

Today we are living in an age of instability, an age of constant competition.

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