

Press release: PM meeting with Donald Tusk: 6 April 2017

The Prime Minister and President of the European Council Donald Tusk had talks this afternoon in Downing Street following last week's [Article 50 notification](#).

The PM reiterated the UK's desire to ensure a deep and special partnership with the European Union following its exit and noted the constructive approach set out by the Council in its draft guidelines published last week.

She said the UK looked forward to formally beginning negotiations once the 27 member states agreed guidelines. Both leaders agreed that the tone of discussions had been positive on both sides, and agreed that they would seek to remain in close touch as the negotiations progressed.

The PM also made clear that on the subject of Gibraltar, the UK's position had not changed: the UK would seek the best possible deal for Gibraltar as the UK exits the EU and there would be no negotiation on the sovereignty of Gibraltar without the consent of its people.

With the UK also remaining a full and engaged member of the EU for the next 2 years, the PM and Donald Tusk also discussed the agenda for the next EU Council meeting.

Press release: Appeal for information following pollution in Hampshire

The Environment Agency is appealing for information in the Andover area following a pollution incident on the River Anton.

The Environment Agency were alerted to a pollution of oil on the River Anton close to Andover College on 4 April.

Since then, Environment Officers have been working on site to determine the source and reduce the impact on the environment, and booms have been deployed across the river to contain the pollution.

Adam Fulton, Area Duty Manager for the Environment Agency, said:

Our Environment Officers are working hard at the site to manage the environmental impact, and at the moment we have had no reports of

dead fish.

We will continue to investigate the source of pollution, and are asking anyone who might be able to assist our enquiries to call our Incident Hotline on 0800 807060.

News story: Laser technology used in works to secure mine shaft

Works are now complete to secure an unrecorded mine shaft, which caused a ground collapse at Kilbowie Road, Clydebank.

The collapse was caused by a mine shaft that was not detailed in historical mining records, but we believe that it was used to extract coal, limestone and iron ore over 100 years ago.

While only a 6 metre diameter hole was initially visible at the surface, investigations using laser scanning technology identified this led to a 200 cubic metre void on top of the unrecorded mine shaft, which went down a further 56 metres.

Laser scan showing the void beneath Kilbowie Road

The depth of the mine shaft is the equivalent to the height of 14 double decker buses stacked on top of one another.

Our team of experts designed a solution to safely:

- fill the shaft with 140 tonnes of stone and inject 217 tonnes of pressurised grout
- construct a reinforced concrete cap

This repair was further complicated by exposed utility services in the void that needed to be protected during the works. A fractured foul water sewer and storm water drain within the ground collapse also made the repair more complex, with water needing to be pumped over 150 metres around the void during the works.

The Coal Authority's works at Kilbowie Road, Clydebank

Tim Marples, Head of Public Safety and Subsidence, said:

"Our team has now completed works to secure the mine shaft and we've handed over the site to West Dunbartonshire Council who are leading on the road reinstatement works.

"It's been a complex repair project, but our team's been operating 7 days a week to ensure it was completed as quickly as possible.

"We'd like to thank residents for their patience while our works have taken place."

A West Dunbartonshire Council spokesperson said:

"Following the completion of the Coal Authority's repairs, work will begin to fill the void above the shaft, reinstate services, commence the road reconstruction and resurface the road.

"This phase of the repairs was anticipated to take up to 16 weeks, however, we hope to have completed this work by the end of June.

"If residents have any specific queries we would encourage them to email roads@west-dunbarton.gov.uk so that we can help."

Press release: Foreign Secretary on first official visit to Greece

The Foreign Secretary Boris Johnson is visiting Athens on 6 and 7 April.

The Foreign Secretary is visiting Greece to underline the strength of the UK-Greece relationship and our cooperation on a wide range of areas including migration, organised crime and counter terrorism.

During his visit the Foreign Secretary Boris Johnson will meet with the Prime Minister Alexis Tsipras and Foreign Minister Nikos Kotzias.

Speaking from Athens, the Foreign Secretary Boris Johnson said:

Greece is an important partner for the UK. We work closely together on our joint security and defence objectives in the region and our shared goal of a Cyprus Settlement. As we prepare to leave the EU, I look forward to strengthening our historic ties.

Further information

News story: Foreign Office appoints new Non Executive Directors

Miranda Curtis has been appointed as lead non-executive director, and Sir Edward Lister has been appointed as a member non-executive director.

They take up their appointments with immediate effect.

Miranda Curtis's expertise is in building multinational leadership teams, the negotiation and oversight of international joint ventures, and cross-border deal making.

Sir Edward Lister's background is in facilitating large-scale urban regeneration schemes and coordinating major public & private sector partnerships.

Head of the UK Diplomatic Service, Sir Simon McDonald said:

I welcome Miranda and Sir Edward to the Foreign Office's Board. They know how to manage large projects in both the commercial and public sectors and will give us invaluable support.

Further Information:

Miranda Curtis is Non-executive director of Marks and Spencer Plc and Deputy Chair of the Royal Shakespeare Company. She spent her executive career in international media and telecoms, with over 20 years at Liberty Global. She joined the board of Liberty in 2010.

Sir Edward is Chairman of the Homes and Communities Agency (HCA). Previous roles include Chief of Staff to the Mayor of London, Deputy Mayor for Policy and Planning at City Hall and Leader of Wandsworth Council. He was also the Chairman of the Old Oak Common Development Corporation.