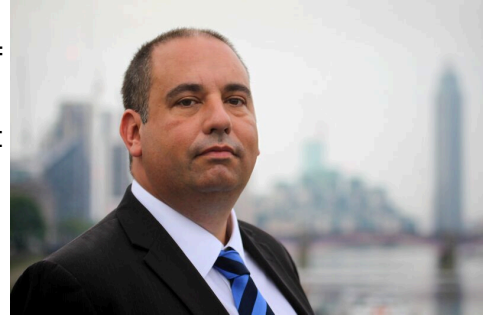


Paint job whitewash

UKIP Defence Spokesman Bill Etheridge has slammed an attempted government whitewash in the latest of a long series of delays to the Royal Navy super carrier, HMS Queen Elizabeth II as it emerges that divers inspecting the hull of the HMS Queen Elizabeth have discovered that the top coat of paint had failed to adhere properly. The news comes as the current fleet flagship, helicopter carrier HMS Ocean, may be sold to Brazil after twenty years of service in 2018.



When asked previously in Parliament why sea trials for the carrier were being delayed till the summer, when, all along, the spring had been the intended start date the Defence Secretary Michael Fallon said: "It has always been our intention that Queen Elizabeth should be accepted into the Royal Navy before the end of this year. We are not giving specific dates as to when the sea trials are likely to commence.

Then when Defence Procurement Minister Harriett Baldwin faced the Commons Defence Committee she was asked by Madeleine Moon, what was behind the delay. She replied "By the very definition of what you're going through when you're going through trials is that you're potentially in that trial process have to make some corrections to something, that's the whole point of a trial."

Press release: Alok Sharma celebrates 45 years of UK-China ambassadorial relations

Over 300 guests attended the event at Lancaster House, including the Chinese Ambassador to the UK, Mr Liu Xiaoming, and a wealth of British and Chinese business representatives, government officials, parliamentarians and China Chevening Scholars.

The guests at Lancaster House were treated to a series of performances and displays from Weli Creative's 'Magical Lantern' exhibition, a string ensemble from the Guildhall School of Music, and a collection of Chinese and British manuscripts from the British Library. Also on display was ClothCat Animations' new children's series Luo Bai Bei, which is due to be screened in China and the UK later this year. Other exhibitors included the Victoria & Albert Museum, the British Museum and B&H Fashion.

Mr Sharma and the Chinese Ambassador each delivered a speech at the event, which followed the official anniversary on 13 March, before the London Symphony Orchestra performed a recital for the attendees.

UK Minister for Asia, Mr Alok Sharma MP, said:

Throughout the last 45 years, the UK-China relationship has been steadily strengthening. Today we see cooperation at an all-time high and a global partnership that is delivering real benefits for both nations.

Personal ties and mutual understanding are at the heart of any successful relationship. That is why promoting business, cultural and educational links is so important to us. Forty-five years ago, there were 200 Chinese students in the UK and today we welcome over 150,000 Chinese students at universities, colleges and schools across the UK. Through our Generation UK programme, we are working to increase the number of British students studying in China from 5000 currently to 20,000 by 2020.

As we look ahead to the future for the UK and China, it is important to reflect on what our two countries have achieved over the last 45 years. Trade between our two countries has increased 200-fold. We want to do even more. We are working together to address some of the significant challenges facing the world today, such as conflict in the Middle East and international terrorism. Our Infrastructure Alliance will allow us to work together to build the capacity of third countries, and we are tackling global health issues such as anti-microbial resistance.

Since our countries established full Ambassadorial relations, the pace and scope of what we have achieved, individually and together, is extraordinary. We want to continue to build the links between our two countries into the future. I strongly believe that we have a great deal to look forward to.

The Minister personally thanked the sponsors for the event: The Bank of China; Ernst & Young; HSBC; and Huawei.

The UK has more dialogues with China than any other European country. Chinese visitors to Britain have doubled in five years, with around 150,000 Chinese students now studying across the UK. Last year, the UK Government funded 98 China Chevening Scholars and 15 China Chevening Fellows from 18 different provinces and municipalities to attend postgraduate study at UK universities.

Mr Sharma has visited Beijing, Guangzhou, Shenzhen, Fuzhou and Xiamen, as well as Hong Kong, since his appointment as Minister for Asia last year. Prime Minister Theresa May attended the G20 Summit last September in Hangzhou and will visit China again later this year.

[Press release: Charity Commission finds 'basic and serious mismanagement' in selling land at charity](#)

The Charity Commission, the regulator of charities in England and Wales, has concluded that the trustees of the Spiritualist Association of Great Britain ([see 'Notes to editors'](#)) were responsible for serious mismanagement in the way they disposed of the charity's London property in 2010.

The regulator has today (30 March 2017) published a [report of its statutory inquiry](#) into concerns about the sale of the charity's property at Belgrave Square. The Commission received information that the property was sold on for £21 million by its new owners, shortly after the charity had disposed of it for £6 million in December 2010.

The Commission first became aware of this in 2013, over 4 years after some of the events took place. The Commission's report concludes that the trustees failed to fulfil their legal duties and responsibilities towards the charity, and that 'the failures and breaches were not minor or technical in nature' but 'amount to basic and serious mismanagement'.

The report criticises the failure by the trustees to obtain a report from a surveyor who was suitably qualified as required under charity law for a disposal of this type. It finds that the trustees failed to seek independent specialist advice about how to ensure the charity would benefit from a possible post-sale increase in the value of the property if a change in the use of the property and/or enfranchisement was secured, as happened here. The inquiry's view was that the charity should have known that a commercial company would only purchase the property if it had good reason to believe it would secure enfranchisement or successfully negotiate a change of use. The inquiry also concluded that the trustees failed to take proper account of concerns raised by the charity's solicitor before the sale was completed.

Although the trustees told the inquiry that there was a financial imperative to dispose of the property and there was only one prospective purchaser, the report concludes that the trustees failed to conduct proper due diligence into the buyer of the property, a shell company with no assets.

There were mitigating factors as to why further regulatory action in the case was not appropriate, including a retrospective valuation of the property subsequently obtained by the charity that could be argued as being supportive

of the 2010 sale price. Also, the Commission did not find evidence that the trustees, or anyone associated with the charity, derived unauthorised private benefit from the sale or any indication of bad faith on the part of the buyer, and the main person who authorised the disposal is now deceased.

Harvey Grenville, Head of Investigations and Enforcement at the Charity Commission, said:

One of the purposes of publishing inquiry reports is to ensure other charities have the opportunity to learn the wider lessons.

This case highlights that disposing of charity land can involve complex arrangements, which charities need to be careful about and obtain proper professional advice on. But even for simpler deals, it's a reminder of why it is so crucial that all charities and trustees understand the basic duties set out in our guidance, '[The essential trustee](#)'.

These duties include trying to get the best deal for your charity and complying with the specific legal requirements that apply in charity law when selling or leasing charity land or property. The law in this area is designed to ensure that a charity's assets are protected and that when disposing of charity assets it is only in the best interests of the charity. We have developed more detailed [guidance on disposing of land](#), which we strongly recommend charities refer to and use.

The Commission's report sets out wider lessons for charities to learn from the case. The [full report](#) is available on GOV.UK.

Ends

PR 25/17

Notes to editors

1. The charity's full name is [The Spiritualist Association of Great Britain \(formerly The Marylebone Spiritualist Association\) Limited](#) (registered charity number 225455).
 2. [The Charity Commission](#) is the independent regulator of charities in England and Wales. To find out more about our work, see our [annual report](#).
 3. Search for charities on our [online register](#).
 4. Details of how the Commission reports on its regulatory work can be found on [GOV.UK](#).
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Today the Government will finally act on the historic decision of the people of this country to leave the EU

UKIP Leader Paul Nuttall said, "Today the Government will finally act on the historic decision of the people of this country to leave the European Union."



"Finally, nine months after our vote the UK will formally inform the EU that we are leaving."

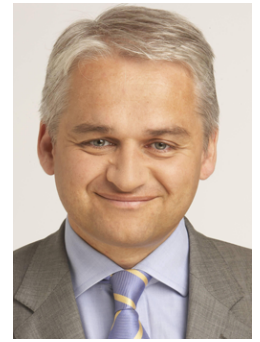
"UKIP is delighted that this is eventually happening. 24 years ago this party was formed to make this a reality, so it would be churlish to complain. We have been ignored, dismissed, insulted and abused, but through determination and with good humour we fought on and we have succeeded."

"The 9 months delay has, of course, cost the taxpayer additional billions, and has allowed those who would block the democratic will of the people to do all they can to spread discord, but we are here now."

"While negotiations continue we will continue to be the 'guard dogs of Brexit', holding the Government's feet to the fire at home and our MEPs will be working to ensure our friends on the continent do not pull any fast ones."

To have Channel 4 based out of the capital would be exciting and brilliant for diversity in broadcast media

A consultation on whether to move Channel 4 out of London is being launched, Culture Secretary Karen Bradley has announced. The broadcaster will remain publicly owned but how it spends money and where it is based is being reviewed to make sure it is "serving the country".



Responding to the news UKIP's Media Spokesman Patrick O'Flynn MEP said, "Looking at moving media outlets out of London can only be a good thing. The past year or two has shown us the dangers of a metropolitan bias developing and of London-based correspondents losing touch with wider currents in public opinion. To have Channel 4 based out of the capital would be exciting and brilliant for diversity in broadcast media."