

[Press release: Bristol car thief's sentence 'unduly lenient'](#)

A man who carried out a series of violent offences has had his sentence increased after the Solicitor General, Robert Buckland QC MP, referred it to the Court of Appeal as unduly lenient.

Aaron John Scrase, 20, and an accomplice attempted to steal a Porsche from a drive in St Hilary Close, Bristol. When the owner confronted them, Scrase attacked him with a wrench. The pair later stole a Mini, and used this to rob a cyclist of his belongings. On another occasion, Scrase stole alcohol from a shop on a petrol station forecourt and, when a member of staff intervened, joined his accomplices in punching and kicking him. He was also sentenced for separate offences of car theft and a burglary at a newsagents.

Scrase was originally sentenced at Bristol Crown Court in August, where he was given 1 year 11 months detention in a Young Offender Institution. Today, after the Solicitor General's referral, the Court of Appeal increased his sentence to 4 years 6 months detention.

Commenting on the sentence increase, the Solicitor General said:

"Scrase carried out a number of offences, terrorising victims in the Bristol area. It is important that crimes like these are not taken too lightly. The Court of Appeal's decision today makes that clear."

[Speech: The power of the arts and social activities to improve the nation's health](#)

I love my job. I get to see brilliant doctors and inspirational nurses, courageous paramedics and committed carers. I get to meet people who save lives each and every day.

Yet, there were some perks to being Culture Secretary. You'd get to go to the Tate, the National, the Royal Opera House for work. You'd get to rub shoulders with the likes of Grayson Perry, Anthony Gormley and even the legendary Ronnie Wood.

Although, when Ronnie offered me a little pick-me-up at the Brits, I was surprised, and mightily relieved, when he handed me a mini Babybel.

“Minister caught in cheese scandal” isn’t quite a career ending headline.

We know what the NHS does is life-saving. But what the arts and social activities do is life-enhancing. You might get by in a world without the arts, but it isn’t a world that any of us would choose to live in.

As the great Chinese philosopher Confucius said: “Music produces a kind of pleasure, which human nature cannot do without.”

And as the great Rolling Stones said: “I can’t get no, oh, no, no, no, I can’t get no satisfaction.”

Music and the arts aren’t just the foods of love. They’re not just right in their own terms as the search for truth and expression of the human condition.

We shouldn’t only value them for the role they play in bringing meaning and dignity to our lives. We should value the arts and social activities because they’re essential to our health and wellbeing.

And that’s not me as a former Culture Secretary saying it. It’s scientifically proven. Access to the arts and social activities improves people’s mental and physical health. It makes us happier and healthier.

So that’s what I want to talk about today: how we can harness the incredible power of the arts and social activities to improve the nation’s health and wellbeing.

How the arts and social activities can help us move to more person-centred care and a focus on prevention as much as cure. And how social prescribing can shape our health and social care system in the future.

First: the power of the arts and social activities.

Now, I must pay tribute to Ed Vaizey for all his work in this field, and the All Party Parliamentary Group on Arts, Health and Wellbeing for their Creative Health report, which applied some much needed rigorous analysis to the research.

And what they found is:

- the arts and social activities can help keep us well, aid our recovery, and support longer lives better lived
- the arts and social activities can help meet major challenges facing health and social care – ageing, loneliness, mental health, and other long-term conditions
- and, the arts and social activities can help save money for the NHS and social care system

One project, a collaboration between the Royal Philharmonic Orchestra and Hull's stroke recovery service, used music sessions to help people after they'd had a stroke.

And what they found is through learning to play instruments, trying conducting, and eventually performing as part of an orchestra, nearly 90% of stroke patients felt better physically, with fewer dizzy spells and epileptic seizures, less anxiety, improved sleep, improved concentration and memory, better morale and more confidence.

That was just one study. Others across the country have seen similar successes.

In Lambeth, in south London, The Alchemy Project used dance as an early intervention against psychosis. The young people, who worked with dance experts, showed major improvements in concentration, communication, and wellbeing.

In Gloucestershire, hospitals are now referring patients with lung conditions to singing sessions. Sounds counter-intuitive? But no. Singing helps people, even with chronic lung conditions.

In my home county of Cheshire, Halton has now created a "Cultural Manifesto for Wellbeing". Sounds grandiose, but it's simple ideas like connecting school choirs to every local care home in the borough.

Simple ideas like the Southbank Centre using working poets to run a poetry course for people with dementia and their families.

Or the music therapy charity Nordoff Robbins, which helps children with autism communicate, people with dementia feel less anxious, and provided comfort to people facing terminal illness. Last year alone, they helped almost 8,000 people.

So those are just some of the examples of how the arts have benefited health. And we must remember this is still a very new medical field. Social prescribing only really started about 5 years ago.

Just the other day, Canada announced that it was going to start prescribing free museum visits to patients. Well, we're lucky enough to have some of the world's best museums for free, here in London.

But we need to ensure that the people who may benefit most, are aware of what's available and that they're accessible.

As Culture Secretary, one of the biggest challenges remains to change the perception of the arts as elitist or inaccessible, something I know is a personal priority for the new Culture Secretary Jeremy Wright.

And, I think this is a challenge we also have to overcome with arts and health and social prescribing. The arts are for everyone. And what pleased me most about Lord Howarth's work with the APPG, what had the biggest positive effect, the common theme running through all the creative fields from

literature, to music, to art is: personal creativity.

Taking part. Having a go. Dusting off forgotten skills. Or learning new ones.

So social prescribing isn't about prescribing tickets to Hamilton or seeing a Titian at the National Gallery, as fun as they both may be. It's about what's right for you. What fits.

Don't like opera? Fine. The doctor isn't going to force you to sit through 17 hours of Wagner's Ring Cycle. Unless that doctor happens to be Michael Gove.

It's about what works for you. How you can participate in the arts to improve your health. It's about moving from patient-centred care to person-centred care. Stopping people from becoming patients in the first place. Which is the second thing I want to talk about today.

Right now, my department is working with the NHS to draw up a long-term plan for the future of our health and social care system.

The reasons are twofold:

- we're putting a record £20.5 billion extra a year into the NHS over the next 5 years, so we have to ensure we get the best possible return, and every penny of taxpayer's money is well spent
- and, society is changing – we're living longer, our needs are becoming more complex, our expectations of public services are growing; at least 20% of GP consultations are now due to things like housing, employment and relationship breakdowns

Now, those things may appear unrelated to health, but they're not. It's why yesterday I launched a new focus on prevention for our health and social care system. It's one of my top 3 priorities, along with technology and workforce.

Because if we want to get prevention right, we must move to person-centred care. And this is how we do it:

- by giving people the knowledge, skills and confidence to take responsibility for their own health
- by using new digital technologies to help people make informed decisions, work with healthcare professionals, to choose the services they need, when they need them

So, I see social prescribing as fundamental to prevention. And I see prevention as fundamental to the future of the NHS.

For too long we've been fostering a culture that's popping pills and Prozac,

when what we should be doing is more prevention and perspiration.

Social prescribing can help us combat over-medicalising people. Of dishing out drugs when it isn't what's best for the patient. And it won't solve their problem.

Social prescribing is a tool that doctors can use to help them, help patients and help the NHS cut waste.

It's the Goldilocks approach to medication: the right amount at the right time. No more, no less.

So under my vision for prevention, I see social prescribing growing in importance, becoming an indispensable tool for GPs, just like a thermometer or a stethoscope may be seen today.

And, together with a greater focus on diet, exercise, stopping smoking and excessive alcohol consumption, and greater mental health support, how we move to more person-centred care, and build a health and social care system for the future.

So, finally, let me turn to the social prescribing ideas that we're looking at together with the Arts Council and DCMS.

First, social prescribing through libraries. There are nearly 3,000 libraries in England. Many of them already do great work in helping people become better informed patients so they can better manage their own health.

What we're looking at is if more libraries can offer health services, and if we can expand the existing health services libraries already offer.

Norfolk's Healthy Libraries Initiative is a great example of libraries being used for stop smoking and healthy living sessions.

But if we can connect even more libraries to GP surgeries and primary and community care services, and increase training for librarians on social prescription referrals, then we could reach even more people, and make libraries even more vital and valued to their local communities.

So things like: dance classes for elderly people, choirs for loneliness and mental health reading groups. Using our libraries and librarians to intervene earlier and improve public health.

Second, we're looking at how music can help people with dementia. How it can reduce the need for medication. How it can reduce agitation and combative behaviour. How it can reduce the need for restraints and help people with dementia, and their families, cope better with symptoms.

And I must pay tribute to the pioneering work of the charity Playlist for Life. Their work creating personal playlists for people with dementia led to a 60% reduction in the need for psychotropic medication at one care home.

This is the kind of cheap, easy-to-use social prescription that I'm fully

behind. Because dementia is one of the major health challenges we face for the future. The number of people with dementia is set to rise from 850,000 today to more than a million in less than a decade. Personal playlists could offer a simple solution to this growing problem.

And third, we will create a National Academy for Social Prescribing to be the champion of, build the research base, and set out the benefits of social prescribing across the board, from the arts to physical exercise, to nutritional advice and community classes. A resource which GPs and other frontline health workers can draw on for guidance and expertise. Where they can learn what works, and what's available in their communities.

Because social prescription reduces over subscription of drugs. It can lead to the same or better outcomes for patients without popping pills. And it saves the NHS money, because many of these social cures are cheaper or free.

Now, drug companies may not like that. And you can bet this multi-billion pound industry will use every tool at their disposal to lobby for the status quo and convince us drugs are better than free social cures. That's why we need a National Academy for Social Prescribing to be a champion for non-drug treatments. And it's the role of the state to sponsor the treatments that are often cheaper, better for patients, and better for society.

Now, I remain open to any idea. I'm not wedded to any one model. What's most important is what's proven to work. And my department will work with NHS trusts, providers, staff and with colleagues from DCMS and Arts Council England, so we can share our expertise and learn from each other.

Social prescription is about making better use of what we already have. About making the arts and social activities more accessible.

We're the country of Shakespeare, The Beatles, Harry Potter and Harry Kane's right foot.

But we're also a country of community choirs, reading circles and the Bury St Edmond's Amateur Operatic and Dramatic Society, which you'll find in my wonderful constituency of West Suffolk.

People coming together. Taking part in arts and social activities, getting involved in something that's good for our health and good for society.

Arts, social activities and health in action. Life saving, life enhancing, making life worth living. So let's work together to make it happen.

[Press release: New boost to showcase](#)

'best of British' creativity abroad

- Leading advertising CEO Annette King appointed chair of new Creative Industries Trade and Investment board
- Government support for international creative industries activity increased to £5 million
- The board will aim to increase creative industries' exports by 50 per cent by 2023

Creative Industries Minister Margot James will today announce a cash boost to turbocharge the UK's international trade in the creative industries.

This cash will help the nation's £92 billion creative industries seize international trading opportunities and target inward investment from abroad.

Speaking at Lisbon's Museum for Art, Architecture and Technology, the Minister will confirm a further £1 million of government funding to promote the 'best of British' creativity abroad, taking the total to £5 million.

The Minister will also announce the appointment of leading advertising CEO Annette King as chair of the newly established Creative Industries Trade & Investment Board.

This new industry-led initiative, agreed in the Creative Industries Sector Deal, part of the Government's modern Industrial Strategy, aims to stimulate trade in one of the UK's most exciting sectors and continue a great British success story.

Speaking ahead of the Creativity is Great event in Lisbon, as part of the festival's Web Summit, Minister for Digital and the Creative Industries, Margot James, said:

The UK's creative industries are globally renowned and by boosting our support we will make sure our brilliant British talent can reach new markets.

As well as increasing funding for this vibrant sector, I'm delighted to announce Annette King will chair the new Creative Industries Trade and Investment Board.

She will help make sure we are creating the right environment for our creative industries to flourish on the international stage and maintain our position as one of the world's creative and cultural superpowers.

Through the Export Strategy, launched in August, the Department for International Trade has set out the target of increasing total UK exports to 35 per cent of GDP – an increase of five per cent from current levels – to transform the UK into one of the G7's most successful exporting powers.

Industry Chair of the Creative Industries Council, Tim Davie, said:

I'm delighted Annette has accepted the invitation to Chair the Trade and Investment Board. This is a vital part of the landmark Sector Deal to increase creative exports and the number of business exporting from across the country.

I'm confident she will do a fantastic job of championing the whole of the UK creative industries and I look forward to supporting her from the Creative Industries Council.

Annette King, chair of the Creative Industries Trade & Investment Board, said:

Creativity is the UK's calling card to the world; our reputation for ideas, flair, talent and imagination sitting alongside our rich cultural heritage and cutting-edge creative companies.

I'm honoured to have been asked by Tim to take the position of Chair on the CITIB and look forward to working with the talented and committed board members from across the sector to meet this target.

Today's funding boost will support UK businesses attending the Shanghai International Advertising Festival where the UK is 'Country of Honour,' a new China-UK film exchange to help increase coproductions between the countries, and support an increased British presence at the Game Developers Conference in San Francisco.

The board will build on industry's successful collaboration with Government which has already opened up business opportunities for British creative companies in the growth markets of China, the US, India and Hong Kong, providing a platform for firms to showcase their activity and meet new customers at industry events including South By South West and the London Book Fair.

The Board will include representatives from across the sector, which spans film, TV, publishing, music, games, animation, architecture, advertising, craft, design and fashion.

Recent statistics show that creative businesses are on average more likely to export than other UK businesses.

Creative industries exports in services and goods are currently worth more than £40 billion, with films produced in British studios such as Star Wars: The Last Jedi, Beauty and the Beast, Wonder Woman and albums from artists Little Mix, Ed Sheeran and Michael Ball. There are also more than 2,000 active video games companies in the UK, such as Rockstar North, King and Rebellion and together they employ 30,000 people.

ENDS

Notes to editors

1. Annette King is the chief executive of Publicis Groupe UK, a role where she oversees all of its agencies in the UK. She joined from Ogilvy, where she spent 17 years in various different roles, from running and building OgilvyOne in the UK and then EMEA to leading Ogilvy UK Group's ten operating companies.
2. The chair and board membership are unpaid.
3. The new Board was a landmark part of the Industry Strategy Sector Deal agreed between government and industry under the leadership of the Creative Industries Council. The Creative Industries was one of the early sectors to strike a sector deal.
4. The Board will develop and oversee delivery of an export strategy and explore, support and advise on high-value opportunities for Inward Investment and Foreign Direct Investment.

Full list of confirmed board members:

- Film: Amanda Nevill, BFI's CEO
- TV: Dawn McCarthy-Simpson, PACT Director of International Strategy
- Publishing: Stephen Lotinga, Publishers Association CEO
- Music: Tom Kiehl, UK Music Deputy CEO and Director of Government and Public Affairs
- Games: Jo Twist, UKIE CEO
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- Department for International Trade: Sue Bishop, Head, Creative, Lifestyle and Learning

- Department for Digital, Culture, Media & Sport: Creative Industries Deputy Director
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Speech: HRH The Prince of Wales' keynote speech at The Commonwealth: Towards a common future

Mr. President, Distinguished Guests, Ladies and Gentlemen.

It gives me particular pleasure to be able to speak to all of you this morning and apart from anything else to be back in Ghana after all these years. My wife and I have had the most special time in the country here over the past few days and we have been so deeply touched by the wonderfully warm welcome we have received wherever we have been. In fact so warm it's taking some time for my blood to thin.

And I can scarcely believe that so much time has passed since I first set foot in this fascinating land back in 1977 when, believe it or not, I was only twenty-eight years old and Ghana, too, was young, having just completed her first two decades of independence.

Although I am afraid it has taken me far too long to return, I can assure you that I have been following Ghana's story closely and, like so many other people, I have been profoundly impressed by the remarkable course that Ghana has taken.

Over these past years, your country, ladies and gentlemen, if I may say so, has become an example to other nations. It has given its citizens stability and security, with strong democratic institutions, free and fair elections and the peaceful transition of power, in a vibrant multi-party, multi-faith democracy. At the same time, Ghana's civil society has thrived and its N.G.O.s, its trades unions and professional associations are now among the most active and engaged in the region. I know, too, that Ghana's traditional leaders – some of whom, including the Asantehene and Okyenene, I have had the great pleasure of meeting again on this visit – continue to have

a vital and influential voice in your national discourse.

Underpinning all of this, it seems to me, are Ghana's deeply-held values of tolerance and inclusion which are embedded in your traditional culture and enshrined in your constitutional protection of free speech and freedom of religious expression. While, elsewhere, diversity has fuelled division and conflict, in Ghana it has been an enduring source of strength and national pride.

Ghana has also become a force for good in the world. For over fifty years she has made a much-valued contribution to United Nations Peace-keeping operations, with Ghanaian armed servicemen and women, police officers and civilians making a vital difference to the maintenance of international peace and security and helping to create the conditions for sustainable development in countries stricken by conflict.

Here, Mr. President, if I may, I would like to take the opportunity to pay a special tribute to the memory of that proud son of Ghana, Mr. Kofi Annan, whose recent loss has been so keenly felt by people throughout this country and indeed across the World. I had the particular pleasure of meeting Mr. Annan on numerous occasions, and have the greatest respect for his moral conviction, his strong sense of justice and his quiet determination to confront the world's most urgent challenges. He will long be remembered by all those who knew him, and by countless others whose lives he touched.

Mr. President, Ladies and Gentlemen, the histories of our two nations are, I know, closely intertwined, and while today we enjoy shared opportunity, we can never forget that our past has sometimes borne witness to tragedy and loss and, at times, profound injustice. At Osu Castle on Saturday, it was especially important to me – as indeed it was on my first visit there forty-one years ago – that I should acknowledge the most painful chapter of Ghana's relations with the nations of Europe, including the United Kingdom. The appalling atrocity of the slave trade, and the unimaginable suffering it caused, left an indelible stain on the history of our world.

While Britain can be proud that it later led the way in the abolition of this shameful trade, we have a shared responsibility to ensure that the abject horror of slavery is never forgotten, that we abhor the existence of modern slavery and that we robustly promote and defend the values which today make it incomprehensible, to most of us, that human beings could ever treat each other with such utter inhumanity.

At other points in our history, our two nations have suffered and toiled alongside each other. At the Commonwealth War Graves Cemetery on Friday afternoon, I was honoured to join you, Mr. President, in remembering the bravery and sacrifice of troops from Ghana, and from across West Africa, who made such a vital contribution in the First and Second World Wars. In the First World War alone, a staggering 200,000 soldiers from West Africa supported the Allied effort and 30,000 of them lost their lives. During the Second World War, some 65,000 Ghanaians served in the Royal West African Frontier Force, in operational theatres stretching from East Africa to modern day Burma. I need hardly say, therefore, how special it was for my wife and I

to meet some of those surviving veterans during this visit.

Now as we mark the Centenary next month of the end of the First World War, it is so very important that we remember all those who fought – wherever they came from and wherever they served – and that we honour the immense sacrifice that so many of them made.

Today, Ladies and Gentlemen, the United Kingdom and Ghana enjoy a dynamic partnership of equals, anchored in our shared experience but looking to a shared future. We share the same language, the same legal system, the same values – and a strong trading relationship that is worth over one billion dollars.

You will not be surprised to hear that I have been very pleased to see, over these past few days, the many ways in which the United Kingdom has been helping to make a difference in Ghana whether through the private, government or N.G.O. sectors. But this is a two-way relationship, and the influence of Ghana, and of people of Ghanaian heritage, in the United Kingdom is extensive and vital too – whether in the arts, fashion, music, technology, business, academia or, of course, sport.

There is, it seems to me, no greater example and demonstration of the bond between our two countries than the 250,000 men and women of Ghanaian descent who live in the United Kingdom and make such an indispensable contribution to our society and our economy.

Many of these tremendously successful individuals are both British and Ghanaian and play active roles in the lives of both our countries. They act as a bridge between us, across which travel the ideas, creativity and talent that fuel our shared prosperity and help shape our identity.

Shortly before we set off on this Tour, my wife and I were delighted to host a Reception, at St. James's Palace in London, to celebrate the contribution to British life of the West African diaspora communities in the United Kingdom. We were joined by many famous faces and leaders in their fields, but also by nurses, police officers, armed forces personnel, teachers and other men and women who make such an indescribable difference to our country.

These diaspora communities – as with the British Asian communities, or those whose roots are in the Caribbean – are one of our contemporary society's greatest assets – and one in which I have nothing but the most enormous pride. They offer a powerful demonstration of Britain's place within our remarkable Commonwealth family, of the shared opportunities it represents, and of everything that binds us together in a changing world.

Next year of course we will celebrate the Commonwealth's seventieth birthday. The Commonwealth, therefore, is just a few months younger than I am myself and has lasted a great deal better – as you can probably see for yourself ladies and gentlemen – and therefore so has been a fundamental feature of my life for as long as I can remember. Over these seven decades, the Commonwealth has built upon its firm foundation of shared experience and common values to strive for a more prosperous and more secure future for the

2.4 billion people who call the Commonwealth home. The past seventy years have brought global change on an unprecedented scale, with challenges and opportunities that could never have been anticipated in 1949. All the while, the Commonwealth has been a constant – a common point of reference by which its members have navigated the ever-changing tides of an uncertain world.

Ghana has played an active and influential role in the Commonwealth ever since becoming, in 1957, the first newly independent African country to join. President Kwame Nkrumah, of whom I have vivid memories of meeting when he visited the U.K. in the 1960's, played a key role in the forced withdrawal of apartheid South Africa from the Commonwealth in 1961 and, later, was instrumental in the establishment of the Commonwealth Secretariat in 1965.

Today, Ghana continues to play an influential role. At the Commonwealth Heads of Government Meeting in London in April, during which I had the great pleasure of sitting next to you, Mr. President, at The Queen's Banquet, Ghana lent its voice to commitments, among other things, on education, gender equality, clean oceans, cyber security and more.

I know, Mr. President, that you share my determination that the Commonwealth should strive for renewed relevance in the lives of its citizens and should draw upon its unparalleled networks of professional expertise to offer practical solutions to some of the most pressing challenges of our time, many of which are increasingly deep-seated and deeply integrated.

No issue is more pressing, it seems to me, than that of climate change. The recent report of the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change, which provided stark and alarming evidence that even 1.5 degrees of warming will mean catastrophic damage to the planet's ecosystems, sent a clear signal that we must all surely heed. The impact of such alarmingly dangerous climate change is, of course, a really major risk multiplier for it exacerbates the increasing fragility of the world's natural capital, on which we are all totally dependent and the resilience of which has been substantially undermined by decades of over-exploitation.

I am afraid, Ladies and Gentlemen, that the impacts of climate change global warming are already being felt by far too many Commonwealth citizens, not least through the devastation that is wrought, ever more frequently, by the terrifying hurricanes and cyclones to which our small island states, in particular, are so horrifyingly vulnerable. In November last year I visited the Caribbean islands of Dominica, Antigua and Barbuda, and the British Virgin Islands, after previously visiting Malaysia Singapore and Indonesia, to show my support to those communities as they struggled with the aftermath of Hurricanes Irma and Maria; and earlier this year, I visited Vanuatu, in the Pacific, to see how they were recovering from Cyclone Pam, which wreaked havoc across that archipelago. Although, in each of these island states, I encountered a strength of spirit and resilience that was profoundly humbling, with the existential threat of climate-induced catastrophe growing ever more real, one has to wonder what the future holds.

I know, of course, that the effects of climate change are being felt every day by people across this continent as well, with increasingly erratic

weather patterns representing a growing threat to food security and triggering the mass migration of millions of people. It is profoundly worrying, for instance, that Lake Chad is today just one tenth the size it was only a few decades ago – a catastrophic shrinkage which, combined with the Southward spread of the Sahara desert, is displacing whole populations and fuelling bitter conflict.

With such different parts of the Commonwealth, thousands and thousands of miles apart, facing such depressingly similar challenges, there is, it seems to me, tremendous potential for the Commonwealth to share best practice and co-ordinate its response to these kinds of disasters. Earlier this year in Darwin, in Australia's Northern Territory, I visited the highly impressive National Critical Care and Trauma Response Centre, which deploys world-class medical teams and facilities in rapid response to disasters overseas, on behalf of the Australian Government. To my mind, at least, it offered a compelling example of the sort of co-ordinated response that could be replicated elsewhere in the Commonwealth to offer practical assistance to people in their times of greatest need.

Although, tragically, it is essential that we prepare for the effects of climate-induced disasters in this way, we must, at the same time, work together to tackle the underlying causes – which surely means, among other things, establishing a proper price for carbon and addressing the global problem of perverse subsidy regimes and the continuing lack of the “polluter pays” principle. In addressing the fundamental and most pressing challenges that our planet faces, I have long felt – for what it is worth – that this can be done, at least in part, by developing a truly circular economy in which we design products so that little or nothing is wasted in recycling and put in place the planning systems, infrastructure and incentives to ensure that every effort is made to minimise our environmental impact.

It is becoming evident that not following such an approach has disastrous consequences, as is witnessed by the fact that 8 million tonnes of plastic enter the Ocean every year, that soon there will be one tonne of plastic for every three tonnes of fish in the sea, and that the dead zones in the Ocean, now numbering over 400, are continuing to grow. Given this, ladies and gentlemen surely, surely we must find a way to protect and conserve our ocean and develop a truly sustainable circular approach to the Blue Economy, as we must to the rest of our economic activities? Such an approach will not only protect our eco-systems but will also generate new jobs and will stimulate economic growth.

Now I know you agree, Mr. President, that Ghana can play a vital role in all of this, helping to lead the way in Africa and, indeed, in the Commonwealth at large. In this regard, I was delighted to see that Ghana has joined the High Level Panel for a Sustainable Blue Ocean Economy, which is co-chaired by the Prime Minister of Norway and the President of Palau, with the World Resources Institute, of which I recently became Patron, providing the Secretariat.

I am utterly convinced of the potential for the Commonwealth to be part of the solution to these challenges and the Commonwealth Clean Oceans Alliance,

announced at this year's Commonwealth Heads of Government Meeting in London, is an important example of how it can do so. The Alliance brings together Commonwealth countries around a commitment to preventing plastic entering the marine environment. A key part of the Alliance is the Global Plastics Action Partnership, established by the World Economic Forum and World Resources Institute, as a global public-private delivery mechanism to tackle the terrible plastic pollution of our rivers, deltas and oceans. I am delighted, therefore, that Ghana has been included among the first three country beneficiaries, alongside Indonesia and Vanuatu.

In the same way that taking an integrated approach to Ocean issues – resolving the problems of wastage, plastics, over-fishing, illegal, unreported and unregulated fishing and the absence of adequate Marine Protected Areas, is vital to protect the Ocean's health, so too, it seems to me, is an integrated landscape approach to the rural economy in order to protect our ecological, social and economic security. And, in this regard, I can only applaud Ghana's leadership on the Cocoa and Forest Initiative, the inaugural meeting of which I was happy to host, with my then International Sustainability Unit in London last year, and am shortly to attend a follow-up meeting after I've finished this speech. As I am sure you are more aware than ever, Ladies and Gentlemen, we are entering the era of a 'triple threat' – that is to say one where the effects of climate change, rapid urbanisation, unsustainable population growth and natural resource depletion are compounding to make the perfect storm.

It is already beyond most people's comprehension that in the last twenty-five years the number of people living in towns and cities has almost doubled. But by the year 2050, the world's urban population is projected to increase by an additional 2.3 billion people – which in context is the total current population of the Commonwealth.

Even more concerning is that on current trends, this doubling of the world's urban population would result in a tripling of the world's urban footprint – placing enormous strains on ecosystems and directly challenging the carbon reduction strategies that are so vital in the context of climate change. Across the Commonwealth the impact of these frightening trends is, as I've said, only, too evident, with urban sprawl and informal settlement dislocating millions of people from basic services and jobs.

Recent studies show that in the Commonwealth urban growth will be greatest in the places with least professional resource to plan for it – which is critical if it is to be sustainable. Invariably, current tools and policies for planning urban settlements are just not rapid enough to get ahead of the rate of urban development.

And unless our growing towns and cities are planned, even at the most basic level, to protect main arterial routes, farmland and natural ecosystems, then we will not realise the potential benefits of economic growth and the opportunity that sustainably planned urban expansion can undoubtedly deliver. My own Foundation therefore has been working with the Commonwealth Local Government Forum, the Commonwealth Association of Planners and Commonwealth Association of Architects to develop an online toolkit that will help shape

growth in secondary cities, where most of the projected urbanisation is expected to occur.

Given the challenges in the Commonwealth to address this rapid urbanisation – across sub-Saharan Africa, India and through to the small Island States – there is also a huge opportunity through the diversity of the Commonwealth to share tools, techniques and best practice for planning walkable, mixed-use, mixed-income human settlements that can play such a vital role in the reduction of poverty, mitigation of the impacts of climate change and reversing damage to finite ecosystems.

There are, it seems to me, Ladies and Gentlemen, so many ways in which the Commonwealth can draw on its unparalleled store of talent and professional expertise, and sheer diversity of experience, to find solutions to the enormous challenges we face, and seize the opportunities from which we can all benefit. An astonishing sixty per cent of the Commonwealth's two billion citizens are now under the age of thirty – the potential, therefore, is immense, but so are the risks – especially from unemployment and alienation, we therefore need to empower young people through personal development programmes, skills-training and assistance with business enterprise development. In all of this lies tremendous opportunity for the people of this continent.

Every young person, in Ghana just as in the U.K., has the potential to make a difference in their communities and to their country. Helping young people to unlock their potential is something to which I know you are committed, Mr. President. In the United Kingdom I set up my Prince's Trust some forty-two years ago and, since then, it has helped nearly a million young people to get into jobs, education and training or to start their own enterprise and to create brighter futures for themselves and those around them. Now, through Prince's Trust International, we are taking the experience and expertise that my Trust has built up since 1976 and, with local partners, are helping to change young lives in other parts of the world. I am therefore delighted to be able to announce that Prince's Trust International is now looking to bring their programmes to Africa for the first time, starting here in Ghana. It will, I hope, offer a further connection between our countries, in some small way, at least, whereby we can contribute to your priority, Mr. President, of fuelling youth employment and diversified economic growth.

Your Excellencies, Ladies and Gentlemen.

It is clear to me that the Commonwealth remains as vital today, as it has ever been. It brings us together, building bridges between our governments and our people, and offering the practical means to work together for a better future. In such an uncertain and changing world, none of us can know what kind of a planet our grandchildren, and great grandchildren, will inhabit, but the Commonwealth, it seems to me, offers us a vital mechanism to help ensure that it is not poisoned and polluted and that its vitality is not compromised.

Therefore, we owe it to them – and to every one of our 2.3 billion fellow Commonwealth citizens – to renew and strengthen the partnerships between us,

and use them to give life to the aspirations of each generation. I have nothing but the greatest confidence that Ghana will play an essential part in that, just as it always has, and that the bonds between our countries will remain strong and indispensable to us all.

Thank you ladies and gentlemen.

ENDS.