

News story: Sports Grounds Safety Authority Board Member Extended

The Culture Secretary has extended the term of Peter Rowley OBE as a Board Member of the Sports Grounds Safety Authority until 12 November 2017.

Peter Rowley retired as a director and Chief Executive of Darlington Building Society in 2009. Since then Peter has developed a portfolio of interests in sport administration. He is Chairman of The Sports Council Trust Company, Chairman of British Weightlifting, the lead non-executive director of the Sports Grounds Safety Authority, Vice Chairman of StreetGames UK, a trustee of Middlesbrough Football Club Foundation and a trustee of Tees Valley Community Foundation. He has served previously as a board member of Sport England, an independent member of UK Sport's Audit Committee, chairman of SkillsActive UK and a director of Coachwise Ltd. Peter believes passionately in the power of sport to change lives and communities for the better and received the OBE for services to sport administration in the New Year Honours List 2017.

The role is remunerated at £265 per day and the Board meets approximately 6 times per year. 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. Peter has declared no such political activity.

News story: Ministers step up engagement with small businesses

At a roundtable with small businesses today, Government Ministers reiterated their determination to have a two way dialogue with small businesses throughout the process of EU exit.

Hosted by the Federation of Small Business, the event was attended by Robin Walker, Minister for Exiting the European Union and Margot James, Minister for Small Business as well as representatives from the FSB and various small businesses.

During the roundtable attendees discussed the important part that the UK's five million small businesses play in the economy and looked at issues such

as the Repeal Bill, market access and skills.

It follows a conference held at Chevening House, during which Ministers from the Department for Exiting the EU, the Treasury and the Department for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy came together with business leaders to discuss EU exit.

Robin Walker, Minister for Exiting the European Union, said:

Small businesses are the lifeblood of our economy and we want to ensure that they continue to flourish long after we leave the EU.

That is why we are stepping up our engagement with businesses throughout the exit process, ensuring we can help them to capitalise on the opportunities that arise and address the challenges that they may face.

We have been clear that providing businesses with certainty is a key priority and the forthcoming Repeal Bill will give Britain's businesses confidence that they won't face unexpected changes on the day we leave the EU.

Margot James, Small Business Minister, said:

We want the UK to remain the best place in the world to start and grow a business. This is why we are working closely with Britain's small businesses to ensure that the interests of small and medium sized businesses are well represented during the Brexit negotiations.

FSB is helping to ensure that that they play a key role as we deliver a long-term Industrial Strategy that builds on our strengths, as well as ensuring the voice of small businesses are heard loud and clear in our Brexit negotiations.

Mike Cherry, National Chairman of the Federation of Small Business, said:

We are delighted to be hosting Ministers from the Department for Exiting the European Union and the Department for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy.

This is an opportunity for key Ministers, who will be playing a vital role in the exit process, to engage directly with FSB members and discuss their needs in a post-Brexit UK.

FSB has conducted a thorough series of research reports underpinned by in-depth member consultation as to what small businesses want from Brexit, from trade and exports, to jobs and skills, to the replacement of EU funding. And we know that Ministers and civil

servants across the Government will be listening and responding to our findings, which will help inform a deal that works for small businesses and so fosters economic growth and job creation.

We will continue to be a constructive partner in these negotiations and ensure that the voice of the UK's 5.5 million small businesses and self-employed is heard loud and clear.

Since last June the Government has been engaging extensively with businesses across the UK, travelling across the country for visits, roundtables and meetings. The Government will continue to have an open dialogue with the FSB and its members throughout the Brexit process.

[Corporate report: Marches Mosses BogLIFE project](#)

Updated: Project leaflet and links to BogLIFE newsletters added.

In August 2016 the EU LIFE programme awarded Natural England a multi-million pound grant over 5 years to support the Marches Mosses BogLIFE project. The aim is to restore the Fenn's, Whixall, Bettisfield, Wem and Cadney Mosses Special Area of Conservation (SAC). The partnership includes Natural Resources Wales and the Shropshire Wildlife Trust. The project's also supported by the Heritage Lottery Fund.

The project plans to create a healthier and larger habitat for Marches Mosses by storing rainfall on the existing bog where appropriate by:

- blocking ditches
- creating small bunds (low banks) to prevent runoff
- buying and restoring more peatland
- removing selected areas of scrub, trees and conifer plantations

To reduce the effects of air pollution on the bog the project will:

- test ways of managing its effects on bog vegetation, such as controlling dense areas of purple moor grass using different methods
- engage with local land managers and others to raise awareness of how air pollution affects the bog and explore ways to reduce its impact

The project will also:

- improve the bog's water quality
- clean up a former scrap-yard
- monitor the recovery of the bog

- share knowledge gained with managers of similar habitats in the UK and Europe
- establish a centre of excellence for volunteering and training
- raise awareness of the bog by engaging with a wide range of audiences such as local schools

Background

Lowland raised bogs are one of the rarest wildlife habitats in the world. This habitat is very important for biodiversity and for its critical role in carbon storage. The aim is to reduce past damage from:

- plantation forestry
- scrub invasion
- peat extraction
- land drainage for agriculture and other uses
- invasive species
- air pollution

Contact

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[Press release: OTS says it is high time to digitise paper stamp duty on shares](#)

The Office of Tax Simplification (OTS) is the independent adviser to government on tax simplification. In this [report on paper stamp duty](#) published today, the OTS takes a wide-ranging look at the potential for paper stamp duty to be reformed, digitised and simplified.

Stamp Duty Land Tax (on land transactions) and Stamp Duty Reserve tax (on most share-trading) have been digitised for some years. But stamp duty itself, which is charged on certificated share transactions taking place outside the CREST settlement system, is still administered by impressing paper stock transfer forms with physical stamps. This is an outdated and cumbersome approach.

Angela Knight CBE, Chair of the OTS Board, said:

In this digital age it is anachronistic to still be stamping paper documents as we did on the 17th century. This results in delays and can cause commercial difficulties, particularly when there is a commercial requirement to register a transfer on the same day as the transaction takes place. This report points the way to both modernise and speed up the process.

Paul Morton, OTS Tax Director, said:

It is clear from our work that there is a significantly greater demand for the facility to register documents on the same day as the transaction than is possible with the current arrangements. Digitisation is the norm across business and commerce of all types. Digitising paper stamp duty, and taking some related simplification steps, will improve the whole process for those currently needing to have documents stamped.

Core recommendations

The core set of recommendations, propose:

- replacing the process that requires sending a paper document to the Birmingham Stamp Office to be stamped, with a digital process
- updating the rules governing company registrars' so that they are able

to register transactions on the same day as and when required

- limiting the scope of stamp duty to the transactions it applies to in practice

Further recommendations

In addition, the report makes some more technical simplification proposals including:

- addressing the present archaic way in which stamp duty is calculated in relation to consideration that is difficult to value at the time of the transaction concerned
- bringing stamp duty legislation into one place and within the umbrella of the already digitised Stamp Duty Reserve Tax and then repealing the present stamp duty legislation which is spread across many Acts of Parliament
- ensuring that the digital process is developed in a way which secures the fullest benefits for both those who pay the tax and those who collect it

Notes for editors

Stamp duty was the predecessor tax to Stamp Duty Land Tax (for land transactions since 2003) and Stamp Duty Reserve Tax (on electronic share transactions since 1986). Stamp duty now mainly applies to share transactions undertaken using paper forms.

The OTS advises the Chancellor on tax simplification, challenging tax complexity to help all users of the tax system; it does not implement changes – these are a matter for government and for Parliament.

The OTS team is led by Chairman Angela Knight CBE and Tax Director Paul Morton and has a small staff drawn from HM Treasury, HM Revenue and Customs and the private sector.

The OTS works to improve the experience of all who interact with the tax system. It aims to reduce the administrative burden – which is what people actually encounter in practice – as well as simplifying the rules. Simplification of the technical and administrative aspects of tax are each important, both to taxpayers and HMRC.

Press Enquiries only please contact Ed Rowley, OTS Press Officer – Phone: 03000 585 028

News story: Honorary Queen's Counsel nominations: deadline 1 September 2017

The Ministry of Justice (MOJ) is inviting nominations for appointment as Queen's Counsel (QC) 'honoris causa' (honorary silk). Nomination forms must be completed and returned to MOJ by 1 September 2017.

The rank of QC is awarded to advocates (barristers and solicitors) who have demonstrated particular skill and expertise in the conduct of advocacy. It has been awarded in various forms for around 400 years. The rank of QC honoris causa is separate to these awards and are awarded to lawyers and legal academics that have made a major contribution to the law of England and Wales outside practice in the courts, which has not been recognised through other forms of honours.

Honorary silks were first awarded in the late nineteenth century and it has been the practice for governments to recommend a small number of lawyers and legal academics for the honorary rank with each round of substantive QC appointments. Despite its name, honorary silk is not part of the honours system and is administered separately within MOJ.

Eligibility criteria

In making a nomination you should ensure that your nominee meets the required criteria set out below:

- the award is open only to qualified lawyers and to legal academics
- the individual should have made a 'major contribution to the law of England and Wales'
- 'Outside practice in the courts' will generally mean that the award is made for an achievement other than a person's normal practice as a lawyer or academic
- QC honoris causa is not a 'working rank'. It cannot be used in practice as a lawyer. Furthermore, honorary silk cannot be awarded as an alternative to the substantive QC rank for people who, for whatever reason, do not fit its eligibility criteria
- Honorary silk is awarded only in England and Wales. There is no exact equivalent in Scotland or Northern Ireland. However, this does not mean that achievements of a similar nature cannot be recognised in those

jurisdictions. If you would like to nominate someone, whose work is in Scotland or Northern Ireland, for an honour you can contact the [Scottish Government](#) or the [Honours Secretariat for Northern Ireland](#).

We recognise that those who are not lawyers or legal academics make equally valuable contributions to public life, and may have done so in similar fields as legally qualified individuals. If you feel a non-legally qualified individual ought to be recognised, you can instead [nominate them for an honour](#).

If someone is nominated for honorary silk who has been nominated for an honour this year or has already been honoured in the last year, it is very unlikely that we will be able to put their name forward.

How to make a nomination

We welcome nominations for honorary silk from anyone, no matter what your background. If you would like to suggest someone for appointment, please complete the [Honorary QC nomination form](#) (MS Word Document, 93.5KB) .

When completing the form please give as much detail as possible. The more we know about a nominee, the easier it is to assess whether they meet the honorary silk criteria. If we have only a limited amount of information about someone, it is unlikely that we will be able to recommend them for appointment. You can nominate as many people as you like, but please ensure that you keep their details separate.

You need to complete the nomination form and send it to us by 1 September 2017 preferably by email or alternatively post to:

Mr Martin Marston-Paterson
Ministry of Justice
Postal Point 3.16
102 Petty France
London SW1H 9AJ

Email: martin.marston-paterson@justice.gov.uk

Please note, we will only accept nominations which are submitted on the nomination form attached to this webpage. Letters of support for a candidate will not be accepted or attached to a nomination. In cases where more than one person wishes to nominate a single candidate, each individual must send in a separate form for the nominee. This gives a fuller representation of the candidate's suitability for honorary silk.

Timing

Please ensure that your nominations reach us no later than 1 September 2017. Nominations made after this date cannot be accepted.

Contact us

If you would like additional information on honorary silk or how to make a nomination, please feel free to contact us by phone on 020 3334 0970, or by email: martin.marston-paterson@justice.gsi.gov.uk.