

Press release: PM congratulates the Queen on her Sapphire Jubilee

From:

First published:

6 February 2017

Part of:

Prime Minister Theresa May, on behalf of the nation, congratulated Her Majesty the Queen on her 65-year reign.

Prime Minister Theresa May said:

Today's Sapphire Jubilee marks yet another remarkable milestone for our remarkable Queen.

I know the nation will join with me today in celebrating and giving thanks for the lifetime of service Her Majesty the Queen has given to our country and to the Commonwealth. It is a testament to her selfless devotion to the nation that she is not marking becoming the first monarch to reign for 65 years with any special celebration, but instead getting on with the job to which she has dedicated her life.

She has truly been an inspiration to all of us and I am proud, on behalf of the nation, to offer our humble thanks and congratulations on celebrating her Sapphire Jubilee.

'Together We're Stronger'

6 February 2017

Scottish Labour is to hold its annual conference in Perth this month, unveiling the theme **'Together We're Stronger'**.

Leader Kezia Dugdale will welcome UK Labour leader Jeremy Corbyn, London Mayor Sadiq Khan, UK Labour deputy leader Tom Watson and other high-profile speakers to the Fair City.

To attend the conference, click [here](#).

As part of the 'Together We're Stronger' theme, Scottish Labour will firmly oppose the SNP's divisive plans for a second independence referendum and the austerity of the Tories and the SNP that is dividing communities.

The conference will be held in Perth Concert Hall between February 24 and 26.

Scottish Labour leader Kezia Dugdale said:

"I'm delighted that Scottish Labour is returning to Perth this year for our annual conference.

"We always receive a great welcome, and the hundreds of Labour delegates attending will help to boost the local economy. I look forward to welcoming Jeremy Corbyn, Sadiq Khan, Tom Watson and our other speakers to the city.

"The last few years have been among the most dramatic in UK political history. The full implications for our country may not be known for some time, however one thing is clear now more than ever – people need a strong Scottish Labour Party focused on growing our economy, investing in public services and giving everybody a fair chance in life.

"Our country is divided enough, which is why Scottish Labour will firmly oppose the SNP's reckless plans for a second independence referendum. Together, our country can be stronger."

UK Labour leader Jeremy Corbyn said:

"I will be bringing a message that only a Labour government would hand back wealth and control to people and communities.

"That only a Labour Government would put the public back into our economy, fix our rigged economy and break the grip of vested interests to help the many not the few.

"That only a Labour Government would redistribute power and wealth and shrink the gap in income and wealth, making sure the corporations and the richest pay their fair share of taxes.

"And that only a Labour Government would end the race to the bottom in the jobs market and guarantee education and employment rights for all."

London Mayor Sadiq Khan said:

"I'm very much looking forward to visiting Perth for Scottish Labour's annual conference.

"I'm working to grow the relationship between London and the great Scottish cities such as Perth, Edinburgh, Glasgow, Dundee and Aberdeen. London and Scotland share many of the same challenges following the Brexit vote.

"Kezia Dugdale has set out a welcome and ambitious vision for our United Kingdom. As Mayor of London, I am forging a new cross-party consensus on further devolution to the UK capital.

“As in Scotland, this is about protecting jobs, wealth and prosperity. Londoners should have more control over how taxes raised in our city are spent.

“The entire country will benefit from this – if we increase investment, London and the UK will grow.”

Press release: HMRC wins ‘alternative money’ lap dance case

From:

First published:

6 February 2017

Wiltonpark LTD faces a tax bill estimated at more than half a million pounds.

Wiltonpark LTD, owner of five London-based ‘gentlemen’s clubs’ branded ‘Secrets’, has lost its tax battle with HM Revenue and Customs and now faces a tax bill estimated at more than half a million pounds.

Wiltonpark issued vouchers to their customers to pay the dancers and the club then charged the self-employed dancers a 20% fee to cash-in the ‘Secrets’ branded ‘money’. The club argued that the fee charged didn’t attract VAT as they were simply holding the money safely on the dancers’ behalf – HMRC disagreed.

The Court of Appeal has agreed with HMRC that the club’s income from charging dancers for redeeming the vouchers is in fact taxable.

Jim Harra, Director General, Customer Strategy and Tax Design, HMRC, said:

HMRC always intervenes when it seems to us that tax due under the law is not being paid. This is a prime example. Our work ensures that everyone pays the tax due, creating a level playing field for all businesses.

We’re investigating clubs who use similar schemes and there’s a potential tax liability running into the millions at stake – money that is needed to pay for the UK’s vital public services.

1. Please find a link to the judgement which outlines the technicalities in relation to this case [here](#)

2. HMRC believed this business model sidestepped VAT payments due on the redemption fees charged. The clubs argued that the charge amounted to keeping the money secure for the dancers and therefore was exempt for VAT purposes.
 3. However, the Court of appeal case ruled against the clubs and agreed with HMRC that the charges the club put on the dancers who redeemed the vouchers was taxable.
 4. Follow HMRC's Press Office on Twitter [@HMRCpressoffice](#)
 5. HMRC's [Flickr channel](#)
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[Speech: British High Commissioner's speech at the launch of the African Science Academy](#)

Ladies and Gentlemen, it is a pleasure to be with you today to mark the official launch of the African Science Academy in Ghana.

Every single person here has, in some way, contributed to the success of this moment. I think you will agree with me when I say that the young women of the African Science Academy (ASA) are simply brilliant. They are intelligent, articulate, and passionate about the development of their continent. I cannot wait to see what they go on to achieve; and how they inspire other young women to achieve similar things through their example.

I first heard about plans to create the African Science Academy when I met Dr. Tom Ilube in 2015. Tom was visiting as part of a delegation with the Lord Mayor of London. I was struck by his vision and determination to launch Africa's first STEM school for girls. I was equally impressed to learn how quickly his ambitious idea became a reality. Last year, Tom was named the most influential black British person, largely due to his work in education and philanthropy. This exceptional school exists because of his imagination and impressive resolve.

You can feel that something special is happening here. To the pioneering 24 girls of ASA, you must be so very proud of yourselves. All of you took a leap of faith when you decided to join a brand-new school, particularly those who moved countries to do so, perhaps leaving home for the first time. From your academic excellence to your outstanding confidence, you are all role-models. Role models for your siblings, your peers, and for the millions of young girls across the continent who fight for their right for a quality education. ASA students – you are also the future. You have shown yourself to be ambassadors for girls studying science. You are the future engineers, computer scientists, professors and astronauts of this exciting continent. And you are part of the future in reducing machoism, misogyny, discrimination and prejudice against women – that is, by men against women.

To develop, African leaders need to prioritise and invest in a strong educational infrastructure. Africa has the youngest population in the world, with over 200 million people aged between 15 to 24. We need our young people to be equipped with skills relevant to the technological era. It is the youth who will develop the solutions to the development issues of our countries. From climate change to agriculture; from software development to finding life-changing cures – a knowledge of technology and the sciences is crucial.

Next week, the United Nations will celebrate the International Day of Women and Girls in Science to promote female inclusion and participation in the sciences. Internationally, there is a strong gender imbalance in the STEM fields of science, technology, engineering, and mathematics. Girls and women continue to face unique and significant barriers in accessing STEM education, such as gendered discrimination and lack of encouragement. ASA aims to bridge this gap in Africa by providing gifted girls with access to new opportunities and an excellent pre-university education. ASA is leading the way in its efforts to prepare girls to compete and achieve in a male-dominated world. And that is the key – no country, no society can ever hope to develop fully or to realise all its potential if it systemically discriminates against half of its population.

Indeed, we know that women and girls typically make up just over half of most national populations, including here on the African continent. Improving the lives of girls and women is also a key priority for the UK government. In 2016, the UK Department for International Development launched a new initiative: Leave No Girl Behind, to deliver quality education to disadvantaged girls. We believe that access to a good education, in a safe environment, significantly improves the life chances of girls.

Through DFID, right here in Ghana, we have a Complementary Basic Education programme designed to help children who have dropped out of, or who never enrolled in, primary school to have a second chance at gaining those vital literacy and numeracy skills. So far, that programme has enabled over 150,000 children, half of them girls, to have a second chance at education; and well over 90% of those have both completed that programme and transferred back into mainstream education.

A second DFID Ghana programme is called Girls' Participatory Approaches to Student Access or G-PASS which addresses the household economic challenge, particularly in Ghana's poorest northern regions, of putting girls through secondary school, by providing an incentive and scholarship package for vulnerable girls in the 75 most deprived districts of Ghana, while helping Colleges of Education to improve the quality of teaching they receive. So far, over 87,000 girls have received such scholarship packages, with over 70,000 of them completing Junior High School and over 16,000 Senior High School, representing a significant cadre of educated girls and young women in this country's most disadvantaged areas.

We are proud of that work, and proud, too, to see private initiatives like ASA bear fruit. We are happy to be a supporter of ASA and the brilliant work that is happening here. Proud that Ghana is the country where this wonderful project is located. And proud that ASA students are completing the gold-

standard Cambridge International A-Levels, representing the potential of British qualifications to stretch the minds of Africa's best and brightest.

ASA was built by an incredible team, and so much hard work has gone into making it a success. I would like to take this opportunity to encourage companies and individuals to support the development of ASA, whether financially or through in-kind support. We all want to see ASA grow from strength to strength. With your help, ASA can build a large 21st century campus and offer scholarships to hundreds of bright girls who might benefit from this opportunity. Such feats do not happen by magic. It requires the power of people and the collaboration of partners invested in girls' education and Africa at large.

I would also encourage ASA to share its experience with other schools and educational organisations. You are doing things differently and nurturing a new generation of empowered young women. Share your stories with others. Inspire other schools to encourage girls to pursue subjects like physics and computing. Amplify the voices of your students, who will be the change-makers of tomorrow. We want to hear their voice.

Thank you again for inviting me as guest of honour to this special occasion. Congratulations to the Founder, Dr Tom Ilube; Headteacher, Ms Efua Adabie; the staff and students at ASA; and all of ASA's committed supporters. In a few years, ASA will have a strong alumni network of hundreds of young women who will be leaders in their fields of expertise. Good luck to you all on this ambitious and worthy endeavour.

[News story: Surveillance Camera Commissioner contract extended](#)

From:

First published:

6 February 2017

Part of:

The Home Office has extended Tony Porter's contract for a further 3 years.

Mr Porter, who previously held roles in business and law enforcement, including as Temporary Assistant Chief Constable at Greater Manchester Police and Vice President Head of Physical Security Intelligence at Barclays Bank, took up the role as [Surveillance Camera Commissioner](#) in March 2014.

He was originally appointed for a 3 year term ending on 10 March 2017. The

Home Secretary and Permanent Secretary have now extended Mr Porter's term from 3 to 6 years with his contract now expiring on 10 March 2020.

Home Secretary Amber Rudd said:

The role of the Surveillance Camera Commissioner in providing oversight and compliance with the surveillance code of practice is a vital one in our modern society.

Tony has done an excellent job over the last three years and I am pleased to be able to extend his contract to allow him to continue his important work through to 2020.

Mr Porter said:

I'm delighted to have my commission extended for a further 3 years. With the help of my advisory council and many others I've been able to raise standards across surveillance camera users and protect individuals' right to privacy through tools such as self-assessment and third party certification. There's still much important work to do though and I'll be launching my national surveillance camera strategy for England and Wales later in the year setting out my vision up until 2020.

The commissioner is responsible for:

- encouraging compliance with the surveillance camera code of practice
- providing advice on the effective, appropriate, proportionate and transparent use of surveillance camera systems
- providing advice on operational and technical standards
- reviewing how the code of practice is working and advising the government where any changes may be necessary

Mr Porter joined Greater Manchester Police in 1982 and went on to hold numerous senior policing roles including command of the North West Counter Terrorism Unit and Temporary Assistant Chief Constable at Greater Manchester Police.

He was awarded the Queen's Police Medal in 2008 for distinguished service to policing.