

Government issues rallying call to action for historic counties celebrations

Government publishes new guidance to help local authorities recognise historic counties as a way to boost community pride.

Published 16 July 2019 From: [Ministry of Housing, Communities & Local Government](#) and [Jake Berry MP](#)



From the bear and ragged staff of Warwickshire to the golden knot of Staffordshire, a renaissance of historic county flags is well underway as the government publishes guidance to help councils celebrate the rich heritage and culture of their counties.

The [new guidance](#) helps local authorities recognise historic counties as a way to boost community pride and provide opportunities for families to learn about local traditions.

It includes consideration of placing road signs to mark the boundaries of the historic counties, flying county flags whenever possible, designing flags for counties without one and celebrating county days.

The government recently confirmed that 50 registered flags of the historic counties of Great Britain will fly alongside the Union flag in the heart of Parliament Square in support of a colourful celebration of the nation's history and culture on 23 July – Historic County Flags Day.

Northern Powerhouse Minister, Jake Berry MP, who champions the historic counties campaign in government, has this week written to the leaders of all county councils encouraging them to celebrate their historic county's heritage and proudly fly the flag for their counties on 23 July.

Minister for the Northern Powerhouse and Local Growth, Jake Berry MP, said:

Our new guidance helps local authorities celebrate historic counties, their shared heritage, culture, history and our great nation.

In government, we are throwing our full weight behind historic counties through proudly flying 50 iconic county flags in the heart of Parliament Square for Historic County Flags Day on 23 July.

I am delighted that this campaign has won support from the County Councils Network and I look forward to seeing the celebrations local authorities across the country have planned to promote historic counties in their communities.

A number of county councils have also thrown their full support behind the historic counties campaign, including Hampshire who have recently created their own emblematic, [eye-catching flag](#). Staffordshire has meanwhile held its own Staffordshire Day celebrations earlier this year which included a 'Made in Staffordshire' theme to promote the historic ceramic and brewing heritage of the county.

The campaign has also attracted support from the County Councils Network who hosted Minister Berry earlier in the year to discuss how central government and local government can do more to promote historic counties at both the national and grass-roots levels.

Councillor Martin Hill, County Councils Network devolution spokesman, said:

County councils are an integral part of England's history and they continue to be part of people's local identity. The historic nature of counties forms a key part CCN member councils' work to promote their areas as great places to visit, live and work.

The County Councils Network welcomes the government promoting the significance of counties, both economically and socially.

At the same time, it is important that this guidance recognises the importance of existing county boundaries in enabling county councils to deliver efficient local services, such as transport and highways, and economic growth.

County councils should retain local discretion over how they use their history and identity to ensure that their 26 million residents remain clear about who is providing the services they use each day.

Historic County Flags Day is Tuesday 23 July 2019, when the people of Great Britain celebrate the nation's historic counties through the flying of flags.

The government attaches great importance to the history and traditions of this country. Our history helps to define who we are and where we come from, and we are stronger as a nation when we cherish and champion our local traditions. Understanding the past and how we have developed helps us to face the future with confidence and as a shared experience.

In 2012 the government changed Whitehall rules to allow local and county flags to be flown without planning permission, in 2014 planning guidance was issued allowing councils to put up traditional counties boundary signs and the Traffic Signs Regulations and General Directions 2016 allows the signing of historic county boundaries.

County councils and unitary counties have been encouraged to come forward with innovative ideas to bring local communities together around the history and heritage of their areas.

The Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government has committed to exploring further work with a range of partners to raise the profile and maximise the impact of celebrating historic counties in the long-term.

Read the [guidance](#) issued to councils.

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Restoring Estuarine and Coastal Habitats in the North East Atlantic

Thank you.

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At the Environment Agency's recent flood and coast conference, I shared a platform with the writer and broadcaster Nicholas Crane, who you probably know from the television programme: "Coast".

He says:

Britain has only been occupied for 12,000 years... It's all happened so quickly – we've gone from nobody being here at all in 9,500BC to 64 million of us being here today.

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Personally speaking, 12,000 years seems like quite a long time.

Maybe that's because I've never studied geology.

But, when experts put our present challenges in such a grand historical context I think it's worth listening.

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Speaking at the World Economic Forum in January, David Attenborough said:

The Holocene has ended. The Garden of Eden is no more. We have changed the world so much that scientists say we are in a new geological age: the Anthropocene, the age of humans.

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Last year, the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change said we have 12 years to hold global warming to 1.5°C above pre-industrial levels... and even if we do, the impacts of climate change – like floods, heatwaves, storms, drought, and sea-level rise – will increase.

As the Extinction Rebellion activists remind us again this week, we need to act, but last week, the Committee on Climate Change made clear:

- We are not reducing emissions fast enough.

And,

- Businesses, infrastructure, technology, and people are not prepared for weather impacts that will get worse in the next 11 years.

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The estuarine and coastal environment of the UK...(Where over a third of people live)...has changed substantially from its natural state.

Even without human intervention, the coastline has never stayed in the same place, but climate change is increasing and accelerating these processes.

England has also lost about 85 per cent of its historic saltmarsh.

We have gone from over two hundred thousand hectares to around thirty four thousand.

Some areas which have experienced 100 per cent loss of saltmarsh have not recovered in any way.

It is estimated that more than 90 per cent of our native oyster biogenic reefs have been lost.

More than 50 per cent of our water bodies no longer have seagrass where it once grew.

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But, I don't think we should despair.

Human beings are agile and can adapt.

The blue whale hanging from the ceiling, here in the Natural History Museum, reminds us of that.

In the 1800s there were 350,000 to 400,000 blue whales across the world's oceans.

After decades of commercial hunting only around 7,000 to 10,000 were thought to be left in 1966.

That year, in London, the decision was taken to legally protect blue whales.

Since then the population is believed to have grown to between 10,000 and 13,000 with some saying it could be as high as 20,000.

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This conference is about changing the story like that for the UK's coastal habitats.

Our near-shore seas and estuaries in the North East Atlantic have been

transformed by human activity with significant losses of key habitats and the services they once provided.

We can reverse some of these changes and restore habitats.

The 25 Year Environment Plan sets an ambition to deliver environmental net gain and to restore marine biodiversity.

This creates the space for everyone in this room to raise their ambition higher... together.

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So how should we act?

In the government's National Adaptation Programme, the Defra Minister Lord Gardiner, wrote:

While we continue to play a leading role in international efforts to keep global temperature rises well below 2°C... our resilience will only be robust if we prepare for worse climate change scenarios.

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The Environment Agency, is a regulator, advisor and operator out to three nautical miles.

We need to protect people and businesses on the coast through flood protection schemes.

Earlier this year, we released a draft Flood and Coastal Erosion Risk Management Strategy to 2100.

We said: We can't win a war against water by building away climate change with infinitely high flood defences.

We need to be more resilient.

We need to help communities better understand their risk and give them more control about how to adapt and respond.

And, we need to look at more nature based solutions.

Last week, Minister Coffey announced a Call for Evidence on flooding and coastal erosion policy.

We will be working closely with government and partners to finalise our Strategy later this year.

As the Committee on Climate Change reported last week, society urgently needs to invest in Nature based Solutions such as afforestation, peatlands, and

saltmarsh to draw down carbon and ensure that we can adapt to the impacts of a changing world.

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Today, we want to establish a network for restoration of estuarine and coastal habitats and species.

This has – remarkably – never been done before..

Certainly not across government bodies, industry, NGOs and academia.

We want you to share your knowledge and experience.

We hope to take stock of what we have lost, what projects are underway, and look to the future to see what more we can do collectively.

Afterwards we hope to develop a much larger programme of restoration.

My colleague Pete Fox will be elaborating on the opportunities for partnership in a moment.

No one organisation can do this alone.

Green Finance has a significant role to play.

In the recent Green Finance strategy, the government increased the expectation for financial institutions – and regulators – to consider the impacts of climate change within their investments.

The strategy says the government will work with international partners to catalyse market-led action to enhance nature-related financial disclosures.

This will complement the global review of the economics of biodiversity by Professor Sir Partha Dasgupta.

And, it will mirror the success of the Task Force on Climate-related Financial Disclosures' approach by supporting the private sector to develop consistent disclosures to better manage nature-related financial risks.

This is important, but we also need a large scale redistribution of capital towards the types of green assets that I hope you will discuss today.

But, we're not just talking about "green" initiatives – this work is in everybody's financial best interests.

The marine environment has a tremendous ability to recover.

Climate change threatens to overshadow protective management measures and lead to considerable loss of ecosystem services.

We need practical interventions to restore habitats, and increase ecosystem service resilience.

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I hope that today's conference helps to move the discussion about coastal habitats on from protection – to restoration.

We want to achieve greater resilience for people and wildlife at the coast: restoring, enhancing, and protecting the benefits we receive.

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All of us benefit from the coast – particularly in a country where it is never more than 84 miles away.

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Thank you very much.

[Highways England on right lines to make 'ghost' markings vanish](#)

'Ghost' road markings and blacked out lines, which can confuse drivers, could become a thing of the past thanks to Highways England's global search for a solution to the problem.

Published 16 July 2019 From: [Highways England](#)



When white road markings need to be removed, for example when road layouts change, the original lines can sometimes still appear as faint or 'ghost' marks.

The problem is worse in bright sunshine.

But Highways England's £685,000 international research project is aiming to find a solution.



'Ghost markings' which can confuse drivers could become a thing of the past.

The company, responsible for motorways and major A-roads, launched a competition which has seen products from around the world undergo tough testing in the Spanish capital Madrid – with the road markings subjected to some two million 'wheel overs'.

Now the eight winners of the competition are seeing their materials put to the test on the M5 in the south west. In addition, removing markings can cause damage to the surface with the repairs adding to the overall cost of road schemes and creating additional work. Testing is also taking place on five removal systems which could address this issue.

Corporate Group Leader Martin Bolt, who has been overseeing the competition for Highways England, said:

We know 'ghost' markings on any roads, not just ours, can be confusing for drivers and autonomous vehicles so we set out to find a solution which makes a real difference not just for road users on our network but across the globe.

There is a worldwide problem with road marking removal and it is the first time the industry has been challenged like this.

We're hoping the outcome of the competition will give us a greater understanding of the materials and processes we, and the road industry, should be using in future schemes, and will help drivers on their journeys.

The competition, launched in conjunction with Roadcare and Kier, was made possible through a £150 million ringfenced fund Highways England has for innovation projects.

The aim was to find the most effective road markings that will also reduce damage to the surface when the lines are removed.

Thirty-six entries came in from around the globe with applicants asked to send samples of their product for testing which has been taking place at an industry-recognised centre in Madrid.



Road markings have been tested with two million 'wheel overs'.

Eight winners have now been chosen in the Transforming Road Markings competition and their materials will be tested in all weathers on the M5 in the south west over the next 12 months.

Once complete, the most successful products will be highlighted in research shared around the world and setting new high standards for the road industry.

Keith Dawson, managing director of Roadcare, said:

Competitors from across the globe have told us how refreshing and inspiring it has been that Highways England is leading the way in looking for solutions to what is an international issue. They are fully supportive in helping to find a sustainable solution to the road markings challenges.

Scott Cooper, managing director of strategic highways at Kier, commented:

By working collaboratively with our client and supply chain partners such as WJ, Wilson and Scott and Roadcare we have been able to continue to develop and deliver new ideas, products and processes.

These will help deliver safer roads as scarring and ghosting will disappear. The customer experience through roadworks will improve as a result of clearer markings and finished schemes will have a much cleaner appearance.

General enquiries

Members of the public should contact the Highways England customer contact centre on 0300 123 5000.

Media enquiries

Journalists should contact the Highways England press office on 0844 693 1448 and use the menu to speak to the most appropriate press officer.

[Governor Dakin's inaugural speech: 15 July 2019](#)

His Honour the Speaker, Your Ladyship the Chief Justice, the Honourable Premier, the Honourable Leader of the Opposition, Her Excellency the Deputy Governor, the Honourable Attorney General, Honourable Ministers, Honourable Members of this Honourable House, the Commissioner of Police, Ladies and Gentlemen, Family.

And, through your various representational roles, my greetings to the people of these islands, a community I hope I will soon be able to call 'friends'.

Mr Speaker, thank you for the opportunity of addressing this House a thank you I extend to the Honourable Premier, and to the Honourable Leader of the Opposition, for their welcome, not only to myself but also my family.

As experienced leaders you will have chosen your words with care and I look forward to weighing those words accordingly.

To reply today to the important points you make would suggest I have arrived with an agenda prepared in London; you will all be relieved to hear that I don't. My views can wait until I am better informed, through detailed conversations with you.

In truth, I come with only one idea: 'To preserve and to improve'. I'll explain this in a moment.

Let me first though properly introduce you to my family, supporting me here today. Mandy my extraordinary wife, who you will find ready to contribute a great deal to these islands. Charlie – our daughter – an 'International Relations' graduate now deeply engaged on environmental issues and Fraser – our son – an Undergraduate studying Engineering.

You, I know, understand the importance of family in the way I've just described a family. You also use the imagery of family – rather beautifully I think – to describe the wider islands that I'm now Governor of: "the family islands". I look forward to getting to know this new family.

A word about first impressions.

This is not our first time in these islands; our family have previously arrived in a particularly important capacity. We arrived as tourists; the economic engine of this country and on which so much of these islands future depends.

We expected the beauty – we'd of course seen the pictures. We anticipated the weather – we'd consulted the forecast. What we didn't expect was the genuine warmth of the people we met. If it's the beaches that brought us here it's the people that would bring us back.

Every person: the immigration officer; the representative of the car hire firm in Provo; the taxi driver in Grand Turk; the waitress; the bartender; the police officer that helped us at the fish fry; the owner of the accommodation we stayed at; the power boat skipper who took us down the islands; all were outstanding Ambassadors for this country. All four of us are delighted to be back.

To substance. The greatest courtesy I can now pay you is to be both brief (I will take little more than 5 minutes) – and to be clear – (I will make just 6 points). Four words that you may choose to hold me to account to, one thought about the Constitution and I'll end talking about my priorities.

The first word is 'Care'. I may be a True Brit, but I'm a Brit who cares deeply about the UK's relationship with the Caribbean, and the Caribbean's relationship with the UK. With a Bajan wife, whose family has lived on that island for centuries, and children who enjoy joint Bajan / British nationality how could I be anything, but.

I've been in the Caribbean every year for the last 35 years and visited many of the islands in this region. Nearly 33 years ago I married Mandy in St Georges Church, Barbados. One of our children was christened in St Ambrose Church, St Michael, Barbados.

I therefore promise to 'care' about the people and the future of these islands, an easy promise to make, and an easy promise to keep, because both myself and my family have cared about the future of this region for a very long time.

You will find I will take my responsibility to represent the interests of the Turks and Caicos Islands seriously and diligently.

The second word is 'Listen'. Long standing connections to this region ensure that I at least know how much I don't know. I have some insight to island life. I know how hard I will have to work to understand a rich and complex society that few – who have not lived in the Caribbean – can properly understand.

As a result you will find me inquisitive, I aspire to be one of the most informed people on these islands. Whoever you are, you will find that I will ask a lot of questions. You all, I think, have a right to be heard – and I have a duty to listen.

So I promise to seek to understand the collective wisdom of these islands by listening to as many people as I can – from as many different walks of life as I can; I promise to 'listen'.

The third word is 'Service'. I was introduced to public service in 1982 when I joined the British Army. Six months later, at the age of 19, I was leading thirty soldiers on operations. That was 37 years ago and this word 'service' has been tested every day since then.

The cap badge at the Royal Military Academy Sandhurst – where I started my first career aged 18 – does not read "Lead to Serve". You do not 'serve' through your 'leadership' – quite the opposite. The cap badge at Sandhurst reads: "Serve to Lead".

The truth is that the quality of a person's leadership is based only on the quality of their service, and the quality of their service boils down to putting others first. So I promise, as your Governor, that I will not only be Her Majesty's servant in these islands, but I will also be your servant.

Being clear and straight: This final word, and we need not dwell on this because you will – in the end – judge me as you see it – is that you will find me 'clear' and by being clear you will find me 'straight'.

To 'care', to 'listen' to 'serve' and to be 'straight' seem to me four good words, four good anchors, to be held accountable to.

I promised a word about the constitution. I am the 15th Governor of these Islands. Her Majesty, Queen Elizabeth, has appointed all 15. She had been crowned twenty years before the first Governor – Alexander Mitchell – was appointed by her. All fifteen Governors received their commission from her, to be her representative as Head of State.

I am genuinely touched by the spotlight you place on me today, but in truth whoever the individual Governor is, is not the issue. It is instead what the office of Governor represents: continuity, the link to the Crown and to Britain, and the Governor's application of the constitution that is important.

It is important because it ensures everyone in these islands, and anyone wishing to travel to her, or invest in her, understands that through the Constitution it is the rule of law that prevails here and all are equal here before the law.

An investment here is safe, because the law keeps it safe. A persons human rights are in the end guaranteed here because the law demands those rights be protected.

Conversations about the constitution become immediately complex but let me – for the moment – keep things simple. The key test is that a Constitution has to be good enough to weather the bad times as well as the good. To take in its stride not just the sort of outstanding leaders who spoke before me today, the Premier and the Leader of the Opposition, but those whose intentions, perhaps long in the future, may be less selfless than the standard that all of us in this room aspire to now.

It's why the oath I swore at the start of these proceedings is taken by all of you so seriously and why it is – to me – the islands sword and shield; something I must steward diligently.

I am acutely aware that as Head of State I am appointed rather than elected. I have the greatest respect for those politicians amongst you, who face an electorate. As a result you – as well as Her Majesty who appointed me as her representative – have every right to demand, in your Head of State, Statesman like qualities. Today is my first step on a journey to earn the right to be judged in that way.

In the 18th Century the political philosopher Burke offered advice. His definition of a statesman was: "A disposition to preserve and an ability to improve". That seems to me to remain a good aiming mark in the 21st Century Turks and Caicos Islands. To preserve and improve. You will find that I'm interested in making a practical, positive, difference.

So I'm interested in supporting all those helping educate, protect, develop and care for all that call these islands home, including the most vulnerable. I'm equally interested in supporting those who are focused on business,

tourism and diversifying the economy. We all rely on wealth creators.

We can all learn from the next generation – I have – and there will be a particular place, in my heart, for those who understand that the stewardship of our environment offers not just benefits here, but also the opportunity for the Turks and Caicos Islands to have a genuine global voice.

That's a global voice in what will be one of the predictable themes of this century, something critical we must steward for those that come behind us. Fortunately it's a fast developing UK priority. On the environment we – the Turks and Caicos Islands, Britain and all the Overseas Territories – are more influential and stronger together than we can ever be apart.

In starting a new role though it's critical to have early focus – my early focus will be on properly understanding issues relating to crime, illegal immigration and hurricane preparedness. My programme has been prepared with that in mind.

That's enough talk. I start my agenda – such as it is – to work with you all to 'preserve and to improve'. In the end this is going to be a Governorship based on values. Whether I 'care', 'listen', 'serve' and whether I'm 'straight' will best be judged by my actions rather than my words. I'm now keen to get to work.

And may God bless the Turks and Caicos Islands.

[Government Chemist hosts MFAN meeting](#)

MFAN, led by [Professor Clare Mills](#), is a forum for research and practice in food allergy. It aims to improve quality of life and safety for people with allergies, enable better provision by businesses and provide tools for allergenic food risk assessment and risk management.

The topic for the meeting was "Allergen analysis best practice guidance". The background to the meeting has been described in our [collaborative paper](#) on potentially flawed food allergen analysis, which could jeopardise improvement in precautionary allergen labelling and undermine correct risk assessment prior to food recalls.

The meeting was attended by over 30 expert practitioners. These included delegates from academia, the European Commission Joint Research Centre, [JRC](#), [MoniQA](#), ELISA allergen detection platform manufacturers, food retailers, and other technical experts.

The meeting was a truly international event with attendees from the UK, Australia, Austria, Germany, and Italy. Electronic remote participation by scientists from the UK, USA, South Africa and Australia ensured a wide range

of views were heard. The meeting produced high-level ideas and discussions and very positive feedback.

The outputs from the meeting will include a guidance document on food allergen analysis.

For more information about the work of the Government Chemist contact