

## [Press release: Prime Minister hosts Burns Night Supper in Downing Street](#)

Ahead of Burns Night on Friday (25 January), the Prime Minister and Mr May hosted the celebration in the State Dining Rooms of Number 10 in honour of the famous Scottish poet.

Guests included Chief Executive of the Scottish Fishermen's Federation Bertie Armstrong and Tunnock's Boyd Tunnock while Dame Katherine Grainger gave the Address to a Haggis. Secretary of State for Scotland David Mundell, Environment Secretary Michael Gove and the Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster David Lidington also joined in the celebrations.

As they walked down Downing Street, guests were welcomed by a piper from the Royal Scots Dragoon Guards and enjoyed Scotch whisky while the Ayrshire Fiddle Orchestra played. During the iconic haggis supper, Katy Thomson performed traditional songs such as 'Auld Lang Syne', 'My Heart's in the Highlands' and 'Ae Fond Kiss'.

Welcoming guests, the Prime Minister said:

The work of Robert Burns, one of our finest poets, continues to be enjoyed by millions of people and tonight is not only a celebration of him but the proud culture of the whole of Scotland.

Scotland is a hugely valued part of our United Kingdom and I am delighted to have this opportunity to celebrate the great poet, this great nation and our precious Union.

Burns Night Supper has been celebrated for hundreds of years since the first supper was held by acquaintances of Robert Burns to commemorate his death. Today, it is marked all around the world to celebrate his life and work with events held in the weeks surrounding the late poet's birthday.

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## [Press release: PM meeting with PM Ardern: 21 January 2019](#)

Prime Minister Theresa May held bilateral talks with the Prime Minister of New Zealand, Jacinda Ardern, today over lunch in Downing Street.

The two leaders reflected on the work their countries had done together since the Commonwealth Heads of Government Meeting in April. They also discussed

Prime Minister Ardern's wellbeing agenda, and shared views on tackling social challenges.

They noted how much their two nations have in common, such as championing free trade, working to uphold the rules based international system, and the many New Zealanders and Brits who choose to call each other's countries home.

The two leaders reaffirmed their shared desire to forge an ambitious, high quality free trade agreement after the UK leaves the EU.

Prime Minister May welcomed the Comprehensive and Progressive Agreement for Trans-Pacific Partnership (CPTPP) coming into force, and that New Zealand had offered its support to the UK's potential accession.

The Prime Ministers also reflected on their security and defence relationship, and agreed on the need to continue and deepen our close cooperation on challenges to global stability, including in areas such as cyber security and disinformation.

They both welcomed the opportunity for closer cooperation through the co-location of the UK's new High Commissions in Tonga and Vanuatu, including on climate resilience.

Both leaders looked forward to continuing their countries' long-standing relationship and to exploring further opportunities to work and trade together.

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## **[News story: New Zealand and United Kingdom joint statement on climate change and resilience in the Pacific](#)**

Pacific Island countries are uniquely affected by the impacts of climate change. This is a global challenge. No single country can solve this issue by itself. Climate change requires ambitious and co-ordinated action.

The Paris Agreement, signed and ratified by all Pacific Island countries, set the goals of holding the increase in the global average temperature to below 2 degrees Celsius above pre-industrial levels and pursuing efforts to limit the temperatures increase to 1.5 degrees Celsius above pre-industrial levels.

The United Kingdom and New Zealand reaffirm our joint commitment to work with Pacific Island countries to take action to mitigate greenhouse gas emissions, reduce vulnerability and increase resilience to the impacts of climate change.

Pacific countries – including those with medium to high per capita GDP – continue to suffer from diseconomies of scale, external economic shocks, uncertainty caused by future climate impacts and catastrophic climatic events. The UK and New Zealand recognise that individual and co-ordinated action is required to address the vulnerabilities of Pacific Island countries to support their sustainable and prosperous future.

The United Kingdom and New Zealand are committed to supporting international action to address issues of oceans, access to development and climate finance, advice on climate induced migration and issues around climate induced insecurity across the Pacific. We, together with the Pacific Islands Forum Secretariat, facilitated the [Wilton Park Forum on Climate Change and Resilience in the Pacific](#) held in December 2018 to support Pacific Island countries to advance practical action on these issues. The forum, attended by Ministers from the UK and New Zealand, was a great opportunity for us to work together along with our Pacific partners and we will look at how we can build on that cooperation in the region over the coming year.

The United Kingdom will open 3 new diplomatic posts in the Pacific next year – Vanuatu, Samoa and Tonga – and a new UK regional development expert will be based in Fiji from 2019 onwards. These new UK posts will work with New Zealand and like minded partners to maximise the impact of multilateral spending to address Pacific Island Countries' vulnerability to climate risks.

New Zealand announced the Pacific Reset in 2018, a refreshed approach to the Pacific based on a depth of understanding, friendship, mutual benefit, collective ambition and sustainability. To support the reset, New Zealand has announced a significant increase to our official development assistance budget, much of which will be focused on supporting key Pacific priorities, including climate change mitigation and adaptation, and expanding New Zealand's diplomatic footprint in the region.

We will also work together to use the UK Prime Minister's role as resilience champion at the UN Secretary-General's 2019 Climate Summit to galvanise world leaders and drive transformative action. We will use this opportunity to drive a step-change in the way we collectively build resilience to the impacts of climate change to ensure a more secure and prosperous future for all, including those countries particularly vulnerable to climate change such as Small Island States, many of which are in the Pacific.

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## **Statement to parliament: Security situation in Northern Ireland**

With permission Mr Speaker, I wish to make a statement to the House following the terrorist attack in Londonderry on Saturday evening.

As the people of the City and those visiting were making the most of the renowned hospitality on offer, a crude, unsophisticated – but dangerous – explosive device detonated as brave PSNI officers were clearing the area. CCTV released by the PSNI shows teenagers and others passing by only minutes before the device detonated. It is sobering to think that a truly sickening outcome by those responsible was only narrowly averted.

Firstly, I would like to pay tribute to the police and other emergency services who responded so magnificently in the immediate aftermath of this attack. It was through their urgent actions that we are not facing circumstances where there could have been casualties or even fatalities.

A nearby hotel was busy; a fundraising event was taking place in a hall adjacent to where the device exploded; and elderly residents in sheltered accommodation were all within yards of the explosion.

Those who planned this attack and who placed this crude device in a busy city centre had absolutely no regard for the people who live and work there.

Mr. Speaker, Hon and Rt. Hon members will be aware that there are a number of security alerts ongoing in Derry/Londonderry today and we are being kept informed of developments by PSNI who are working hard along with other agencies to ensure that this sort of mindless disruption is minimised.

Mr Speaker, those behind the attack will never succeed. Londonderry is a city that has thrived since the signing of the Belfast/Good Friday Agreement 20 years ago – everyone can see that – and one that will continue to grow and develop despite the actions of those who seek to sow discord and division.

And that's why, Mr Speaker, the city has sent a clear message in the wake of this attack – these people and these actions have no place in their city. Political leaders, the business sector, those offering hospitality to a growing number of visitors to Northern Ireland, have all spoken out to challenge those who seek to continue with these violent and futile acts. The wider community in the city have also united their voices in condemnation. We should all listen carefully to what they say.

And to be clear, Mr Speaker, the City remains open for business – Londonderry's Chamber of Commerce condemned the attack but were clear that it would not, "deter us from opening today and getting on with the job."

The bottom line is that voices across the political, business and community spectrum are united. This is intolerable violence which has absolutely no place in our society. We all want to look forward and build a peaceful future for Northern Ireland. The small number of people responsible for this attack have absolutely nothing to offer Northern Ireland and will not prevail.

Violent dissident republican terrorists operate in relatively small, disparate groupings. Their campaign of hatred and violence is unfortunately nothing new. Law enforcement pressure has reduced the number of national security attacks in Northern Ireland. In 2018 there was only one national security attack, compared to five in 2017, four in 2016 and a total of 16

attacks in 2015. Although there has been a reduction in the overall number of national security attacks in recent years, vigilance in the face of this continuing threat remains essential. The current Northern Ireland Related Terrorism (NIRT) threat to NI is SEVERE (which means an attack is highly likely), this attack does not change this threat level.

While there have been many successes by the police and others, it is clear dissidents remain intent on killing. In attempting to impose their unwanted control on people across Northern Ireland, these groupings also choose to ignore democracy and consent, principles that have been, and will continue to be, central to the political process.

The Government have consistently made it clear that terrorism will not succeed and tackling it continues to be of the highest priority. We are determined to keep people safe and secure across the whole of our United Kingdom. Derry is a vibrant city with a bustling economy and an exciting arts and cultural scene, as demonstrated in 2013 when it was the UK's City of Culture. Success breeds success. That is also why this Government has backed Londonderry, and will continue to do so. Building upon the £350m commitment we have made towards a Belfast City Deal, the UK government is equally committed to delivering a comprehensive package of economic support for Derry and Strabane. A city deal for Derry and Strabane will boost investment and productivity, generate jobs, and deliver growth and prosperity, and this activity has been supported by a number of visits by UK Government Ministers. At the budget the Chancellor of the Exchequer opened formal negotiations for a Derry and Strabane City Region Deal. Those negotiations are underway, and it is crucial that this unique opportunity is grasped to unlock the economic transformation that the region needs and deserves.

But it is not just the UK Government who are backing Derry/Londonderry – from all across the world businesses recognise Londonderry for the great place that it is to do business. Whether it is financial services firms such as FinTru, or IT company Alchemy Technology Services, new jobs are being created every day in the city.

Finally – and in direct opposition to the kind of ideas and barbarism advocated by those responsible for Saturday's attack – Londonderry continues to shine as a beacon of culture and progress on the Island of Ireland... as a major tourist destination and as a host for world renowned events like the Clipper round the world race.

As Assistant Chief Constable Mark Hamilton said yesterday, it's not dissident republicans who hold the ground in Londonderry, it's the community.

Anyone who has any information should pass it to the Police or anonymously to Crimestoppers.

Mr Speaker, I commend this statement to the House.

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# [News story: Secretary of State Appointments to the Organising Committee for the Birmingham 2022 Commonwealth Games](#)

## **Ellie Simmonds**

Eleanor 'Ellie' Simmonds OBE is a Five-time Paralympic Champion and fourteen-time World Champion. Ellie shot to fame when she won her first Paralympic medal at the age of 13 years and nine months at the Beijing Paralympic Games. This was the start of a string of firsts for Ellie as she went on to become the youngest winner of the BBC Young Sports Personality of the Year in 2008 and then the youngest recipient of an MBE at the age of 14. Since her meteoric rise into the public eye, Ellie has continued to dominate her sport, winning 14 World titles, 10 European titles and breaking numerous World records along the way.

After her S6 100m and 400m gold medals at Beijing '08, Ellie went even better at the London 2012 Paralympics, winning four medals, including two Golds, and broke a further two World records. Her Gold medals were won in the S6 400m Freestyle and SM6 200m Individual Medley and she won Silver in the S6 100m Freestyle and Bronze in the S6 50m Freestyle. In the lead up to London 2012 Ellie had become the poster girl for the Paralympic games and her success helped make her the most recognised Paralympic athlete in Great Britain, if not the world. At her most recent Games, Ellie returned from Rio 2016 with yet another Gold medal and a new world record for the SM6 200m Individual Medley, becoming the first S6 ever to swim a sub three minute time, as well as a Bronze in the S6 100m Freestyle.

Ellie's disability is classified as Achondroplasia dwarfism. She started swimming at the age of five and started competing against able-bodied children at the age of eight. At ten years old, Ellie's talent was spotted at a disability event and she was entered onto the British Swimming talent programme. She worked her way through to be selected as the youngest member of a senior British Swimming squad for the 2006 IPC World Championships at the age of 12 years and three weeks.

Ellie has captured both the hearts and minds of the British public, initially balancing her stardom with her school work and training. Since leaving full-time education, Ellie's work outside of the pool with charities such as Dwarf Sports Association, WaterAid and I AM WATER, in addition to her frequent work in the media, has truly cemented her status as Britain's golden girl.

## **Lyndsey Jackson**

Lyndsey Jackson is a senior arts administrator and live event producer, and

the Deputy Chief Executive of the Edinburgh Festival Fringe Society. The Edinburgh Festival Fringe is the largest arts festival in the world, and the greatest platform for artists and creatives to develop and showcase their talents on an international stage.

Lyndsey supports the Fringe Society deliver the Society's vision, aims and objectives through motivational leadership and clear strategic direction, leading on business continuity, governance and strategic planning, digital innovation, ticketing and commercialisation, and the development of education outreach programmes that support the place of the festival in its host city.

Lyndsey has a background in producing new writing and site-specific theatre and working with young people to develop their creative potential through drama and film.

## **Nick Timothy**

Nick Timothy is a columnist for the Daily Telegraph and the Sun. He is a Visiting Fellow at Wadham College, Oxford, and a Fellow of the Royal Society of Arts in London. Previously he was Theresa May's joint chief of staff in Downing Street and her special adviser in the Home Office.

He is also a former Director of the New Schools Network, a charity that helps people to set up free schools, and a former Deputy Director of the Conservative Research Department. Nick was born and brought up in Birmingham.

The roles are not remunerated. These appointments have been made in accordance with the [Cabinet Office's Governance Code on Public Appointments](#). The process is regulated by the Commissioner for Public Appointments.

The Government's Governance Code requires that any significant political activity undertaken by an appointee in the last five years is declared. This is defined as including holding office, public speaking, making a recordable donation or candidature for election. Ellie Simmonds and Lyndsey Jackson have made no such declarations. Nick Timothy has declared that he was a special adviser in the Home Office and Downing Street, worked for the Conservatives during the 2015 and 2017 general elections and canvassed for the Conservative Party.