

News story: Prime Minister's 2018 Christmas message to the Falkland Islands

2018 has been an exciting year for the people of the Falkland Islands – one that has brought with it new faces, new friendships and new opportunities.

The new legislative assembly has completed its first full year, with all your MLAs working hard for the people of the islands.

Plans for a new air link to Brazil have been agreed, including a regular stop in Cordoba in Argentina. It's a move that will make the islands more accessible than ever and boost economic development, and is something your MLAs have done much to deliver.

Talks about fisheries are underway for the first time in 14 years – a vital step in ensuring that we manage our natural resources in a sustainable way while protecting a key local industry.

The islands have welcomed a new chief justice and the FIDF has a new major.

Falklands teams swept the board at the first ever Mega Patagonian Ice Hockey Tournament – with members of the Stanley Penguins also joining their Chilean and Argentinian counterparts in mixed teams for friendly matches.

The Falklands' flag flew proudly at the Commonwealth Games, bringing the islands to whole new audiences.

And tourism has increased – with more people from more places coming to experience the natural wonders of your beautiful home.

Alongside the tourists, this year you also provided a gracious welcome for overseas visitors of a very different kind.

Since 1982, many of the graves at Darwin Cemetery had been marked simply as those of "an Argentine soldier known only to God".

In March more than 200 relatives were finally able to mourn at the graves of their sons, brothers, husbands and fathers – and the dignity and respect the people of the Falklands extended to those families said much about the character of your community.

Not far from Darwin another legacy of the war was dealt with as Goose Green became the islands' first settlement to be completely cleared of mines.

Demining was also completed at Fox Bay East and although there is still much work to be done – work we will continue to support – more than 8,000 mines have now been destroyed.

Nearly 40 years after the conflict the new air link, the joint ice hockey teams and the support provided to the families of Argentina's war dead all point towards warmer relations with your nearest neighbours.

Indeed, when I met President Macri earlier this month – becoming the first British Prime Minister ever to visit Buenos Aires – it was a pleasure to focus not just on what separates us, but on what we can achieve together.

However, while the relationship between our governments is changing, I can assure that one thing will never change: our absolute commitment to the people and sovereignty of the Falkland Islands.

It is not up for debate.

As long as you desire the right to be part of the United Kingdom family, we will defend that right – and a valued part of our family is what you will remain.

This year has been all about progress, about moving forward.

As it draws to a close we can all be positive about what the future holds for the Falkland Islands.

2019 will bring continued work on the Islands Plan, further discussions with Argentina under the 2016 Communique, and a referendum to determine constituency boundaries of the Legislative Assembly.

And as the United Kingdom leaves the European Union we will strengthen our ties across globe, bringing greater opportunities not just for the UK itself but also for our overseas territories.

You may be half a world away from us here in the UK, but you are very much in our thoughts.

So from myself and my husband Philip, and on behalf of the whole United Kingdom, let me wish a very happy Christmas to all the people of the Falkland Islands – and a peaceful and prosperous new year.

[**News story: VMD: Civil Service People Survey 2018**](#)



The results of the 2018 Civil Service People Survey show that our people rate the VMD highly. Our engagement index score (the survey's measure of those areas that most shape our experiences at work) is 64% this year (66% last year). This puts us in a group in 14th place out of 111 organisations (on 'rounded' scorings).

[VMD CSPS Highlight Report 2018](#) (PDF, 504KB, 17 pages)

Published 21 December 2018

[News story: Aer Lingus / CityJet deal cleared for take-off](#)

The Competition and Markets Authority (CMA) has today cleared an agreement under which Aer Lingus has taken over scheduled passenger flights, previously operated by CityJet, on the London City Airport to Dublin route.

This is a so-called 'wet lease', under which CityJet provides Aer Lingus with aircraft, crew, maintenance services and insurance to operate the route. However, the CMA investigated the agreement as, in addition to the wet lease, Aer Lingus acquired CityJet's landing slots at both London City and Dublin Airports. Customers who had already booked flights on the route were also transferred to Aer Lingus, and CityJet's website also redirected potential new customers to the Aer Lingus homepage following the agreement's announcement.

The CMA launched an initial, Phase 1, investigation in October to consider the impact of the deal for passengers flying between London and Dublin. Having conducted a careful investigation, it has today announced its decision to clear the agreement.

This is because the CMA found that CityJet had taken the decision to stop providing services on this route prior to its agreement with Aer Lingus and, while CityJet did not market this business to other airlines, our detailed

investigation showed that no other airline would have been interested in taking over the business.

For that reason, without the agreement, the assets transferred by CityJet to Aer Lingus would have instead been used to operate other routes, resulting in a loss of capacity and therefore less choice for customers on the London to Dublin route.

Further details can be found on the [Aer Lingus / Cityjet case page](#).

Press release: Grants available for SMEs looking to export

- applications open today for SME grants to attend international trade shows.
- successful businesses are able to use grants to fund exhibiting costs at 55 events in Q1 2019
- previous successful companies have gone on to secure major contracts as a result of funding

Businesses can apply for grants of up to £2,500 to attend international trade shows through the Department for International Trade's (DIT) [Tradeshaw Access Programme \(TAP\)](#), which opens for applications today (Friday 21 December).

TAP provides financial support for UK SMEs to participate in overseas exhibitions and conferences that cover a range of sectors, from education to aerospace and creative to maritime. Successful businesses can use the grants to fund direct exhibiting costs, including stand costs and conference fees.

55 events comprise the list, ranging from the Aircraft Interiors Expo in Hamburg, to Cannes Lions Festival, to Summer Fancy Food in New York, and Mobile World Congress Shanghai.

Attending international conferences and events are an effective way for those new to exporting, or exploring new territories, to meet potential customers face-to-face and start the exporting process.

Minister for Investment Graham Stuart MP said:

Attending trade shows helps businesses gain market knowledge, forge relationships and raise brand awareness among industry professionals. That is why I'm delighted to be announcing the next raft of TAP-supported events.

TAP grants accompany a wide range of support businesses can access through the Department for International Trade. This includes

dedicated teams of International Trade Advisers, sector specialists, and a network of staff across the world that are available to help businesses embark on, or develop, their exporting journey.

One business that has seen its export sales grow as a result of TAP funding is London-based popcorn manufacturer Joe and Seph's. It secured a major contract with Hong Kong Airlines after attending confectionary trade show ANUGA in Germany using a TAP grant to help fund the visit. The business predicts a 60% year-on-year increase in export sales over the next 12 months.

Latest figures from the [Office for National Statistics (ONS)] show that in the year to October 2018, goods exports from the UK increased by 3.5% to £348 billion.

The number of businesses exporting to non-EU countries over the same period rose to 49,000. The most popular non-EU destinations for exporters include USA (19.9%), Australia (7.9%) and Switzerland (7.3%).

Earlier this year, the Department launched the [Export Strategy](#), an ambitious new plan that sets out how the government will make Britain a 21st century exporting superpower through better use of our overseas network, new online tools and building an extensive business to business network.

A government-led collaboration with business, developed after extensive engagement with a range of UK firms, the Strategy sets a new ambition from government to increase exports as a proportion of UK GDP to 35%.

To be eligible for a grant, businesses must be based in the UK (excluding Isle of Man or the Channel Islands) and be a small or medium-sized enterprise, UK university, UK government funded centre of higher or further learning or UK government funded research organisation.

From 1 October 2017, the maximum number of grants available to individual companies is limited to 6. The grants can be taken in any market.

Contact your local [DIT International Trade Adviser](#) for further information about the programme.

[Press release: Family of Elsie Frost can apply for fresh inquest](#)

On 9 October 1965, 14 year old Elsie Frost was stabbed to death on her way home from her sister's house. An inquest took place between 4 and 11 January 1966 and the Coroner recorded a verdict that Elsie Frost had died of multiple

stab wounds and had been murdered by Ian Bernard Spencer.

The Attorney General said:

“Having considered the application, I have given consent to the family of Elsie Frost to apply to the High Court for a new inquest into her death.

“I am satisfied that there is new evidence available that was not put before the previous inquest, and I believe that it is in the interests of justice for the application for a new inquest to be heard by the High Court.”

The Attorney General has the authority to decide whether an application can be made to the High Court for a new inquest to be opened. He has no power to order a new coronial inquest himself. A new inquest can only be ordered by the High Court on an application made either by the Attorney or by a third party with the consent of the Attorney.

Before an application can be made, the Attorney must be satisfied that there is a reasonable prospect that the Court would be persuaded to open a new inquest. These decisions are made as part of his public interest function, independently of Government and strictly on the basis of the evidence. The Attorney concluded, in this case, that there was sufficient grounds of challenge set out in the applications to have a reasonable prospect of success.