

Speech: PM's St David's Day Reception address: 1 March

Good afternoon everyone and croeso i Stryd Downing.

It's a pleasure to have you all here to celebrate Wales' national day alongside Welsh people from every walk of life and every part of the country.

We have great figures from the worlds of business, culture and sport.

And I'd like to echo the comments made by Alun about the great effort so many of you made to get here today, despite the weather.

And I hope you've all had a chance to try out some of the wonderful Welsh produce on display.

Today is a great showcase for a great part of the United Kingdom, a part of the world that is no longer Europe's best-kept secret.

Every year millions of people are seeing for themselves just how much Wales has to offer.

That includes myself and my husband, who are regular visitors to Snowdonia, we love to go walking there.

And while the world is coming to Wales, Wales is also reaching out to the world.

Many of the companies represented here tonight are exporting across Europe and around the globe.

But also in sport, the whole world saw the amazing medal-winning performance by Wrexham's Laura Dais in the Winter Olympics.

And next month well over a hundred Welsh men and women will be heading to Australia for the Commonwealth Games.

They will include Anna Hursey, who is lighting up the world of table tennis despite being just 11 years old.

Anna and her teammates will be proud to be competing under the red dragon – just as I'm proud to see it flying over Downing Street today.

I'm proud because it is a reminder that Wales makes the UK the country it is.

And we wouldn't be the same without it.

The nations of the UK each have their own unique characters, cultures and needs.

But when we come together as one, we are all the better for it.

As my colleague David Lidington said in Broughton earlier this week, when we are united at home we are stronger abroad.

That's why I'm working with Alun to help Wales be all it can be, to help Welsh businesses and people reach their full potential.

And that does include abolishing the Severn Crossing Tolls, investing over £600 million in City Deals for Cardiff and Swansea and committing to a growth deal for the north.

This is a government that is working hard for everyone in every part of Wales, from Haverfordwest to Holyhead.

It's an exciting time for Wales, there's much to look forward to, many opportunities on the horizon.

So, tomorrow let's get out there and make sure the world knows all about Wales and what it has to offer.

But tonight, let's celebrate the very best of Welsh life – and of course the very best of Welsh food and drink!

Enjoy the rest of the reception, and Dydd Gwyl Dewi hapus.

Press release: Minister Field remarks to media at the February 2018 EU Foreign Affairs Council meeting

Upon arrival at the Foreign Affairs Council in Brussels, Minister of State Mark Field said:

We are obviously very interested in playing our part today in the Venezuelan situation which is a dreadful humanitarian, political and diplomatic situation. We are obviously very keen to be supporting the Spanish who are leading on this and we need to move towards a united front to ensure there is a fully participatory, free and fair election in Venezuela.

We are going to talk about the Middle East Peace Plan... I hope that we are going to have an agreement that we need to move ahead and ensure that there is a two-state solution but also above all that America has to be part and parcel of this process.

We are also going to talk a little bit about Moldova. Many of you know obviously in Moldova there is a programme of economic and political reform being supported by all elements of the European Union.

News story: Secretary of State Appoints Charity Commission Chair

Baroness Tina Stowell has been appointed by the Secretary of State for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport as the new Chair of the Charity Commission, for three years from 26 February 2018.

Baroness Stowell will take over from William Shawcross in the role.

Matt Hancock, Secretary of State for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport, said:

Tina Stowell will be a brilliant chair of the Charity Commission and I am delighted she is taking up this role. It is an important time for the Commission, and the sector, and I know that she will work tirelessly to protect and promote the great work that charities do and ensure they uphold the highest standards of integrity. I would also like to thank William Shawcross for his hard work over the past six years.

Baroness Stowell said:

I am delighted to join the Charity Commission, and look forward to leading a strong board and a committed and expert staff through the challenges ahead. I will place the public interest at the heart of everything I do as Chair to build the public's trust in charities and the Commission as their regulator. To that end it is vital that we have a constructive, business-like relationship with all our stakeholders and I look forward to listening to a wide range of voices in the days and weeks ahead.

Baroness Stowell of Beeston was Leader of the House of Lords and the Lord Privy Seal until July 2016.

Tina Stowell was made a peer in January 2011 and joined the Government in September the same year. As a junior minister she led the landmark Marriage (Same Sex Couples) Act through the House of Lords in 2013. She was promoted to Leader of the House of Lords and the Lord Privy Seal in 2014 and re-appointed to the same Cabinet post after the 2015 General Election.

Before joining the House of Lords Tina Stowell's career over the previous 25 years crisscrossed government, politics and the media. Until September 2010, she was the BBC's Head of Corporate Affairs.

She was a civil servant for ten years, working at the Ministry of Defence in

London, the British Embassy in Washington and 10 Downing Street from 1991 to 1996. She left the Civil Service at the age of 28 and was awarded the MBE in the 1996 Queen's Birthday Honours List.

Notes to editors

- This appointment has been made in accordance with the Cabinet Office's Governance Code on Public Appointments
- The Chair of Charity Commission is appointed by the Secretary of State. Remuneration for this role is £62,500 for up to two and a half days per week. The term of appointment will last for three years
- In accordance with the Governance Code on Public Appointments, 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. Baroness Tina Stowell has declared that she was leader of the Conservative Party in the House of Lords from 2014-2016; she has spoken on behalf of the Conservative Party and candidates during elections campaigns; and has canvassed on behalf of the Conservative during election campaigns. She has resigned the Conservative Whip in the House of Lords and become an independent, unaffiliated peer.

Statement to Parliament: Armed Forces' Pay Review Body Appointments

The Secretary of State for Defence (Rt Hon. Gavin Williamson CBE MP): I am pleased to announce that the Prime Minister has invited Mr John Steele to continue to serve as Chair of the Armed Forces' Pay Review Body for a further two-month term of office, commencing on 1 March 2018. This allows Mr Steele to draw Pay Round 18 to a conclusion.

I would also like to take this opportunity to announce that the Prime Minister has appointed Mr Peter Maddison as the next Chair of the Armed Forces' Pay Review Body. His appointment will commence on 1 March 2018 and run until 28 February 2021.

Both the extension and the appointment have been conducted in accordance with the guidance of the Office of the Commissioner for Public Appointments.

News story: Foreign Secretary statement following the Kabul Process meeting

Foreign Secretary statement following the Kabul Process meeting – GOV.UK

The Kabul Process is the Afghan-owned, Afghan-led conference aiming to take forward a real intra-Afghan dialogue on peace.



Commenting on the second meeting of the Kabul Process, Foreign Secretary Boris Johnson said:

Yesterday, at the Kabul Process meeting, Afghanistan's National Unity Government made a significant and bold offer to the Taliban, laying out their plans for talks without preconditions. I commend the vision of President Ghani and Chief Executive Abdullah who laid out a clear but flexible proposal on talks – and a road to peace, prosperity and stability for Afghanistan. The United Kingdom, along with the region and the international community stand united in support of this determination to bring the violence to an end.

I strongly believe that the only solution to the conflict in Afghanistan is through a political settlement, led and owned by Afghans themselves. Yesterday's Kabul Process meeting was a landmark step on this important journey. It is now for the Taliban to take the opportunity offered and to step forward and contribute to an inclusive political process. I urge them do so. Afghanistan's future must be decided through dialogue, not the gun.

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Thank you for your feedback