

# Press release: 10,000 new trees to boost roadside wildlife habitat in the South West

The work is taking place at 21 sites in Devon and Cornwall and involves the planting of 10,000 native trees and shrubs to fill or reduce gaps in hedgerow and woodland along the roadside.

In total the planting will provide around three extra miles of vegetation and connect over 105 miles of habitat on the verge and land adjacent to the A30 and A38.

The scheme is being delivered under Highways England's national Biodiversity Plan which is being supported by a £30 million national investment programme over the next five years.

The plan recognises road verges and associated land can be managed to provide areas of habitat, relatively free from human access, that may be scarce in the surrounding landscape.

These road verges can also be used to connect fragmented habitats in the wider landscape, enabling plant and animal populations to move and interact, and so become stronger and more resilient.

Ecologist Leonardo Gubert said:

Highways England is committed to protecting the environment through its biodiversity plan and improving the connectivity of habitats along our roads is one of our top nature conservation priorities.

The main aim of this improvement scheme is to reconnect wildlife habitat and ecosystems on a significant scale across our road network in the South West allowing species to move between core areas.

The work is expected to have a huge benefit for a wide variety of species of animals including insects, birds, and mammals, such as butterflies, bees, flies and dormice, suitable places to forage, shelter and breed.

Tree and shrub species being planted include oak, maple, holly, willow, honeysuckle and rose at locations between Pocombe Bridge and Pulsack on the A30 and Wrangaton and Bellamarsh on the A38.

The programme runs from Monday 5 February until Friday 16 March 2018.

The majority of planting will not require any traffic management but a few

schemes may require lane closures at times and no delays are anticipated.

Highways England has also been undertaking a lowland heathland conservation scheme in Devon and Cornwall and has plans to expand its species rich wildflower meadows in the South West as part of a future improvement programme.

The lowland heathland is a priority for nature conservation because it is a rare and threatened habitat which supports a variety of scarce birds, animals and plants.

There are several areas on the Highways England network in Devon and Cornwall where road verges are either suitable for heathland species or are located adjacent to sites where heathland is present or has been historically recorded.

Work has included the planting and management of new heathland areas and aftercare at eight locations covering over 26,000 square metres across the Highways England network. Location sites are along the A30 and A38 including Dartmoor, Bodmin Moor and Goss Moor, and Haldon Hill.

### **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.

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## **[News story: Attorney General appoints new Treasury Counsel](#)**



Attorney General Jeremy Wright QC MP

The Attorney General Jeremy Wright QC MP, has appointed 5 new members to the Treasury Counsel team.

Tom Little and Julian Evans have been appointed as Senior Treasury Counsel to the Crown. The appointments will run for 3 years from 20 December 2017.

Joel Smith, Jonathan Polnay and Paul Jarvis have been appointed as Junior Treasury Counsel to the Crown. The appointments will run for 3 years from 21 November 2017.

Mr Mark Heywood QC is First Senior Treasury Counsel and heads the team of Senior and Junior Treasury Counsel. Treasury Counsel prosecute some of the most serious criminal cases in the country.

Miss Alison Morgan is First Junior Treasury Counsel.

The title "Treasury Counsel" derives from the days when all Crown Counsel at the Central Criminal Court were instructed by the Treasury Solicitor. That procedure was changed in 1908, and since then the Director of Public Prosecutions has instructed the permanent counsel there.

Treasury Counsel are appointed by the Attorney General. They are divided into 2 groups: Senior Treasury Counsel and Junior Treasury Counsel.

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## **[Press release: Results of first UK Government Severn Growth Summit Poll revealed](#)**

A key poll taken at first UK Government Severn Growth Summit has revealed that 97% of delegates felt that the removal of the Severn tolls would be of benefit to Wales.

During the live poll carried out by Cardiff based award-winning company, Doopoll, it was also revealed that 90% (139 out of 155 respondents) of the guests feel that their business will be boosted by the abolition of the Severn Tolls.

Over 300 guests from either side of the Severn estuary attended the inaugural event at the Celtic Manor Resort, held to explore how links between the South Wales and South West England economies can be strengthened following the abolition of the Severn Tolls.

Companies on both sides of the border are already benefitting from the

removal of VAT from the crossing tolls earlier in January. Later this year, the tolls will be consigned to history when they are abolished altogether by the UK Government.

### **The poll also revealed:**

- 80% of delegates felt that removal of the tolls will give them access to a wider market (168 out of 203 respondents)
- Almost 60% of respondents felt that road links were a challenge of cross border working (119 out of 200 respondents)
- 86% of respondents cited faster rail links between Bristol and South Wales as important to them (out of 151 responses)

### **Secretary of State for Wales Alun Cairns said:**

The Severn Growth Summit has sparked the biggest commercial conversation for the west of the UK in a generation. It is clear from these findings that we have a golden opportunity to capitalise on the ambitions of industries from both sides of the Severn Crossings.

From Bath, all the way across to Swansea, we can create a critical mass that can raise prosperity, create closer collaboration and competition and improve social and cultural opportunities for people who live in the region.

I am delighted to see almost universal recognition from this live poll that scrapping the tolls will benefit Wales – this will be the biggest economic stimulus in decades and it fits my approach of making politics fit the economy rather than the economy fit politics. Exporting goods to the rest of the UK from Wales is of vital importance, with 8 out of 10 lorries destined for the UK market – scrapping the tolls will help our economy go from strength to strength.

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## **[Press release: Government ushers in a new generation of town houses](#)**

Housing Secretary Sajid Javid today (4 February 2018) confirmed government backing to create a new generation of town houses in cities like London and Manchester to ease pressure on valuable open spaces and help growing families.

Under the changes it will be easier to build upwards on existing blocks of

flats and houses as well as shops and offices.

For example, an additional 2 levels could be added to a property – provided it was in keeping with the roofline of other buildings in the area.

It will ensure councils can protect valuable open space in inner city areas, maintain the character of residential areas, safeguard people's privacy and stop unwanted garden grabbing. These developments must remain in keeping with the character of the local area, including the preservation of listed buildings and conservation areas.

Housing Secretary Sajid Javid said:

The answer to building new homes isn't always an empty plot, or developing on a derelict site.

We need to be more creative and make more effective use of the space we already have available.

That's why we are looking to strengthen planning rules to encourage developers to be more innovative and look at opportunities to build upwards where possible when delivering the homes the country needs.

Delivering development in built up areas is an important part of the government's [housing white paper](#) proposals.

This policy will be included in the revised draft National Planning Policy Framework, which is due for consultation in early 2018.

The government consulted on a proposal to amend national planning policy to give greater emphasis to this matter as part of the [housing white paper](#) published on 7 February 2017.

In February 2016, the government [consulted](#), jointly with the Mayor of London, on proposals to support building upwards in London to deliver new homes through development plan policies, a permitted development right or Local Development Orders.

Responses offered support for a policy approach to the principle of building upwards.

The [government response](#) to the consultation, published alongside the [housing white paper](#) in February 2017, set out the intention to "take forward the policy option through the [National Planning Policy Framework](#) to support the delivery of additional homes by building up", as part of a package of measures to support building at higher densities and using land more efficiently.

The consultation draft of the revised National Planning Policy Framework will be published in early 2018, and will include building up policy alongside others to make efficient use of land and buildings, and building at higher

densities.

This policy will be incorporated into the updated National Planning Policy Framework.

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## [Press release: UK Emergency Medical Team heads home after bringing Bangladesh diphtheria outbreak under control](#)

The UK Emergency Medical Team pictured at Manchester Airport. Picture: Russell Watkins/DFID

The UK Emergency Medical Team (EMT), deployed to the camps of Cox's Bazar in Bangladesh following a deadly outbreak of diphtheria, is heading home after bringing the disease under control.

Medical professionals, including doctors, nurses and paramedics, will return this weekend having spent up to six weeks triaging more than 3000 Rohingya people.

Almost 500 people were treated for diphtheria and were it not for British help, many could have died.

Dr Derek Sloan, a consultant in infectious diseases from Fife, Scotland, examines a young boy for symptoms of diphtheria in Kutupalong, Bangladesh

Stationed across three diphtheria treatment centres, the 40-strong UK aid-funded EMT prescribed precautionary antibiotics to the displaced men, women and children suspected to have the disease. Those displaying clear symptoms were immediately given live-saving diphtheria anti-toxin.

With the outbreak now under control, local Bangladeshi health professionals working for the International Organisation for Migration (IOM) have taken over from the UK clinicians and will work to completely stamp out this disease from the camps.

Ummul Jesmin, one of the Bangladeshi nurses who worked alongside the UK EMT, has also learned vital infection prevention and control skills. These will be essential should another infectious disease outbreak like cholera occur. Pleased with the opportunity to work alongside the EMT, Ummul had nothing but praise for her British colleagues.

Ummul Jesmin, one of the Bangladeshi medics who worked alongside the UK EMT

and who will continue to tackle the outbreak now that the British team is leaving.

Diphtheria, entirely preventable through vaccination, surfaced within the camps in late 2017. To date, there have been over 5,000 suspected diphtheria cases and at least 37 deaths.

The overcrowded camps, home to over 655,000 Rohingya refugees who have fled persecution in neighbouring Burma, are a breeding ground for diphtheria.

The contagious disease can cause extreme breathing difficulties and inflammation of the heart. This can lead to heart failure, damage to the nervous system and fatal paralysis.

It is especially dangerous to children; more than half the deaths recorded relate to those under the age of five. The expertise of the British clinicians has saved countless lives including that of four-year-old Settara.

Settara was brought to a treatment centre by her mother Moriam in mid-January with a fever, sore throat and in pain.

One of the nurses instantly identified that Settara was displaying symptoms of diphtheria. Doctors admitted Settara immediately and gave her diphtheria anti-toxin along with a course of antibiotics.

Whilst Settara underwent treatment, the team established that Moriam had seven other children who had all been exposed to the disease. The entire family was provided with precautionary antibiotics and Settara went on to make a full recovery.

Six-year-old Sumaiya, sitting up in bed and already recovering after receiving diphtheria antitoxin treatment.

Six-year-old Samaiya was also brought to the treatment centre in mid-January with clear symptoms of diphtheria. Just a few hours after being given diphtheria anti-toxin, she started to look and feel much better and was seen happily sitting in bed drawing pictures. Samaiya was discharged shortly after to complete her course of antibiotics at home.

The UK, having led the way in providing medical expertise to the crisis, has also helped fund a UNICEF vaccination programme which protects vulnerable Rohingya children from diphtheria.

The first round of the vaccination campaign is now complete and has ensured more than 350,000 children aged between six-weeks and 15-years-old are protected. Children are now receiving their second dose of the vaccine; 110,513 have been vaccinated in the last week alone.

International Development Secretary Penny Mordaunt said:

I have nothing but admiration and thanks for the UK medics who travelled to Cox's Bazar over the New Year to help victims of

diphtheria, who, without UK support, would have died.

These medics embody everything that the UK stands for. We are a nation which does not shy away from our responsibility. When the desperate and the displaced are in need of our help we step in. We should be incredibly proud of this.

Our team has now handed their knowledge over to medics in Bangladesh so they can carry on the fight against diphtheria. Diseases have no respect for borders and this vital work is ultimately making the world a safer place.

#### Notes to Editors:

1. The UK's Emergency Medical Team (EMT) is a collaboration between DFID, the NHS, Public Health England, UK Med – a register of NHS volunteers ready to deploy to emergencies, Handicap International and the UK Fire and Rescue Service. This is the first deployment of the EMT since it was verified by the World Health Organisation (WHO) in December 2016. UK medical personnel have previously been deployed to respond to Typhoon Haiyan in the Philippines in 2013 and the Nepal earthquake in 2015.
2. The deployment has been funded from DFID's Bangladesh humanitarian budget – up to £650,000 has been earmarked for the EMT.
3. The EMT deployed to Cox's Bazaar on 28 December 2017 and some staff were rotated out of Cox's Bazaar after three weeks. Replacement clinicians were deployed in mid-January. All staff were given a diphtheria booster injection before deployment.
4. Following the request for international assistance by the World Health Organisation on 15 December, a UK EMT team travelled to Bangladesh to conduct an emergency assessment, and recommended the deployment of the EMT.
5. In response to the diphtheria outbreak in Cox's Bazaar, existing clinical facilities have been converted and scaled up. This was led by Médecins Sans Frontières MSF and the International Organisation for Migration (IOM). However IOM and other international NGOs are unable to manage the complex care needs of these patients, which is why they required the support of UK staff.
6. IOM has provided the medical facilities for the deployment. The World Health Organisation (WHO) has provided drugs. The UK EMT provided a specialised clinical team, clinical oversight, some key medical equipment not available in country, and accommodation and transport for staff.
7. Diphtheria is a bacterial infection. It most often causes infection of the upper respiratory tract. Diphtheria is most commonly spread from person to person through respiratory droplets (coughs and sneezes), or by direct contact with either respiratory secretions or infected skin lesions. Respiratory diphtheria usually occurs after an incubation



period of 2-5 days. It causes life-threatening airway obstruction if untreated.

8. The first suspected case of diphtheria was reported on 10 November at an MSF clinic in Cox's Bazar. The outbreak was confirmed through laboratory testing on 04 December 2017. As of 30/1, 5,120 suspected cases of diphtheria and 37 deaths have been reported.
9. DFID is working in partnership with the government of Bangladesh to ensure that children living in the camps and host communities are vaccinated against this deadly disease.
10. DFID is funding £2 million of the \$4.6 million cost (£3.4 million) required to vaccinate 351,458 children aged six-weeks to 15-years-old as part of the vaccination campaign.
11. The wider UNICEF vaccination campaign will also vaccinate 130,000 school children living in host communities near to the camps in Cox's Bazar.
12. Funding for this vaccination campaign has been provided from the response budget announced on 23rd October and 27th November 2017.
13. Medics have worked tirelessly to ensure the swift vaccination of those most at risk.
14. The UK has currently contributed £59 million to the crisis since 25 August 2017.