

Speech: Dormant Assets Commission report launch

Good morning ladies and gentlemen, and let me begin by thanking Nick and the Dormant Assets Commission for inviting me to speak today.

I'm extremely grateful to you and your superb team for all the work you have done over the past year. You have written a very impressive and detailed report – but I'm afraid you will all have to wait a little longer for my formal response. I will need to study its detail very carefully.

As you may be aware, this Government is committed to building a shared society, where everyone has the opportunity to get on in life, no matter who they are or where they come from.

We want the benefits of economic success to be felt by everyone, not just the privileged few. As Minister for Civil Society, the Prime Minister's vision is central to everything I do. It is my mission to ensure we make a difference and improve peoples' daily lives.

I believe that our approach to dormant assets in this country is an outstanding example of the Prime Minister's vision for a shared society. Government, business and the voluntary sector working together to make society work that little bit better for everyone. And the results of this collaborative approach have been impressive.

The existing dormant assets scheme was launched in 2011 to encourage banks and building societies to identify dormant accounts. After identification, they have to make all reasonable efforts to reunite assets with their owners.

Only after this and where there was a surplus, should any money be distributed for the benefit of good causes throughout the UK.

Now, it has been a great success so far. More customers have been reunited with their money, and 360 million pounds has been distributed for the benefit of good causes, with more to come.

In England, this money has been used through social investment to establish Big Society Capital, the world's leading social investment bank, and I'm pleased to see Cliff Prior in the audience today. BSC has matched 300 million pounds of reclaimed funds with 500 million pounds of additional investment into activities with a social purpose.

I have seen for myself the impact this has had on communities. Two projects I have visited, Think Forward in North East London and Reconnections in Worcestershire, are both social impact bonds that were funded by Big Society Capital. One was specifically for young people in London and the other the elderly in Worcestershire – yet without this source of money, they might have struggled to find the funding to start these projects.

Encouraged by this success, last year I established an independent Commission on Dormant Assets. It was asked to consider how we might improve the current scheme to include a wider range of dormant assets, beyond banks and building societies, and I asked Nick to be its Chairman.

The Commission has since identified a potential two billion pounds in assets that at the moment are simply gathering dust in dormant accounts, when they could either be reunited with their rightful owner or used to change millions of lives across the country.

Now as you'll all appreciate, a broader scheme cannot be set up overnight. Getting a new dormant assets scheme in place is a big task and it's going to take time. And as I said earlier, I will need to consider this report carefully before broadening the current scope of activities.

I also want to carry out a wider public consultation to allow everyone with an interest to feed in their views. So there's a lot of work ahead of us. But thanks to the Commission, we have a report and its clear advice on the next steps we might take to take this forward.

I will also continue to think creatively about how the existing scheme can be improved, so even more money is released and even more organisations can benefit from the funding.

But Government really can't do this on its own. If we're going to make a success of an expanded dormant assets scheme, then the partnership of those represented here today will continue to be absolutely essential.

So, I look forward to working with you – financial services companies, consumer groups, charities, communities and individuals across the country.

Together we must ensure we put in place a scheme that really delivers for good causes; that continues to protect consumers and reunites owners with their assets wherever it's possible to do so.

More than anything, I want to see us transform the provision of social investment and support of good causes here in the United Kingdom. This could then make a real and lasting difference to the lives of the people in our country who need our help the most.

Reuniting dormant assets with their owners, while using any surplus to benefit good causes, is exactly what a decent and caring Government should be doing.

Positive action from the State is bringing together Government, business and the third sector, working together for the benefit of taxpayers, consumers and beneficiaries.

So I am very grateful to the Commission for all its hard work over the past twelve months to unearth these new resources, helping our charities and voluntary groups to become more sustainable and independent. This report will shape and inform how we make best use of dormant assets in the years ahead.

I will now hand over to Nick, who can talk more about the work of the Commission and its main findings and recommendations.

Thank you.

ENDS

[News story: BBC Board Members for Scotland and England appointed](#)

Government has today announced the appointment of the Scotland and England representatives for the new BBC Unitary Board following an open and competitive recruitment process. Steve Morrison has been confirmed as the new BBC Board member for Scotland, and Dr Ashley Steel will be the new Board member for England.

Overall the new BBC Board, which will be responsible for overseeing a strong and independent BBC, will be made up of 14 members:

- a Chair appointed via a public appointments process coordinated by the Department for Culture, Media and Sport (DCMS). The selection panel for this appointment was chaired by a Public Appointments Assessor, nominated by the Commissioner for Public Appointments;
- four non-executive board members representing each of the devolved nations, also appointed through a public appointments process coordinated by DCMS;
- five non-executive board members appointed by the BBC Board; and
- four executive members appointed by the BBC, including the BBC Director General, Tony Hall.

Steve Morrison, the new Board member for Scotland, has a career spanning almost four decades in broadcasting, and was previously Chief Executive of Granada PLC as well as founding Chief Executive of independent production companies group All3Media and subsequently its Chairman, now retired. He is currently the Rector of Edinburgh University.

Steve Morrison said:

As a Scot who has spent his life in television it is a great honour to be the first Scottish Member of the new BBC Board. The BBC is taking important steps to increase programme production both in Scotland and for its network channels. I look forward to contributing my broadcasting experience to the new Board and encouraging the growth of the creative industries in Scotland.

Dr Ashley Steel, the new Board member for England brings with her extensive board experience, and was previously Vice Chairman at professional services firm, KPMG.

Dr Ashley Steel said:

I am delighted to be joining the new BBC Board as the non-executive director representing England. The BBC is one of the best and most respected media organisations in the world, and I look forward to working with Sir David Clementi and colleagues.

The recruitment for a Board member for Northern Ireland will re-commence once the new Northern Ireland executive is in place.

No Board member for Wales has been appointed and another competition will now be launched to fill the vacancy.

ENDS

Media enquiries: DCMS Press Office 020 7211 6145

Notes to Editors:

Steve Morrison's career in broadcasting began at BBC Radio Scotland (Edinburgh) and BBC Television (Glasgow). He then moved to Granada where he worked as both Head of Regional Programmes and Director of Programmes, eventually becoming Chief Executive of Granada plc. During his time at Granada he was joint Chairman of the Granada/Scottish Television airtime sales house.

Steve was the founding Chief Executive of independent production companies group All3Media, and subsequently its Chairman, now retired. All3Media became the leading group of British owned Independent TV Production companies before it was sold to a joint venture of Discovery and Liberty Media.

Steve also holds an Honorary Doctorate of Social Science from Edinburgh and is currently the Rector of Edinburgh University.

Currently Dr Ashley Steel is a non executive director on the boards of National Express plc, the Civil Aviation Authority and Ince & Co, an international law firm. She is a founding member of the global advisory board for Out Leadership, a New York based organisation helping Chairmen and CEO's on LGBT business issues. Previously, Ashley was Vice Chairman at professional services firm, KPMG. During her time with the firm she worked in over 40 countries advising both listed companies and national governments. She also held global leadership roles for the firm's transport and infrastructure practice and, while based in the USA, for its global technology and media practice.

The appointment process was run in accordance with the OCPA Code of Practice. It is a requirement of the Code that political activity is declared; both

candidates have declared no such political activity. Remuneration for the role of BBC Board Members is £33,000 per annum.

Under the terms of the BBC Royal Charter, appointment of the BBC Chair and members is made by HM The Queen on recommendation from Ministers (the Secretary of State for Culture, Media and Sport, through the Prime Minister).

[News story: 'Forward Ladies' entrepreneur Etta Cohen honored](#)

Etta Cohen founded ['Forward Ladies'](#) in 1999. She began her organisation by meeting with locally employed women and women who had founded their own businesses. 'Forward Ladies' now supports more than 1,300 business women across the country and hosts more than 300 events a year.

The honour has been given as the world recognises International Women's Day on 8 March, where the social, economic, cultural and political achievement of women is celebrated.

Minister for Small Business, Consumers and Corporate Responsibility Margot James said:

This honour is a tribute to Etta's outstanding commitment to raising the profile of women in the work place.

As the world celebrates International Women's Day this week, it's important to remember how much more successful our economy is thanks to the increased contribution of women.

We need more women making decisions at the top of business, and people like Etta have the drive and vision to help make that happen.

The name 'Forward Ladies' was suggested for Etta's group because it reflects her determination to develop and encourage women from all levels of professional life. She has worked tirelessly to organise training days, talks from inspirational business speakers and networking events to grow her organisation into the success it is today.

Now with a small team behind her, the sustainable business supports 13,000 business woman and runs more than 350 events a year from trade missions to networking events.

She also promotes diversity and equality at both regional and national levels working closely with key government agencies. 'Forward Ladies' operates

across 10 UK regions and believes that women from all cultures should play in the building of future prosperity. Etta sits on a range of boards across different industries, notably the Yorkshire Asian Business Association (YABA).

The ceremony was conducted this week at the Department for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy.

An OBE is a Queen's honour given to an individual for a major local role in any activity such as business, charity or the public sector. OBE stands for Officer of the Most Excellent Order of the British Empire.

[News story: DFID staff attend unveiling of the Iraq and Afghanistan memorial](#)

Today, twenty DFID staff who have served in Iraq and Afghanistan joined the International Development Secretary, Priti Patel, and over 2,500 other British citizens and military personnel at the unveiling by Her Majesty The Queen of the Iraq and Afghanistan memorial in London.

The DFID staff selected were invited to represent all DFID staff who have served in Iraq and Afghanistan since 2001. Priti Patel met the group ahead of the ceremony and said:

Today we recognise all those who served in Afghanistan, Iraq and the Gulf, both military and civilian. The whole country can be proud of these brave men and women who, without a moment's hesitation, deployed to some of the world's most dangerous places.

We rightly commemorate their achievements – in terms of protecting Britain's security and improving the lives of people caught up in conflict.

Here we profile just a few of the DFID staff who attended the ceremony on behalf of their colleagues.

Wendy Phillips

Wendy has conducted 3 separate DFID tours of Afghanistan, and is DFID's representative to meet Her Majesty The Queen as part of the Iraq and Afghanistan memorial unveiling ceremony. Originally from Nunhead in South East London, Wendy now lives in Stowmarket.

In 2003, Wendy was Deputy Head of DFID's office in Kabul for a period of 18 months.

In 2005, she went back to Afghanistan as part of the command structure in the Provincial Reconstruction Team (PRT) in Helmand, working alongside UK and international military colleagues to improve security for development agencies to enable them to work in Helmand.

Since 2014 Wendy has been back in Afghanistan again, looking after the day-to-day running of DFID's office and the welfare of its staff. She is due to retire at the end of 2017.

Commenting on being invited to the memorial ceremony, Wendy said:

I was so surprised but pleased to be invited today; I've flown back especially for it. Being recognised in this way after a 41 year career in DFID is incredibly humbling.

I think that it is right we are commemorating the efforts of all those who worked in Afghanistan, Iraq and the Gulf, not just the military but the civilians too. With operations of that scale, there are so many people involved, and still are today. Everyone who took part was a cog in a much bigger wheel; everyone had an important role to play, and it is right and proper that we've marked that down in history.

In Afghanistan we knew it was going to be tough and we knew change would be incremental. But we are in it for the long haul and we are starting to see real reform in the country.

UK support has helped to ensure more than 7.2 million children now attend school, 39% of who are girls, and the Government of Afghanistan are also making more positive commitments, changing the way they operate for the better which will make the biggest difference of all.

Wendy's son, Corporal Phillips of the Army Air Corps, attended the event with her. Corporal Phillips has also conducted 3 tours of Afghanistan.

Christa Rottensteiner

Christa was born in Vienna, Austria, but lives in Clapham, London. She has worked in DFID for 11 years, and was posted in Afghanistan from 2012-2013 as DFID's local government team leader.

Christa oversaw the delivery of DFID programmes that supported local authorities to deliver basic services such as water, drainage systems, waste collection and electricity, to people in remote parts of Afghanistan. She also worked on projects that improved Afghanistan's local governance structure, making it more effective and efficient.

Reflecting on her time in Afghanistan, Christa says:

My lasting memories are of speaking to committed, fearless women who are making a difference despite the difficulties. I feel privileged to have been able to work in Afghanistan alongside so many committed DFID Afghan staff.

Adam Farley

Adam is originally from Cornwall and went to school in Plymouth. From 2013-2014 he was the Infrastructure Programme Manager in DFID Afghanistan, overseeing programmes that gave Afghans better access to power, safer and more modern roads and a freight railway in the north to help increase trade with its regional partners.

The projects that Adam that Adam worked on helped to connect more villages and towns, which meant that more people could reach the services they desperately needed. Creating formal roads also increased safety and as part of the wider project, DFID helped train local workers to maintain what had been initiated.

Speaking ahead of the memorial ceremony, Adam said:

I wanted to come today and pay my respects. I am pleased that both civilians and members of the military are acknowledged with this memorial. We often, quite rightly, commemorate the military for their brave and selfless acts, but this has been a real team effort and recognising the joined up endeavour is right and proper.

None of us had to go to Afghanistan, we choose to because we wanted to make a difference in our own way.

Helen Jones

Helen (far left in picture above) was born in Ealing, London. She now lives in Hampshire, and has worked for DFID for 5 years.

From 2013-14 she was Deputy Head of DFID's Socio-Economic Development Team in Helmand, Afghanistan, where she worked alongside government authorities to help them improve the planning, budgeting and delivery and maintenance of local services – including health facilities, access to schools, access to water, electricity and road maintenance – at provincial and district level. One of the team's primary functions was also to capacity build, equipping the population with the skills necessary to plan and deliver these vital services.

Helen said:

I am very pleased that both civilians and members of the military

are acknowledged by the memorial unveiled today. It was a real team effort in Afghanistan, in every sense of the word, and it's right that this team effort is being recognised.

Her lasting memories of her time in Afghanistan are her admiration for the brave women of Helmand who put their lives on the line to make a difference – those who were involved in governing, female police officers and those who risked their lives to vote in elections.

Clare Moya

Clare is from Beckenham in Kent and has worked for DFID for 17 years. From 2004-2005 she was Deputy Head of DFID's office in Basra. She returned to the country from 2009-2010, as Programme Manager for DFID's work in Southern Iraq, based in Baghdad.

Her primary objective in Basra was to ensure the safety of DFID staff there, as well as supporting the development of DFID's bilateral programmes. Whilst in Baghdad she managed a pilot youth employment programme which saw DFID working in conjunction with the Iraqi Government and local colleges to get young people into formal training: eg welding, building, sewing, mechanics, and from there into jobs.

Clare also helped monitor elections in Iraq. She remembers seeing and speaking to queues of families going to vote and they all told her how important the day was to them and their country.

I think that it is absolutely right that we are commemorating the efforts of all those who worked in Iraq, Afghanistan and the Gulf, and not just the military personnel but the civilians too", she says.

The responses to those conflicts are on such a huge scale, take so many years and involve so many people, it is right that everyone who played a role is recognised.

[Press release: International Trade Minister announces 'Export Champions' to promote Midlands businesses to the](#)

world

Midlands businesses looking to export to countries across the globe were given a boost today with the announcement of dozens of 'Export Champions' as part of a programme to encourage and inspire businesses to export internationally.

Announced at the inaugural Midlands Engine Trade Summit, the 'Midlands Engine Export Champions Programme' sees 28 high profile business leaders from across the region offering their expertise and advice to inspire companies to export and support existing exporters looking to expand into new markets.

From vehicle manufacturer Westfield Sportscar in Kingswinford, to textiles design business The SundayGirl Company in Kidderminster, the 28 Export Champions span a wide range of sectors and services. Business leaders from these companies will provide peer to peer support and help others to fulfil their global market potential.

Speaking at the Summit in Birmingham, International Trade Minister Mark Garnier said:

We want to use the momentum of the Midlands Engine to drive this region's exports to new heights and I am delighted to announce the launch of these new champions. 28 experienced exporters based in the Midlands will work to inspire others to either export for the first time or to export more.

My department is helping even more companies in the region explore opportunities on the global market and through this Programme local business will truly benefit from a range of expert advice from local business leaders.

Export Champion and CEO of Morningside Pharmaceutical Dr Nik Kotecha said:

It is an honour to be appointed as one of the inaugural Export Champions for the Midlands. This is an incredibly exciting time for businesses across the region, and my fellow Export Champions and I are looking forward to spreading the word about the value of exporting.

The Midlands Engine has a lot to offer the world, and I look forward to raising the profile of exporting throughout the region, helping businesses to develop opportunities and fulfil their global potential."

Over 27,000 businesses across the Midlands Engine exported nearly £40 billion worth of products to over 100 countries in 2015 and the Midlands is responsible for 24% of England's manufacturing output with particular

strengths in automotive, motorsport, aerospace and rail.

The creation of the Midlands Engine Export Champions Programme swiftly follows the launch of the government's [Midlands Engine Strategy](#).

An ambitious strategy to help the Midlands reach its full economic potential, the strategy has been published today as the Chancellor Philip Hammond visited the region the day after delivering his first Budget.

It includes significant investment in skills, connectivity and local growth, while it sets out how the government plans to drive the region's huge potential and promote it to the world.

Over 500 delegates attended the Midlands Engine Trade Summit at the Vox Conference Centre where they participated in specialist workshops and heard first-hand the steps they can take to export their goods and services overseas.

In addition to engaging with SMEs and local businesses, the Export Champions will promote the Department for International Trade's Exporting is GREAT campaign and digital tool www.great.gov.uk which helps UK businesses break onto overseas markets. This innovative new programme will provide practical advice and support to drive further growth in exports.

The full list of Export Champions is:

1. Liz Fothergill CBE DL, Chairman, Pennine Healthcare (Derby)
2. Kevin Oakes, Chairman, Royal Crown Derby (Derby)
3. George Paul, Executive Director, Bradbury & Son (Buxton)
4. Jane Shepherd, Managing Director, Shepherd PR (Ashbourne)
5. Stuart Garner, CEO, Norton Motorcycles (UK) Ltd (Castle Donnington)
6. Dr Nik Kotecha, CEO, Morningside Pharmaceuticals (Loughborough)
7. Shahid Sheikh OBE, Managing Director, Clifton Packaging Group (Leicester)
8. Matt Gilmartin, Managing Director, Concept Smoke Screen (Boston)
9. Gary Headland, CEO, Lincoln College Group (Lincoln)
10. Malcom Hall MBE, Managing Director, Hall-Fast Industrial Supplies (Mansfield)
11. Susan Hallam, Managing Director, Hallam Internet (Nottingham)
12. Karen Prior, Group Finance Director, Anpario plc (Worksop)
13. Anil Puri, Chairman, Purico Group (Nottingham)
14. Graham Tyers, Managing Director, Newson Gale LTD (Nottingham)
15. Steve Crane, Managing Director, Business Link Japan (Corby)
16. Philip Duggan, Director, The Boss Design Group (Dudley)
17. Simon Evans MBE, Sales and Marketing Director, Moflash Signalling (Birmingham)
18. Deborah Leary OBE, Chief Executive Officer, Forensic Pathways (Birmingham)
19. Andrew Riley, Chairman, Mechatherm International (Kingswinford)
20. Ian Stokes, Managing Director, Stadi Arena (Meriden)
21. Stewart Towe CBE DL, Chairman and Managing Director, Hadley Industries plc (Smethwick)

22. Julian Turner, Chief Executive Officer, Westfield Sportscars (Kingswinford)
23. Jo Hilditch, Managing Director, Whittern Farms (Lyonshall)
24. Simon Pearson, Managing Director, Jesmonite® (Bishops Castle)
25. Elizabeth Gooch MBE, Chief Executive, eg solutions plc (Stafford)
26. Paul Morris, Founder and CEO, Addmaster (Stafford)
27. James Blakemore, Managing Director, JMB Partnership (Warwick)
28. Gaena Martin, Creative Director, The SundayGirl Company (Kidderminster)