

# Readout of Prime Minister's roundtable of UK oil and gas industry leaders: 14 March 2022

Prime Minister Boris Johnson hosted a roundtable of leaders in the UK's offshore oil and gas industry today to discuss domestic energy security.

This is part of a series of engagement by the Government across the UK's energy sectors, including with renewable and nuclear companies in the coming days and weeks.

The Prime Minister reaffirmed his steadfast commitment to the North Sea oil and gas industry as a key asset in the UK's plans for achieving greater energy independence, in ensuring the country's smooth transition to net zero and in being part of the solutions needed for a cleaner future – which are ever more crucial as we move away from Russian hydrocarbons following Putin's illegal invasion of Ukraine. This was welcomed and echoed by industry leaders, who made clear that the oil and gas industry are fully behind the UK's energy transition.

The Prime Minister and CEOs discussed increasing investment in the North Sea oil and gas industry and boosting supply of domestic gas. This included how the UK can remove barriers facing investors and developers, and help projects come online more quickly. They agreed to work together going forwards to help accelerate this further.

They also spoke about how the oil and gas industry plays a vital role in providing the solutions for our net zero future, including in the production of low-carbon hydrogen and roll out of new carbon capture projects, which the sector is well-positioned to take forward thanks to its skills and expertise.

The roundtable comes ahead of the publication of the UK's plans for greater energy security this month, with renewable energy, nuclear and domestic gas all a crucial part of achieving its aims. It also follows the UK's recent decision to end imports of Russian oil over the course of this year.

The Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster Steve Barclay, Business Secretary Kwasi Kwarteng, Energy Minister Greg Hands, and Chief Secretary to the Treasury Simon Clarke also joined the meeting at Downing Street.

Those represented from the oil and gas industry included: the Oil and Gas Authority, Blackstone Energy Partners, Bluewater Energy, BP, Carlyle International Energy Partners, Equinor, Esso, Greenergy, Harbour Energy, Neptune Energy, Offshore Energies UK, Prax Group, TotalEnergies and Shell.

---

# BHC Honiara marks Commonwealth Day 2022 with Points of Light Award

World news story

The British High Commission in Solomon Islands and Nauru celebrates Commonwealth Day with a Points of Light Award to Joe Billy Oge for his outstanding service.



Head of State in Solomon Islands His Excellency Sir David Vunagi and Joe Billy Oge after the awarding ceremony.

The British High Commission in Solomon Islands and Nauru yesterday celebrated Commonwealth Day by presenting Joe Billy Oge with a Points of Light Award for his outstanding service to young people in Solomon Islands.

Mr Oge, 45, received the 208th Commonwealth Points of Light Awards from Her Majesty the Queen Elizabeth II for his work as Chief Commissioner of the Solomon Islands Scouting Association. The Points of Light Award recognises outstanding individual volunteers – people who are making a change in their community.

The award was presented on behalf of the Queen by His Excellency the Governor General of Solomon Islands. Sir David Vunagi thanked Mr Oge for his work with the Solomon Scouts Association underlining the importance of the movement and in investing in our youth.

British High Commissioner to Solomon Islands and Nauru, Thomas Coward said:

Commonwealth Day is an annual celebration of the deep ties across the 54 countries of the Commonwealth and our shared values of prosperity, democracy and peace. Given that 2022 is Her Majesty the Queen's Jubilee Year, there is a special focus on the role service plays in the lives of people and communities cross the Commonwealth. Which makes this a perfect opportunity to thank Billy Joe Oge for his service to the young people of Solomon Islands.

Commonwealth Day is annually celebrated on 14 March with a message from Her Majesty The Queen and a Commonwealth Service was held at Westminster Abbey. This service was made even more special with former Points of Light winner and current Chevening scholar Gladys Habu acting as Solomon Islands flag bearer for the service.

Gladys Habu said:

I am pleased to say that I have been successfully nominated to be flag bearer for my home country on the Commonwealth Day Service at Westminster Abbey this year on Her Majesty's platinum jubilee. A once in a lifetime opportunity I will carry our flag with the highest honour and respect.

Previous Points of Light Awardees in the Solomon Islands include:

- Jacob Sibia, a village chief who has enabled over one hundred children to gain primary education by leading the construction and funding of a school built from scratch.
- Judah Suimae, Coordinator of voluntary clean-ups across Honiara city who also raises awareness of plastic pollution and promoting a safe, green local environment.
- Marilyn Gedi, Champion for community conservation who created 'Kawaki', a women's group dedicated to conservation and rare turtle protection for the Arnavon Islands.
- Gladys Habu, Environmental activist and UNICEF Pacific Supporter who has campaigned for many years on a local and international level to advocate for increased awareness of the impact of climate change.

Published 14 March 2022

---

## **DLUHC announces a preferred candidate for the role of Chair of the Regulator of Social Housing**

Following an open competition, the Secretary of State for Levelling Up,

Housing and Communities has announced that Bernadette Conroy has been selected as the preferred candidate for the post of Chair of the Regulator of Social Housing.

Bernadette Conroy is an experienced Chair and Non-Executive Director (NED) operating across a number of sectors. These include financial services regulation, where she is a NED for the Financial Conduct Authority and housing, where she is Chair of Network Homes. She is also the Independent Chair of the Buildings and Estates Committee of Cambridge University with responsibility for the development and maintenance of the University's estate and its capital build programme and a NED for Milton Keynes Development Partnerships. Prior to taking on a non-executive portfolio, Bernadette held a number of executive roles in financial services, latterly as Global Head of Strategy and Planning for HSBC Corporate, Investment Banking and Markets. She has an MA in Mathematics from Cambridge University and an MBA from INSEAD. In 2020, Bernadette received the Sunday Times Not for Profit Non-Executive Director of the Year award.

Pre-appointment scrutiny by the select committee will follow at its sitting on 21 March. Following this, the committee will publish their recommendations, which the government will consider before deciding whether to finalise the appointment.

The [Regulator of Social Housing](#) (RSH) is one of DLUHC's (Department for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities) key arm's length bodies. It seeks to promote a viable, efficient, and well governed social housing sector able to deliver homes that meet a range of needs. The RSH is also responsible for regulation of consumer standards, ensuring that existing tenants are provided with homes that are safe, and that landlords deliver good services.

The [Charter for social housing residents: social housing white paper](#), published in November 2020, recognised the fundamental role of effective regulation in protecting and empowering social housing tenants, ensuring that landlords are effectively held to account to deliver the services expected of them.

It set out the government's commitment to significantly expand the Regulator of Social Housing, legislating to remove the 'serious detriment' test (where there is evidence of a standards breach at organisational level) and introduce a new, proactive approach to regulation of consumer issues such as quality of homes, landlord services and transparency, while maintaining robust economic regulation of the sector. Regulation of the social rented sector will also support delivery of the commitment made in the [Levelling Up White Paper](#) to reduce non-decency in the rented sectors by 50%.

The Panel for the campaign was made up of:

- Lord Gary Porter, Panel Chair, Departmental Non-Executive Director
- Tracey Waltho, Director General Housing and Planning, Departmental official
- Debbie Gillatt, Senior Independent Panel Member

---

## UK celebrates strength of Commonwealth ties in India

The British High Commissioner, Alex Ellis, will host a reception in New Delhi to mark Commonwealth Day with High Commissioners of member nations, representatives from Commonwealth Accredited Organisations, Commonwealth Scholars, and youth associations. Commonwealth Day 2022 is being observed around the world on 14 March.

The UK is currently Chair-in-Office of the Commonwealth, and the UK's diplomatic network in India will celebrate the strength of Commonwealth ties in India with a series of events across the country. Planned events include a youth café and model Commonwealth Heads of Government Meeting (CHOGM) for students in Hyderabad, a friendly beach volleyball match in Puri, a special event for the defence community in Delhi, and various other receptions. This year's Commonwealth Day also holds special significance for the UK, as we celebrate Her Majesty the Queen's Platinum Jubilee – a testament to the strength and longevity of the Commonwealth.

The British High Commission will also highlight the spirit of the Commonwealth together with Indian athletes like PV Sindhu and Neeraj Chopra. The sports personalities will celebrate the incredible living bridge between both nations in India's 75th year of Independence on social media. Sport is a unifying force and will be on full display at the Commonwealth Games in Birmingham later this year.

### **Alex Ellis, British High Commissioner to India, said:**

The Commonwealth brings together a third of the world's population, supporting democracy, international peace and security, and the rule of law. Commonwealth Day is an opportunity to celebrate these close bonds in India and beyond, and to reflect on what we have achieved and can achieve together.

The Commonwealth is a unique association of 54 equal member states, and 2.4 billion people spanning six continents, and accounting for a third of the World Trade Organisation, a quarter of the G20, and a fifth of all global trade. India is a founding member of the modern Commonwealth, and home to nearly 60% of Commonwealth citizens. As a leading member, India provides impressive support to Commonwealth members, including through funding to the Commonwealth Small States offices in New York and Geneva, training for officials from Commonwealth governments, and in 2019 held the first Commonwealth cricket camp.

## Further information

Commonwealth Day is celebrated on the second Monday of March every year.

The UK hosted the last Commonwealth Heads of Government Meeting (CHOGM) in 2018 in London, and is Chair-in-Office until the next summit in Rwanda in June. The theme for CHOGM 2022 is 'Delivering a Common Future: Connecting, Innovating, Transforming.'

The CHOGM was due to have been held in Kigali in June 2020 but has been postponed twice due to the impact of the Covid-19 pandemic.

Watch the videos from Indian athletes celebrating the living bridge between the UK and India and their links to the Commonwealth on Twitter: [@UKinIndia](#)

The Birmingham 2022 Commonwealth Games will take place from 28 July to 8 August 2022 and will be the first major multi-sport event to award more medals to women than men.

The Commonwealth Charter can be found [here](#).

Prime Ministers Narendra Modi and Boris Johnson have made an historic commitment to strengthen work between the UK and India over the next decade with the [2030 Roadmap for future relations](#).

For media queries, please contact:

David Russell, Head of Communications  
Press and Communications, British High Commission,  
Chanakyapuri, New Delhi 110021. Tel: 24192100

Media queries: [BHCMediaDelhi@fco.gov.uk](mailto:BHCMediaDelhi@fco.gov.uk)

Follow us on [Twitter](#), [Facebook](#), [Instagram](#), [Flickr](#), [Youtube](#) and [LinkedIn](#)

---

## [First community projects granted GDF community funding](#)

The first community projects to be awarded funding from the Geological Disposal Facility (GDF) Community Investment Funding (CIF) have been announced. A BMX 'Pump Track' at Seascale, the Beckermat Reading and Recreation Rooms and Seascale Cricket Club have received confirmation that they will receive a total of over £65,000 from the up to £1million a year funding which is made available to benefit local communities engaged in discussions about hosting a GDF. A range of other projects for Community

Investment Funding are also currently being discussed in West Cumbria.

The Mid Copeland GDF Community Partnership in Cumbria, which formed in November 2021, is the first community to benefit from this funding which is for initiatives that support the local economy, improve community well-being, or enhance the local environment. Anyone can apply to the Community Partnership for grant funding for projects that benefit people living in the area it covers.

GDF Community Partnerships have also formed in South Copeland and in Allerdale, Cumbria, with discussions beginning in Theddlethorpe, Lincolnshire, through a GDF Working Group. The formation of these groups signifies real progress in the nationwide search for a suitable host site for a GDF. These groups also provide a vital platform for long-term community engagement, local investment funding, and investigations into site suitability.

Seascale Parish Councillor Lizzie Mawson applied for the funding to revamp the local BMX Pump Track in Seascale which received £47,801. She said:

It's absolutely wonderful to have the funding for this local facility – the children come from far and wide to use it. This grant will enable us to do much needed work before the track falls into disrepair. I would encourage others to apply, there are no end of projects which could be done in our area.

#### [Seascale BMX pump track GDF Programme funding](#)

Simon Hughes, Director of Community Engagement and Siting at Nuclear Waste Services, said:

I am delighted to see the Mid Copeland GDF Community Partnership approving funding for local projects that will have a positive impact on the lives of people in the area for years to come. In forming a GDF Community Partnership, we have made up to £1million of funding available every year, for local initiatives which ensure local people and organisations enjoy immediate tangible benefits from participating in discussions about the potential for them to host a GDF.

It's been a privilege to join early discussions with people in communities across the country about geological disposal. I'm looking forward to continuing these discussions and seeing more Community Partnerships realise the benefits of engaging in the process.

Beckermet Reading and Recreation Rooms received £9,576 to draw up refurbishment plans and Seascale Cricket Club were awarded £8,122 for an electronic scoreboard.

The GDF Programme is making available £1million of community investment funding for each Community Partnership, as set out in Government policy. A Community Partnership will consider the grant applications, make awards and develop locally specific funding priorities.

GDF Community Partnerships increase public engagement in the GDF programme, and along with triggering community investment funding, help communities create a long-term vision for themselves, which could include better transport links, broadband, education, healthcare facilities or environmental initiatives. The search for a suitable site in England or Wales is a nationwide process based on community consent and includes detailed site investigations over a number of years.

[Find out more from the Mid Copeland GDF Community Partnership.](#)