

# Jeremy Wright speech to Conservative Party Conference 2018

Jeremy Wright MP, Secretary of State for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport, speaking today at Conservative Party Conference at The ICC, Birmingham, said:

*(Check against delivery)*

“It’s a pleasure to be here in Birmingham, the city that gave me my first job, to talk about the job I am privileged to have now.

The Department for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport is a very wide-ranging portfolio and I can’t cover all of it in this speech. To cover it in Government needs an exceptional team of ministers and I’m lucky to have just such a team in Margot James, Michael Ellis, Tracey Crouch and Henry Ashton, along with our whips Mims Davies and James Younger and our PPSs Nigel Huddleston and Andrew Bowie. I’d like to thank them for all they do.

It may not be immediately obvious what connects the different elements of my Department’s title, but I think what connects them is what connects us – as individuals, as communities and as a country. The ties of Civil Society that bind us – the sports clubs and youth clubs, the churches and the charities, the arts projects, the libraries and the community groups of all sorts that bring people together and bind our nation.

The ties that help us to reflect together as we do in the Centenary of the end of the First World War, and in commemorations that move us all.

And of course there are the digital links needed to get the most out of 21st Century life. As Conservatives we should be proud of the fact that we have made superfast broadband available to 95% of premises as we said we would. But the truth is that is not much comfort if you are in the 5% not covered.

So we can and we must do more. By 2020 everyone will have the right to minimum speeds of 10 megabits per second, and mobile coverage must expand further across the UK.

But technology is changing all the time and we must have infrastructure that can support whatever we will need in the future. That’s why we are investing in 5G mobile technology and developing what it can do, including in an urban setting right here in the West Midlands.

It’s also why our focus will now be on a fibre optic network for broadband that will really make us fit for the future. That is sensible planning.

But we must also make sure that everyone can benefit from what these technologies offer. So as we build a fibre network, we will identify the places the market won’t reach on its own and we will connect them – not as an afterthought but in parallel with the places it’s profitable to connect.

Because if technology has the power to connect us all, nobody should be left behind.

Technology is changing our lives in many ways, and we can be proud of the fact that many of those changing the world are here in the United Kingdom.

Our digital technology sector is worth nearly £184 billion and employs 2.1 million people.

Last year, venture capital investment in London's tech sector was more than in Germany and France combined.

The internet is an amazing resource, and social media lets us reach others faster and more easily than we ever have before.

But these things have a dark side too. There are those who use social media to bully or intimidate, to isolate rather than to include. And it is having an effect – 16 to 25 year olds are the most connected generation of all, but they are lonelier than the over 65s.

There are also those who use the internet to abuse children or promote terrorism, and I don't believe there is anything so special about the online world that the normal rules of human behaviour, and the law, should not apply there too.

So the time has come to define those rules and how they should apply online, and if that needs new law, that is what we will do. Britain can lead the world on this, and we should.

Of course, there are many other things that connect us – our heritage, our history, our art and performing arts, film and television. The creative industries more broadly add a huge amount to our economy and to our identity.

They don't just enrich our lives, they help to make us who we are – as individuals, as communities and as a nation.

They are strengths we will celebrate in a festival of national pride and international impact in 2022.

Our culture and heritage are vital aspects of the Britain we project to the world, the ingredients of the soft power we are so good at, and need to stay good at, through Brexit and beyond.

And while we're on that subject, some of you may have heard that I might be delivering this speech as a hologram. To those of you who have spent the last 5 minutes thinking this is the most realistic hologram you've ever seen, I should make it clear that I decided not to.

At this moment, and especially on a subject like Brexit, I don't think our political debate needs more virtual reality, it needs more actual reality. And the reality is we are leaving the European Union.

We are leaving because Parliament decided to ask the people of this country

as a whole to make this choice and they made it.

However they voted in the referendum two years ago, I believe the vast majority of them now want us to get on with it.

And to all those who can't get over the referendum result, to those who seek to avoid it or ignore it, and to those who want to do it all over again, I say it's time to move on.

Leaving the European Union in a way that gives us the best possible platform for the future is something we can do, but it is one of the most complex and challenging things the United Kingdom has ever had to do, and we don't have a single talent or intellect to waste in that effort.

So however you voted then, help to build our future now.

But we should recognise that the Brexit process has divided us, and recognise too those things that can bring us back together, as the England football team did with character, skill and real heart this summer.

And they weren't the only ones to lift our spirits this year. We have seen the best ever medal haul in a Winter Olympics, a wonderful European Championships in Glasgow and all 3 Grand Tours in Cycling won by Britons, not to mention the Ryder Cup.

Sport has always had the power to inspire us, most of all when we can see our heroes and heroines do amazing things.

That's why, over 20 years ago, a Conservative Government legislated for a list of sporting events you shouldn't have to pay a subscription to watch. That principle is just as important today, and making sure it still applies as viewing habits change is work the independent regulator Ofcom is doing now.

But some of the finest sporting moments of the last few years have been in womens' and disability sport – the Paralympics and Invictus Games, Netball Gold at the Commonwealth Games, and England and Scotland womens' football teams qualifying for the 2019 World Cup.

Equality means visibility, and I recognise the progress that has been made in broadcasting more of these events. But whoever we are, we have the right to be inspired by diversity in sport that shows the best in all of us. So we will work with sports bodies, broadcasters, and the wider media to do better. It's 2018 and it's about time.

And we have the capacity not just to put in great sporting performances, but also to put on great sporting events. We showed the world that with the 2012 London Olympics and we will show them again with the 2022 Commonwealth Games here in Birmingham.

And wouldn't it be great to put on a World Cup in style in the UK and Ireland in 2030? If the FAs are ready to bid, we are ready to make it happen.

Because we don't just need to project the United Kingdom to the world, we need the world to come here and see it for themselves. Last year the UK attracted record numbers of visitors and we are predicted to do even better this year.

And, crucially, tourists are going beyond London – record numbers for example going to Scotland, to the North West and here to the West Midlands.

And as hosts of the Great Exhibition of the North and described by the Rough Guides as the number one place in the world to visit in 2018, Newcastle Gateshead welcomed more than 4 million visitors over the summer, including the Cabinet.

But in truth tourism has gone almost unnoticed for years as a major employer and as a major contributor to our economy.

For the sake of the communities up and down our country for whom tourism is essential, I intend to change that, and we will work with the tourism industry to find practical ways for Government to help.

So for the international community, and for our local communities, our culture has a lot to offer. But it also has a lot to offer us as individuals.

When I was 13, I was shy and didn't much like being the centre of attention. I've changed. But that year I was persuaded to take a large part in a school play.

The effect on my self-confidence, on what I felt I could do, was significant and long-lasting – so much so that I feel able to say to you that if I had not stood on that stage then, I would not be standing on this stage now.

I want more young people to have that feeling.

There are many schools and youth theatre groups doing a great job of providing those opportunities, but there are still too many young people, in too many places, who don't have the chance to be part of a production, on stage or behind the scenes.

So working with the Secretary of State for Education, we are going to give them that chance.

In 5 different areas across the country, we will spend £5 million to give thousands more young people the chance to perform on stage at school.

And what they perform matters too. Britain has a remarkable theatrical heritage, the names of our famous playwrights are known the world over. But there are also great British playwrights the world does not yet know, from different parts of the country and from different backgrounds.

I want our young people to know their cultural past, but also to get to know their cultural future – to meet the people, who come from where they come from and who are writing great plays today. So we will help to promote the

work of these new playwrights, and help young people to perform their plays.

Because our culture belongs to us all and it is as strong as it has ever been.

We are proud of our past, but we are prouder still of who we are now and of what we will do next.

We Conservatives are in Government at this pivotal moment in our history. What a challenge, certainly, but also what an opportunity – the chance to design our future.

For centuries Britain led the world in exploration, invention and imagination.

For centuries in the arts, in the written and spoken word, the world looked to these islands for thought and feeling on what it means to be human.

And now, in a century where success will be defined by innovation and creativity, we still lead the world in these things.

So this is not a moment to lose our self-confidence. This is a moment, our moment, to show the world that just as Britain shaped the past, Britain can shape the future.”

ENDS

For further information, please contact the Press Office on 020 7984 8121.

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## **Paul Davies: Time for Change**

Paul Davies AM, Leader of the Welsh Conservatives in the National Assembly for Wales, speaking today at Conservative Party Conference at The ICC, Birmingham, said:

***(Check against delivery)***

“Cynhadledd, prynhawn da, a gai ddechrau trwy ddweud mor falch ydw i, i siarad â chi heddiw fel arweinydd newydd Ceidwadwyr Cymru yng Nghynulliad Cenedlaethol Cymru.

Mae'n anrhydedd enfawr.

Good afternoon ladies and gentlemen, and for those of you who don't speak the language of heaven, can I begin by saying how proud I am to speak to you today as the new leader of the Welsh Conservatives in the National Assembly

for Wales.

It's a huge honour and a privilege and I am grateful to Welsh Conservative Party Members for putting their trust in me and it's great to have the opportunity to work alongside our hardworking Secretary State for Wales, Alun Cairns who has delivered so much for Wales and our formidable team in CCHQ Wales.

And we have a great Chairman of the Welsh Conservative Party in Byron Davies – Gower's loss is our gain.

A few weeks ago, my election concluded my Party's efficient and decisive leadership contest – in complete contrast to that of the Welsh Labour Party's contest to replace current First Minister Carwyn Jones.

He announced in April his intention to stand down as First Minister in December – an eight month long goodbye, during which time Welsh Labour have been debating whether to adopt similar leadership election procedures to those which elected Jeremy Corbyn.

Surely that should ring alarm bells!

Conference, I speak to you today as a man on a mission.

A mission to kick Labour where it hurts.

A mission to transform our public services.

A mission to change Wales!

And I tell you, it won't be one small step we will be taking ...

... we are aiming to make a giant leap...

... a giant leap from being the official opposition in the National Assembly for Wales ...

... and into Government in Cardiff Bay!

You see, conference, Labour have been running Wales for almost twenty years.

But they are running it into the ground.

Performance in our NHS and education systems is consistently worse than other parts of the UK.

Welsh patients generally wait longer for an ambulance, longer for tests, and longer for treatment than in any other part of the UK.

Millionaires have access to free prescriptions...

... while cancer patients are denied access to many of the modern treatments available here in England.

Under Labour a third of hospital beds have been axed.

Cancer and A&E targets have been missed for a decade.

And hospitals have been closed and downgraded across the country.

And our education system is faring no better.

It has slipped down and down and down in the international league tables...

... to become the only UK nation in the bottom half of the OECD world rankings...

... and has the accolade of being the worst performing education system in Britain.

The rankings placed Wales below former communist states of Eastern Europe and we are even being outperformed by countries which 20 years ago were recovering from civil war.

What an absolute disgrace!

Now, the Labour clan will try to tell you that these appalling facts are all down to 'Tory cuts'...

... but the reality is that for every £1 spent on hospitals and schools in England...

... Wales receives £1.20.

While NHS spending has risen each and every year since 2010 under the Conservatives in England...

Spending in Wales was actually cut in some years.

Conference, I am proud to say that no modern day Conservative Prime Minister has ever cut an NHS budget.

Shame on Carwyn Jones and the Welsh Labour Government for cutting theirs!

And in spite of getting 20% more in funding per pupil to spend on education than in England...

... Labour spends almost £700 less per pupil each and every year.

It's no wonder that scores of schools have closed their doors in the past decade and that this summer Wales saw its worst GCSE results in 15 years!

This week in Birmingham, we have already been hearing about Jeremy Corbyn's dangerous hard-left policies and the threat he poses to our country.

But don't forget that there is a part of the UK where Labour is already in power – propped up by the only Lib Dem in the village and as a result of grubby pork barrel budget deals with Plaid Cymru!

Now, you may have noticed that Plaid Cymru elected a new leader last week.

Well, I have a message for Adam Price.

The people of Wales are crying out for a change of Government in Cardiff Bay.

Prop up another Labour administration at your peril!

The message is clear – we will never agree on everything, but where we can, let's work together in the interests of the people of Wales to deliver the change Wales needs.

After almost ten years of Carwyn Jones as First Minister, we've seen a decade of downgrades and closures in our NHS.

And falling standards in our schools.

We don't know yet who the new First Minister will be but it seems likely that the choice will be from one of three Cardiff based AMs.

One a Baroness!

One responsible for a catalogue of failures in our NHS!

And the other a Corbynite before the term was even coined!

Whoever emerges as the next First Minister, this much is clear.

The people should have the opportunity to have their say.

You will have no mandate to govern the people of Wales.

Only an Assembly election will give you that...

...so BRING IT ON!

...so today I'm calling on the wannabee leaders of the Welsh Labour Party to commit to give us that election.

We Welsh Conservatives are ready for the fight for the future of our precious nation.

We are ready to take that giant leap.

We are ready to CHANGE WALES.

Thank you."

ENDS

For further information, please contact the Press Office on 020 7984 8121.



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## Ruth Davidson speech to Conservative Party Conference 2018

Ruth Davidson, Leader of the Scottish Conservatives and Unionists, speaking today at Conservative Party Conference at The ICC, Birmingham, said:

*(Check against delivery)*

“Friends, it’s great to be back here in Birmingham.

Seven years ago, I came to conference looking to lead the party north of the border.

I promised you I would grow the Conservative family in Scotland. Well, never let it be said, I’m not a woman of my word.

Conference, there are plenty of things I could talk to you about today.

I could tell you about the fantastic work our 31 MSPs are doing in Holyrood, day by day holding Nicola Sturgeon’s miserablist SNP government to account.

I could let you know about the work of our superb 13 Scottish Conservative and Unionist MPs.

Who, day by day, are showing that you can stand up for Scotland, without walking out on the UK.

Or I could talk for days about all the unseen stuff – the work our hundreds of councillors are doing every day for communities right across the country, showing that, contrary to our opponents’ claims; Conservatism isn’t alien to Scotland, but that’s it’s OF Scotland.

Friends, I could talk a lot about all this.

But, actually, what I want to talk about isn’t the day to day of parliamentary speeches or council chamber business.

I want to talk about what matters.

Things that, when you’re about to step back from the front line for a bit – as I’m about to do – are perhaps a little easier to see.

And I want to make a plea.

To look beyond the sound and fury that passes for our politics just now. Where the extremes get ever louder and the centre falls to silence.

Where more energy is expended on twitter spats and below the line comments,

than on making it that bit easier for those who come after.

The people whose daily hopes, worries and aspirations should be at the heart of all we do.

People struggling for a deposit, or desperate to get home from work before the nursery closes, or looking to ensure they can receive enough social care to stay in their own home.

These are the people who need to be first in our minds.

And it's by focussing on their concerns that we do what's needed – to bring the country back together.

Because there's no point pretending.

The last two years have exposed some deep divisions in this country – and in this party.

And here's a safe prediction: in the days and weeks ahead we're going to hear more of them.

The fact is this: Brexit is happening. One way or another, we need to sort this.

So let me just address three issues.

First up – I want to deal with this question of another referendum.

Because over the last few weeks, I keep being asked:

Ruth you voted Remain, surely you'd welcome the chance to try and reverse the result. Why not back another vote?

Why not join all the other people who were happy to support a referendum when they thought they'd win, and are now crying foul and insisting we go through it all again.

Well, here's the thing conference.

Those of us in Scotland have been at this for some time already.

Four years ago, the SNP told Scotland they'd respect the independence referendum result. And for four long years, they've been pushing, pushing, pushing to have another go. And to keep going till they get the result they want.

And my response and the Prime Minister's response has been clear: the people of Scotland spoke. They said No. It's time to move on.

Well – the same message applies with Brexit.

I don't get to stand here and profess myself a democrat – to declare that some decisions are so big they can't be taken by politicians alone – and then

demand a re-run just because I wasn't on the winning side.

And if I tried to argue differently – to insist that one referendum result was sacrosanct while another should be immediately overturned, well, that would make me just the worst type of hypocrite.

So whether you're Conservative, Labour, Leave or Remain, Yes or No – we must respect the democratic choices we make – or we undermine the principles we all claim to uphold.

Conference, I didn't get the result I wanted in 2016.

But you don't get to demand a re-run just because you didn't get what you want.

That way leads to more division, more rancour and a politics trapped in the past.

The people voted. And there is no way to bring this country back together that doesn't respect the vote.

But here's the next thing.

These two referenda I've fought over the last decade have made one thing obvious: binary choices divide us into camps.

And, now – across the UK – the danger as we enter this crucial period in our nation's history is that we become too entrenched to reach across to the aisle in search of common ground. That our division on one issue, prevents us from making common cause on others.

Friends, as we approach these crucial few weeks and months, we need to go back to our Conservative principles.

The principles of country, of duty, of practicality and of delivery.

The belief that every prudent act is based on accommodation and accord.

That the best is the enemy of the good if it stops us improving the outcomes for the country.

The attitude that listens, eyebrows raised, to ivory-towered schemes of the ideological puritan and replies: aye, right.

It's this practical, pragmatic and utterly Conservative approach that will get us through.

Because, when the future of our country is at stake, it is essential.

Here's the truth:

We can agree a Brexit deal under the Conservatives, or we can risk handing the keys of Downing Street to Jeremy Corbyn.

I know which one I believe is in the national interest. I stand by the prime Minister.

And lastly, if we want to sort this, let's remember this too.

Two years ago in July, standing on the steps of Downing Street, Theresa May gave her first address as Prime Minister and mentioned something that people tend to forget.

It's that the full title of our party is the Conservative and Unionist party.

And she said: "That word Unionist is very important to me".

Well – me too.

Yes – ensuring a good future relationship with the EU is important – indeed, vital for our country's future.

Yes – we must show our friends and allies across the continent that we intend to remain the open, engaged, responsible nation we always have been.

But let's never lose sight of the fact that the Union that's most important to us is our own:

the Union of Scotland, England, Wales and Northern Ireland.

Let's remember that across the UK, there are those who are working day by day to break up that union – and who believe that a chaotic Brexit will help.

Let's remember this also: the rock upon which this party is founded is a belief in the unity of this country and the enterprise of its people.

So let's commit to making this our number one priority:

to make sure that the Union – our Union – emerges stronger, not weaker, from these next few weeks – because THAT is what matters the most.

So conference:

We sort this by respecting the democratic result.

We sort it by using our Conservative values, of putting the national interest first.

And we sort it by always, always keeping our eye on the most important prize of all: keeping our country together.

And if we get that right, let's remind ourselves where it leads

To a Conservative government getting on with the job.

To a Conservative government doing what we always do:

Getting more people into work, fixing the public finances, supporting people

off of welfare, cutting taxes for the lowest paid, helping businesses thrive – sorting out the mess we're left by a Labour government, getting Britain back in the black.

I know there's some debate right now about how we respond to Mr Corbyn's Labour party.

Here's my advice: folks, just leave him to his Labour takeover.

Let him crack on with all those 9 hour long meetings of the National Executive Committee he seems to love...

Let get him get on with compositing motions and allowing deselections of long serving members.

Let him spend his time on that.

And instead, let us get on with facing up to the challenges of the 21st century which need our attention.

By tackling the housing crisis, sorting out planning laws and delivering new affordable homes – so young people starting out in life can buy their first home.

By improving childcare, making it more flexible, freeing up hours – so people can juggle work and family life more easily.

By boosting school standards, putting head teachers in charge, championing vocational qualifications – so there is an education system that works for all.

By delivering security in old age, putting our NHS on a firm footing – so the healthcare supported through work can be accessed in retirement.

And let's do it not just in England and Wales, but in Scotland too.

People keep asking me: do you seriously think you can beat the SNP?

Damn right I do.

Because Scotland has had enough of the negativity, the grievance, the decade long moan.

Instead, we want to crack on.

So yes, there IS a job I'm after. It's the job of First Minister of Scotland.

Because I want to lead the country – and leave the SNP's decade of division behind us.

Instead, to move forward.

To restore our education system, to make us the real Northern powerhouse, to build the homes our young people deserve.

With a clear goal in mind: to make Scotland the best place in the UK to live, to work, and to raise a family.

Conference, I'm tired of talking about the constitution.

I want to get on and boost the country I love.

To focus on what matters to people's lives.

A decent job.

A home of your own

Time for your family.

Security in retirement.

It doesn't sound like much, does it?

But for too many people in our country, it remains a dream that's out of reach.

Let's get behind the Prime Minister, so she can get Brexit done.

So that we can throw all our energies on making that dream come true for everyone in this country.

That's the real challenge before us.

So – together – let's all rise to meet it.

Friends, before I go – it's my real pleasure to welcome the new leader of the Welsh Conservatives to the stage.

His unveiling was like the best Welsh rugby commentary I'd ever heard.

“Byron Davies announces that Paul Davies has triumphed over Suzy Davies to replace Andrew RT Davies.”

Paul took his Preseli Pembrokeshire seat off the Labour party in 2007 and has never looked back.

He's a true servant of the party, a champion of Wales and I look forward very much to working with him in the future.

So Conference, please give a big welcome to Paul Davies.”

ENDS

For further information, please contact the Press Office on 020 7984 8121.

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## Michael Gove speech to Conservative Party Conference 2018

Michael Gove MP, Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, speaking today at Conservative Party Conference at The ICC, Birmingham, said:

*(Check against delivery)*

“Thank you Lewis, for your inspirational story.

Your idealism, your dedication and your courage are an example to us all.

Thank you for campaigning on behalf of our precious oceans.

Our island nation has been defined by its relationship with the sea.

It has been our doorway to global trade, a treasure house of oil and gas, and the home to teeming stocks of fish.

But now our oceans are in danger.

Danger from climate change, from chemical residues, from exploitation and indeed from plastic.

The equivalent of a dumper truck of plastic is dropped in the sea every minute of every day.

Unless we change course, by the year 2050 the seas will contain more plastic than fish.

We cannot, and we will not, allow that to happen.

Which is why we need, in the words of Winston Churchill, action this day.

And we are acting.

Already the plastic bag charge has cut the number distributed by almost 90 per cent.

We are unleashing the innovative energy of our scientists, and the entrepreneurial flair of our businesses, to develop new greener products that are already generating new jobs.

And later this year we will launch a new front in the war against waste.

We will take steps to make recycling easier, invest in cleaner technologies, and take tougher action against the fly-tippers and waste criminals who pollute our landscape and trash our blue planet.

Determined, focussed and effective action to conserve our environment from a Conservative Government.

As we know all too well from our history, if you want a mess cleared up you need a Conservative Government.

In 1979, after our economy had been trashed by Labour, it was a Conservative Government that came to the rescue.

And in 2010, we inherited a deficit out of control, rocketing unemployment and young lives wasted.

But now, thanks to the steps we took, we have a dramatically reduced deficit, three million new jobs created and youth unemployment is at a record low.

The Conservatives rescued our country again.

I feel obliged to point out that every step of this essential economic repair was vigorously opposed by the Labour Party.

And if last week told us anything, it's that we must not allow Labour to wreck our economy ever again.

Harold Wilson used to say the Labour Party was a moral crusade or it was nothing.

Now Jeremy Corbyn's Labour Party is a toxic cocktail of unrepentant Marxism-Leninism and unacceptable antisemitism.

They are giving all the errors of the twentieth century another chance to wreck our society.

We've seen how this story ends before – in misery and shame.

When our Jewish friends and neighbours live in fear for their futures, let us stand with them against prejudice, against intimidation, against bigotry and against hate.

So let us take action today. Right here, right now.

Let a message come loud and clear from this hall, a message of unshakeable solidarity with the Jewish community.

And this week, in this Party, for the sake of our children, let us commit to unite so that the Moscow-loving, Hamas-hugging, high-taxing, moderate-bashing, job-destroying, National Anthem-avoiding, NATO-hating, class war-provoking, one-man museum of economic folly that is Jeremy Corbyn, is never let anywhere near Downing Street.

And we should also never forget that Labour's threat to the economy is also a threat to the environment.

You can't invest in enhancing the environment unless you have a healthy economy.



Just as you can't have sustainable growth without protecting the environment.

And with our world warming, our forest cover dwindling, our wildlife in danger and our global population growing, we desperately need action this day.

Which is why the work of the great DEFRA team is so critical.

For all the fantastic work that they do, I thank my Parliamentary colleagues: George Eustice, Therese Coffey, David Rutley, John Gardiner, Charlotte Vere, Iain Stewart, Kevin Hollinrake and Craig Tracey.

For the great job they do, thank you also to the brilliant team of civil servants in DEFRA and its agencies.

I also want to thank tens of thousands of more great people who I get to work with.

They are people upon whom this country depends so much. They are the backbone of Britain. Our farmers. Let's show them our appreciation.

If we are to feed a hungry world and safeguard the soil, the water and the air on which sustainable food production depend, then we in Government need to act to secure a better future for farming.

And leaving the European Union allows us to act faster and more flexibly to sweep away the barriers which have stood in the way of modernising farming.

Our new Agriculture Bill will help farmers to be more productive and ensure they get a fair price for their produce.

It will mean that they can invest in new technology to help them provide a harvest for the world.

And when we are outside the EU, we will also publish a new food strategy for Britain.

We will ensure that food production is truly sustainable, replenishing the soil, using energy wisely and supporting innovation.

And we will reform food labelling so that we uphold the highest animal welfare standards and give consumers the information they need to stay safe.

Food and drink is one of our greatest success stories, not least here in Birmingham and the Midlands, home of Cadbury's and the Balti, Staffordshire cheese and Melton Mowbray pork pies.

Conservative ministers will act to ensure that we lead the world in safe, affordable, healthy food.

And the first step in that strategy will be reducing food waste.

Every year, millions of tonnes of good, nutritious, edible food is thrown away.

This is an environmental, economic and moral folly, and we will address it.

I can announce action this day to invest £15 million so that food which would otherwise be wasted is redistributed to those most in need.

Working with industry and charities, we should be able to get up to 250 million extra meals a year onto the tables and plates of the most deserving in our society.

This is determined green action from a Conservative Government.

Action that helps the planet, helps the poorest and remains true to our Conservative values.

And no Conservative value runs deeper than the desire to make our world better for our children.

To be Conservative is to love what we know, to cherish our home, and there is no more beautiful home on Earth than ours.

Whether it's the Lake District that so moved Wordsworth, the Yorkshire Dales that inspired the Brontes, the stark majesty of the Fens or the lush green fields of Somerset, Dorset and Devon, we are heirs to an inheritance of natural beauty which moves the soul.

But over the course of the last hundred years, we have seen that beauty besmirched, nature in retreat and wildlife threatened.

We have lost more than half of our farmland birds.

Water voles, red squirrels and hedgehogs have been increasingly under threat.

More than 90% of our wildflower meadows are gone.

We have a responsibility to the next generation, to the place we call home and to the whole planet, to reverse that destruction.

And that is exactly what this Conservative Government will do.

We will pay our farmers the money that they deserve – the money that they need – to look after our countryside and restore natural beauty.

We will make more space for nature with stronger protection for ancient woodland while planting eleven million new trees.

And we will ensure that when the new homes we need are built, that developers not only meet the highest standards of quality in design but they also reverse environmental damage and invest in a greener, more beautiful Britain.

And outside the European Union we can also right another historic wrong.

We can at long last reverse the tragic decline of our fishing industry.

And yes, for me this is personal.

My dad worked in the fish trade and 35 years ago his small business had to close, as the fishing industry suffered inside the EU's Common Fisheries Policy.

The CFP has inflicted deep economic and environmental damage.

But now, thanks to our vote to Leave, we are taking back control of our waters.

More fish for British boats means that there could be millions of pounds extra earned by our fishermen.

And we will make sure that we fish sustainably, by ensuring that we decide who fishes in our seas and on what terms.

As an independent coastal state, we will once more be in control of one of our most precious, renewable, national assets.

Let us all keep our eyes on that prize – a new sea of opportunity.

And leaving the EU also allows us to set a global standard for environmental protection – to deliver a Green Brexit.

No one voted to leave in order to harm the environment – far from it.

So through the first Environment Bill in more than 20 years, we will restore nature, purify our air, and ensure the powerful are properly held to account for their commitments to the natural world.

We can also do more on a mission close to my heart and to so many British hearts – improving animal welfare.

The animals who share this planet with us, and indeed often share a home with us, need our care and protection.

Exploitation, callousness and cruelty are never acceptable.

Animals are our fellow sentient beings.

They show loyalty and devotion, and they know pleasure and pain.

They are partners with us in evolution's great pattern of life.

And that is why this Government is acting today to protect and enhance animal welfare.

Already we have acted to ensure that CCTV cameras are installed in all abattoirs so there is no hiding place for cruelty.

And we are acting against the cruel abuse of puppy farming by making sure that domestic pets cannot be trafficked for tainted cash.

We will also use the full force of the criminal law to punish those responsible for the worst acts of cruelty.

At the moment those who abuse animals face a maximum sentence of 6 months.

We will ensure that is increased to 5 years.

We will show zero tolerance towards those who have zero compassion for animals.

And internationally we are protecting our most endangered species, by deploying our money and elite troops to tackle the criminal gangs who are responsible for slaughtering one of the world's most iconic species: the African elephant.

In the last ten years almost a quarter of the population of African elephants has been eradicated – victims of the poachers who are feeding the illegal trade in ivory.

That is why we are introducing some of the world's toughest measures to tackle this trade.

We have a duty to take action this day to ensure this slaughter stops and we save the African elephant from extinction.

But we know that there is more that we have to do to uphold our manifesto pledge to hand on our environment in a better state to our children.

We need more action on pollution to secure clean air for our children to breathe.

More action to safeguard marine wildlife by increasing the area of the world's oceans which is protected from less than 10% to 30%.

More action to reduce the greenhouse gas emissions that fuel global warming.

More action to get water companies to tackle leakage and invest in the environment.

More action to bring dwindling fish stocks back to our rivers.

More action to save other endangered species from pangolins to rhinos.

More action to develop the technologies which will free us from reliance on harmful chemicals.

More action to help our bees and pollinators.

In short, more action to preserve our world.

Some people might say that we are setting our sights too high.

To them I say, you don't know our party.

It was Conservatives who abolished the slave trade, cleared Victorian slums, made working conditions decent in our factories, gave our cities clean water, delivered equal votes for women, introduced equal marriage for all, fought against fascism and communism, extended state education to all, built record numbers of homes for working people, led the fight against global warming, established the first national living wage, gave the poorest pupils in our schools the most money, allowed record numbers of working people to graduate from university, and ensured a record number of people were in work.

We are the party of real progress and radical reform.

The party relentlessly focused on the future and its promise.

The party that cherishes what we have in this country and wants us to be an example to the whole world.

And together, united, we can ensure that this country, and our world, are cleaner, greener and stronger.

Thank you.”

ENDS

For further information, please contact the Press Office on 020 7984 8121.

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## [James Brokenshire: Building homes and creating stronger communities](#)

Rt Hon James Brokenshire MP, Secretary of State for Housing, Communities and Local Government, speaking today at Conservative Party Conference at The ICC, Birmingham, said:

***(Check against delivery)***

“Thank you to Shazia for your kind words of introduction.

Shazia is a great example of Conservatives making a difference in local government and making a difference in the communities they serve.

Thank you for your public service and all that you do.

Can I also introduce my fantastic team at the Ministry of Housing Communities and Local Government.

My ministers Kit Malthouse, Jake Berry, Rishi Sunak, Heather Wheeler and Nigel Adams. Our tireless PPSs Chris Philp and Leo Docherty and our whip Jeremy Quin.

Friends, it's been quite a year for me and today is a particular personal milestone.

When I addressed our Conference twelve months ago, I didn't know it, but I had lung cancer.

In some of my darker moments earlier this year, I questioned whether I would be here at all – let alone fit, well and able to speak on this stage today.

When you receive a cancer diagnosis... when you are forced to confront your own mortality head on... it makes you appreciate what's important... what makes life worth living.

I know I couldn't have got through this period without the incredible love and support of my wife Cathy and our three children, Sophie, Jemma and Ben.

They've kept me positive, they've helped get me through surgery, through my recovery and back to strength.

But I also know that if it wasn't for our amazing NHS I wouldn't be here today.

They saved my life and in some way will have touched the lives of every person in this hall.

To all those who work in our NHS – thank you.

You are amazing and we pay tribute to all that you do.

Now I may be part of one lung lighter, but it hasn't diminished my passion for our party, my pride in our country and my earnest belief that our best days lie ahead of us and not behind us.

That is what makes us Conservatives.

And a key part of this is building the homes our country needs.

The Prime Minister is right in seeing this as our biggest domestic priority.

And I am proud to serve alongside her to meet the challenges of our time and harness the opportunities of the future.

We must respond to the uncomfortable truth that through decades of under-investment and lack of political will for too many a home of your own is unaffordable and out of reach.

Everyone deserves a decent, affordable and secure place to call home.

When a generation is locked out of the housing market it hurts us as a country.

It's the impact it has on the lives of individuals and their families.

It's about social justice, opportunity and building a fairer, stronger

Britain.

A Britain where 'Generation Rent' can become 'Generation Own'.

A Britain where we turn the vision of a place you call home into a reality.

The last time a Government committed to building 300,000 homes a year was in 1951 when Harold Macmillan was Conservative Housing Minister.

Super Mac did it then and we will do it again.

We will build 300,000 homes a year by the mid 2020's.

And we have made an important start.

Since 2010 one point one million new homes built.

Nearly half a million families are now home owners thanks to Help to Buy and Right to Buy.

And a million first time buyers are expected to benefit from our cuts to stamp duty with 80% of first time buyers paying no stamp duty at all.

If you aspire to own your own home then I want to say this to you.

We will help you.

We will build the homes our country needs.

We will support you to save for your deposit.

We will break down the barriers standing between you and the opportunities you deserve.

We will fix our broken housing market and make it work for you.

As for Jeremy Corbyn and the Labour Party they may have given the Red Flag a reboot, but it's the same old socialism that brought our country to its knees and would do so again.

Under the last Labour government house building fell to levels not seen since the 1920's.

The number of first time buyers collapsed by over 50%.

Housing became more unaffordable, not less.

Labour doesn't believe in increasing home ownership.

They would suspend Right to Buy and shatter people's hopes and dreams of the chance to buy their own home.

It's same old story from the same Old Labour.

No matter what they say, you know we'll all have to pay.

But I know that there is much more to do to get the homes we need built.

We need to be bold and radical to remove unnecessary barriers and speed up delivery.

And in doing so we need a reformed planning system that is effective and responsive.

In July I published the new planning rule book.

It provides greater certainty and clarity for developers and communities alike.

To know the requirements and expectations and encourage a plan led approach to development.

Strengthening the protections for our environment and our precious Green Belt.

But we need to be smarter on how we use land and the space available.

Prioritising brownfield but also looking at land that's already been built on.

That's why I will publish proposals to permit people to build up on existing buildings rather than build out to use more precious land.

And give Councils greater powers to deliver the garden communities of the future.

But it's not just about getting homes built – it's about fairness.

Some practices in the leasehold market – such as unexpected costs that rise every year and bear no relation to services – can turn a homeowner's dream into a nightmare.

That's why we're banning the unjustified use of leaseholds on new houses and limiting future ground rents for long leases to a peppercorn.

But we also need to address quality issues in new homes too.

That's why I can announce today the creation of a New Homes Ombudsman.

This new watchdog will champion home buyers, protect their interests and hold developers to account.

And give confidence that when you get the keys to a new home you get the quality build you expect and the finish you've paid for.

Getting a fair deal extends to private renters too.

We've created a Rogue Landlords database to identify the worst offenders.

We are banning unfair letting agent fees being passed onto tenants.



And Capped deposit costs too.

Fairness also needs to be felt by people living in social housing.

That's why I want to see a new deal for social housing tenants.

To deliver decent homes, strengthen redress and break unjustified stigma.

Equally as Conservatives we are committed to supporting the most vulnerable in our society.

It is simply unacceptable in modern Britain that there are still people living out on our streets with no roof over their head.

Our rough sleeping strategy and rough sleeping initiative are focusing efforts to drive change to give support to those most in need.

So that we end rough sleeping for good.

Most profoundly though, people should be safe in their own homes.

It's been over a year since the tragedy of the Grenfell Tower fire.

This unimaginable horror has rightly shocked us all and underlined the need to do all that we can to see that such a disaster cannot happen again.

My work with Grenfell United and the wider community has been hugely helpful in keeping this issue right at the top of the government's agenda.

And that is why today I can confirm that I will change the building regulations to ban the use of combustibile materials for all new high rise residential buildings, hospitals, registered care homes and student accommodation.

And bring about a change in culture on building safety.

In advancing our ambitious housing agenda we need to create strong, prosperous, confident communities socially and economically.

Giving a sense of identity, a sense of place and an affinity to the places where we live, where we work, where we spend our time.

Communities where we recognise diversity and heritage.

How this makes us stronger;

How we all have so much more in common than divides us.

We have to defend the civility of civil society against hatred and separation.

We have to be robust in challenging anti-Semitism, anti-Muslim hatred and division based on religion, heritage or background.

There is no place in our country for bigotry and intolerance.

And as Conservatives we will stand up against this in all its forms.

At the heart of our communities are our towns and high streets.

Our high streets are the beating heart of a local economy.

And local businesses are their lifeblood.

That's why I'm proud that we've launched the Great British High Street Competition.

To recognise, to champion and to celebrate innovation and success.

But we know technology is changing the way we live our lives and the challenges this brings.

I look forward to receiving the work of our new high streets advisory panel led by Sir John Timpson.

So that we can take further action to support our high streets and help them continue to do what they do best.

I know that so much local success relies on the dedication and hard work of Conservatives in local government around the country.

I want to thank all of our Councillors who work tirelessly for their communities.

It's because of you people understand that with a Conservative council you get quality services and lower taxes.

We asked Conservative councils to help fix the mess left by the last Labour government and they delivered.

In return we've devolved power, localised business rates, created a swathe of city region mayors, founded Local Enterprise Partnerships, kick started local industrial strategies.

Through the fair funding review and business rate retention we have the opportunity to drive further change, to support innovation and get the very best from local government.

But I know an ageing population and growing demand are creating real pressures on public services.

Health and social care are inextricably linked and any reforms must be aligned.

That's why I'm working with Matt Hancock – recognising local government's direct interests – towards the publication of the Social Care Green Paper.

This will include plans to reform social care, provide better integration of

services and put the care system on a long term sustainable footing.

As we leave the EU we should be confident and positive about the potential of each part of our country and the contribution they can make to drive our future prosperity.

Through the Northern Powerhouse, the Midlands Engine and Silicon Vale linking Oxford, Cambridge and Milton Keynes.

Through City Deals and Local Growth Funds.

Through the UK Shared Prosperity Fund supporting continued regional investment.

Helping deliver a country that works for everyone.

And we will harness the opportunities that are presented to us.

In 2022 Birmingham will host the Commonwealth Games.

It will provide the platform for this great city to shine on a global stage.

The chance to drive economic potential.

The chance to create a sense of pride – not just in this city but our country as a whole.

That's why I'm proud today to announce the Government funding for the construction of the Athletes Village.

We will invest £165 million to help support the delivery of 5,100 new homes, but just as importantly create a long lasting legacy for Birmingham and from the Commonwealth Games.

And this is part of our Conservative mission.

To create a legacy.

A legacy of new homes and communities for your children and mine.

To show, that to be Conservative is to want to build for the future not turn away from it, and in doing so draw on our traditions, history and knowledge.

Whether through new homes, villages, towns, cities or communities, we Conservatives are working to build a new Britain.

A people reconnected to our nation with renewed pride and energy.

Optimistic and hopeful for the future.

Because the nation we are building is one where opportunity is for all and no one is left behind."

ENDS

For further information, please contact the Press Office on 020 7984 8121.