

Churches Conservation Trust appointments: 14 January 2022

Press release

The Queen has approved the following appointments.



The Queen has approved the appointments of Mrs Elizabeth Peace CBE as Chair of the Churches Conservation Trust; Sir Simon Jenkins' re-appointment as a Member of the Trust and; Dr Oliver Cox and Mr Inayat Omarji MBE as Members of the Trust, each for a three year term.

Liz has been a member of the Churches Conservation Trust since 2013 and has a strong interest in heritage. She was Chief Executive of the British Property Federation for thirteen years and was awarded a CBE for services to the property industry. She has experience of turning strategy into delivery plans and has a strong understanding and commitment to diversity and inclusion in the property and heritage sectors.

Simon is an author and journalist, and former Chairman of the National Trust. He has a keen interest and knowledge of historic churches and has been a Member of the Churches Conservation Trust since 2015. He brings specialist knowledge and expertise of church buildings. He now has more time to devote to the Trust in what will be his final term of office. He will aid the Trust to identify future candidates who could bring the same degree of external credibility in his field to the Board.

Oliver is an academic historian. As Heritage Engagement Fellow, he leads Oxford University's Humanities Division's engagement with both the UK and international heritage sectors. He has a strong understanding of the role of church buildings at the heart of local communities and has a wealth of experience and connections in the academic sector.

Inayat has been instrumental on leading the development of All Souls Bolton, one of the Churches Conservation Trust's flagship projects and has been a strong advocate for the work of the Trust in the local community. He has a passionate interest in community engagement and was awarded an MBE for

services to Built Heritage and the Community in Bolton. He has strong strategic leadership experience gained from his career as a senior manager in the statutory and Charity sector, in particular working with Black and Minority Ethnic communities, supporting many local and national partners and organisations to make a difference at grassroots.

Published 14 January 2022

[Joint statement between the UK and EU on the Northern Ireland Protocol and EU-UK relations](#)

Press release

Foreign Secretary Truss and Commission Vice-President Šefčovič held their first meeting at Chevening on 13-14 January on the Northern Ireland Protocol and EU-UK relations.



Foreign Secretary Liz Truss and Commission Vice-President Maroš Šefčovič held their first meeting at Chevening on 13-14 January.

The meeting took place in a cordial atmosphere. They agreed that officials would meet next week in intensified talks and that the principals would meet again on 24 January.

We share a desire for a positive relationship between the UK and the EU underpinned by our shared belief in freedom and democracy.

Published 14 January 2022

New assessments for GCSE French, German and Spanish

News story

Changes to how these GCSEs will be assessed in future confirmed by Ofqual.



Changes to how GCSEs in French, German and Spanish will be assessed in future have been confirmed today by Ofqual.

They are needed because the government is changing from 2024 how students will be taught and assessed in these subjects – to help young people develop their language skills for life and work.

The Department for Education's (DfE) revisions to the subjects' content will ensure students understand what vocabulary and grammar skills will be needed in their exams.

We consulted last year on our proposals for the assessment of these revised qualifications, at the same time as the DfE consulted on its draft changes. We are publishing the [outcome of our consultation today](#). The DfE has also today published its [final subject content revisions](#).

The DfE announced today the changes are due to come into effect for first teaching from September 2024, with first assessments in 2026.

We are going ahead with our consultation proposals – which set out revised assessment objectives, and confirm that the current use of tiered assessments and non-exam assessment (NEA) will continue.

Further draft proposals for the more detailed assessment requirements – in the Subject Level Conditions and Guidance – will go to public consultation in due course.

We are also inviting applications for independent subject experts – particularly experienced teachers – to work with us on the accreditation

reviews of the revised qualifications. For more information, go to [Guidance: Apply to be an external expert with Ofqual](#)

Published 14 January 2022

[National regulation: construction products](#)

In January 2021, the government announced that the Office for Product Safety and Standards (OPSS) would take on responsibility for the national regulation of construction products. This is in line with a recommendation made in the [Independent Review of Building Regulations and Fire Safety](#) led by Dame Judith Hackitt following the Grenfell Tower fire.

OPSS started work to establish the new Regulator in April 2021 and has begun to lead and coordinate work that will set a new regulatory approach for construction products. The intention is that the National Regulator for Construction Products (NRCP) will become fully operational once the [Building Safety Bill](#) and subsequent secondary legislation have been approved by Parliament. This new legislation would give OPSS all the necessary legal powers to carry out its duties as the Regulator in full.

The challenge

Evidence given during the Grenfell Tower Inquiry demonstrates that there is a clear need to confront poor practices in the construction products industry and to establish new norms that will restore public confidence in it. While the NRCP will encourage good practice, enforce the law, and educate the industry, the system cannot be fixed by regulatory intervention alone. All industry stakeholders have a part to play in changing the operational culture and must accept this responsibility, including:

- manufacturers
- distributors
- product installers
- warranty providers
- standards makers
- test houses

First steps

In the interim, OPSS is:

- establishing its leadership within the sector

- developing an evidence base
- recruiting staff with appropriate skills and knowledge
- engaging with stakeholders to build its capacity and understanding
- reviewing the regulatory system to highlight any gaps
- liaising with the sector to set expectations

It is also supporting local authorities in the enforcement of the current construction products regulations, drawing on existing legal powers and OPSS' expertise in areas such as intelligence gathering, risk assessment and investigation.

Operational arrangements

The Department for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities (DLUHC) is the lead Department, responsible for construction products. OPSS, in its role as the NRCP will act on behalf of and be funded by DLUHC. OPSS will continue to act as the national regulator for consumer products within the Department for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy (BEIS).

The operational arrangements that apply while OPSS prepares to carry out the functions of the NRCP are contained in an interim Memorandum of Understanding agreed by DLUHC, BEIS and OPSS. Once it is fully operational, the NRCP will work closely with other regulators to co-ordinate regulatory action, particularly the new [Building Safety Regulator](#), within the Health and Safety Executive, which will oversee the safe design, construction and occupation of high-risk residential buildings.

Read more

[Virgin Orbit mission success brings UK satellite launch one step closer](#)

The UK Space Agency welcomes the news that Virgin Orbit has successfully completed its second operational mission from California on Wednesday 12 January, launching several satellites into orbit from beneath the wing of a 747.

The UK Space Agency and Cornwall Council are supporting Virgin Orbit to launch satellites from Spaceport Cornwall, starting this summer, with the spaceport set to create 150 jobs in the local area.

One of the commercial satellites launched on the 'Above the Clouds' mission was manufactured in Scotland by Spire Global, a world-leading satellite company based in Glasgow. These satellites were shipped from Glasgow to California for the launch, which demonstrates the potential value to the UK

satellite industry of having a new launch capability in the UK.

Spire Global's ADLER-1 satellite is designed to help address the growing issue of space debris by gathering data about the environment in Low Earth Orbit.

UK Space Agency Deputy CEO Ian Annett said:

Congratulations to Virgin Orbit on another successful mission, which demonstrates the huge potential of innovative, air-launch technology to meet the needs of the modern satellite industry. Having an RAF pilot at the controls demonstrates the UK's commitment to working closely with Virgin Orbit ahead of their first launch from Spaceport Cornwall later this year.

The UK is home to some of the world's leading satellite manufacturers, which currently ship their products overseas for launch. We are supporting them by fostering a new domestic launch market, with spaceports and launch operators providing services across the UK and catalysing investment from all over the world.

Virgin Orbit also launched two new Earth observation satellites designed by Polish company SatRevolution, which aim to support precision farming and agriculture with high-resolution images, demonstrating the growing environmental applications of small satellite technology.

Unlike many rockets, Virgin Orbit's Launcher One takes off horizontally, carried aloft by a modified Boeing 747 jet, named Cosmic Girl, which was flown by Flight Lieutenant Mathew Stannard, a Royal Air Force pilot on secondment with Virgin Orbit.

This was Virgin Orbit's third commercial flight. In January 2021 the company put its first satellites into space, after launching from California's Mojave desert.

Melissa Thorpe, Head of Spaceport Cornwall, said:

With another successful launch, our partners Virgin Orbit are proving a new, more sustainable way for satellites to access space. We are so excited to bring this technology to UK soil, and to demonstrate how we can launch responsibly, create amazing jobs and inspire the nation.

The UK Government's [National Space Strategy](#) sets out how the UK will become the first country in Europe to launch satellites into orbit in 2022. Spaceport Cornwall is one of seven potential spaceport sites across the UK which will help to cement the UK's role as a science superpower and help unleash a wave of innovation across the country.