

James Barnard, Sophie Birshan and Alison Taylor have been appointed as Trustees of the Wallace Collection

James Barnard

James Barnard started his career as a banker employed by Nomura International plc. He was called to the Bar of England and Wales in 1993 and now practices as a barrister, specialising in commercial and chancery litigation at 1 Essex Court, Temple.

He was a member of the board of The Rambert School of Ballet and Contemporary Dance from 2004-2014, also serving as Chairman of its Risk and Audit Committee for four years.

He is a trustee of The Linbury Trust, one of the largest UK-based grant-making foundations with a particular focus on public engagement with culture (including arts, dance, museums and heritage); he also sits on the Investment Committee and Social Impact Investment Committee of the Linbury Trust.

He is the co-trustee of the Parham Park Trust (1984), a charitable trust which funds, maintains and preserves one of the finest Elizabethan houses open to the public in England.

Sophie Birshan

Sophie is the Industry Head for Multicategory Retail at Google, leading Google's relationships on marketing and adtech with many of the UK's largest retailers. Prior to Google, Sophie was Head of Insight at John Lewis & Partners, leading the data science and analytics function.

Previously she has held roles as Director of Loyalty Marketing at Mothercare; as a consultant at McKinsey & Company in their London, San Francisco, and Mumbai offices; and as a Policy Advisor in the Prime Minister's Strategy Unit.

With a lifelong love of heritage and the arts, Sophie has previously served on the London Committee of the Heritage Lottery Fund. She holds an MBA from Harvard Business School, graduating with high distinction.

Alison Taylor

Alison Taylor is a Chartered Accountant and Banking Executive with a particular focus on business and the charitable sector. In 2019 she became CEO of CAF Bank and Charities Aid Foundation Charity Services providing financial services, infrastructure and support to charities across the UK to help them build financial resilience and enhance their fundraising capabilities.

A passionate advocate for the role of charities in society, she sees the potential for connecting donors with charities that best represent their interests to maximise the benefits of giving for society. Previously, Alison spent many years in corporate banking at HSBC and was HSBC UK Chief of Staff on the Executive Committee that managed the transition of HSBC's ring-fenced bank.

Initially, Alison qualified at Deloitte working in mergers and acquisitions across sectors in the UK and overseas. She is a charity trustee and fundraiser and a community volunteer with Westminster Connects and the Royal Voluntary Service.

She has been a member of The Wallace Collection for many years and is passionate about maintaining the calibre of the museum for future generations, whilst increasing accessibility to a broader catchment of visitors. Alison looks forward to bringing her expertise in finance, risk management, and the charitable sector to bear at the Board of Trustees.

Wallace Collection Trustees are not remunerated. These appointments have been made in accordance with the Cabinet Office's [Governance Code on Public Appointments](#). The appointments process is regulated by the Commissioner for Public Appointments. Under the Code, any significant political activity undertaken by an appointee in the last five years must be declared. This is defined as including holding office, public speaking, making a recordable donation or candidature for election. James Barnard, Sophie Birshan and Alison Taylor have declared no such political activity.

[Government proposes strengthening insolvency regulation](#)

The Government has today set out new proposals to reform and simplify regulation of the insolvency sector.

Key changes set out in the consultation include:

- establishing a single independent regulator to sit within the Insolvency Service, replacing the current four Recognised Professional Bodies
- extending regulation to firms that offer insolvency services, as the current regime only covers individual Insolvency Practitioners
- create a public register of all individuals and firms that offer insolvency services
- create a system of compensation and redress

These changes will help strengthen and modernise the regulatory regime which has been in place for over 30 years and needs reform in order to be able to keep pace with developments in the insolvency market.

The reforms will ensure a robust and proportionate regulatory regime which enhances consistency, improves transparency and, importantly, will also regulate firms that offer insolvency services rather than just individual Insolvency Practitioners.

Regulation at firm level would see the insolvency sector brought into line with other sectors such as audit and the legal professions. The vast majority of firms offering insolvency services are not expected to face increased costs, unless there are instances of wrongdoing.

Business Minister Lord Callanan said:

The proper functioning of the insolvency regime is vitally important to support business investment and growth and to provide a safety net for individuals in severe financial difficulty.

Those most impacted by insolvency need confidence in the professionals involved, and the UK regime has a strong reputation for delivering the best outcomes possible when an insolvency occurs. In order to maintain that confidence, the regulatory regime must keep pace with the times and these proposals to introduce an independent regulator will strengthen the regime and deliver greater transparency, accountability and protection for creditors, investors and consumers.

The Insolvency Service is currently responsible for oversight of regulation of the Recognised Professional Bodies (RBPs), which are responsible for regulation of individual IPs.

Following a [Call for Evidence](#), the Insolvency Service has found that the current framework is disproportionately complex, with 4 membership bodies and government all involved in regulating fewer than 1,600 individuals.

This approach has led to weaknesses in the regulatory system as the market has evolved over recent decades. As well as a lack of regulation of firms undertaking insolvency work, the current system also lacks transparency and has inconsistencies, with different bodies making information available in different formats.

The Government is also proposing a public register which will clearly show all individuals and firms that are authorised to provide insolvency services, together with whether that individual or firm has previously been sanctioned by the regulator.

In addition, where there has been a mistake or wrongdoing by an IP or firm offering insolvency services, which has adversely affected one or more parties involved in the proceedings, there will be a new formal mechanism that will allow for compensation to be paid if appropriate.

The consultation will run until 25 March 2022.

Notes to editors

The proposed changes would apply to England, Scotland and Wales. Insolvency, including regulation of insolvency, is a transferred function in Northern Ireland, although there is close alignment of the insolvency and regulatory frameworks between Great Britain and Northern Ireland.

The full consultation for reforming insolvency regulation can be found [here](#)

Contact Press Office

You can also follow the Insolvency Service on:

[Tony Juniper CBE reappointed as Natural England Chair](#)

The Environment Secretary, George Eustice, has today (21 December) confirmed that Tony Juniper CBE has been reappointed as Chair of Natural England for a second term. Tony Juniper's second term will be for three years and will run from 23 April 2022 to 22 April 2025.

Chair of Natural England, Tony Juniper, said:

I am honoured to be reappointed as Chair of Natural England. Our vital role in defending and enhancing our nation's natural environment has never been more important.

Since I came to lead Natural England in 2019 we have made significant progress in restoring energy and direction to the organisation, created a clearer strategic plan and mission and secured a major increase in resources to implement it. We have made strides toward realising England's ambition to create a Nature Recovery Network, supported the landmark Environment Act, declared new National Nature Reserves, helped the public connect with nature, advised government on nature-based solutions to climate change and how best to join up new farming policy with nature recovery, among many other things.

Looking to the future and there is a lot to do, and in this second term my focus will be even more firmly on the delivery of the Government's ambitious goals for Nature recovery, including implementing biodiversity net gain, delivering programmes for key habitats, such as peatlands, gearing up species recovery programmes, initiating more landscape-scale nature projects, supporting government to deliver nature-based solutions to combat

climate change and implementing new land management schemes, and harnessing all of that to establish the Nature Recovery Network which is so vital for overall success.

I want to thank all of our brilliant staff, partners and stakeholders for their support and dedication, and I look forward to continuing to work together to deliver the biggest possible positive impact for Nature that we can.

Environment Secretary, George Eustice, said:

Tony has provided strong leadership to Natural England, bringing passion and a wealth of experience to the organisation, and I am pleased he will continue as Chair for a second term.

Natural England continues to play a key role in delivering the 25 Year Environment Plan, and I look forward to working closely together as we implement the Environment Act, build back greener from the pandemic and restore nature across the country.

The reappointment has been made in accordance with the Ministerial Governance Code on Public Appointments and all appointments are made on merit and political activity plays no part in the selection process.

There is a requirement for appointees' political activity (if significant) to be made public. Tony has declared that he has not taken part in any significant political activity in the past five years.

Tony Juniper biography

- Tony Juniper CBE has been Chair of Natural England since 2019.
- Prior to joining Natural England, Tony was Director of Advocacy and Campaigns at WWF-UK and President of Royal Society of Wildlife Trusts.
- He is a Fellow of the University of Cambridge Institute for Sustainability Leadership and former advisor to the Prince of Wales.
- He began his career as an ornithologist, working with Birdlife International and for many years worked with Friends of the Earth, most recently as Executive Directors and Vice Chair of Friends of the Earth International.
- He is a prolific author publishing many books, including the multi-award-winning bestseller 'What has Nature ever done for us?'
- In 2017, Tony was recognised for his services to conservation with a CBE in the Queen's birthday honours.

Natural England

- Natural England is a non-departmental public body, set up under the Natural Environment and Rural Communities (NERC) Act 2006, and is the government's statutory adviser for the natural environment in England.

- Natural England plays a key role in delivering the government's environmental priorities, including the 25 Year Environment Plan. Its general purpose is to ensure that the natural environment is conserved, enhanced and managed for the benefit of present and future generations.

National recognition for collaboration

News story

The Institute of Collaborative Working has recognised one of our major supply chain frameworks as best in class after winning the 'Supply Chain' award.



The removal of the top diffuser from the Windscale Pile Chimney is one of the many major projects that the framework has been involved in.

Sellafield Ltd and our Decommissioning Delivery Partnership framework partners ADAPT, CNSL, IDS, Nexus, TDA, i3 have received the prestigious 'Supply Chain' award' at the 2021 Institute for Collaborative Working annual event sponsored by the British Standards Institute.

The award is significant external recognition of our approach to collaboration.

Sellafield Ltd category manager Paul King, who attended the event (virtually) on behalf of the company alongside representatives from our partners, said:

Our submission was assessed against a number of elements including awareness, knowledge, partner selection, internal assessment, working together, value creation and staying together.

I'm extremely proud of the work we have carried out alongside our lot delivery partners, and the award recognises the collective activity of our programmes over the last 5 years.

The organisers of the event praised the collective dedication of our key work at Sellafield, that includes major milestones such as the removal of the diffuser at the top of the Windscale Pile Chimney and installing one of the machines that will retrieve waste from the Magnox Swarf Storage Silo.

Collaboration is fundamental to the delivery of our purpose – creating a clean and safe environment for future generations.

Sellafield Ltd supply chain director Susan Lussem added:

I'm delighted that Sellafield Ltd and its partners have once again shown that collaboration is key to the success of making strides to cleaning up our site. I'm looking forward to more successes in 2022.

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[Increasing flood resilience in the River Great Ouse](#)

The floods of December 2020 in the River Great Ouse catchment were caused by continued heavy rainfall on already saturated ground. Flooding affected many homes and communities across the region.

Over the last year, the Environment Agency has worked with local communities to better understand the effects of the flooding, and to help improve resilience to such flood events.

It has invested around £30 million* in flood defence schemes, repairs and improvements to the thousands of flood risk assets in the River Great Ouse catchment. The Environment Agency owns or operates 1,141 of these assets. A further 5,000 assets are owned or operated by other agencies such as internal drainage boards and local authorities.

An improved flood warning service has been activated and is ready for winter. The 25 highest risk areas in the River Great Ouse catchment can now receive earlier flood warnings than ever before. This free service gives those affected more time to prepare for flooding, and to protect their families and homes.

For properties in areas not protected by flood defences, the Environment Agency is looking at the potential for new schemes and also other measures

such as Property Flood Resilience (PFR).

The Environment Agency has also supported a number of local flood action groups to help them better prepare their communities for future flood events.

Simon Hawkins, Environment Agency Area Director, said:

The Environment Agency has worked constantly over the years to better protect thousands of properties from flooding in the River Great Ouse catchment.

Since December 2020 we have taken a range of measures to improve flood resilience across the region. We have engaged with communities affected by flooding and inspected and repaired thousands of flood defence assets. Our flood defence capital programme has continued to progress, with more flood defence schemes under construction.

Flooding will continue to be a threat to our region. The effects are devastating to those affected and disruptive to many people, with recovery costs that can be huge.

We can never eliminate flooding and we urge people to be prepared for flooding by following the 'Prepare, Act, Survive' guidance.

Investment in the area's flood defences over the last 10 years

Between 2011 and 2021 the Environment Agency has invested over £77 million in building and funding flood defence schemes that now better protect more than 15,500 properties in Cambridgeshire and Bedfordshire from flooding and erosion.

The schemes have been completed by the Environment Agency working on its own, or in partnership, and by sponsoring organisations through government Grant-in-Aid (GiA).

The types of scheme include:

- Flood and erosion protection
- Replacement flood defences
- Natural flood management
- Major flood gates
- Pumping station refurbishments
- Reservoir protection
- Individual property flood resilience measures

Working with communities to increase flood resilience against the

effects of climate change

More extreme weather events caused by the climate emergency are being increasingly felt, and flooding will become more likely everywhere. River level records will be broken time and again and more intense rainfall will cause severe surface water flooding.

To find out what you need to do, go online and search 'Prepare for Flooding'.

*This figure includes £24.6 million allocated for capital schemes and £3.8 million in maintenance for the financial year 2020 to 2021. For the financial year 2021 to 22, £11.3 million is allocated for capital schemes, and £3.7 million for maintenance. The Environment Agency has issued advice to riparian property owners on their responsibilities, specifically, on how to prevent blockages to rivers that could increase flood risk.

Further information

Throughout history the River Great Ouse catchment area has been subject to flooding. Serious floods took place in 1912, 1947, 1953, and in more recent memory in 1998.

In December 2020, many properties flooded across the River Great Ouse catchment. This occurred following several days of heavy rainfall on already saturated ground leading to swollen rivers causing a combination of surface water and fluvial flooding.

Property flooding was reported across a wide area and 143 communities were affected in some way.

Flood defence investment in Cambridgeshire and Bedfordshire, since 2010

(figures stated are up to end of March 2020)

In Cambridgeshire, we have invested £74.6 million in flood defences since 2010, providing better protection for around 15,600 homes.

In Bedfordshire, we have invested £3 million in flood defences since 2010, providing better protection for around 185 homes.

Investment in flood defences nationally

- A record £5.2 billion will be invested between 2021 and 2027, creating around 2,000 new flood and coastal risk management schemes to better protect 336,000 properties across England.
- These schemes will help to avoid £32 billion in wider economic damages, reduce the national flood risk by up to 11 per cent, and reduce the risk of considerable disruption caused by potential future flooding to the daily lives of over 4 million people.