

# Her Majesty's Ambassador to Luxembourg visits Guardian Glass plant

World news story

Ambassador Fleur Thomas visited the Guardian Glass Plant in Luxembourg, learning more about the companies' investments and future plans.



On Tuesday 24 August, Ambassador Fleur Thomas visited Guardian Glass in Bascharage. Accompanied by the Trade & Investment Advisor Stefan van Look, the ambassador met with Messrs Boekhoudt, Ries and Gheysen for a guided tour of the plant and to discuss their latest investments in the UK, their production line in Luxembourg and future sustainable investments.

With its international headquarters in Luxembourg, the American company recently invested in a new state-of-the-art furnace in Goole, securing jobs for years to come. This UK plant produces flat, coated and laminated glass products mainly for customers in the UK and Ireland.

With COP26 drawing closer, the ambassador was especially interested in Guardian Glass' commitments to the environment. The Guardian Glass delegation was proud to explain that they are increasingly using recycled glass for the production of brand-new glass sheets. The company is also expanding its green initiatives by optimising the design of its new furnaces to become more energy efficient and improve environmental performance.

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## Chewing Gum Task Force to clean up our

# high streets

Major chewing gum producers, brought together by government, have signed up to a new £10 million partnership to remove gum litter from our high streets, Environment Minister Rebecca Pow announced today.

The scheme, including Mars Wrigley, GlaxoSmithKline and Perfetti Van Melle and managed by independent charity Keep Britain Tidy, will see gum firms invest up to £10 million over the next five years to help reduce gum litter.

Chewing gum litter is a blight on our towns and cities and wastes millions of pounds of taxpayers' money every year; the annual clean-up cost is estimated at £7 million. Around 87% of England's streets are stained with gum, according to research by Keep Britain Tidy.

The investment, starting later this year, will be used to clean up historic gum litter staining and use behavioural interventions to encourage people to bin their gum. Previous pilots have reduced gum littering by up to 64%.

Littering is a criminal offence and the Government has already empowered local authorities by increasing on-the-spot penalties for offenders to £150, rising to up to £2,500 if convicted in court. The Government is seeking powers in the Environment Bill to ensure that enforcement powers are used with a high degree of professionalism, whether by council staff or private contractors, and to place our improved enforcement guidance on a firm statutory footing.

The Task Force is part of the Government's new [strategy to support the evolution and regeneration of high streets](#) across the country, which includes [15 Town Deals](#) totalling £335 million to fund community regeneration projects, the transformation of derelict buildings, and communities being given the chance to own local pubs, theatres, sports grounds and corner shops.

Environment Minister Rebecca Pow said:

The stains of discarded chewing gum are a blight on our communities, spoiling our streets and wasting millions of pounds of taxpayers' money.

This new scheme means chewing gum producers are not only helping to clean up towns and cities as they welcome people back to our high streets, but crucially taking action to prevent people littering in the first place.

We are committed to building back better and greener and this commitment to making town centres a more attractive and inviting place is a key part of our long-term strategy to breathe new life into our communities.

Jonny Briscoe, Managing Director, Perfetti Van Melle – PVM UK, commented:

As an organisation serious about corporate responsibility, Perfetti Van Melle is committed to help with the clean-up of Britain's streets and to educate consumers about the importance of responsible gum disposal.

Allison Ogden-Newton, Chief Executive of environmental charity Keep Britain Tidy, said:

Keep Britain Tidy are delighted to be working with Defra and the chewing gum industry to clean up gum from our streets and critically stop it being dropped in the first place.'

The Chewing Gum Task Force forms part of wider government action to tackle litter and protect our environment. The Group will also have the opportunity to share best practice and research in gum cleansing and litter prevention such as cleaning up, education, and biodegradability.

The "Keep it, Bin it" anti-litter campaign, supported by Defra and funded by Mars Wrigley, encourages people to dispose of their litter responsibly, calling time on rubbish excuses for littering and telling people to keep hold of their rubbish until they find a bin.

The Government's landmark Environment Bill includes powers to introduce a [Deposit Return Scheme](#) for drinks containers, which will recycle billions more plastic bottles and stop them going to landfill. Our Extended Producer Responsibility Scheme will mean companies will be expected to cover the full cost of recycling and disposing of their packaging, and through the fees they pay they will be incentivised to use packaging that can be recycled and meet higher recycling targets. We have also outlined our intention to [explore regulatory options](#) to tackle the issue of discarded cigarette butts, which make up 66% of all littered items.

[Consistent Recycling Collections](#) will be introduced for every household and business in England, ensuring more plastic is recycled, while ministers will have new powers to make it easier to place charges on single-use plastic items that threaten our ecosystems. The government will also introduce a world-leading [plastic packaging tax](#) from April 2022, on plastic packaging which doesn't meet a minimum threshold of at least 30% recycled content, to encourage greater use of recycled plastic and protect our environment.

Statistic on cost of chewing gum clean-up taken from [Financial Cost of Packaging Litter – Phase 2 – Final Report, WRAP](#)

Statistic on impact of chewing gum on streets taken from Keep Britain Tidy research

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## Joint statement on Afghanistan safe passage

We are all committed to ensuring that our citizens, nationals and residents, employees, Afghans who have worked with us and those who are at risk can continue to travel freely to destinations outside Afghanistan.

We have received assurances from the Taliban that all foreign nationals and any Afghan citizen with travel authorization from our countries will be allowed to proceed in a safe and orderly manner to points of departure and travel outside the country.

We will continue issuing travel documentation to designated Afghans, and we have the clear expectation of and commitment from the Taliban that they can travel to our respective countries. We note the public statements of the Taliban confirming this understanding.

The statement was released initially by the governments of the United States of America, Albania, Australia, Belgium, Belize, Bulgaria, Burkina Faso, Cabo Verde, Canada, Central African Republic, Colombia, Costa Rica, Côte d'Ivoire, Croatia, Democratic Republic of the Congo, Denmark, Djibouti, Dominican Republic, El Salvador, Estonia, Eswatini, Federated States of Micronesia, Fiji, Finland, France, Gabon, Georgia, Germany, Ghana, Greece, Guinea, Guyana, Haiti, Honduras, Iceland, Ireland, Israel, Italy, Japan, Jordan, Kazakhstan, Kenya, Kiribati, Kyrgyzstan, Latvia, Lebanon, Liberia, Libya, Lithuania, Luxembourg, Madagascar, Maldives, Malta, Marshall Islands, Moldova, Montenegro, Morocco, Nauru, Netherlands, New Zealand, Niger, North Macedonia, Norway, Palau, Papua New Guinea, Poland, Portugal, Republic of Cyprus, Republic of Korea, Republic of Kosovo, Romania, Rwanda, Secretary General of the North Atlantic Treaty Organization, Senegal, Serbia, Sierra Leone, Slovakia, Slovenia, Somalia, Spain, St. Kitts and Nevis, Sudan, Suriname, Sweden, Switzerland, The Bahamas, The Gambia, The High Representative of the European Union for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy, Togo, Trinidad and Tobago, Turkey, Uganda, Ukraine, Union of the Comoros, United Kingdom, Vanuatu, Yemen, and Zambia.

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# Operation Warm Welcome

Work is underway across the whole of Government to ensure the Afghans who stood side by side with us in conflict, their families and those at highest risk who have been evacuated, are supported as they now rebuild their lives in the UK.

The plans, dubbed 'Operation Warm Welcome', will be overseen by Victoria Atkins as the new Minister for Afghan Resettlement.

The support provided will be similar to the commitments in the Syrian Resettlement Programme and ensure that those who worked closely with the British military and UK Government in Afghanistan, and risked their lives in doing so, get the vital health, education, support into employment and accommodation they need to fully integrate into society.

The UK has a proud history of providing safe haven to those in need and the plans to be set out next week will also harness that generosity of spirit and the offers of support which have already flooded in from charities, businesses and the British public.

This includes the creation of a central portal where people, organisations and businesses can register their offer of support, be it volunteering, a job opportunity, professional skills to help with integration and deal with trauma or donations of items like clothes and toys. Free English language courses will also be provided in recognition that many of the dependents of former staff and Afghan translators may need this.

Prime Minister Boris Johnson said:

For those who have left their homes with no more than a small bag of belongings, and in fear for their lives, coming to the UK will no doubt have been a daunting experience, but also one of hope for the future.

I am determined that we welcome them with open arms and that my Government puts in place the support they need to rebuild their lives. We will never forget the brave sacrifice made by Afghans who chose to work with us, at great risk to themselves. We owe them, and their families, a huge debt.

Full details will be set out next week and build on the commitments already made. These include £5 million for local councils to provide housing support, an offer of a vaccine for everyone on arrival and access to rapid mental well-being and trauma support.

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# PM call with Chancellor Merkel: 28 August 2021

Press release

Prime Minister Boris Johnson held a phone call with German Chancellor Merkel about Afghanistan.



A Downing Street spokesperson said:

“The Prime Minister spoke to German Chancellor Angela Merkel this morning about the situation in Afghanistan.

“The leaders welcomed the UK, German and wider NATO shared efforts to evacuate vulnerable people from Afghanistan over the last two weeks.

“They agreed on the need for an international effort in the weeks ahead to prevent a humanitarian crisis in Afghanistan. The Prime Minister outlined the UK’s enduring commitment to the country, including doubling aid to the region this year.

“The Prime Minister and Chancellor resolved to work, alongside the rest of the G7, to put in place the roadmap on dealing with any new Afghan government discussed at last week’s leaders’ meeting. The Prime Minister stressed that any recognition and engagement with the Taliban must be conditional on them allowing safe passage for those who want to leave the country and respecting human rights.”

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