

# Heather Blackman, Bronwyn Hill and Wesley Kerr reappointed as Trustees of The Royal Parks

## **Heather Blackman**

Heather is an experienced Chief Executive Officer within the retail sector, latterly at the lifestyle clothing, purpose-led brand Finisterre. She has worked in retail at board level for 15 years across a number of premium brands including Hotel Chocolat, Laura Ashley & Fat Face.

She started her career in Buying and Merchandising, then moved into multi-channel retailing, specialising in change management and growth stages of organisations. She brings vast experience of brand, strategy and commercial planning centred around the customer to The Royal Parks. Heather serves on The Royal Parks' Audit & Risk Committee and is Chair of the Remuneration Committee.

## **Wesley Kerr**

Wesley Kerr is a broadcaster, journalist, historian and horticulturist. He holds an MA from Trinity College, Cambridge. He served on the advisory board of the Royal Parks from 2013 to 2016 when it was a DCMS executive agency, and was a Trustee at the foundation of the Royal Parks charity. He was closely involved in restoring Brompton Cemetery and sits on the Greenwich Park Revealed Programme Board. He is a vice-president of the Metropolitan Public Gardens Association and was a member of the RHS Show Gardens panel. Chaired the Heritage Lottery Fund's Committee for London 2007-2014. Awarded the OBE in the Queen's Birthday Honours in 2015 for services to heritage.

He worked on numerous BBC television and radio programmes including Nationwide, Newsnight, Panorama, Holiday, Watchdog, Healthcheck, Value for Money; and all the daily news outlets. Specialist coverage of Chelsea and Hampton Court Flower Shows. Recently he has curated several art exhibitions. He was also a BBC royal correspondent, and appears in many documentaries on ITV, C4, C5 and internationally on this subject. He has worked in 40 countries and continues to write as a freelance for newspapers and journals and to lecture on heritage and horticulture.

## **Bronwyn Hill**

As Permanent Secretary at the Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs (2011-2015), Bronwyn led a complex organisation through transformational change and a series of crises, including the 2012-13 flooding. A CBE for transport services was in recognition of her contribution to national transport strategy, major projects and transport in London. She applies this experience of leadership and learning in challenging times in her non-executive work. Her interest in the environment and the importance of

green spaces for people in London led to her joining The Royal Parks Board in 2016. She is now the Lead Non-Executive Trustee.

Bronwyn joined the University of Greenwich as a Governor in 2016, becoming the Chair in 2020. As the first in her family to go to University, Bronwyn is keen to help others benefit from the transformative experience of higher education. Outside work, Bronwyn is a life-long rower and cyclist. She is a Director of the Trafalgar Rowing Centre and former Chair of Globe Rowing Club in Greenwich. She has worked with the Port of London Authority to encourage greater use of the Thames for recreational water sports.

These roles are not remunerated. These reappointments have been made in accordance with the [Cabinet Office's Governance Code on Public Appointments](#). The process is regulated by the Commissioner for Public Appointments. The Government's Governance Code requires that any significant political activity undertaken by an appointee in the last five years is declared. This is defined as including holding office, public speaking, making a recordable donation or candidature for election. Bronwyn, Heather and Wesley have not declared any activity.

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## Government spending with small businesses continues to rise

- More than £15bn paid to small and medium sized businesses to help deliver vital public services in 2019/20
- Figure is at its highest rate since records began in 2013
- Increase reflects Government's continued support for the small business sector

New data published today shows that government spending with SMEs continues to rise.

The latest procurement figures for 2019/20 show that across government, £15.5bn was paid to small and medium sized businesses to help deliver vital public services.

The figure is an increase of £1.3bn on the previous year and the highest since records began in 2013.

Cabinet Office Minister, Lord Agnew, said:

Small and medium-sized businesses are the backbone of the UK economy, fuelling economic growth and providing employment for almost 17 million people.

That is why we are determined to make sure the power of government

spending supports this vital sector and helps bring forward the delivery of top class public services.

Figures for government spending with small businesses are measured both in terms of direct spending, where money goes directly from the government to small businesses, and indirect spending, which goes through the supply-chains of larger companies.

For 2019/20, the total direct spend was £6.6bn, compared to £6.4bn in 2018/19, and the indirect spend was £9bn, compared to £7.8bn in 2018/19.

Overall, spending with small and medium sized businesses represented 26.7 per cent of the £58bn spent by the government in 2019/20 – an increase of 1.1 per cent on the previous year.

The boost in spending is a result of both a long-term government commitment and greater working with the sector.

It marks the government's commitment to obtaining value for money for taxpayers and supporting small businesses and start-ups through procurement.

Work includes talking directly with SME organisations to better understand the challenges and barriers facing smaller firms when bidding for and contracting with government departments.

Details of all contracts awarded by the government are published on Contracts Finder.

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## [Sarah Smart appointed new Chair of The Pensions Regulator](#)

Smart has been serving as the interim Chair since 1 April 2021, and is due to be made the permanent Chair on 1 June 2021, following the recent Work and Pensions Select Committee pre-appointment hearing.

Minister for Pensions, Guy Opperman, said:

The Chair is a vital part of The Pensions Regulator, providing effective oversight of this high-profile organisation and engaging and building positive relationships with senior stakeholders.

This is a challenging but rewarding role, and I am delighted that after serving as Interim Chair, Sarah has now been officially

appointed as the permanent Chair.

Newly appointed Chair of The Pensions Regulator, Sarah Smart, said:

I am delighted to be appointed Chair of TPR at such a challenging and exciting time. Continuing my work with the Board, I intend to use my extensive experience in the pensions sector to ensure TPR's resources are used effectively to protect savers, drive up standards of governance and administration, and embrace change.

My role will be to oversee the strategic delivery of that work, supporting the CEO and TPR's many talented and committed staff, but also challenging where necessary so we remain a successful, flexible, resilient and diverse regulator.

Charles Counsell, CEO of The Pensions Regulator, said:

We welcome the appointment of Sarah Smart as Chair of TPR. Sarah has a deep knowledge of the pensions industry, built up over 20 years of working in a number of important governance roles, including five years as a Board member at TPR.

Her experience will be extremely valuable as we strengthen our regulatory grip on an ever-changing pensions landscape, and meet the challenges ahead by delivering on our Corporate Strategy.

I look forward to working with Sarah and our Board to ensure that TPR continues to be clear, quick and tough, using its resources in the most efficient way to bring the maximum benefit for savers, and to hold to account those who threaten the retirement security for millions in workplace pensions.

The appointment was made following an open competition regulated by The Office for the Commissioner of Public Appointments.

### **Further information**

- The Chair is entitled to an annual remuneration of £73,840, based on a time commitment of around 104 days per year.
- The Chair's performance will be assessed at least once a year against objectives for each year of the appointment and linked to the performance of TPR. The appraisal will be carried out by a person of appropriate level within DWP.

## Contact Press Office

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# Flood defence work starting across York

- New larger floodgate to be installed under Lendal Bridge to better protect businesses and roads in the city
- New flood wall being built in Bishopthorpe to reduce flood risk in village
- Preparation work also starting in Marygate area (including Museum Gardens), as well as plans for work on Terry Avenue (by Rowntree Park)

Work is starting this week under Lendal Bridge on Wellington Row to prepare for the installation of a new, larger floodgate and construction has begun on Chantry Lane in Bishopthorpe.

Preparations are also being made for the start of work in the Marygate area and Museum Gardens, as well as on Terry Avenue near Rowntree Park.

## **Lendal Bridge**

The Lendal Bridge floodgate installation is the last stage of the Environment Agency's work from Ouse Bridge to Scarborough Bridge on the station side, which has included raising defences along North Street Gardens and Memorial Gardens.

This section of the flood scheme better protects 39 homes and businesses from flooding, as well as access roads.

## **Bishopthorpe**

The Bishopthorpe work includes the construction of a 180 metre-long flood wall running along Chantry Lane and the boundary of the palace grounds, incorporating a six metre-deep steel barrier underground; a floodgate across the bottom of Chantry Lane and water flow mechanism.

This reduces the risk of flooding to 117 properties, as well as Main Street, therefore helping to protect access for residents in the south of the village.

## **Marygate**

Elsewhere in the city, a site compound will be built in Marygate car park from Monday 10 May to facilitate the raising of the flood embankment in the Museum Gardens, as well as increasing the height of the flood walls and gates between Scarborough Bridge and Museum Gardens, including installing glass panels on top of the defences along Earlsborough Terrace.

The work will reduce the risk of flooding to 57 homes and businesses in the Marygate area.

## **Clementhorpe**

A site compound was established on the playing field in Rowntree Park last month to enable construction work to take place on the Clementhorpe section of the scheme, between Skeldergate Bridge and Millennium Bridge.

Construction on Terry Avenue will include complex underground work, with a 240 metre-long and six metre-deep semi-permeable barrier being installed in order to prevent flood waters seeping through the ground and undermining overground flood defences. This work will require large machinery to be used that requires appropriate safety precautions to be taken.

To ensure the safety of the public, a section of Terry Avenue will be closed from Skeldergate Bridge to just before the entrance to Dukes Wharf. The closure date is yet to be confirmed by the Environment Agency's contractors but is currently expected to start on Monday 17 May and take 12 months.

Once completed, the Clementhorpe section of the flood scheme will provide improved flood protection to 135 homes and businesses.

The Environment Agency has worked with City of York Council and the community to create suitable diversion routes. The routes were reviewed and approved by an independent road safety auditor, before being submitted to the council for their review and approval.

Ben Hughes, director of the Environment Agency's York Flood Alleviation Scheme, said:

This is a big month for the York Flood Alleviation Scheme. We're very pleased that further work is starting to reduce the risk of flood to homes and businesses, as well as infrastructure. It's great news for the city.

We understand that parts of the work could be inconvenient for some people, including walkers and cyclists who use the riverside route, but the York Flood Alleviation Scheme essential for long-term resilience of the city, which, as we're all too aware, is prone to flooding.

In total, the Environment Agency is investing £45 million in the York Flood

Alleviation Scheme to better protect 2,000 homes and businesses in the city from flooding.

More information about [York Flood Alleviation Scheme](#).

More information about [flooding and to sign up to receive free flood warnings](#).

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## [Chancellor visits leading meal kit provider to discuss future of the economy](#)

- Chancellor visits Gousto in London to meet staff and discuss future of the economy
- Gousto are creating 1,000 new jobs this year
- government's £350 billion Plan for Jobs continues to support businesses as they get back on their feet

Rishi Sunak visited Gousto, who after growing significantly over recent years, have thrived over the past 12 months and are hiring 1,000 new staff this year.

To expand their operations, the innovative firm are taking advantage of the super-deduction, Britain's biggest ever 2-year business tax cut, and one of the government's flagship schemes announced at Budget as part of the Chancellor's Plan for Jobs to get the UK's economy roaring again.

Other schemes that have been essential in helping other businesses across the UK to bridge the crisis include the Coronavirus Job Retention Scheme, business grants, government backed loans, business rates relief and tax deferrals.

On the visit, the Chancellor was welcomed by Shaun Pearce, chief technology officer at Gousto, and went on a tour of their headquarters, visiting their creative studio before helping the team to prepare meals in their development kitchen.

### **Chancellor of the Exchequer Rishi Sunak said:**

It's inspiring to hear stories of businesses that have succeeded over the past year – with their innovation, energy and grit, they remind us of the drive that defines British business.

For many businesses though the past year has been incredibly difficult, which is why we have spent over £350bn to bridge them

through the crisis.

As the economy reopens, we tread optimistically but cautiously forward, with our Plan for Jobs remaining on hand to give businesses and people the support they need to get back on their feet.

**Timo Boldt, Founder and CEO at Gousto, said:**

In 2021, Gousto will double its workforce to 2,000 employees as we prepare to open 2 more fulfilment centres over the next two years, in response to continued demand for our recipe boxes.

We welcomed the discussions with the Chancellor of the Exchequer today, who recognises the role we've played in serving the nation through the pandemic and how we will help the future of the UK economy as a tech leader creating thousands of jobs.

The more we grow, the greater the positive impact we can have on people and the planet, as we strive towards our mission to become the most-loved way to eat dinner.

Founded in 2012, Gousto pioneered the recipe box offering in the UK and sold over 25 million meals in Q1 of 2021 (compared to 10 million meals in Q1 2020) through its subscription service – three meals a second.

**Further information**