

British Embassy Costa Rica adaptation and resilience seminar: invest in nature to tackle climate change

On 24 and 25 March 2021, the British Embassy in Costa Rica, in collaboration with the Forever Costa Rica Association, hosted the virtual seminar, “Harnessing the power of nature for climate change adaptation and resilience.”

This event aimed to drive momentum for action and alignment on nature and adaptation ahead of [COP26 in Glasgow](#) in November 2021, encouraging countries to sign up to the Leaders’ Pledge for Nature (LPN), the High Ambition Coalition (HAC) and the Adaptation Action Coalition.

Sessions evidenced how putting the LPN into action and delivering adaptation through nature-based solutions bring tangible benefits and contribute to a green recovery.

The two-day event was inaugurated by Anne-Marie Trevelyan, UK International Champion on Adaptation and Resilience and Andrea Meza, Minister of the Environment and Energy of Costa Rica.

In her introductory remarks, Anne-Marie Trevelyan, said:

Nature-based solutions for adaptation help protect people from disasters, support and create livelihoods, and can offer strong value for money. This is why the UK is putting nature, adaptation, and resilience at the heart of its preparations for COP26.

We greatly welcome Costa Rica’s membership to the Adaptation Action Coalition, to convert political commitments into tangible delivery on the ground. I urge other Latin American and Caribbean governments to share progress, and highlight where further action and support is needed, through the publication of Adaptation Communications ahead of COP26.

The activity featured presentations from a range of climate change experts including Lord Zac Goldsmith, UK Minister of the Environment and Professor Sir Partha Dasgupta, Economist, who spoke on the findings of his report, The Economics of Biodiversity.

Also among the key speakers were Peruvian Vice-Minister for the Environment, Luisa Elena Guinand; Carlos Manuel Rodríguez, CEO and Chairperson of the Global Environment Facility; and specialists from the International Union for the Conservation of Nature (IUCN) and World Wildlife Fund (WWF).

Over 600 individuals attended the virtual event, with participants from over 30 countries in Latin America, the Caribbean and Africa. Discussions

underscored the imperative of placing nature at the centre of national climate change policies as well as the need for a more inclusive approach to adaptation and resilience strategies, recognising the value of local knowledge and solutions.

Financing for nature-based solutions was also raised as a priority issue. Lord Goldsmith stressed that the UK would double UK International Climate Finance to £11.6 billion, and spend at least £3bn of this over the next five years, on solutions that protect and restore nature.

British Embassy Manila convenes Philippine private sector ahead of COP26

Manila, Philippines – A virtual gathering of Philippine business leaders discussing climate change and sustainability was convened recently by the British Embassy in Manila, in partnership with the Department for International Trade.

During the Embassy-hosted Philippine Green Business Leaders virtual roundtable, keynote speaker Nigel Topping, the UN's COP26 High-Level Champion for Climate Action, discussed his role in galvanising new, more ambitious and most credible climate action from companies, investors, cities, states and regions, and referenced the UK's own journey in driving down emissions while at the same time growing its economy.

With 15 companies represented across the business spectrum, senior Philippine corporate executives highlighted the importance of pursuing and embedding sustainability in their operations, while at the same time tackling the significant challenges posed by COVID-19.

The Philippine Green Business Leaders virtual roundtable followed closely on the heels of the Embassy's Earth Hour events and other COP26 related meetings, and showcased the strong commitment of the Philippine business sector to tackle the challenges of climate change mitigation, adaptation, resilience and sustainability.

Daniel Pruce, British Ambassador to the Philippines said:

At the core of the UK's clean growth leadership is delivering for countries most vulnerable to climate change. This of course includes the Philippines which has witnessed stronger and more destructive typhoons throughout the years. If we are to be successful in achieving a cleaner future, the role of private

investment is paramount.

Ambassador Pruce reiterated the need of a whole-system approach to address climate change in the country. On 1 to 12 November, the British Government will welcome heads of state and climate policy experts and negotiators in Glasgow, Scotland for the 26th UN Climate Change Conference of Parties (COP26). The COP26 summit will bring parties together to accelerate action towards the goals of the Paris Agreement and the UN Framework Convention on Climate Change.

Nigel Topping, the UN's COP 26 High-Level Champion for Climate Action said:

COP26 is the first real test of the Paris Agreement, which set our long term goal to net zero and a process of ratcheting ambition every five years. When you as business leaders raise your ambition, it sends a very strong signal to political leaders and makes it easier for policy makers to be bold. And when bold policy comes, it makes it easier for your peers to intensify their own [climate] ambitions. We call this the 'ambition loop', and hope it delivers a real step up in climate action from governments and the private sector alike.

During the event, Mr. Topping encouraged local businesses to embrace and join the Race to Zero initiative, the flagship global campaign to rally leadership and support from non-state actors for a healthy, resilient, zero carbon recovery that creates decent jobs, prevents future threats, and unlocks inclusive, sustainable growth.

As part of the British Embassy in Manila's contribution, the Embassy will organise a series of thematic sessions in the lead up to COP26. These sessions will include representatives from Philippine government, civil society, academia, and industry leaders. The Philippine Green Business Leaders roundtable was the opening forum in this series, and set a positive tone for the events to come.

For businesses interested in joining the Race to Zero campaign, please send an email to RaceToZero@unfccc.int

[Historic site providing housing for over 55s gets new lease of life](#)

Thornley House, situated on the site of a former medieval hospital in rural Durham, is being given a new lease of life thanks to £560,000 of grant

funding from the Government's Affordable Homes Programme.

Registered Provider, Sherburn House Charity, is working with Esh Construction and Edwards Architecture to renovate the Grade II and Grade II* listed properties, delivering 14 self-contained flats for over 55's, including 12 Sheltered Accommodation and 2 general needs flats, available for affordable rent.

Due to the heritage of the site, this scheme requires a sensitive renovation. The site dates back to 1181 and was founded by the Bishop of Durham to care for lepers with living accommodation for the monks and nuns who cared for them.

The grant funding has been vital in helping the developer manage the high costs of materials such as welsh slate and stone slab for roof coverings; cast iron rainwater goods and the preservation of timber doors and sliding sash windows.

Although already operated by Sherburn House Charity as accommodation for older residents, this project is critical for the ongoing operation of the scheme. Poor layouts, shared kitchen facilities, poor standards of insulation and heating, and communal utilities charges render some units unlettable and they fall short of Sherburn House's aim of supporting independent living and reducing social isolation.

The work being undertaken will ensure that these historic buildings continue to support independent living for its residents. The communal heating system will be replaced with individual central heating systems and bathroom and kitchen renovations will bring these homes up to date.

Pauline Bishop, the Charity's Chief Executive said: "We are so excited to present our newly refurbished Sheltered Accommodation properties. The Charity Trustees acknowledged that the properties were past their best and required substantial investment to bring them up to standards required of modern living. They agreed to invest the Charity's own money which was substantially supported by Homes England funding.

"The work was part of a 5-year programme of renovation on the site which includes a 55-bed care home, independent living accommodation and a large 4/5 bedroom house which will support adults with care needs."

[Nightingale court opens in Bolton stadium](#)

- temporary court set up at University of Bolton Stadium
- Nightingale court to serve local community while providing vital

financial boost for the Wanderers

- part of government's plan to ensure justice continues throughout the pandemic

The £25 million all-seater University of Bolton stadium will swap referees with judges as it transformed into a Nightingale court. It will host two courtrooms that will hear non-custodial criminal cases and be able to issue fines and community service orders. Any cases deemed serious enough for time in prison will be sent back to a Crown Court for sentencing.

Cases will be heard in rooms beneath the terraces of the Nat Lofthouse Stand (East) and West Stand, which are normally used for conferences. The venue will help to free up space at the nearby Crown Court for more jury trials – reducing delays and delivering speedier justice for people across the north-west. It will also provide the club with a vital cash-injection while the turnstiles remain closed due to lockdown restrictions.

The versatile stadium has previously hosted concerts for the likes of Oasis, Elton John, and Coldplay. It will now provide some of the 60 Nightingale courtrooms which will be available nationwide by the end of the month – set up by the government to boost capacity and alleviate pressures on the courts and tribunals system caused by the pandemic.

Courts Minister, Lord Wolfson QC, said:

This new Nightingale court is in the heart of the local community and will help to deliver swifter justice for people across Bolton.

Courts have been established in cathedrals, hotels, theatres, and now football stadiums to help us tackle the delays caused by the pandemic. This innovative approach is already increasing the caseload going through our courts, while pumping much-needed cash into businesses which have taken a financial hit over the last 12 months.

A Bolton Wanderers Football Club spokesperson said:

The club is pleased to support Bolton Crown Court by enabling the University of Bolton stadium to be used as a Nightingale court.

As a versatile venue which is at the heart of Bolton, we are proud to be once again supporting our local community during what has been a challenging 12 months for all.

The move is part of a £113m government investment to support courts and tribunals during coronavirus (COVID-19). It includes recruiting 1,600 extra staff, investment in further technology, and on-site safety precautions such as plexiglass screens. This is on top of the £142m being spent to speed up technological improvements and modernise courtrooms. The impact of these

measures is already being seen:

- England and Wales are believed to be the first comparable major jurisdiction in the world to resume jury trials, with hundreds now being listed each week
- outstanding cases in the magistrates' courts have fallen by around 50,000 since the peak last summer
- while the number of disposals continues to be just under pre-COVID-19 levels, the Crown Court continues to see an increase in the number of trials listed
- more than 20,000 hearings using remote technology are taking place each week – compared to around 550 in March 2020 – a 4,000% rise

The decision to keep courts and tribunals open during the pandemic has had a tangible impact on people's lives. Over 9,000 court orders were issued to protect children from female genital mutilation, forced marriage, and domestic abuse between April and September 2020.

Meanwhile, [a major £40m investment](#) announced recently will go towards specialist help for vulnerable victims – funding helplines and the recruitment of more counsellors. This comes as an extra £337m was confirmed in the recent Spending Review to deliver swifter justice and support victims in 2021/22, while £76m will further increase capacity in family courts and tribunals.

Notes to editors

1. More than £113m is being invested in a range of measures to tackle the impact of COVID-19, including the recruitment of 1,600 additional staff and opening more Nightingale courts.
2. We're also spending £153m to improve court and tribunal buildings – the biggest single investment in court estate maintenance for more than 20 years.
3. This progress will be bolstered by an extra [£337m the government is spending next year](#) to deliver swifter justice and support victims, while an additional £76 million will further increase capacity in family courts and tribunals.
4. Details on [measures to keep courts safe, secure and clean](#).
5. More details on the [Nightingale courtrooms in operation](#).

[Multi-million pound scheme for zero-emission buses across England launched](#)

- new scheme worth up to £120 million launched to help local transport authorities introduce zero-emission buses
- move will reduce carbon emissions from local public transport, improving

air quality in areas across England

- support follows national bus strategy announcement, which set out how buses will be greener, cheaper, more frequent and more reliable

Transport Secretary Grant Shapps has today (30 March 2021) launched a multimillion-pound scheme to enable local transport authorities to roll out zero-emission buses as the government continues to build back greener.

Up to £120 million is being made available through the zero-emission-buses regional area (ZEBRA) scheme, which will allow local transport authorities to:

- bid for funding to purchase zero-emission buses
- reduce the carbon emissions from their local public transport
- improve air quality in towns and cities across England

The funding will deliver up to 500 zero-emission buses, supporting the government's wider commitment to introduce 4,000 zero-emission buses.

The funding comes from the wider [£3 billion fund announced by the government](#) to improve bus services in our [national bus strategy](#) published on 15 March.

The major new strategy – the biggest shake-up to the standard of bus services in the country for a generation – will see passengers benefit from:

- lower, simpler flat fares
- more frequent services
- requirements that will see councils set yearly targets for improving the reliability of services

To ensure the funding from today's zero-emission-bus fund is used quickly to help provide British bus manufacturers with an injection of orders, the government is calling on consortia of local transport authorities, energy companies, bus operators and manufacturers to come together to work up strong cases for funding. This will help make sure that buses are built, bought and being driven on our roads efficiently to the benefit of local economies and communities.

Bidders will have until 21 May 2021 to submit expressions of interest for a fast-track process that will allow local transport authorities with well-developed proposals to move quickly in their bid to secure funding.

However, the government has said it wants all local authorities to have the opportunity to submit bids and, therefore, those who need more time to develop their proposals will have until 25 June 2021 to submit expressions of interest.

Transport Secretary Grant Shapps, said:

We've set out our vision of how we're going to make buses better in this country, and now we're getting on with delivering it.

The launch of the scheme today means we're giving businesses and local authorities the tools to help deliver the 4,000 zero-emission buses we said we would introduce, which will dramatically improve air quality in towns and cities across the country, helping us achieve our net-zero ambitions.

Silviya Barrett, Head of Policy, Research and Projects at Campaign for Better Transport, said:

Zero-emission buses are great news all round. As well as addressing climate change and air pollution, this funding will boost the bus manufacturing sector and give more passengers the best modern buses.

We're glad that the government has appreciated the need to speed up the transition to zero-emission buses.

Jane Gratton, Head of People Policy at the British Chamber of Commerce (BCC), said:

The BCC very much welcomes investment in initiatives that boost public transport infrastructure and the UK's drive towards net-zero.

This is a welcome injection of cash and confidence for businesses in this sector and for towns and cities across the country. Access to affordable, reliable and greener public transport will be a key to rebuilding local economies.

The national bus strategy contains several pledges to improve the environmental friendliness of the country's bus sector. This includes a [consultation on the end date for sales of diesel buses](#), which was launched alongside the strategy.

Today's announcement comes as Coventry recently received the historic first pot of funding from the [all-electric bus towns and cities competition](#), giving the city £50 million of funding to revolutionise its bus services and entirely replace their current fleet with electric buses.

It also comes as the government announces over £30 million of funding to support pioneering research into battery technology, the electric vehicle supply chain and hydrogen vehicles.

Twenty-two studies will receive a share of £9.4 million, including:

- proposals to build a plant in Cornwall that will extract lithium for use in electric vehicle batteries
- a plant to build specialised magnets for electric vehicle motors in

Cheshire

- lightweight hydrogen storage for cars and vans in Loughborough

Funding from the ZEBRA scheme will help the UK build back greener as the government publishes its [transport decarbonisation plan](#), setting out how all modes of transport – sea, rail, road and aviation – can help deliver net-zero by 2050.