

# UK funds to help communities in Peten to tackle COVID-19 impact

World news story

The British Ambassador in Guatemala, Nick Whittingham, visited Peten and met with communities and authorities who are receiving assistance to improve governance, reduce poverty and continue preventing COVID-19 infections.



The UK government is providing extra support of more than 500,000 quetzals to a [3-year project aimed at tackling illegal wildlife trade in Guatemala and bordering areas with Mexico](#). The funds will address COVID-19 specific impacts in the area.

The projects will help local authorities financially debilitated by COVID-19 to continue tackling illegal wildlife trade in the area. It will also expand livelihoods investments through support for subsistence agriculture, apiculture, and habitat restoration within five Guatemalan communities, benefitting over 120 households.

Ambassador Whittingham held a meeting with project implementers working in the area and led by Wildlife Conservation Society (WCS). The Executive Secretary of the National Council of Protected Areas (CONAP), Abraham Estrada; Environmental Prosecutor, Aura Marina Lopez; and Environmental Judge of Peten, Karla Hernandez, also joined the meeting. They revised implementation to date and next steps.

Later, the Ambassador visited the premises of the Guatemalan Ministry of Health in Santa Elena, Peten. The funds will also allow collaboration with Guatemala's Government to provide personal protective equipment (PPE), COVID-19 medical kits and rapid testing for rural communities/project partners, and undertake outreach to raise awareness about COVID-19 within rural communities.

Finally, the Ambassador travelled to the Community of San Miguel, in the Municipality of San Andres, to see how some of these projects are becoming a reality and to participate as a witness of honour in the signature of a

conservation agreement. This compact will allow villagers to benefit from the fruits of their labour -with aid of capital seed from the fund-, whilst they also commit to continue preserving the environment and tackling illegal wildlife trade.

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## [Recruitment of Chief Commissioner of the Northern Ireland Human Rights Commission](#)

Press release

The Secretary of State for Northern Ireland invites applications for the appointment of Chief Commissioner of the Northern Ireland Human Rights Commission.



The Secretary of State for Northern Ireland invites applications for the appointment of Chief Commissioner of the Northern Ireland Human Rights Commission.

The new Chief Commissioner will take up the appointment in late summer 2021 for a period of up to five years. Further details about the role, including the terms of appointment, and the application pack are available for download at <http://publicappointments.cabinetoffice.gov.uk/>

Alternatively, an application pack can be requested by email to [NIHRC2021@nio.gov.uk](mailto:NIHRC2021@nio.gov.uk) or by telephoning 028 9076 5497. Unfortunately, we are unable to send or receive application packs by post at the current time. Please contact us if you require other formats.

The closing date for applications is Sunday 28 February 2021. Late or

incomplete applications will not be accepted.

The Commissioner for Public Appointments regulates appointments to the Northern Ireland Human Rights Commission and the Secretary of State in accordance with the provisions set out in the Northern Ireland Act 1998 makes appointments.

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## Prime Minister's statement on coronavirus (COVID-19): 3 February 2021

Good afternoon,

When Captain Sir Tom Moore decided to launch a national campaign in his own back garden

raising more money and achieving more in his one hundredth year than perhaps any Centenarian in our history

he knew instinctively which organisation he wanted to thank and support

it was – and is – the NHS. And he was right.

Because there are many people and groups responsible for the UK's vaccination programme

and we owe our thanks to our brilliant scientists,

to Kate Bingham and the Vaccine Task Force which has procured over 400 million doses of seven different types of vaccine,

to the manufacturers and the delivery drivers,

the pharmacists, the military medics, countless volunteers,

but to get this life-saving medicine into the arms of the nation at the kind of speed that we're seeing

we are relying on the doctors, nurses and all the staff of our NHS.

And it is thanks to their effort – the most colossal in the history of our National Health Service –

that we have today passed the milestone of 10 million vaccinations in the United Kingdom,

including almost 90 per cent of those aged 75 and over in England and every eligible person in a care home.

And with every jab and every day, we have more evidence about the effectiveness of these vaccines.

New research from Oxford University suggests the protection provided by the first dose of the Oxford-AstraZeneca vaccine kicks in after three weeks and lasts right the way through to the booster at three months.

And research also shows that the Oxford AstraZeneca vaccine seems likely to reduce transmission to others.

And even if these vaccines cannot make us invulnerable,

and no vaccine has ever given 100 per cent protection to everybody

the evidence increasingly shows that our vaccines achieve this crucial objective:

to reduce death and serious illness from those major strains of Covid that have been subject to research.

And in the days leading up to our review point in the week of the 15th of February we will be accumulating even more data

helped by NHS Test and Trace –

so that we can begin to chart a way ahead

starting, if the data allow, with the re-opening of schools on March 8th.

And I will be setting out as much as we can about that roadmap forward on February 22nd

And though today there are some signs of hope

the numbers of Covid patients in hospital are beginning to fall for the first time since the onset of this new wave –

the level of infection is still alarmingly high.

And I am sorry to say that we have lost another 1,322 lives in the last 24 hours alone

and our hearts again go out to every family that grieves.

And the wards of our NHS are under huge pressure with more than 32,000 Covid patients still in hospital.

And so tonight let's clap together for Captain Tom at 6pm and let's clap for the spirit of optimism that he stood for  
but let's also clap for all those he campaigned for  
our brilliant NHS staff and care workers  
and let's do everything we can to carry on supporting them.  
Because if we stay at home, protect our NHS and save lives,  
then in the words of Captain Tom –  
tomorrow will be a good day.

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## **Jacobs awarded £162.5m Lower Thames Crossing contract**

The Lower Thames Crossing will improve journeys by almost doubling road capacity across the Thames east of London, with 14.3 miles of new road featuring two 2.6-mile-long tunnels. The scheme will help to unlock a wealth of economic benefits by supporting over 22,000 jobs during construction and creating better connections to the region's ports, distribution hubs and manufacturing centres.

The Integration Partner will bring a diverse range of capabilities to create a strong support function to Highways England in connection with the project, including programme management, stakeholder management and risk management. Their experience-based insight will enable objectives for time, cost and quality to be met.

Jacobs will begin to prepare the scheme to move into the delivery phase so that main works contractors will be in a good position to be quickly mobilised. They will also support the successful delivery of the construction, integrated system commissioning and handover to operations helping to ensure the project leaves a great legacy.

Matt Palmer, Lower Thames Crossing Executive Director said:

The Lower Thames Crossing is the most ambitious road project this country has seen since the M25 was completed nearly 35 years ago. The construction of the crossing will generate 22,000 jobs, and will connect the midlands to the Channel ports providing a boost to the UK economy as part of post Covid19 recovery. This contract award is the first step in that journey.

Jacobs will be join us as a partner, bringing world-wide best practise in large infrastructure programmes to supplement Highways England's outstanding record in successful project delivery. Together our intention is to create a collaborative team with our three main contractors to deliver an exceptional project that the country can be proud of.

Jacobs People & Places Solutions Senior Vice President Europe and Digital Strategies Donald Morrison said:

We are united around the Lower Thames Crossing's vision to improve transport connections and boost regional economic growth opportunities, and look forward to driving strategic collaboration with Highways England and their key partners on this critical component in the UK's future transport infrastructure.

Our collective knowledge and capability in successfully integrating major transportation solutions, coupled with our long partnership of working with Highways England position us to manage this uniquely challenging programme of work, achieving best value against the outcomes.

The award of the Integration Partner contract follows the £2bn Tunnels and Approaches package – Highways England's largest ever contract – tender launch in November 2020.

Highways England plans to resubmit its application for a Development Consent Order later this year. An application was originally submitted to the Planning Inspectorate in October 2020 but was withdrawn in order to provide more information.

Visit the [Lower Thames Crossing pages](#) for more information on this project.

## **General enquiries**

Members of the public should contact the Highways England customer contact centre on 0300 123 5000.

## **Media enquiries**

Journalists should contact the Highways England press office on 0844 693 1448 and use the menu to speak to the most appropriate press officer.

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# Three new board members appointed to the Environment Agency

Environment Secretary George Eustice has appointed Dr Stewart Davies, Ines Faden da Silva and Lilli Matson to the Environment Agency Board. The appointments began on 1 February 2021 and will run for four years until 31 January 2025.

Board members provide non-executive leadership challenge and support to the Environment Agency's executive through regular Board meetings, committees and groups. They also undertake individual lead roles on relevant issues and with local operational teams.

All appointments to the Environment Agency Board are made on merit following open competition. The appointments comply with the Ministerial Code of Governance on Public Appointments. There is a requirement for appointees' political activity (if significant) to be declared. All three appointees have declared that they have not taken part in any significant political activity in the past five years.

Environment Secretary George Eustice said:

It is great to welcome Stewart, Ines, and Lilli. Their knowledge and experience will be an asset to the Environment Agency Board as we all work together to improve and enhance the natural environment.

Emma Howard Boyd, Chair of the Environment Agency, said:

The Environment Agency Board's remit covers about 13 million hectares of land, 22,000 miles of river, 3,100 miles of coastline and 2 million hectares of coastal waters. It's a big responsibility but it's a privilege to work with and learn from the Environment Agency's, and wider Defra Group's, experienced and expert staff.

I look forward to working with Stewart, Ines and Lilli. They have the skills and knowledge to help the Environment Agency better prepare the country for climate shocks, like flood and drought, and deliver on the Government's 10-point plan for a green industrial revolution.

The Environment Agency is a Non-Departmental Public Body set up under the Environment Act 1995 to take an integrated approach to environmental protection and enhancement in England. It has major responsibilities in flood management, water resources and quality, climate change, land quality, chemicals, pollution prevention and control, waste, conservation and

biodiversity, fisheries conservation, air quality and navigation.

The new appointments are based on a time commitment of four days per month and receive a remuneration rate of £16,800 per annum.

## **Biographies**

### **Dr Stewart Davies**

Stewart is Chair of the Sustainable Development Partnership for the City of Bradford Metropolitan District. He was formerly Chair of the Environmental Services Association and the Innovation Advisory Board at the Natural Environment Research Council, having served on the board of Innovate UK and the Sustainable Development Commission.

### **Ines Faden da Silva**

Ines is group treasurer at Tideway, a regulated utility and the company building London's super sewer. Tideway has issued £1.7 billion of sustainable finance, including seventeen green bonds in public and private markets, a green US private placement and a sustainability linked revolving credit facility. Prior to Tideway, Ines worked for Citigroup where she advised and arranged financing for infrastructure and energy projects and later managed a portfolio of structured assets.

### **Lilli Matson**

Lilli has worked for Transport for London since 2006, currently as Chief Officer of Safety, Health & Environment, delivering the Mayor's Transport Strategy, the Vision Zero Action plan for London and working to address the climate crisis and to ensure TfL's environmental performance is exemplary. Previously Lilli was a member of the UK Government's Commission for Integrated Transport and ran her own transport consultancy, leading major projects on sustainable transport for a range of clients.