

Project cuts pollution in Northumberland

A £2 million engineering project at a nationally important archaeological site is cutting pollution in the north east of England.

Mining took place for 200 years at Carrshield in the North Pennines Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty, but the wastes – known as tailings – left behind after processing lead and zinc ores were being washed into the River West Allen and damaging the environment.

The site was on Historic England's register of at risk scheduled monuments because the 19th Century dry stone wall that kept the mine tailings out of the river was beginning to fail and at significant risk of suddenly collapsing, which could have caused 1,000 tonnes of lead, zinc and cadmium to severely pollute the river.

The Coal Authority and Environment Agency carried out investigations over several years to decide how to cost-effectively stop the river being polluted, while preserving the unique industrial heritage at the site.

The river was eroding the wall and, at the same time, rain falling on the mine tailings was washing about 3 tonnes of metals into the river each year.

Set in a remote location, the area has the potential for rapid changes in weather conditions and river flows, which increased the difficulty of construction, and a large crane was used to allow staff to work safely next to the river.

The very high concentrations of lead and zinc in the tailings meant rare calaminarian plants were growing in some areas, which needed protecting as they are an important part of the biodiversity of the area, and specialists made sure the work was carried out without damaging the archaeology and ecology.

The long-term solution involved re-profiling the mine tailings and installing an impermeable capping layer and perimeter drains to stop rainfall washing metals out of the wastes.

Damaged sections of the walls were rebuilt using concrete blocks and then faced with local stone to blend in with the existing walls.

A thin layer of mine tailings was placed on top of the cap and planted with local seeds, including the calaminarian plants, to increase the biodiversity and maintain the industrial nature of the site.

Unfortunately lots of wastes containing high concentrations of metals have already entered the West Allen, so a trap was installed in the river downstream of Carrshield to capture contaminated sediments so they can be removed from the river.

The project is part of the [Water and Abandoned Metal Mines \(WAMM\) programme](#), a partnership between the Environment Agency, Coal Authority and Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, to make our rivers cleaner and healthier to benefit people, wildlife and the economy.

The Carrshield project received additional funding from the North East Local Enterprise Partnership's Local Growth Fund, as part of the [River Tyne economic development](#) project.

Nick Cox, the Coal Authority's metal mine programme lead said:

This is a nationally important archaeological reminder of Britain's industrial past, which is set within a very challenging environment.

Thanks to the planning and management of the scheme and good partnership working, it has proved that a scheduled monument site can be sensitively, but robustly repaired.

The work was essential and will protect against catastrophic failure and the long-term erosion of contaminated mine wastes directly into the local river system.

The Environment Agency's Dr Hugh Potter, manager of the WAMM programme, added:

This is one of our many projects within the North Pennines that are designed to clean up more than 150km of rivers in the South Tyne catchment, which are polluted by cadmium, lead and zinc from abandoned metal mines.

These metals harm fish and river flies, and ultimately end up contaminating sediments in the Tyne estuary.

Historically this industry played a major part in Britain's history, but these mines are the source of half the metals found in our rivers and around 1,500 km of rivers are polluted in England.

The government's [25 Year Environment Plan](#) and the [Northumbria River Basin Management Plan](#) make it clear that cleaning up this chemical pollution is a priority.

[More than 19,000 jobs created by Kickstart Scheme so far](#)

- 19,672 jobs created for young people so far by landmark Kickstart Scheme
- jobs in tech, film and TV, communications, fitness, and the charity sector among the roles on offer
- more than 4,350 applications from employers and gateways

The landmark scheme, which gives 16-24-year olds a future of opportunity and hope by creating high-quality, government-subsidised jobs across the UK, began last week.

The Scheme has also received 4,359 applications from employers across Great Britain, with a wide range of jobs available, including in tech, construction, communications, fitness and media. New applications from employers are being accepted each week.

Chancellor Rishi Sunak said:

Our country's future will be built by the next generation, so it's vital that we harness the talent of young people as we rebuild from the pandemic. But this isn't just about kickstarting our economy, we're giving opportunity and hope to thousands of young people, kickstarting their careers and offering them a brighter future.

Work and Pensions Secretary Thérèse Coffey said:

Every job created by the Kickstart Scheme is a potentially life-changing opportunity for a young person, and the heartening response of employers shows they recognise the huge value in giving youth a chance.

The pandemic has hit young people hard, but we are doing everything in our power to give them hope and the chance to find their place in the world of work.

Employers from all corners of the country have signed up, creating thousands of new and interesting jobs and helping us to level up as we build back better.

Young people have been some of the hardest hit by the pandemic and unemployment can have longstanding implications for their future jobs and wages. The Kickstart Scheme runs until December 2021 and is expected to create more than 250,000 high-quality jobs for them.

On a visit with the Prime Minister to a Tesco warehouse yesterday (11 November), the Chancellor met some young people who are set to start their Kickstart placements next week. Other businesses including Bloomberg, British Chambers of Commerce, Network Rail, Barnardo's, YMCA, LADbible Group, Tech Nation, The Royal Mint, KFC, and Farrow & Ball have also committed to support the scheme. Over 500 [gateways](#) – organisations that act on behalf of employers offering 29 or less vacancies – have registered to help the smallest businesses to hire young people too.

Each job placement lasts six months and is fully funded by the government, helping young people build their confidence and experience in the workplace, while earning a regular wage. Young people on Kickstart will also get additional employment support and training to help them progress during their placement, with £1,500 available to employers to cover this training as well as other onboarding costs.

The scheme is just one part of a package of support for young people. The government has invested £1.6 billion in increasing the number of apprenticeships, traineeships and employment support schemes, helping people to build the skills they need to get back into work.

Further information

- on 31 August, 523,000 jobs were furloughed where the employees were 24 and under
- in August 2020, there were over 600,000 16-24-year-olds not in employment on Universal Credit
- [BBC Panorama](#) found people aged 16-25 were more than twice as likely as older workers to have lost their job, while six in 10 saw their earnings fall
- the scheme is open to people 16-24 years old, who are claiming Universal Credit, and are at risk of long-term unemployment
- referrals to the scheme will run until December 2021 with the Kickstart Scheme expected to create hundreds of thousands of jobs for young people on Universal Credit and at risk of long-term unemployment, with those eligible referred through their Jobcentre Plus Work Coach
- the government will fully fund each Kickstart placement – paying 100% of the age-relevant National Minimum Wage, National Insurance and pension contributions for 25 hours a week.
- employers will be able to top up this wage, while the government will also pay employers £1,500 to set up support and training for people on a Kickstart placement, as well as helping pay for uniforms and other set up costs
- more than 500 bodies have signed up to serve as gateways on the £2 billion programme, providing assistance to employers offering fewer than 30 vacancies under the scheme.
- referrals to the Scheme will run until December 2021 – to find out more

visit the [Kickstart Scheme page](#)

Here's what some of the organisations involved in the scheme have to say:

Peter Grauer, Chairman, Bloomberg L.P. said:

The coronavirus crisis has taken an enormous toll on job markets around the globe, with young people some of the worst affected.

As we turn towards the future, the UK Government's Kickstart Scheme offers an innovative solution to helping young people back into the job market. We are proud to be part of such an ambitious initiative and look forward to welcoming a promising array of young talent across our UK business.

Gerard Grech, CEO, Tech Nation said:

Kickstart is a fantastic enabler for the economy. Talent is everywhere, but opportunity is not, so it's really important we all do our best to help everyone fulfil their potential. I'm delighted to see the Kickstart Scheme embraced by UK scale ups which will inspire a new and diverse generation into tech. Digital tech now accounts for 9% of the UK workforce and more than a fifth of the workforce in the UK's biggest cities, plus over 90,000 jobs a week in tech were advertised in August.

James Martin, Director of Policy, British Chambers of Commerce said:

The Kickstart Scheme will help firms create and support thousands of opportunities for young people, maintaining their access to the job market and driving the UK's economic recovery.

Rooted in local business communities across the UK, Chambers are playing a leading role in connecting businesses with young people to create long-term quality employment opportunities. They will want to see the application process simplified.

Hayden Wood, co-founder and CEO of Bulb, said:

We're proud to be giving more young people the opportunity to work inside a high-growth company building new technology to bring simpler, cheaper and greener energy to 1.7 million homes.

As the UK's biggest green energy company, a B Corp and one of the fastest growing firms in the country, we hope to play an important role creating jobs and building a greener way of living and working.

Sarah Barnes, Bauer Media's People and Culture Director said:

At Bauer we work hard to level the playing field so that all can access opportunities within our teams, and so we were really drawn by the government's fantastic new Kickstart programme that aims to give unemployed young people a future.

These promising young individuals will have the unique opportunity to apply for placements that provide on-the-job training, skills development and mentoring from some of the UK media industry's most well-respected professionals, giving them the well-deserved first break that can so often be hard to come by, particularly in the ongoing climate.

Anne Jessopp, Chief Executive of The Royal Mint, said:

We are delighted to join the Government's Kickstart Scheme, and provide valuable work opportunities for 16 to 24 year olds. We recognise the importance of providing practical placements and mentorship for young and diverse talent – helping them gain experience and to develop their careers.

As one of the largest employers in Wales, we have a wide variety of opportunities available in areas such as design, IT and marketing – and look forward to welcoming our first placements later this year.

Denise Hatton, Chief Executive of YMCA England & Wales said:

YMCA welcomes the Government's Kickstart Scheme, its renewed focus on job placements and recognition of the additional support young people need in order to mitigate the economic impacts of COVID-19 and find a job.

Young people continue to face deep uncertainty about what is next for them in the wake of this pandemic. Equally so, businesses are facing challenges around finances and sustaining themselves as they grapple the everchanging economic landscape. The Kickstart Scheme is a brilliant opportunity to provide young people with experience, employment, and pay to succeed in the future, and we are thrilled to see local YMCAs across England and Wales come together in order to help deliver this opportunity.

YMCA believes that all young people deserve the right to be paid a decent wage and the opportunity to develop a career to ensure they thrive now and into the future. It is very encouraging to see the government's focus on equipping young people with the skills they need in order to do this.

Andrew Haines, CEX of Network Rail said:

We're proud to be supporting the Kickstart Scheme. It fits perfectly with Network Rail's aim to develop a diverse range of talent and to provide opportunities for younger generations in STEM careers. We want to help develop skills and open future career paths for the next generation and we are delighted to help make a difference to many young people facing unemployment and uncertainty during these difficult times. This is an exciting opportunity for us as a business to showcase careers and develop future talent.

Nick Wells CEO, Whistl, said:

The Kickstart Scheme enables future talent to join Whistl and begin their career in the fast growing logistics and e-commerce fulfilment sector. The initial 30 people who are joining us will gain valuable on the job training to develop their employability and worked based skills at our facilities across the UK.

Amanda Stainton, HR Director, Portakabin said:

With a core focus on offering transferable skills, we are best placed to introduce a new audience to fresh opportunities within the modular construction industry. We are also looking to use our position within the market to make a positive impact and open up avenues to these young minds to help them consider a future career in any industry.

[Extra Bank Holiday to mark The Queen's Platinum Jubilee in 2022](#)

- Nation will come together over a four-day Bank Holiday weekend to celebrate The Queen's 70 year reign
- Extensive programme of public events will mix traditional pageantry with cutting edge technological displays
- Jubilee medal will be created and awarded to public services workers

The UK will celebrate Her Majesty The Queen's 70th anniversary as monarch with a blockbuster weekend of celebrations, Culture Secretary Oliver Dowden has announced today.

The May Bank Holiday Weekend will be moved to Thursday 2 June and an additional Bank Holiday on Friday 3 June will see a four-day weekend to celebrate Her Majesty The Queen's Platinum Jubilee – the first time any British monarch has reached this historic milestone.

This historic event will reflect on Her Majesty's reign, and her impact on the UK and the world since 1952.

Activity will build across 2022 in the run up to the four day weekend, when the eyes of the world will turn to the UK.

The four day celebrations will feature an extensive programme of events that mix the best of British ceremonial splendour and pageantry with cutting edge artistic and technological displays. These will be interspersed with the traditional nationwide fanfare and celebrations.

Spectacular moments in London and other major cities will be complemented by events in communities across the UK and the Commonwealth, allowing people to join together in celebration and thanks at a national and local level.

Plans for the Platinum Jubilee are being developed in conjunction with some of the UK's leading creative minds, event organisers and world class digital design companies. Using the talents of the UK's cultural and creative sectors, the programme will engage young people from across the Commonwealth and use new technology in exciting ways.

In keeping with tradition, a Platinum Jubilee medal will be awarded to people who work in public service including representatives of the Armed Forces, the emergency services and the prison services. This tradition stretches back to the reign of Queen Victoria when an official medal was designed to mark her 50th anniversary on the throne.

Culture Secretary Oliver Dowden said:

Her Majesty's Platinum Jubilee will be a truly historic moment – and one that deserves a celebration to remember.

We can all look forward to a special, four-day Jubilee weekend, when we will put on a spectacular, once-in-a-generation show that mixes the best of British ceremonial splendour with cutting edge art and technology. It will bring the entire nation and the Commonwealth together in a fitting tribute to Her Majesty's reign.

The commemorations are being arranged jointly with The Royal Household and the Department for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport.

Further details on all aspects of programming, including events and how the public can get involved will be released in the months ahead.

2022 will be a significant year for Britain as we will also host The Birmingham 2022 Commonwealth Games and Festival UK 2022, each of which will bring a worldwide focus to the UK and will showcase the best of 21st Century Britain.

ENDS

NOTES TO EDITORS

The design and qualifying criteria for the Platinum Jubilee medal will be announced in due course.

[Youngest ever officer rewarded for heroism at sea](#)

- 20 mariners to be recognised with Merchant Navy Medals
- youngest ever recipient saved 3 lives at night-time call-out on rough waters
- others praised for work in promoting diversity and protecting the environment

Third Officer Max Bingle, who at 24 years old stands as the youngest ever recipient of the prestigious Merchant Navy Medal, has today (12 November 2020) been recognised for saving people's lives in dire straits at sea.

Max, from Devon, is joined by 19 other mariners awarded for outstanding service and contribution to the sector, including services for fishing safety and training throughout their careers.

While at sea, Third Officer Max Bingle responded to the distress call in pitch black, rough waters to save 3 men on a sinking boat. Despite his own boat becoming endangered during the rescue mission, he drove forward and, with the help of 2 others, saved the lives of his fellow mariners.

Another recipient is Fazilette Khan who has received the accolade for her services to the marine environment. Fazilette began her career as a Radio Officer in 1984, and set up the marine environmental charity [GreenSeas Trust](#) in memory of her mother Haida Khan as she saw an increase of litter around the coast. The charity has overseen the successful BinForGreenSeas campaign, which has seen nautically themed recycling bins placed in every coastal town because of her actions.

Maritime Minister Robert Courts said:

I am delighted to announce the recipients of this year's Merchant

Navy Medal. They have all gone beyond the call of duty to provide an invaluable service to our sector and our country.

It's a special honour to award the medal to Max, its youngest ever recipient. He showed incredible bravery in saving 3 fellow sailors from drowning in rough seas, and this award is a recognition of his incredible selflessness that night.

The Merchant Navy awards celebrate the vital role of Merchant Navy seafarers and the contribution they continue to make to our country, as well as their well-known service during wartime.

Third Officer Max Bingle said:

This recognition is completely out of the blue. Everybody on board acted in the highest maritime tradition by going to the aid of fellow sailors in peril on the sea. Saving lives is what we are trained to do as seafarers, and I'm grateful for this recognition.

Other recipients of this year's medal include Captain Chris Locke, who first went to sea as a Deck Cadet in 1977. His seagoing career spans over 35 years and took him around the world, with multiple deployments including the 1982 Falklands War.

Guy Platten has also received the medal for his services to the maritime sector, stretching from outstanding services for life-saving projects and, most recently, his extraordinary efforts in supporting the government to resolve the crew change crisis during the coronavirus (COVID-19) pandemic.

During the COVID-19 pandemic, the UK government has led the charge to safeguard British maritime workers, including successfully repatriating 1,500 UK seafarers from overseas and a further 15,000 foreign national seafarers from 110 nationalities, whose movement was restricted due to closed borders and have been flown home from UK shores. To ensure their swift repatriation, the Maritime Minister held the world's first summit with the United Nations and secured recognition for seafarers as key workers.

The [2020 Merchant Navy Medal awards recipients are available, and nominations for the 2021 awards are now open.](#)

[Responding to the humanitarian crisis in Yemen](#)

Many thanks, Madam President. And thank you also to Mr Griffiths, Mr Lowcock

and Mr Beasley. I think the briefings left us in no doubt as to the scale of the humanitarian crisis, the human crisis in Yemen and the urgent need to find progress in terms of a political solution.

So, to Mr Griffiths first, the United Kingdom fully supports your efforts to progress the political solution. The recent success that you described in securing the exchange of over 1000 prisoners does demonstrate that face-to-face dialogue can indeed lead to positive outcomes. So we encourage you, in doing what you can, to bring the sides together to finalise the Joint Declaration. It's clear from everything we've heard today that only an end to the violence can help us bring enduring humanitarian relief and hope to the people of Yemen.

But as you say, Mr Griffiths, we continue to see spikes in violence – in particular the Houthis continue to launch persistent missiles and drone attacks at Saudi Arabia and to pursue further territorial gains in Yemen; casting doubt over the Houthis' commitment to peace. The recent arrival of a senior IRGC envoy in Sana'a underlines this point and highlights Iran's destabilising role in the Yemen conflict. So we urge the Houthis to refrain from such behaviour and instead, to place their efforts into dialogue.

Another necessary step is the implementation of the Riyadh Agreement and so the United Kingdom calls on the parties to rapidly form an inclusive cabinet and implement the necessary military reforms.

But we heard today about the dire humanitarian situation. Several sets of data were released last week, and it's clear that the risk of famine is growing. But as Mr Lowcock has said, this is not about data or statistics for the people and children of Yemen, but a grim human reality. The Integrated Food Security Phase Classification's latest acute malnutrition analysis for parts of southern Yemen, as we've heard, predicts that malnutrition in the south is soon expected to reach its highest levels since the conflict began.

We know how bad it's been. It's getting worse. By the end of 2020, the number of children suffering acute malnutrition will grow by 10 percent – risking the fate described just now by Mr Lowcock. And as we heard from Mr Beasley, the World Food Programme has also assessed that food security is worsening faster than expected.

With 40 percent of households across the country now not having enough to eat, the dire picture makes swift action now, before it's too late, all the more important, particularly on the economy, humanitarian funding and humanitarian access.

On the economy, urgent action is needed to ensure the availability and affordability of food, as we've heard. At present, Yemen's economic problems are escalating and driving up the prices of basic goods, such as food and fuel and putting additional pressure on the humanitarian response. The Yemeni Riyal has reached, as we've again heard today, record lows against the dollar and the Central Bank of Yemen's hard currency reserves are effectively exhausted. The Government of Yemen must set out a realistic and transparent budget whilst taking steps to avoid further inflation. External support in

the form of hard currency to the Central Bank of Yemen is also urgently needed so that food importers can continue to bring food into their country.

The UN-led humanitarian response, again, as we heard today, remains vastly underfunded, further driving that risk of famine. Only 43 percent of the UN's \$3.3 billion appeal has been received to date. And as a result, 12 of the UN's 38 major programmes in Yemen have already closed or been majorly scaled back this year. If no further funding is received, more will close, denying life-saving assistance to those long-suffering Yemeni children and people.

So it's critical that donors disperse promptly and consider additional funding for 2020. Donors must also commit new funds at the start of 2021 and not wait for a pledging conference. For our own part, the United Kingdom has already disbursed 81 percent of our 200 million pound commitment for this financial year.

Shockingly, in this context, severe humanitarian access constraints, particularly in the Houthi-controlled north, continue to hamper the humanitarian response. Aid and humanitarian workers must be able to reach those in need, otherwise vulnerable Yemenis will needlessly die. We also condemn any attacks on aid workers, including the two recent incidents in Aden.

A senior officials donor meeting is taking place this week, hosted by the European Commission in Sweden. It is vital that we use this meeting to send a clear message that we will not tolerate constraints on the distribution of lifesaving assistance.

I'm grateful to the briefers for their updates on the SAFER oil tanker. Last month UNOPS and the Houthis agreed in principle to an assessment mission to secure that tanker. But as Mr Griffiths has said, this issue is progressing slower than urgency requires. We understand the revised statement of works is due to be submitted shortly but we encourage the UN to accelerate this work and urge the Houthis to agree to the revised plan so work can begin as soon as possible.

Madam President, what we have heard today is an urgent call to action from the leadership of the UN humanitarian organisations. We need to heed their grave warnings with immediate action. Thank you.