

Prisoners turn over new leaf through innovative farming scheme

The scheme, being run at HMP Hewell in Worcestershire, is part of a landmark trial between the prison and farming technology company, LettUsGrow, that will see prisoners grow leafy greens, salad and herbs in high-tech 'vertical' farms.

Vegetables are grown in compact towers using aeroponics using an air or mist environment rather than soil.

At the forefront of farming, this advanced technology produces more plants, more quickly and with 98 percent less water than conventional methods.

Most importantly, the scheme will train prisoners up in the jobs of the future, such as farm management software, plant science and food safety. This will help them find a job on release in new and emerging technologies and dramatically reduce their chances of reoffending.

This is just the latest move in the government's strategy to make sure prisoners use their time behind bars to get the skills they need to find work once through the gate and back home.

Prisons Minister Stuart Andrew MP:

This innovative scheme is just the tip of the iceberg in our drive to equip prisoners with the practical skills they need to get a job on release – ultimately cutting crime and keeping the public safe.

Up there with education, family ties and addiction treatment, stable work holds the key to a life free from crime and safer communities for us all.

Ralph Lubowski, Governor of HMP Hewell:

I am delighted to partner with LettUs Grow in this fantastic initiative, which will give our prisoners the opportunity, confidence and training to turn their lives around.

Vertical farming is an innovative, emerging industry and this partnership highlights our commitment to ensuring that prisoners are skilled up to find work on release.

The latest figures show the number of former offenders in work six weeks after release has increased by nearly half, whereas proven reoffending has fallen to just over 25 percent – making huge progress in tackling the £18

billion cost of repeat offending and keeping the public safe.

Notes to editors

- [The latest statistics](#) from the Ministry of Justice show that the proportion of persons released from custody who were employed at 6 weeks from their release rose by 6 percentage points to 16 per cent between April 2021 and March 2021. This is an increase of more than half (57 per cent).
- New data shows that over the last 10 years, proven reoffending has decreased from 30.9 percent (2009/10) to 25.6 percent (2019/20).
- The [Prisons White Paper](#) – the Deputy Prime Minister’s strategy to reduce reoffending and keep the public safe – puts a laser-sharp focus in getting prisoners into work both behind bars and on release.
- Learn more about LettUsGrow [here](#)

[OX to ZERO summit: Oxfordshire’s world-leading solutions to reaching net zero](#)

Oxfordshire’s world-leading solutions to reaching net zero

- Inaugural OX to ZERO summit to demonstrate how Oxfordshire is leading the global charge in addressing the climate emergency
- September 1 event at The Blavatnik founded by University of Oxford, Harwell, UK Atomic Energy Authority and OxLEP to help accelerate net zero transition
- Programme includes experts in fusion energy, transport, storage, systems, CO2 removal and innovation, with virtual tickets at oxtozero.com

A new one-day summit at The Blavatnik School of Government will showcase how Oxfordshire leads the global charge in addressing the climate emergency.

OX to ZERO unites the county’s most innovative thinkers, investors and entrepreneurs exploring the potential of new ideas, technologies, and companies to accelerate the net zero transition.

Curated by founding partners the University of Oxford, Harwell, UK Atomic Energy Authority and OxLEP, the September 1 programme includes thought leaders in fusion energy (Tokamak Energy, First Light Fusion), transport (YASA, ARRIVAL), storage (Johnson Matthey, Faraday), systems (Low Carbon Hub, SSE), CO2 removal (Oxford Net Zero, OUI) and innovation (STFC, Cleantech).

Keynote speakers include ocean advocate Emily Penn and Simon Mundy, Moral

Money editor at the Financial Times and author of climate change book Race for Tomorrow.

Chas Bountra, University of Oxford, said: "After the pandemic, the climate emergency will potentially destroy even more lives, make parts of the world uninhabitable, and produce irreversible changes to our surroundings. OX to ZERO provides an insight into how the Oxford ecosystem is once again pulling together to take on the biggest challenge facing our planet. I hope we can create hope and solutions for humanity."

Sebastian Johnson, OxLEP, said: "Oxfordshire has a history of delivering pioneering solutions to the world's greatest challenges. The expertise and desire that exists in the county can be a critical driver to tackling the climate emergency head-on, at pace. OX to ZERO will showcase further solutions that can drive the world towards a zero-carbon future."

Tim Bestwick, UKAEA and Harwell, said: "OX to ZERO will showcase the big ideas and solutions that, coupled with investment and supported by Oxfordshire's innovation ecosystem, can make an important impact on the sustainable future of our planet."

OX to ZERO will feature experts from a variety of fields dedicated to supporting the drive towards a zero-carbon future, including more leading figures from green finance, business and academia. It will also be one of the first opportunities worldwide to watch Star Makers: The Energy of Tomorrow, a new documentary about the fusion energy record achieved on the Joint European Torus at Culham Science Centre.

Numbers are limited for the in-person event, with virtual tickets and more information available at oxtozero.com.

Urging all parties to ensure the ceasefire in Gaza is durable and prevents further violence: UK statement to UN Security Council

Thank you President, and my thanks go to the representatives from the UAE and others who called this important Council session.

The United Kingdom joins fellow Council Members in welcoming the ceasefire in Gaza announced last night. We express our thanks to Egypt, Qatar and the office of UN Special Coordinator, Tor Wennesland, for their mediation efforts. We now urge all parties to do their utmost to ensure the ceasefire is durable and prevents further violence.

These last few days we have once again seen tragic scenes in Israel and the Occupied Palestinian Territories.

We strongly condemn the firing of over 1,100 rockets at civilians by Palestinian Islamic Jihad, and the ongoing campaign of terror attacks by the group, which has resulted in the deaths of innocent civilians, Israelis and Palestinians alike.

As my Foreign Secretary has been clear, the UK stands by Israel and its right to defend itself in the face of such terrorism and violence.

The United Kingdom expresses its deepest condolences to the families of innocent Palestinian civilians killed over the past three days, particularly the tragic deaths of children. The UK supports a timely and thorough investigation into all of these reports. The Israeli-Palestinian conflict, and the cycle of violence, have taken too many lives.

We remain deeply concerned about the humanitarian situation in Gaza, including lack of movement and access, damage to civilian infrastructure, and critical supplies, such as fuel for power plants to supply electricity, including for hospitals. We welcome Israel's announcement that it is allowing humanitarian aid through to Gaza. Immediate access for humanitarian relief is essential, and we expect that the ceasefire agreement will now allow for prompt restoration of movement and access for people and goods via the Erez and Kerem Shalom crossings.

This escalation is yet another reminder of the urgent need for progress towards a Two State solution that ensures a safe and secure Israel, living alongside a Palestinian state based on 1967 lines, with Jerusalem the shared capital of both states.

[Capacity building for sustaining peace in Africa](#)

Thank you President for convening this briefing. And thank you to all our briefers for their valuable remarks. I will make three points.

First, as our Kenyan colleague said, Africa is a continent of great potential. Yet the United Kingdom shares the deep concern expressed by others with regard to the scale of challenges that many countries in Africa are facing today.

Covid-19 has made it harder to consolidate development gains.

Many countries have had to grapple with the impact of climate change and exacerbating humanitarian pressures. The drought in the Horn of Africa and

flooding in South Sudan are just the latest tragic examples.

On top of this, the global economic consequences of Russia's illegal invasion of Ukraine have hit the continent hard, jeopardising hard-won peace and development gains.

Second, the UK remains committed to do its part to support African countries to fulfil their potential. Through our new International Development Strategy, we are working with governments and civil society to help partners get on track for the Sustainable Development Goals. This includes capacity building to strengthen institutions that work for the well-being of their citizens.

The UK remains a strong supporter of efforts to promote peace and manage conflicts across the continent. We take our responsibilities in this Council seriously. We work in close partnership with the AU, for example to reconfigure the AU Transition Mission in Somalia.

We have trained over 3,000 African peacekeepers in the last financial year through the British Peace Support Team in Africa.

And in July, we hosted the second UK-Ghana Security Dialogue where we agreed to support regional approaches to tackling growing risks of instability in coastal West African states.

The UK is the second largest donor to the Elsie Initiative Fund, having provided over \$6 million since 2019, to increase the participation of uniformed women in UN peace operations.

Third, there are no shortcuts. Development gains and fragile peace will be lost if large parts of a population are marginalised, or human rights are abused. Internationally, we need a model of cooperation that prioritises the values of openness and inclusion. Peacebuilding and development must be people-centred if they are to be sustainable.

And as this Council has made clear, the meaningful participation of women in peace processes is central to building sustainable peace.

In closing President, the United Kingdom remains fully committed to peace and development in Africa. We look forward to the continued partnership, between this Council and the UN Peacebuilding Commission, the wider UN membership and regional organisations – to advance peace and development in Africa.

Thank you.

Giant crane now in place to help reinstate flood defences

Press release

A huge 800-tonne crane is now in situ near Matlock Bridge to help the Environment Agency reinstate the town's flood defences.



The Environment Agency's work to restore flood protection in Matlock, Derbyshire started last week when a huge 800-tonne crane arrived on site.

While the crane is situated on the A6 near Matlock Bridge, the road remains closed and a temporary 2-way traffic system on the bridge is now in place.

The crane is being used to assist in carrying out work to reinstate the River Derwent flood defences. This involves replacing the river wall that collapsed after this year's February storms and the adjacent flood wall behind businesses in Crown Square, Matlock.

The work currently involves lifting 600 2-tonne bags into the river from the A6 to form a working platform for piling works to take place.

A family-fun 'Name the crane' day is being held in Matlock on Wednesday 10 August. In attendance will be Sarah Dines MP; the Deputy Lieutenant of Derbyshire; the Mayor of Matlock; and the Civil Chair of Derbyshire County Council among other local dignitaries.

Naomi Doughty, Project Manager for the Environment Agency, said:

The large 800-tonne crane situated on the A6 near to Matlock Bridge in Derbyshire is helping us to carry out essential work on reinstating the flood defences on the River Derwent. This involves lifting materials and machinery across the river to where the replacement river wall and flood wall will be constructed.

It will be in place until at least the end of the year and will then either remain in situ to enable the cladding of the sheet

piles to take place or return in the spring when the weather is more conducive to the works being carried out.

We've listened to feedback from local businesses about the difficult times they've experienced recently so, in conjunction with our contractors, Jackson Civil Engineering, we are holding a 'Name the crane' family-fun day on Wednesday 10 August to encourage more visitors to Matlock.

Kathryn Battelle, Public Liaison Officer for Jackson Civil Engineering, added:

The crane is one of the biggest mobile cranes in the UK and we're running a competition to find the best name for it.

We're hoping that families will come and join in the fun at our event on Wednesday, which will also provide a unique photo opportunity among other fun activities. We have some great prizes on offer and Jackson Civil Engineering will match all public donations made on the day for Air Ambulance.

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