

PM call with Chancellor Angela Merkel: 13 March 2020

The Prime Minister spoke to Chancellor Merkel of Germany today.

They discussed the coronavirus outbreak and the Prime Minister outlined the UK's science-led approach.

The leaders agreed on the importance of international coordination – particularly at G7 level – to ensure rapid progress to develop a vaccine, as well as the need for a joined up effort to minimise the economic impact of the outbreak. They looked forward to holding a call between G7 leaders to this end.

They agreed to stay in close touch with each other and international partners on this issue.

PM call with PM Conte: 13 March 2020

This afternoon the Prime Minister spoke to Italian Prime Minister Conte.

The Prime Minister expressed his solidarity and sympathy with Italy, in light of the scale of the coronavirus outbreak. He stressed that this was a hugely testing time for countries around the world and that the UK would support Italy in any way possible.

The Prime Minister thanked Prime Minister Conte for his help ensuring British tourists were able to depart Italy following the outbreak and for the support the Italian authorities continued to provide to British people who live in Italy.

The two leaders discussed the importance of taking a transparent and science led approach in response to the virus. They also agreed on the need for international coordination, including through the G7, and they agreed a call between G7 leaders would be a good opportunity to do that.

New digital tool enables easier energy

and carbon reporting

A new digital tool will make it easier and more convenient for businesses to comply with energy and carbon reporting rules.

The Streamlined Energy and Carbon Reporting (SECR) taxonomy allows businesses to report their energy and carbon data when they file digital accounts with Companies House.

The taxonomy has been developed by the Financial Reporting Council (FRC) in collaboration with Companies House and the Department of Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy (BEIS) and enables businesses to report information in XBRL format. Many companies already submit accounts using XBRL, but this is the first time it has been utilised to capture environmental data in annual reports.

SECR legislation, which came into force on 1 April 2019, requires all large UK companies and large LLPs, as well as all quoted companies, to report on their annual energy use, greenhouse gas emissions and energy efficiency actions they have taken. Other businesses can also include the disclosures on a voluntary basis.

Companies House and the FRC are responsible for ensuring businesses comply with the SECR reporting requirements.

Director of Digital at Companies House Ross Maude said:

This is a fantastic example of cross-government working to deliver a digital service that addresses an important issue.

Understanding the role businesses have in reducing energy and carbon emissions is central to delivering the UK's ambition to reach net zero by 2050.

Through effective collaboration, we can make it easier for businesses to play their part.

Project Director for Taxonomies at the FRC, Jennifer Guest, said:

Enabling companies to file their SECR reports digitally within their annual financial report is an important step in improving transparency of companies' energy reporting.

The SECR taxonomy has been carefully designed so it can be used with other accounting taxonomies making it simple and easy to use.

- SECR builds on the previous Mandatory Greenhouse Gas Emissions Reporting

framework, which has been in place since 2013 for quoted companies and expands the reporting requirements from approximately 1,200 to 11,900 UK businesses. The Companies (Directors' Report) and Limited Liability Partnerships (Energy and Carbon Report) Regulations 2018, which implements SECR applies to annual reports for reporting periods which started on, or after, 1 April 2019.

- The SECR framework applies to all quoted companies and applies to large UK incorporated unquoted companies and large Limited Liability Partnerships with at least two of the following: 250 employees, annual turnover greater than £36m, or annual balance sheet total greater than £18m. The threshold should be considered at aggregate level when businesses are required to prepare and file Group accounts.
- A SECR report must be included in a company's Directors' Report (or a new Energy and Carbon Report for large LLPs) and filed with Companies House. Further information on the key requirements under SECR and example reporting templates can be accessed in the Environmental Report Guidelines.
- Companies that fail to comply with the new SECR requirements may have to resubmit their annual company accounts to Companies House or pay fines if missing filing deadlines. Failure to file Confirmation Statements or accounts is a criminal offence which can result in directors being fined personally in the criminal courts.
- Companies House is the register of limited companies in the UK. It incorporates and dissolves limited companies, registers the information companies are legally required to supply, and makes that information available to the public.

[British Embassy commemorates the Queen's Birthday Party](#)

Dear Friends,

Good morning. I am pleased to welcome you today to celebrate the birthday of Her Majesty Queen Elizabeth Second. Thank you very much for being here.

My wife and I only arrived almost six months ago. Time has passed very quickly. My big challenge now is that I have met many people only once and my memory of faces is very bad. Then help me this day if I'm confused!

Although six months is a very short time, there have been many big changes since September. There is a new government in Guatemala. The United Kingdom has left the European Union. In addition, we have learned new vocabulary – for example coronavirus. However, there is also much that has not changed. And something that stays the same are the priorities of the United Kingdom and the work of the British Embassy here in Guatemala. They are three:

1. support our people and our values
2. prosperity and commercial ties
3. as well as peace and security

We have been part of different campaigns on British values. From the Beyond Plastics initiative, for the reduction of single-use plastics, through the campaign on Freedom of the Press and our support for groups that suffer human rights abuses – for example, women, LGBTI and children.

During my few months here, I have worked with the government and NGOs on these issues, on major projects in many parts of the country. For example: Sexual and reproductive health, business and human rights, poverty reduction and climate change.

I have already seen the great contribution that these organizations have made to improve the lives of Guatemalans and their programmes in different priority areas. I have had the honour of visiting places – for example, Xela or Petén – where NGOs are using creativity, energy and experience to do very important things. Things with positive impacts for the most disadvantaged communities. We have worked and will continue working with a number of NGOs here in Guatemala.

In relation to the prosperity of our peoples, we work together with Guatemala on transparency issues, sharing our experience of good practices and lessons learned. We continue to support British companies, which have businesses or investments here. Similarly, we are helping companies with interest to do new deals. During February, we saw a good example of that with the visit of a delegation of security companies.

I am very pleased to know that the Government of Guatemala ratified the Association Agreement between Central America and the United Kingdom last year. This agreement is of great importance as it represents an opportunity to further deepen our relationship with Guatemala. Two years ago, a new British-Guatemalan Chamber of Commerce was inaugurated. This important platform will also help to increase trade and investment in both countries. I welcome its members who are with us this afternoon.

Education is a very important exchange sector between our two countries. The reputation of UK universities is recognized and their work transcends borders. For example, in Guatemala, the University of Bristol, the University of Edinburgh and the University of Liverpool have carried out close projects with INSIVUMEH to strengthen volcano-monitoring capacities in Guatemala. One of the ways in which we have further strengthened the relationship between Guatemala and the United Kingdom has been through the Chevening scholarship programme. Today I am pleased to see many members of our Chevening Fellows

Association.

Perhaps you have also noticed that the Embassy is very active on social media, which we use to promote all these initiatives. Recently, as an old man, I have tried to promote my own Twitter channel. If you still do not follow me, I invite you to do it, so that you are aware of our activities, topics about the United Kingdom and a bit of my magical experiences here in Guatemala.

You might also have noticed the word "Brexit". No more than two months ago, the UK officially left the EU, after 47 years of membership. This is something we do not celebrate, nor regret, is just a step taken by our government following the wishes of the British people through a democratic process that took place in 2016. We are going to work with our European partners to secure a trade agreement this year. Despite the UK leaving the EU, we remain part of Europe. Moreover, we will always work with our colleagues here and worldwide in our values, people, prosperity and peace.

I want to take the opportunity to project a global Britain, in four parts:

1. a new relationship with our European partners and at the same time from other parts of the world, as here in Guatemala
2. negotiate new agreements in other markets and reaffirm ourselves as a free trade partner
3. act with moral anchors around the world to continue protecting human rights, democracy and the rule of law
4. and continue working for peace and security around the world, in all the organizations in which we have a membership, an active voice: permanent member of the United Nations Security Council, NATO, the European Council, the G7, G20, British Commonwealth of Nations and many others

If you ask me: What plans does the UK have for 2020? We are already in communication with many of you to carry out projects and programs to continue strengthening the bilateral relationship.

In addition to the trade negotiations that we will be carrying out around the world, including with Europe, this year we will be working hard as one of the two hosts of COP 26, which is the conference of member states for Climate Change, which will take place in Glasgow, Scotland in November. At the Embassy, we will work more on this topic during 2020, carrying out some projects. I think this is very important here in Guatemala because it is one of the countries most exposed to the challenge of climate change.

Before finishing, I would like to thank now the Guatemalan institutions that have supported the Embassy in consular cases this year, such as Proatur, Disetur and the National Civil Police. We are in uncertain times with the spread of the coronavirus, but I sleep better with the certainty that we have great support from these institutions.

I would also like to thank all the sponsoring companies that join us today. My colleague Paola has named them all. Thank you!

I would also like to thank my wife for her support and my team at the Embassy, for all the work they do and their contribution to the relations between the United Kingdom and Guatemala, as well as the realization of this event.

Finally, thank you all for coming. It is wonderful to have you here and we look forward to continuing to work together in the months and years to come.

Thank you.

[Culture Minister leads calls to save Welsh medieval scientific manuscript](#)

- The work includes information that sheds new light on medieval understanding of science and mathematics
- Manuscript was completed by Welsh scientist Lewis of Caerleon, the personal physician to the Tudor King Henry VII

A 15th century manuscript that sheds new light on medieval scientific knowledge could be lost abroad.

Culture Minister Caroline Dinenage has placed a temporary export bar on the manuscript, which is worth £300,000, in a bid to save the work for the nation by offering a UK buyer or institution an opportunity to purchase the work for the national collection.

The manuscript was completed by Lewis of Caerleon (c.1440 – c.1500), a Welsh physician and highly accomplished astronomer. He played a crucial role in the royal court of the period, brokering the alliance of the future King Henry VII and Elizabeth of York, serving as a physician and astrologer to both the Houses of York and Lancaster, including Henry VII himself. Lewis also spent time imprisoned in the Tower of London during the reign of Richard III for his close association with the Lancastrians.

Lewis of Caerleon was a highly skilled astronomer who carried out observations and recorded detailed calculations aimed at predicting eclipses. He commissioned this beautifully bound manuscript from a professional scribe as a gift to a patron or library, to showcase his own scientific achievements. While some of its texts and tables are similar to those in Lewis's personal notebook held in the collections of Cambridge University Library, a number are unique to this manuscript and hold the potential to shed new light on late-medieval mathematical astronomy.

Culture Minister Caroline Dinenage said:

This manuscript is an important part of the story of how ancient beliefs led to our modern scientific understanding of the world we live in.

It is a remarkable piece by a Welsh scholar that would make an excellent contribution to the national collection. I hope a buyer can be found so we can keep this important work in the UK.

The Minister's decision follows the advice of the Reviewing Committee on the Export of Works of Art and Objects of Cultural Interest (RCEWA). The committee noted that the manuscript displayed the progression from ancient theories of astronomy toward a modern, mathematical approach. They agreed that Lewis of Caerleon was a significant contributor to the study of astronomy and the development of science in the late medieval era.

Committee Member Peter Barber said:

This beautifully written volume, still in its handsome original binding, was made for presentation, very possibly to Henry VII. Its author – a Welshman serving a Welsh king, a patriotic antiquary who was also a physician/scientist – prefigured great figures of a century later, like John Dee, while himself building on the writings of his medieval predecessors. At a time when astronomy and astrology were synonymous, Lewis of Caerleon's skills had political ramifications. They may well have contributed to Richard III's decision to keep him out of harm (and the later Henry VII's) way in The Tower. The text was meant by Lewis, who annotated it in his own hand, to be the definitive version of all of his writings and calculations. It includes notes on how far his predictions of eclipses had been fulfilled and also full versions of hitherto only partly known writings by medieval scholars. It would be a great pity if this volume by an early Welsh scholar who deserves to be better known, with its links to courtly culture, with a distinguished provenance and with its immense research potential, were to be allowed to leave this country.

The RCEWA made its recommendation on the grounds of the manuscript's outstanding significance to the study of medieval mathematical and scientific knowledge and for the Welsh contribution to the history of science in the British Isles.

The decision on the export licence application for the manuscript will be deferred until 12 June 2020. This may be extended until 12 September 2020 if a serious intention to raise funds to purchase it is made at the recommended price of £300,000.

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Notes to editors

1. Organisations or individuals interested in purchasing the manuscript should contact the RCEWA on 0845 300 6200. □
2. Details of the manuscript are as follows: The object is a manuscript on parchment, containing the collected scientific works (in Latin) of the physician and astronomer Lewis of Caerleon. It was produced in England, probably in London or Cambridge, in the later 15th century. It contains 64 leaves, and measures c.445 x 330mm. It is generally in good condition. The manuscript survives in a contemporary decorated binding, which allows the grandeur of its original presentation (unusual for the subject-matter) to be fully appreciated. □
3. Provenance: The original patron of the manuscript is unknown. The secure stages of later provenance identified in the catalogue description are as follows: Sir Henry Spelman (1563/4-1641), antiquary; Walter Clavell (1676?-1740), barrister; William Jones (1675- 1747), scientist and mathematician; George Parker, 2nd Earl of Macclesfield (1697?- 1764); by descent to the 9th Earl (b. 1943). □
4. The Reviewing Committee on the Export of Works of Art and Objects of Cultural Interest is an independent body, serviced by The Arts Council, which advises the Secretary of State for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport on whether a cultural object, intended for export, is of national importance under specified criteria. □
5. The Arts Council champions, develops and invests in artistic and cultural experiences that enrich people's lives. It supports a range of activities across the arts, museums and libraries – from theatre to digital art, reading to dance, music to literature, and crafts to collections. www.artscouncil.org.uk □