

René Olivieri appointed as Interim Chair of the The National Heritage Memorial Fund

René Olivieri is currently Chair of the RSPCA. Until December 2019, René was a Trustee at The National Lottery Heritage Fund, where he chaired both the Finance, Staff and Resources Committee and the Investment Committee. He was also Chair of the Wildlife Trusts (2012-17) and, before that, Chair of Tubney Charitable Trust.

For many years René was the Chief Executive of the international scientific and scholarly publishing company, Blackwell Publishing. Under his leadership, Blackwell became the foremost publishing partner for scientific, academic, and professional societies world-wide. Today, he designs and delivers courses on innovation, business models and cultural change for senior executives in both commercial and non-profit organisations.

Originally from the US, René has developed a huge appreciation and passion for the UK's rich heritage and the positive impact it has on people's lives and in strengthening local communities. He has a keen interest in wildlife and the natural environment, as well as in young people and in education, having served on the Board of the Higher Education Funding Council for England and in the Chancellor's Court of Benefactors at Oxford University.

René has a BA in political science from the University of Oregon and an MA in International Relations from Johns Hopkins University. He has published numerous peer-reviewed articles and was the principal author of 'Giving Our All: Reflections of a Spend Out Charity'.

He and his wife, Anne, live in rural Worcestershire. They are major supporters of the Royal Shakespeare Company which receives all admission fees to their Morton Hall Gardens.

The role is remunerated with an annual salary of £42,964. A competition to appoint a substantive Chair will be launched in the new year. This appointment has been made in accordance with the [Cabinet Office's Governance Code on Public Appointments](#). The process is regulated by the Commissioner for Public Appointments. The Government's Governance Code requires that any significant political activity undertaken by an appointee in the last five years is declared. This is defined as including holding office, public speaking, making a recordable donation or candidature for election. René has not declared any Political Activity.

HM Coastguard volunteer saves man who was choking in Paris restaurant

In fact, you don't know their full name, whether you will ever see them again and have only a tiny clue to who and where they might be.

Back in September of this year, holidaymaker Liam Muns, 34, who was in Disneyland Paris, suffered a major health scare after choking on his food at a restaurant one evening.

A first aider was needed and thankfully sitting just a few tables away from Liam and his family was Harry Patrick, a volunteer with Mullion coastguard rescue team, who was on holiday too, with his family.

Earlier this year – in June, Harry acquired new-found first-aid and life-support training skills as part of his operator role with HM Coastguard, and he was able to put that knowledge to use there and then, in the heat of the moment.

Indeed, his intervention – alongside one other person who offered immediate assistance – proved to be life-saving.

Not only was Harry able to perform the Heimlich manoeuvre, he was also able to co-ordinate an ambulance to arrive at the restaurant, despite a language barrier and the obvious commotion involved during a busy time for the venue.

As Liam was moved into the ambulance, the two men exchanged a few words, in which Harry mentioned he was a HM Coastguard volunteer, based in Cornwall but owing to a mix-up, telephone numbers weren't properly exchanged.

Liam spent four hours at the hospital – an anxious wait for his family – but was then able to leave relatively fit and well.

Back in the UK, and determined to track his life-saver down, he sent out a speculative Facebook message, directed to the Falmouth coastguard rescue team page, in the hope of finding the man who helped save his life and to say thank you. And, fortunately, with the help of Martin Leslie, a coastal operations area commander in Falmouth, and the Maritime & Coastguard Agency, it was possible to put the two of them in touch.

Welsh Secretary welcomes £243 million

UK Government support for Welsh farmers



- This cash injection will maintain the level of funding for Direct Payments at the same rate as last year.
- This will provide certainty for farmers, giving them confidence for next year.

Welsh Secretary Simon Hart has today (Monday 30 December) welcomed the Chancellor's announcement that the Welsh Government will receive £243 million of UK Government funding to support farmers once the UK leaves the EU next year.

Sajid Javid confirmed the cash will be used to support farmers once the UK leaves the Common Agricultural Policy Direct Payments scheme, allowing farmers across Wales to plan for the future, sow their crops and care for their livestock with confidence.

Chancellor of the Exchequer, Sajid Javid, said:

When we leave the EU and are freed from the Common Agricultural Policy, we will be able to support our vital rural communities – who are a cornerstone of life in the UK – with a fairer and less bureaucratic system.

Farmers can enter the New Year with confidence that they have our backing and will be able to thrive after Brexit.

Welsh Secretary, Simon Hart, said:

This funding demonstrates the UK Government's commitment to providing certainty and support for Wales' farmers. It also highlights the vast opportunities available to us as we leave the European Union.

Taking back control of this funding will allow us to better represent the people we serve, ensuring that our farming

communities have exactly what they need to flourish after we leave the European Union.

ENDS.

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[Royal recognition for DVLA's LEAP training programme](#)

Getting your training right allows you to attract better staff, and retain talent. Our Learn, Engage, Adapt, Perform (LEAP) training programme was developed in-house for new and existing leaders. It's a 12 month programme where delegates can explore and understand their role as a leader and build excellent leadership skills. Nearly 500 staff have received the training so far, in just under three years.

So I'm delighted that the programme has been recognised and celebrated with a [Princess Royal Training Award](#).



A huge honour

I helped commission, design and develop LEAP and I was nominated by my training colleagues to accept the award from HRH Princess Anne on behalf of the team. I was honoured, but to say I was nervous was an understatement!

I was joined at the awards ceremony by my colleagues Mari Rees and Richard Perry, and Mark Shackell, a leader from our Contact Centre who has come through the programme.

Mari said:

The awards ceremony was a wonderful way to recognise the hard work of colleagues who created the LEAP programme. Hearing all the stories of the other award winners made me feel proud that the DVLA was in such good company.

Every member of the team has played an important part in gaining this award, I was pleased to represent them on this special occasion.

The ceremony

Entering [St James's Palace](#) was a surreal experience. Taking in the beautiful surroundings and being part of the excitement and nervousness of all the other award winners was like nothing I have experienced before.

After being invited into the waiting hall we mingled with the other award winners ahead of the presentation ceremony.

As the award recipient, I had to leave my colleagues to be seated in a separate area. I waited patiently until I was called to step forward. It was a pleasure to be greeted by Princess Anne who asked me how many staff worked for the agency and congratulated us on our achievements.

After the ceremony, the award recipients were taken to small tables and Princess Anne took the time out to visit each of the tables, where we all got to give a quick overview of our achievements. I thought that was a very nice touch from someone whose time is always at a premium.

The whole day was fantastic and something I will always remember. I feel privileged to have been part of it.



In good company

This award sees DVLA join a select group of businesses and organisations who have achieved the award, including household names such as IBM, The Royal Bank of Scotland and the Royal Navy.

On average only about 40 of these sought-after awards are given each year. We are only the second Civil Service organisation ([the other was HMRC](#)) to have achieved this standard of excellence in the four years since the awards launched.

Future plans

Great training and [opportunities to develop and progress](#) are at the core of our values. With this award under our belt, LEAP goes from strength to strength – the next round of delegates are three months into the latest programme and enjoying every minute.

To find out more

You can [read about what it's like to work at DVLA](#) and [take a look at our latest vacancies on Civil Service jobs](#).

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UK satellites to help lead the fight against climate change

- new government-backed virtual satellite data centre will analyse the impact climate change is having on the UK, help shape policies on reducing carbon emissions, and contribute to reaching net zero targets
- 50 new PhD researchers and £5 million investment to enable use of satellite images to better predict future weather trends and protect communities from flooding and pollution
- Earth Observation experts from the Universities of Edinburgh and Leeds will work with 18 businesses on pioneering work to monitor the impact of climate change

Ministers today (30 December) announced backing for ground-breaking research analysing satellite images that will better predict the future impact of climate change in towns and cities and inform future government action.

A new £5 million satellite data centre involving the Universities of Edinburgh and Leeds will use cutting-edge satellite technology to help combat climate change, including helping lower the risk of people being affected by flooding. The data centre will bring together 50 of the UK's brightest and best PhD researchers to help solve climate change.

Measurements from satellites on rising sea levels, greenhouse gases and shrinking glaciers and forests will help provide policy makers, government and industry with the data and knowledge they need to better understand the impact of climate change and make future predictions.

This knowledge and data could lead to the adaptation of preventative measures for vulnerable areas such as installing flood defences to protect coastal towns, identifying areas increasingly at risk of flooding and monitoring pollution levels in towns and cities.

Business Secretary Andrea Leadsom said:

The UK is leading the world in tackling climate change and we have set the bar high, as the first country to legislate to eliminate our contribution to climate change by 2050, and the fastest in the G20 to cut emissions.

This new satellite data centre will give us instant images showing us the true impact of climate change and in doing so, help us develop innovative new ways of tackling it.

Dr Anna Hogg, co-director of the centre in the [School of Earth and Environment](#) at the University of Leeds, said:

Earth observation satellites collect hundreds of terabytes of data per day, delivering important information about how fast glaciers flow, the size of forest fires in the Amazon, and the quality of the air that we breathe.

We have a fantastic opportunity to grow the community of researchers with the skills and knowledge to measure the how our environment is changing.

Dr Edward Mitchard, centre leader at the University of Edinburgh, said:

We are looking for outstanding candidates from environmental science, maths, physics, engineering and computer science disciplines to undertake a PhD in this exciting and innovative centre.

The students will belong to a happy, inclusive and stimulating research environment, with supervision from world-leading earth observation scientists.

The 50 new PhD researchers will work closely with experts from UK universities at Leeds and Edinburgh as well as leading Earth Observation scientists and industry-leaders.

The [Centre for Satellite Data in Environmental Science \(SENSE\)](#), is a virtual academic collaboration and is being established with funding from the Natural Environment Research Council (NERC) and the UK Space Agency (UKSA). It will work with 18 businesses and partners, including Airbus and Unilever, who will co-fund, co-design and co-supervise 42 of the PhD research projects.

Professor Duncan Wingham, Executive Chair of NERC, said:

The researchers will support cutting-edge scientific discovery, new data-based products and new Earth observation technologies that will provide benefits to society.

Working with the UK Space Agency gives students unique opportunities to engage with the wider community.

Beth Greenaway, Head of Earth Observation and Climate at the UK Space Agency, said:

We are at the forefront of innovative new technology for measuring our planet from space.

We have many of the world's leading scientists and academics who can use this data for new discoveries, and we have a commercial sector able to build the space missions and create services for the

public and private sector.

The rapid growth of the Earth Observation sector means we need to attract thousands of people with the right skills over the next 10 years.

The new centre will be funded by £2.3 million funding over 3 years from NERC's core grant with money from UK Space Agency for specific student activity support. This is matched by £3.4 million additional funding from business/industry as well as the universities own funds.

The independent ['UK space industry: size and health report'](#), published in January 2019, showed that, compared to the 2016 survey Earth Observation services, such as data for monitoring land use and agriculture, is a significant growth area, supporting £92 billion of GDP and growing at a rate of 25% per year.

At the 2019 European Space Agency Ministerial Council in November the UK Space Agency committed over £200 million of investment in Earth Observation, including a UK-led [TRUTHS mission](#) to help tackle climate change and the [ESA Copernicus Space Component](#), which runs to 2028.

(Image credit: Contains modified Copernicus Sentinel data (2016 to 2018), processed by [ESA](#), [CC BY-SA 3.0 IGO](#)).