

PM remarks at the CHOGM opening ceremony: 24 June 2022

Your Royal Highness,

President Kagame,

Madam Secretary General,

Your Excellencies,

ladies and gentlemen,

I'm honoured to perform the final duty of the United Kingdom as Chair-in-Office of the Commonwealth

and hand over the baton to President Kagame, and wish him every success as Chair of our unique association,

encompassing 54 countries and a third of humanity.

One of the newest members is now at the helm,

and more nations are seeking to join,

which tells you everything about the health and vitality of our Commonwealth,

because for all the differences between us,

we are united by an invisible thread of shared values, history and friendship.

The Head of the Commonwealth, Her Majesty the Queen, incarnates everything that brings us together

and it's fitting that in the year of her Platinum Jubilee,

the association she cherishes should be gathering in the continent where she became Queen.

When the UK became your Chair-in-Office in 2018, the word "Covid" had not been invented

many of us had no idea what a "coronavirus" was, and nobody could have known that the worst pandemic for a century would soon claim millions of lives.

The British government put together the partnership between Oxford University and AstraZeneca that produced the world's most popular vaccine,

and during our time as Chair-in-Office, the UK supported the delivery of

more than 1.4 billion doses of Covid vaccines to Commonwealth countries.

The pandemic posed a common threat to all humanity and the same is true of catastrophic climate change.

No-one understands this better than our Commonwealth friends in the Caribbean, the Pacific and the Indian Ocean

who can see the incoming tides surging ever higher up their beaches, threatening to inundate their villages and towns, and, in time, the entire land mass of some island states.

For them, the baleful effects of climate change are not vague or theoretical, but already happening before their eyes.

When we hosted COP26 in Glasgow last November,

it was these fellow Commonwealth leaders who spoke with greatest urgency and authority about the perils of quilting the earth with greenhouse gases.

And we in the developed world have an obligation to help our friends to cope with a danger they had no hand in causing,

and during the UK's time as Chair-in-Office,

the Commonwealth Finance Access Hub mobilised over \$38 million for the most vulnerable members,

but of course we must press on and do more.

And if I could imagine a silver bullet that would solve an array of problems and transform countless lives,

it would be to give every girl in the world the chance to go to school.

At the last CHOGM in London in 2018, the UK announced £212 million for the Girls' Education Challenge,

and I'm delighted to say that this initiative is now at work in 11 Commonwealth countries,

ensuring that girls are able to gain at least 12 years of quality education.

We need to empower them to play their full part in the economy when they leave school,

so the UK is funding the "She Trades" Commonwealth programme,

which has already helped over 3,500 women-owned businesses to become more competitive and generate more than £32 million of sales.

And if there is anyone who doubts the ability of the Commonwealth to speak with one voice,

it was in 2020 that the UK delivered the first ever Joint Statement by all 54 Commonwealth members before the Human Rights Council in Geneva,

recalling – and I quote – our “proud history of acting to strengthen good governance and the rule of law”.

One of the gravest affronts to everything we stand for is Russia’s invasion of Ukraine

and Putin’s blockade of the ports that would otherwise be shipping food to the world’s poorest people.

At this moment, nearly 25 million tonnes of corn and wheat is piled up in silos across Ukraine, held hostage by Russia.

Britain supports the United Nations plan to get that food out

and we will invest over £370 million in global food security this year, including £130 million for the World Food Programme.

We want to work alongside our Commonwealth friends to understand your needs and priorities

and deliver joint solutions to a crisis that Putin has deliberately engineered.

For now, it only remains for me to thank every Commonwealth member for having given the United Kingdom the chance to serve as Chair-in-Office.

And as I pass on this responsibility to President Kagame,

a close friend and partner,

I know that he shares my boundless optimism

about the future of the Commonwealth at the forefront of the international agenda, and benefiting all our peoples.

Thank you all very much.

ENDS

[Rededication services held for two](#)

casualties of the Somme

The graves of Second Lieutenant (2nd Lt) Ernest Lockett Cole and Serjeant (Sjt) Ernest Edward Harris, who were killed in the Somme region of the Western Front whilst serving with antecedent regiments to The Royal Anglian Regiment, have been rededicated more than a hundred years after they died.

Members of the Harris family stand at his grave, together with military representatives. Crown copyright.

The services, which were organised by the MOD's Joint Casualty and Compassionate Centre (JCCC), also known as the 'MOD War Detectives', were held at the Commonwealth War Graves Commission's (CWGC) Ovillers Military Cemetery on 22 June and at Villers-Bretonneux Military Cemetery respectively on 23 June.

Rosie Barron, JCCC case lead said:

"It has been an honour to work with The Royal Anglian Regiment and The Rifles to organise these rededication services. Both 2nd Lt Cole and Sjt Harris are remembered with great pride by their families, who after all this time, now know the fate of their missing relatives. To share this experience with them and to become part of that story is a privilege."

The rededication service for 2nd Lt Cole was attended by members of his family including his great niece Julie Kirkman and her sister Pat.

Julie Kirkman said:

"We are eternally grateful that through the hard work of the researchers we were able to pay our respects and say thanks to our Great Uncle Ernest over 100 years after his death."

2Lt Cole (courtesy of the Cole family)

2nd Lt Cole, aged 29, came from Barrow-in-Furness in Cumbria but was serving with 8th Battalion The Northamptonshire Regiment. He was attached to 1st Battalion, when he was sent to the Western Front on 6 September 1916. A few weeks later on 27 September 1916, C Company of 1st Battalion The Northamptonshire Regiment took part in an attack on the Flers Line in support of 2nd Battalion The King's Royal Rifle Corps. The attack was unsuccessful and 2nd Lt Cole was killed during the fighting. His son, also named Ernest Lockett Cole, was born on 19 March 1917, six months after his father's death.

After the war his remains were moved into Ovillers Military Cemetery where he was buried as an unknown Second Lieutenant of The Northamptonshire Regiment. It was noted that the initials 'EC' were marked on this man's underclothing.

As he was missing, 2nd Lt Cole was commemorated on the Thiepval Memorial in France.

The rededication service at Villers-Bretonneux Military Cemetery was attended by nine members of the Harris family, including Alister Dawson, the great great nephew of Sjt Harris.

Alister Dawson said:

“It’s an honour and a privilege to attend the rededication ceremony and we really appreciate the work of the JCCC. We thank them for taking the time to trace family members and all the effort that goes into organising the ceremony. We hope this will make something that happened over a hundred years ago much closer for our children and they will remember Sjt Harris and all the fallen in proud remembrance.”

Sjt Harris (courtesy of the Harris family)

Sjt Harris, aged 21, came from Takeley in Essex. He was killed on 8 August 1918 during the Battle of Amiens. The battle would mark the start of the Hundred Days Offensive, when the Allies forced the Germans into retreat and brought the First World War to a conclusion. Sjt Harris was a member of 10th Battalion The Essex Regiment which attacked north east of the village of Sailly-le-Sec.

After the Great War as the battlefields were cleared the remains of 28 soldiers were moved into Villers-Bretonneux Military Cemetery from a location near Sailly-le-Sec. Amongst these men was a serjeant belonging to The Essex Regiment who was known to have been killed on 8 August 1918. As Serjeant Harris was missing he was commemorated on the Vis-en-Artois Memorial.

The services were conducted by the Reverend Thomas Wilde CF, Chaplain to 2nd Battalion The Royal Anglian Regiment and were attended by serving soldiers of 2nd Battalion The Royal Anglian Regiment and 5th Battalion The Rifles.

The Reverend Wilde said:

“No one should die on a battlefield without a name. When we are able to identify these officers and soldiers we are able to give them a name. When we give someone a name we give them a story and a family, this is hugely important.”

The graves of both men were identified after researchers contacted the CWGC presenting evidence suggesting they had been found. Further research conducted by the National Army Museum and JCCC confirmed their findings.

The headstones over their graves have been replaced by the CWGC.

Area Director for France at the CWGC, Xavier Puppinck, said:

“It is always really special to host these poignant ceremonies at our

cemeteries, and to formally recognise soldiers who gave the ultimate sacrifice for their country. It will be our honour to care for the graves of Second Lieutenant Cole and Serjeant Harris, in perpetuity.”

[Companies House awarded Gold standard at Mind’s Workplace Wellbeing Index Awards](#)

News story

We’ve been awarded the Gold standard at this year’s Mind Workplace Wellbeing Index Awards for our commitment to the mental health of our colleagues.



This year’s [Mind Workplace Wellbeing Index Awards](#) were held in May 2022 celebrating the 119 organisations who achieved Gold, Silver or Bronze awards for promoting positive mental health.

We’re proud to announce that we’ve been awarded the prestigious Gold ‘Achieving Excellence’ standard for 2021 to 2022. We were ranked 16th out of the 119 organisations that took part.

Angela Lewis, Director of People Transformation at Companies House, said:

Despite the challenges we’ve all faced over the last year, I’m proud that we’ve continued to prioritise supporting our colleagues so that they can deliver the very best services for our customers. Being awarded the Gold standard is an excellent achievement and recognises our dedication to workplace wellbeing.

The [Gold award from Mind](#) is the highest that an organisation can receive, and shows we’re committed to providing a supportive work environment. We’ve achieved this through initiatives such as our mental health network which

helps us to understand and support the needs of our colleagues.

Thank you to all at Companies House who have helped to promote and support positive mental health in our workplace.

Visit the [Mind website](#) for more information.

Published 24 June 2022

[RCVDA Community Housing C.I.C's grading under review](#)

Press release

Providers being investigated for an issue regarding their compliance with the Governance and Financial Viability Standard are added to the regulator's GUR list.



The Regulator of Social Housing reports that RCVDA Community Housing C.I.C has been placed on its gradings under review list today (24 June 2022).

At the time of the last [Statistical Data Return](#), the provider had fewer than 1,000 homes and therefore does not have a current published regulatory grading/judgement in accordance with our established procedures.

The regulator is currently investigating matters which may impact on RCVDA's compliance with the Governance and Financial Viability Standard.

The [gradings under review list](#) is available on the website.

1. The GUR lists providers where we are investigating a matter that might result in them being assessed as non-compliant in relation to the regulator's Governance and Financial Viability Standard.
2. The [regulatory standards page](#) provides information about the economic

and consumer standards that registered providers must meet.

3. For press office contact details, see our [Media enquiries page](#). For general queries, please email enquiries@rsh.gov.uk or call 0300 124 5225.
4. The Regulator of Social Housing promotes a viable, efficient and well-governed social housing sector able to deliver homes that meet a range of needs. It does this by undertaking robust economic regulation focusing on governance, financial viability and value for money that maintains lender confidence and protects the taxpayer. It also sets consumer standards and may take action if these standards are breached and there is a significant risk of serious detriment to tenants or potential tenants.

Published 24 June 2022

SECRETARY OF STATE ANNOUNCES THE APPOINTMENT OF A NEW CIVIL SERVICE COMMISSIONER FOR NORTHERN IRELAND

Press release

The Secretary of State for Northern Ireland, the Right Honourable Brandon Lewis CBE MP, has announced the appointment of Dr Lesley Carroll as a Civil Service Commissioner for Northern Ireland.



Dr Carroll will take up the appointment with effect from 1 July 2022.

Dr Lesley Carroll is currently the Prisoner Ombudsman for Northern Ireland. She is a former Deputy Chief Commissioner of the Equality Commission for Northern Ireland, previously worked as a Presbyterian Minister in North Belfast and was a Panel Member reviewing Charity Regulation in NI which completed its work earlier this year.

Background

Civil Service Commissioners are appointed under the Northern Ireland Constitution Act 1973 by the Queen, on recommendation from the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland. Their function is to regulate appointments to the Northern Ireland Civil Service and under the terms of the Civil Service Commissioners (Northern Ireland) Order 1999, the Commissioners also have the power to consider, and determine, appeals to them by civil servants under the Northern Ireland Civil Service Code of Ethics.

Further information on the work of the Commissioners is available at:

<https://www.nicscommissioners.org/>

Terms of appointment

- This position is part-time for a period of five years ending on 30 June 2027.
- The position receives a daily fee of £300.
- The position is not pensionable.

Political Activity

All appointments are made on merit and with regards to the statutory requirements. Political activity plays no part in the selection process. However, in accordance with the original Nolan recommendations, there is a requirement for appointees' political activity in defined categories to be made public.

Dr Carroll has declared that she has not been politically active in the last five years.

Regulation

Appointments to the Civil Service Commissioners for Northern Ireland are not regulated by the Commissioner for Public Appointments.

Statutory Requirements

Appointments to the Civil Service Commissioners for Northern Ireland are made under the provisions of section 36 (1) of the Northern Ireland Constitution Act 1973.

Published 24 June 2022