

# Press release: Volunteers in drive to give school facelift

St Thomas More Catholic Primary School received a much-needed facelift after 80 employees from 12 different organisations provided materials to carry out the work over a two-week period.

Among the many tasks achieved, communal areas were cleaned, walls and woodwork painted and 275 old coat hooks replaced with brightly coloured, matching ones. New plastic sheeting was also installed around busy places near banisters and the canteen, so they can be wiped clean more easily.

There were major improvements outside as well. Benches were given a new lease of life while planters were built out of fence posts that create a welcoming entrance to the building. The playground has had new long-lasting rubber surface laid to ensure that pupils are able to play in a safe environment.

This hugely impressive team effort was made possible through close collaboration between the various organisations working via East Midlands Asset Delivery (EMAD) for Highways England. They include maintenance and response contractor Amey, design contractor Kier and 21 other suppliers.

Amey's Principal Operations Manager Katy Stephens, who was a key organiser of the event, said:

This was a great community involvement project which saw the many partners in EMAD really work together and get a brilliant result. Not only does this primary school in the heart of Kettering now look significantly improved but this was a wonderful opportunity for the various organisations in EMAD to further cement their working relationships. A great project which was an honour to take part in!

Highways England regional director, Catherine Brookes, joined colleagues in carrying out the facelift. She said:

We were delighted to get involved and do our bit to help the school. It's great to see organisations coming together like this to support the local community.

Fraser Donald, Headteacher of St Thomas More Catholic Primary School, said:

I would just like to say a huge 'thank you' to Amey, Highways England and their suppliers for all their hard work, commitment and vision to our summer renovation project at school. The work was

carried out to a high standard and I am so pleased with the fresh start they have given to all of our school family at St Thomas More. Thank you again for everything and please know that you are always welcome back – you are part of the family now!

## **General enquiries**

Members of the public should contact the Highways England customer contact centre on 0300 123 5000.

## **Media enquiries**

Journalists should contact the Highways England press office on 0844 693 1448 and use the menu to speak to the most appropriate press officer.

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## **[News story: Dr Gillian Tully reappointed in key role for setting standards for forensic science](#)**

The Home Office has today (14 November) announced the reappointment of Dr Gillian Tully as Forensic Science Regulator.

Dr Tully's term has been extended from 3 to 6 years with her contract now expiring on 16 November 2020.

Dr Tully was originally appointed for a 3-year term ending on 16 November 2017, and has spent over 25 years working in forensic science, including a 4-year period as Head of Research and Development for the Forensic Science Service.

The Forensic Science Regulator is an independent role responsible for establishing and enforcing quality standards for forensic science used in the investigation and prosecution of crime.

Baroness Williams of Trafford, Minister of State for Countering Extremism, said:

Dr Gillian Tully has demonstrated her experience, judgement and talent in the role to date and I congratulate her on her reappointment in this key role of setting the standards for forensic science.

Dr Gillian Tully:

I am pleased to have been reappointed to my role as Forensic Science Regulator. I look forward to overseeing the introduction of standards across the remaining areas of forensic science in the criminal justice sector over the next three years, and will seek to build on the quality improvements made to date.

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## Speech: Launch of the ScaleUp Institute review 2017

Thank you all. It is great to be here. I would like to thank our hosts. And I would like to take the opportunity to acknowledge the work that the [ScaleUp Institute](#) has done.

Irene Graham and Sherry Coutu are tireless advocates of scale up businesses, along with their partner organisations, many of which I can see here today.

The institute undertakes important research, spreads best practice, and provides opportunities for both public and private organisations to come together and share ideas. All of this advances our understanding of how to build an environment where small businesses can become high growth businesses. And I welcome the publication of this review as another step forward for the Institute.

Everyone in this room will know how important it is that we help people start up and grow their own businesses.

High growth businesses are vital to the economy – so the more small businesses that can make that leap from start up, to scale up – the better for our economy. And we continue to implement measures that help to make setting up a business as easy as possible.

We start from a strong position. There were a record 5.5 million private sector businesses at the start of 2016. This is an increase of nearly 100,000 since 2015 and over 1 million since 2010. This record of success is one of the reasons that we rank third in the OECD for start-ups.

We are determined to continue that success, just as we are determined to support those businesses which want to scale up. To this end, we have taken serious action since 2010. British Business Bank programmes are supporting almost £3.5 billion of finance to over 56,000 smaller businesses. We have invested an additional £400 million in the British Business Bank to catalyse later stage venture capital investments by the private sector, which will

unlock £1 billion of equity funding in later stage venture capital. We will work with investors to further understand the obstacles firms face accessing capital outside London and the South East.

We are supporting more companies to innovate through the UK's R&D Tax Credits scheme. In 2014 to 2015 more than 20,000 companies, including over 18,000 SMEs, claimed nearly £2.45 billion of R&D support. We are working with high growth innovative businesses and new entrants into sectors and markets to help ensure the value these businesses bring is realised.

We want to support businesses to thrive. High growth businesses in particular make a big contribution to growth and productivity. They also create around one third to a half of all net employment growth amongst established businesses. This is one of the reasons that we want to see more high growth businesses in the UK, but to realise that ambition there is more to do on scale ups.

The OECD ranks the UK as 13th for scale ups, so we must nurture those businesses with the potential to be high growth, create an environment where they can thrive and, importantly, find them and help them at the right time.

Soon, we are going to publish our Modern Industrial Strategy. We are facing tough challenges. Growth has not been even across the UK. Prospects for people and businesses vary too much. We have world-class businesses and sectors – but some are not yet achieving their full potential.

However, great challenges offer great opportunities. Leaving the EU allows us to make fresh choices about how we shape our economy and presents an opportunity to deliver a bold, modern Industrial Strategy. One which builds on our strengths, provides certainty, and stands the test of time, creating a resilient economy ready for the future. Our strategy will enable the UK to work more productively and boost the earning power of people, businesses, places and the nation as a whole.

Key to all of this is creating an environment in which business can thrive. The UK is already a great place to start and grow a business but we want to build on this. That's why it is one of the pillars of our Industrial Strategy. We must ensure that businesses across the UK can access the finance and skills they need to grow and we must create the right conditions for companies to invest for the long term.

As part of this, we want to help promising, growing companies to scale up. As the government's Scale-Up Champion, I have set up a Scale-Up Task Force to look at the issues preventing businesses from taking action to grow and why those that do are not always achieving their full growth potential, whether in scale or speed.

I am delighted to see that some of the members of the Task Force are here today. I would like to thank them for the energy, enthusiasm and innovative thinking that they have brought to our discussions so far. It has been a privilege to work with this group and it has given me a renewed appreciation of just how challenging it can be for people who want to transform their

businesses.

The next step will be the publication of Industrial Strategy white paper. A lot of thinking has gone into the development of this paper and not just the work of the Scale-Up Taskforce; people across the country have responded to the [green paper consultation](#).

There is also the [Patient Capital Review](#), considering the barriers to accessing long term finance, and the Entrepreneurship Review into how we can support businesses to start well and grow. All this work will feed into the white paper, which will reaffirm our commitment to driving business growth and productivity.

We are already a start-up nation; now, the opportunity is to become a scale-up nation. Let us continue to press on with this agenda. There is a wealth of ideas and support in this room.

Thank you once again for inviting me and for listening to me. And I congratulate the ScaleUp Institute for the publication of this review.

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## [Press release: England's bathing waters hold high standards](#)

Standards have remained high following last year's record results which showed bathing waters were the cleanest since records began.

98.3 per cent of bathing waters tested at over 400 beaches and lakes up and down the country passed tough standards this year, following 98.5 per cent last year.

There have been huge strides made since the early 1990s, when just 28 per cent of bathing waters met the top water quality standards that were in force then; now 92 per cent are rated excellent or good.

Environment Secretary Michael Gove said:

We want all bathing waters to enjoy the high quality which the 146 million visitors to Britain's beaches every year expect and we will keep working with partners to drive up standards.

Not only does our iconic coastline generate over £3.6 billion for the economy, it is a valuable part of our natural environment and we will uphold these bathing water standards as part of our plans to deliver a Green Brexit.

Sir James Bevan, Chief Executive of the Environment Agency said:

Maintaining such high water quality standards at English beaches is a huge success and a credit to all those individuals and organisations working hard to keep our bathing waters clean. Water quality has improved significantly over the last two decades – but to protect and enhance water quality even further we will need everyone to take the small actions that will help.

The Environment Agency continues to lead efforts to ensure bathing waters are maintained and improved further, working with partners and the public to reduce pollution.

Local action plans are in place for the waters that need improvement, involving a range of partner organisations. In 2017 the public were also able to see more advice on signs at beaches and get better information online about water quality at any bathing beach.

Notes to editors:

- The Office of National Statistics have published the annual bathing water quality results [here](#)
- Information about each bathing water is updated through the season on the [bathing water explorer](#)

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## [News story: Xbox controllers, Hoverbikes and robotic trucks trialled by British and American Armies](#)

Continuing the MOD's investment in cutting-edge technology, the UK has been working with the US military on autonomous resupply, providing a glimpse into the future of getting much-needed supplies to the front line.

In a week-long exercise in Michigan, the UK MOD's Defence Science and Technology Laboratory (Dstl) and organisations from the US Army's Research, Development and Engineering Command (RDECOM) have been testing an all-terrain 4x4 vehicle controlled by an Xbox-style controller, driverless trucks in convoy and Hoverbike drones for delivering supplies in the most dangerous "last mile" up to the battlefield.

**Defence Minister Harriett Baldwin said:**

One hundred years ago we pioneered tank warfare with our US allies,

and today we remain right at the forefront of military technology together. This exercise has proven the success of our ongoing investment in science and technology as we see concepts becoming reality. This particular project is spearheading solutions to the notoriously dangerous operation of supplying our frontline on the battlefield. Delivering crucial food, fuel and ammo remotely will help save soldiers' lives.

A British Army MAN SV 6-tonne truck leading two US Light Medium Tactical Vehicle trucks in a driverless convoy.

This is a new way of coordinating and delivering vital supplies to front-line operations, aiming to reduce risk to those troops and provide on-demand delivery of food, fuel or ammunition to the front line. The Coalition Assured Autonomous Resupply (CAAR) demonstration, the first in a three-year project to bring concepts to life, marked initial demonstration of unmanned tactical resupply technologies in the three areas.

The line-haul convoy is the first time ever that a UK-US collaboration has joined together in this format, with a British Army MAN SV 6-tonne truck as a 'leader' vehicle in the convoy, followed by two US Light Medium Tactical Vehicles (LMTV) trucks. Travelling at speeds of up to 25mph, the vehicles used integrated robotics to make decisions about speed, steering and other driving functions.

The Unmanned Aerial Vehicles (UAVs) demonstrated included the British-developed Malloy Aeronautics Hoverbike. An advanced prototype quadcopter drone, it can deliver more than 100kg of supplies, using a simple tablet controller. Unveiled for the first time, this version of the Hoverbike could also potentially be used for humanitarian aid and disaster relief missions.

The 4x4 vehicle tested was a tele-operated Polaris MRZR, fitted with advanced sensors, cameras and GPS, and operated by a joint UK-US trials team. Using an adapted Xbox game console controller, Corporal Mortimer and Lance Corporal Thorne remotely 'drove' the 4x4 around the area to simulate an off-road task.

A remote-operated 4x4 being tested by the British and US Armies out in Michigan.

### **Pete Stockel, innovation autonomy challenge lead for Dstl, said:**

Following the communique signature between the two nations in 2014, we have been working closely with our American counterparts to develop effective demonstrations and assessments of important new autonomy technologies, which could one day reduce the burden on and risk to the military user, while improving logistics efficiencies and interoperability.

This is the first time that we have created a UK-US coalition semi-autonomous leader-follower convoy to bring to life concepts which will provide solutions to de-risk the Last Mile of logistics

support to the front line.

We are enormously excited to be working with our US colleagues on this project, delivering on the commitment announced at the Farnborough Airshow in 2016. It has been an exciting challenge to drive this forward at pace. This could be a step-change in how operational risk might be managed, costs could be reduced and – ultimately – lives can be saved, as a result of harnessing this rapidly-evolving technology.

Under the Autonomous Last Mile resupply challenge, Dstl and the Defence and Security Accelerator (DASA) are bringing together a wide range of military and industry partners to join commercial-off the-shelf (COTS) suppliers with novel ideas and tech start-ups in producing a futuristic demonstration of how UK and US forces' tactical resupply might one day operate.

**Colonel John McCrann, from Army Headquarters, said:**

The British Army is keen to work with its US counterparts through Dstl to identify where autonomous technologies can benefit UK military capability.

**Jeffrey Ratowski, TARDEC's project leader for the Coalition Assured Autonomous Resupply (CAAR) effort, said:**

We're using US and UK Soldiers to control multiple robotic assets including the convoy, the autonomous last mile- ground piece, and there's also an autonomous last mile- air piece.

The MOD spends 1.2% of its rising £36 billion defence budget on science and technology. In September Defence Minister Harriett Baldwin [announced the 25 winners of the Last Mile Challenge](#), up-and-coming tech startups and entrepreneurs hoping to bring innovative solutions to resupply the frontline.

Any entrepreneurs can apply to Pitch@Palace Series 9.0, the theme of which is "Data, Intelligence, and The Future of Security". A Defence themed On Tour Event is scheduled to take place in London on 31 January 2018. Find out more or apply to take part [here](#).