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Foreign & Commonwealth Office

King Charles Street
London
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Minister of State

Carl Les
North Yorkshire County Council
County Hall
Northallerton
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09 February 2018

Dear Carl Les,

Commonwealth Heads of Government Meeting 2018

As Minister for the Commonwealth, I wanted to inform you about preparations for April's Commonwealth Heads of Government Meeting and detail some of the ways in which you and your local areas can engage with this national event.

April promises to be an exciting celebration of the modern Commonwealth. It will start with two weeks of Commonwealth Games on Australia's Gold Coast, followed by summit week here in the UK and celebrations marking Her Majesty's 92nd birthday on Saturday 21 April. We will be welcoming national leaders, business people, civil society representatives and, perhaps most importantly, young people from every corner of the Commonwealth to our country for the summit.

This will be one of the largest gatherings of national leaders that the UK has ever hosted. However, the Commonwealth is much more than a collection of Member States. We believe the Commonwealth's greatest strength lies in the many organisations and people who work together across our borders. These connections are often organised by the more than 80 organisations which are officially accredited to the Commonwealth and the vibrant diaspora communities that exist across it, not least in your local communities.

I understand that some of your local authorities hold a flag flying ceremony on Commonwealth Day, which this year takes place on 12 March, to celebrate the Commonwealth. This is a great initiative and way in which to build a national sense of celebration and I would encourage you to do the same this year, as it will add to the national momentum as we look towards hosting the Commonwealth Heads of Government Meeting.

We are delighted to be partnering with the Eden Project - founders of the *Big Lunch* initiative - who this month will launch the **Commonwealth Big Lunches**. Our aim is to bring together millions of people from across the Commonwealth to share food and celebrate their Commonwealth connections. The lunches will run from Commonwealth Day on 12 March until

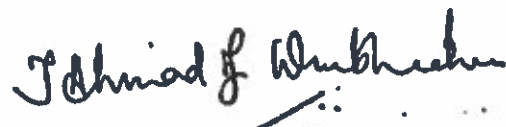
22 April 2018. Our aim is to see lunches held across the Commonwealth, especially all areas of the UK. We would encourage you to bring your community together at a Commonwealth Big Lunch to celebrate our diversity and all that we have in common. Please do advise my office of your plans.

I hope you will join us in celebrating the Commonwealth and working with diaspora communities, through hosting a Commonwealth Big Lunch; supporting the summit via our website, www.chogm2018.org.uk and by using our Twitter handle, [@commonwealth2018](https://twitter.com/commonwealth2018), and Facebook details, [commonwealth2018](https://www.facebook.com/commonwealth2018), to share your Commonwealth story. This is a great way for Local Governments to involve their communities in the celebrations leading up to the summit and will also be an opportunity to promote the role of Local Governments and diaspora communities within the UK. Enclosed are some guidelines which have more information on how to support us and how we can help you promote your public Commonwealth events.

The Department for Education has worked with the British Council and the Commonwealth Secretariat to create an education pack designed to further pupils' understanding of the Commonwealth, including its structure, principles and the great people from its history. I would be most grateful if you could highlight this resource to schools in your areas. This pack can be downloaded online from <https://www.gov.uk/government/news/department-for-education-launches-commonwealth-education-pack>.

Furthermore we are working with cultural institutions across the UK to promote their Commonwealth connections. Many museums and galleries contain objects from across the Commonwealth and run talks, tours or family activities based around these collections; we are keen to promote these on our website and can provide 'proud to support' branding if that would be of interest. Do please encourage your local cultural institutions to get in touch with us so we can promote their work. If you know of a local museum or gallery with Commonwealth activity do ask them to email us at getinvolved@chogm2018.org.uk with the details.

April will be a moment for the UK to demonstrate its openness and the strength of its partnerships with some of our oldest and close friends. I look forward to being informed of your plans to ensure April is a truly extraordinary occasion.



LORD (TARIQ) AHMAD OF WIMBLEDON
Minister of State for the Commonwealth and the UN
Prime Minister's Special Representative for Preventing Sexual Violence in Conflict

Guidelines for support: Social media and campaigns

• The Commonwealth Heads of Government Meeting

The Commonwealth is an organisation with deep roots and profound strengths. The Commonwealth's uniqueness lies in its human networks. These people-to-people links define the organisation and we need to recognise and nurture them.

From 16-20 April 2018, the UK will host the Commonwealth Heads of Government Meeting in London and Windsor. With the theme of 'Towards a Common Future', leaders will work to address common challenges, and focus on delivering:

- **A more prosperous future:** boosting intra-Commonwealth trade and investment and maximising the opportunities offered by the 'Commonwealth Advantage'
- **A more secure future:** increasing cooperation across security challenges including global terrorism, organised crime and cyber attacks
- **A more sustainable future:** building the resilience of small and vulnerable states to deal with the effects of climate change and other global crises
- **A fairer future:** promoting democracy, fundamental freedoms and good governance across the Commonwealth

We want a Commonwealth with a strong and vibrant future built on deep partnerships that embrace its unique and diverse membership.

• Campaigns calendar and key dates



We want to engage with the 2.4 billion citizens across the Commonwealth and make them part of our public engagement programme. We are putting together an exciting agenda of public activity that will run until the end of summit week in April:

- November: we launched our social media channels and started the #ourCommonwealth campaign on Twitter and Facebook
- From Commonwealth Day on 12 March until the end of summit week (22 April), people will be hosting Commonwealth Big Lunches across the Commonwealth
- April: we will be celebrating the Games and cheering Commonwealth athletes before supporting the summit

In January, we will launch our Get Involved page on the summit website where you can find more local events and activities taking place in the UK and across the Commonwealth until the end of summit week.



● How to promote our social media channels

By promoting our activity, you can help us expand our reach and contribute to the success of the summit.

Please share, like and follow our website, Facebook and Twitter accounts.

Website: <http://www.chogm2018.org.uk>

Facebook page: <http://www.facebook.com/Commonwealth2018>

Twitter handle: [@Commonwealth18](https://twitter.com/Commonwealth18)

We would like you to support our social media channels and engage with our campaigns by:

- tweeting or liking our posts
- sharing our content on your social media channels

Please use the hashtag #ourCommonwealth in any online posts you may publish.

Some drafted posts or tweets suggestions below, but please feel free to adapt them to your organisation style or to write your own posts:

- with the link to our Facebook page

"Towards a common future. The UK will focus on prosperity, security, fairness & sustainability at #CHOGM2018. Join the conversation on #ourCommonwealth <https://www.facebook.com/Commonwealth2018>"

"52 member countries. 2.4 billion citizens. Towards a common future. Join the conversation. <http://bit.ly/ourCommonwealth> #ourCommonwealth"

- with the link to our website

"Learn about #OurCommonwealth www.chogm2018.org.uk"

"London will host the next #Commonwealth Heads of Government Meeting (CHOGM) in April 2018. Find out more: www.chogm2018.org.uk"



CHOGM London 2018 @Commonwealth18 · Nov 1
London will host the next #Commonwealth Heads of Government Meeting (CHOGM) in April 2018. Find out more: [chogm2018.org.uk](http://www.chogm2018.org.uk)



UK in India
6 November at 08:45 · C

Young leaders across #ourCommonwealth are working towards a common future. Have your say & join the conversation <http://bit.ly/ourCommonwealth>



We would like you to ask your contacts to share with us their **Commonwealth stories**: do they have a unique link to the Commonwealth? Do they have a positive Commonwealth-linked story to tell? We are looking to feature stories from individuals, diaspora groups, teams, businesses and partnerships on our social media channels as part of our #ourCommonwealth campaign.

If you are aware of anyone who would like to share these, please email:

CommonwealthSummitMedia@cabinetoffice.gov.uk



- **How to get involved with our campaigns**

- **The Commonwealth Big Lunches**

The Commonwealth Big Lunches, in partnership with the Eden Project, will take place across the 52 Commonwealth countries. Launched on Commonwealth Day (12 March), we will encourage people to host lunches until the end of the summit week (22 April). People are invited to come together to share Commonwealth food with their sports clubs, community groups, schools, youth organisations, businesses, friends and families.

The lunch is an opportunity for your organisation to get together with its contacts, partners and network to discuss policies, causes or issues that matter to you.

We would like to ask you to host a lunch and encourage your contacts, stakeholders and network to also host one. The lunch is scalable: for example this could be a party in a garden, a street gathering, business meeting, roundtable, school lunch or something larger which looks to bring different communities together, from a couple of people to hundreds.

If your lunch is open to the public, please email getinvolved@chogm2018.org.uk and we will advertise it on our website. When hosting a lunch, we would ask you to encourage people to attend a lunch and to share pictures with us on social media using the hashtag #CommonwealthBigLunch.

In January we will launch a digital lunch pack with fun and educational Commonwealth facts, guidance and recipes from Commonwealth chefs. You can register your interest to pre-order a free pack and find more information by visiting www.commonwealthbiglunches.com – but we would suggest you start planning now.

- **Commonwealth Day**

The 52 countries of the Commonwealth will come together to celebrate Commonwealth Day on 12 March 2018. This will mark the final run-up to the summit. Local communities celebrate Commonwealth day through a number of different means such as events in schools. This could be an appropriate moment for you to host a Commonwealth Big Lunch.

- **Our newsletter**

We share a monthly newsletter with our partners and stakeholders. It contains updates from the Commonwealth Summit Unit, upcoming events and milestones, ways to get involved in the summit and information about our social media channels.

If you are aware of any partner organisation, stakeholder or group who would be interested in receiving the newsletter, please email alishah.shariff@cabinetoffice.gov.uk

- **We want to support what you do**

We would like to ask you to theme events or activities organised by your organisation or network with a Commonwealth link.

Please share any event or activity with a Commonwealth link taking place near you. Whether a Commonwealth Big Lunch, a Commonwealth-themed exhibition, community event, performance, or any activity with an interesting Commonwealth connection - we will help spread the word.

We will provide our 'proud to support' logo to organisers. If this is open to the public, we can promote this activity online on our social media channels and on our 'how to get involved' page on the summit website. This page, launching in January, will gather information about activities



and events with a Commonwealth link taking place across the Commonwealth. We want to involve people all over the UK and the Commonwealth; featuring your activity would help showcase the work of your organisation or partners, and help you to reach new audiences.

● **Key contacts**

If you are running or aware of any Commonwealth-themed activity happening near you, please email getinvolved@chogm2018.org.uk

If you have any queries regarding the #OurCommonwealth campaign, please email CommonwealthSummitMedia@cabinetoffice.gov.uk

If you are aware of any organisation who would be interested in receiving our newsletter please email alishah.shariff@cabinetoffice.gov.uk

For any other information, please contact the emails below:

Tricia Croasdell – Director of Communications tricia.croasdell2@cabinetoffice.gov.uk

- Digital and website

Steve Vaughan – Head of Digital steve.vaughan@cabinetoffice.gov.uk

- Commonwealth Big Lunches, Commonwealth Day and public engagement

Mel Rouse – Head of Campaigns mel.rouse@cabinetoffice.gov.uk

- Press and media

Yvette Hodgson – Head of Media yvette.hodgson@cabinetoffice.gov.uk

