

**Press Release**

**EMBARGOED UNTIL 4TH MARCH 2018**

**FLY A FLAG FOR THE COMMONWEALTH  
12TH MARCH 2018**

Lord Mayors and Mayors, Lord Provosts, town and parish councils, local authorities and local communities, school children and college students, members of Girlguiding and the Scouts from around the UK and Commonwealth, Sea and Air Cadets, charities and community groups, Commonwealth Ex-Servicemen and major shipping lines, training ships crewed by disabled crewman people, and many others around the world will raise more than ONE THOUSAND Commonwealth flags at 10.00hrs local time on Monday 12 March – Commonwealth Day 2018, in a shared celebration of this amazing family of nations that encompasses the globe.

The Fly a Flag for the Commonwealth initiative, now in its fourth year, is again catching the imagination of thousands of participants from all walks of life, inspiring them to join with others throughout the Commonwealth. As a collective public expression of commitment to the Commonwealth, it enables participants to show appreciation for the values the Commonwealth upholds, and the opportunities offered for friendship and cooperation with fellow Commonwealth young and old citizens around the world.

Scouts in The Bahamas, Belize, Grenada, Jamaica, Malaysia, Maldives, Republic of Malta, Mauritius, New Zealand, Samoa, Sri Lanka, and Trinidad and Tobago will also be raising the Commonwealth flag at 10.00hrs local time on 12 March, joining thousands of other young people around the world in committing themselves to the values of the Commonwealth Charter and the 2018 Commonwealth theme: 'Towards a Common Future'. This year's theme explores how the Commonwealth can address global challenges and work to create a better future for all citizens through sub-themes of sustainability, safety, prosperity and fairness, in line with the theme of the 2018 Commonwealth Heads of Government Meeting in London.

A personal message from the Secretary-General of the Commonwealth of Nations, The Right Honourable Patricia Scotland QC, and a specially written Commonwealth Affirmation, will be read out at each ceremony before the raising of the Commonwealth flag at 10.00hrs that morning. In a common act of witness around the globe members of this great family of nations will reaffirm the commitment of all Commonwealth member states to democracy, development, and respect for diversity.

Bruno Peek LVO OBE OPR – Originator and Commonwealth Pageantmaster, of 'Fly a Flag for the Commonwealth', said: "I am amazed how quickly this event has caught the public imagination in the UK and around the Commonwealth. We are only in our fourth year, and the participation of so many people of all ages and from all walks of life shows the enormous potential of this project and of the Commonwealth. It is a positive and uplifting way for people to link with and assist fellow citizens of the Commonwealth in a family that spans across oceans and continents. There is a real sense of promise, and hope for the future in this current troubled world of ours.

We are also delighted that the Government of the George Cross Island of Malta will be taking part again this year by raising the Commonwealth Flag at 10am on 12<sup>th</sup> March, adding to the international aspect of this Commonwealth event."

The Secretary-General of the Commonwealth of Nations, The Right Honourable Patricia Scotland QC, said: "Fly a Flag is a wonderful opportunity for local communities to come together to celebrate the remarkable diversity and inclusiveness of the Commonwealth, and the many ways in which the lives and livelihoods of its 2.4 billion citizens are enriched through Commonwealth connection and cooperation. By working together locally and globally we learn from one another, and make progress for the good of all."

On Commonwealth Day people of all ages and backgrounds in Commonwealth countries set in every continent and ocean will recommit to working 'Towards a Common Future', our theme for this year and for the Commonwealth Heads of Government being hosted by the United Kingdom in April. Raising the Commonwealth flag reminds us afresh that cooperation as a family of nations enables us to respond collectively to global challenges, and to deliver a fairer, more prosperous, secure and sustainable future for all citizens – particularly our young people."

**- ENDS -**

**NOTE TO EDITORS**

**Fly a Flag for the Commonwealth**

**Bruno Peek LVO OBE OPR - Commonwealth Pageantmaster**

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