



Media Release

Thursday 07 October 2021

The Queen officially launches the Birmingham 2022 Queen's Baton Relay at Buckingham Palace

07 October 2021: Today, Her Majesty The Queen has officially launched the Birmingham 2022 Queen's Baton Relay in a unique ceremony at Buckingham Palace.

The Queen, accompanied by The Earl of Wessex, attended a special ceremony on the forecourt of the Palace to launch the 16th official Queen's Baton Relay. They were joined by Batonbearers made up of athletes who will be competing in next year's Games, young flagbearers from the West Midlands, the Birmingham 2022 Hometown Heroes and representatives from across the Commonwealth.

The Queen's Baton Relay is a tradition that celebrates, connects and excites communities from across the Commonwealth during the build up to the Games. The Queen's Baton will now visit all 72 nations and territories of the Commonwealth for 294 days, covering 140,000 kilometres. The global journey will conclude at the Opening Ceremony of the Birmingham 2022 Commonwealth Games on 28 July 2022.

The Baton was delivered to Buckingham Palace after being carried from Horse Guards Parade and down the Mall by the Birmingham 2022 Hometown Heroes, champions of grassroots sport in the West Midlands, who were accompanied by a Tri-Service military band. One of the Hometown Heroes, Kevin Dillon, a boxing coach from Brierley Hill, brought the Baton to the stage, commencing the start of the ceremony.

The Queen and The Earl of Wessex, Patron and Vice-Patron of the Commonwealth Games Federation respectively, met the designers and manufacturers of the Baton, which was unveiled in Birmingham last week. The Baton was created in a West Midlands collaboration that fused art, technology, and science. Made from copper, aluminium and steel, the Baton also features a platinum strand in homage to Her Majesty The Queen in her Platinum Jubilee year. It is also equipped with cutting-edge technology; 360 degree-camera, heart rate monitor, atmospheric sensors and LED lighting.

Dame Louise Martin DBE, President of the Commonwealth Games Federation, and The Chairman of the Organising Committee for the Birmingham 2022 Commonwealth Games, Lord Lieutenant of the West Midlands, John Crabtree OBE, also accompanied The Queen in the ceremonial party.

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Her Majesty's message was brought to the stage by Haseebah Abdullah, another Hometown Hero and England's first hijab-wearing boxing coach. The Queen then placed Her message to the Commonwealth into the Baton, for it to be sealed and locked. The Queen's message will be read out in full next year at the Birmingham 2022 Opening Ceremony.

Four-time Paralympic gold medallist, Kadeena Cox, had the honour of being the first Batonbearer to receive the Baton from The Queen, marking the official start of the 16th Queen's Baton Relay. She then passed it to Team England squash player Declan James and Team Wales boxer Lauren Price who were positioned at The Queen Victoria Memorial.

Further Batonbearers at the ceremony included athletes from Team England and artistic gymnast Alice Kinsella, Team Scotland hockey player Sarah Robertson, and Team Northern Ireland cyclist Mark Downey.

More than 70 young people from Birmingham lined the stage and held flags from all the nations and territories of the Commonwealth. The flagbearers were made up members of Birmingham City Council's Youth City Board, plus over 50 individuals from Wilson Stuart School, CORE Academy, Hall Green School and King Edward VI Handsworth School.

The ceremony, hosted by BBC Asian Network presenter Noreen Khan, included performances from Birmingham-based acapella group Black Voices, a live-streamed performance from the City of Birmingham Symphony Orchestra, and the Birmingham Poet Laureate and Birmingham 2022 Legacy and Benefits Committee member Casey Bailey wrote and performed a poem called "Take It On".

The official Birmingham 2022 mascot, Perry, who wore his bespoke tuxedo instead of his basketball kit for the occasion, was also in good spirits at the ceremony.

Lord Lieutenant of the West Midlands, John Crabtree OBE, Chairman of Birmingham 2022, said: *"The Queen's Baton Relay will convey a message of hope and inspiration and will connect peoples from across the Commonwealth during the build-up to the Games and as we look to celebrate Her Majesty The Queen's Platinum Jubilee. This journey champions the miracle of difference, the individuality of humanity, yet speaks to a collective collaboration of a global community."*

"Birmingham 2022 will be the Games for everyone, and the Queen's Baton Relay is just one example of that. We will come together challenging the transformational power of sport to unite us all. Today has been a wonderful celebration for the launch of the Queen's Baton Relay, and it will be a thrill and a privilege to follow the Baton on its journey and to hear the stories of all the people it meets and delights."

Commonwealth Games Federation President Dame Louise Martin DBE said: *"I am absolutely delighted we have finally arrived at this special moment, the launch of the Birmingham 2022 Queen's Baton Relay!"*

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“This is a very important day for Commonwealth Sport as the message from Her Majesty Queen Elizabeth II visits our 72 nations and territories in this unique Baton. Traveling for 294 days, and covering 140,000 kilometres, the Queen's Baton Relay provides Birmingham and the West Midlands the opportunity to showcase itself on a global scale.

“It marks the final countdown to the Birmingham 2022 Opening Ceremony on 28 July and provides hope, harmony and cooperation across the Commonwealth at a time when it is needed most.”

Batonbearer and four-time Paralympic gold medallist Kadeena Cox said: *“It was an absolute honour to participate in this once-in-a-lifetime event. Receiving the Queen’s Baton from Her Majesty The Queen was a moment I’ll keep with me for the rest of my life. It was also a privilege to share this special moment alongside six other incredible athletes from England, Wales, Scotland and Northern Ireland. It’s so exciting to think that this Baton will now travel across the Commonwealth, where other inspirational individuals will become Batonbearers in their own communities.”*

Casey Bailey, Birmingham Poet Laureate said: *“It is such a pleasure to be part of a celebration that is shining a light on Birmingham and the whole of the West Midlands. With so much to be excited about next year, this event really felt like it’s launched us into the festivities.”*

Minister for Sport and the Commonwealth Games Nigel Huddleston said: *“The Queen's Baton Relay marks the countdown to the biggest and most exciting sporting event in Birmingham's history. Not only will the Commonwealth Games put the West Midlands on the global stage, it will showcase the UK's expertise in hosting inspirational and inclusive international events.*

“2022 is set to be an exciting year of celebration for our country with the Games, Her Majesty The Queen’s Platinum Jubilee and the Festival UK 2022 all taking place. The baton represents the start of this, and will travel through 72 Commonwealth nations and territories. I look forward to the relay connecting communities around the world and encouraging people to get involved in the Games, including the next generation of sporting heroes.”*

Cllr Ian Ward, Leader of Birmingham City Council, said: *“It is an honour to have been in attendance as the Baton started its journey to all parts of the Commonwealth. The Relay is a fantastic opportunity for Birmingham to showcase everything that is great about the Proud Host City as excitement and interest builds ahead of the Games. It symbolises the strengths and qualities of the city and the Commonwealth – helping us to positively project Birmingham’s boldness to billions of people before it come back home next summer.”*

Mayor of the West Midlands, Andy Street, said: *“The launch of the Queen’s Baton Relay is always an incredibly special moment for the Commonwealth Games, and another key milestone on our road to Birmingham 2022. The eyes of the world will be on the West Midlands in just a matter of months now, and I for one cannot wait to show off our home.”*

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Tomorrow, the Baton will head to Birmingham Airport before departing for Cyprus – the first stop on the Queen’s Baton Relay. From here, it will visit the other 70 nations and territories of the Commonwealth, before travelling the length and breadth of England on the way to its final destination – the Opening Ceremony of the Birmingham 2022 Commonwealth Games.

Birmingham 2022 will welcome 4,500 athletes from 72 nations and territories for 11 days of spectacular sport, from 28 July – 8 August 2022.

For more information on the Queen’s Baton Relay and to follow the Baton’s journey, visit birmingham2022.com/qbr

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For more information, please contact Rose Jackson, Communications Manager at Birmingham 2022 Commonwealth Games, on 0750 315 7644 or email rose.jackson@birmingham2022.com

NOTES TO EDITORS

About the Birmingham 2022 Queen’s Baton Relay

The Queen’s Baton Relay is a Games tradition that celebrates, connects and excites communities from across Commonwealth during the build up to the Games.

Birmingham 2022 is staging the 16th official Queen’s Baton Relay – an epic journey across the Commonwealth, with The Queen’s Baton visiting all 72 nations and territories, reaching Europe, Africa, Asia, Oceania, the Caribbean and the Americas.

The Relay will begin on 7 October 2021 at a special event at Buckingham Palace, where Her Majesty The Queen will place Her message to the Commonwealth into the Baton.

The Baton will travel for 294 days, visiting all 72 nations and territories and connecting communities in every corner of the Commonwealth, embracing unique cultures and sharing stories.

This collective journey will ignite hope, solidarity and collaboration for the next generation, with these stories leaving us all inspired to take on the challenges that matter most to us.

For more information, visit birmingham2022.com/qbr

About the Birmingham 2022 Commonwealth Games

The Birmingham 2022 Commonwealth Games, which will be held from 28 July until 8 August 2022, will be a once in a lifetime opportunity to put the city, the region, and its people on the global stage.

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The Games is already proving to be a catalyst for transformation across the West Midlands, attracting new investment and funding, creating jobs and apprenticeships for local people and new opportunities for local businesses, as well as accelerating projects that will ensure the region is ready to host a fantastic sports and cultural celebration.

Birmingham 2022 will be the Games for everyone, bringing people together from across Birmingham and the region, to provide a warm welcome to millions of visitors during the summer of 2022.

Find out more at www.birmingham2022.com

Full schedule of the Queen’s Baton Relay international route:

Nation / Territory	Arrival date
1. Cyprus	9 October 2021
2. Malta	12 October 2021
3. Nigeria	16 October 2021
4. The Gambia	20 October 2021
5. Sierra Leone	23 October 2021
6. Ghana	26 October 2021
7. Cameroon	29 October 2021
8. Kenya	2 November 2021
9. Uganda	5 November 2021
10. Rwanda	10 November 2021
11. Tanzania	13 November 2021
12. Malawi	17 November 2021
13. Zambia	20 November 2021
14. Mozambique	23 November 2021
15. Mauritius	27 November 2021
16. Botswana	30 November 2021
17. St. Helena	5 December 2021
18. South Africa	8 December 2021
19. Namibia	14 December 2021
20. Eswatini	17 December 2021
21. Lesotho	20 December 2021
22. Seychelles	23 December 2021
23. Pakistan	27 December 2021
24. Maldives	1 January 2022
25. Sri Lanka	4 January 2022
26. Bangladesh	7 January 2022
27. India	12 January 2022
28. Singapore	17 January 2022
29. Malaysia	22 January 2022
30. Brunei	26 January 2022
31. Papua New Guinea	30 January 2022
32. Solomon Islands	2 February 2022
33. Nauru	5 February 2022

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34. Fiji	13 February 2022
35. Samoa	16 February 2022
36. Tonga	19 February 2022
37. Vanuatu	22 February 2022
38. Kiribati	25 February 2022
39. Tuvalu	28 February 2022
40. Niue	3 March 2022
41. Cook Islands	6 March 2022
42. Norfolk Island	9 March 2022
43. New Zealand	12 March 2022
44. Australia	17 March 2022
45. Belize	23 March 2022
46. Guyana	26 March 2022
47. Grenada	30 March 2022
48. The Bahamas	3 April 2022
49. Turks & Caicos	7 April 2022
50. Cayman Islands	12 April 2022
51. Jamaica	15 April 2022
52. Trinidad & Tobago	19 April 2022
53. Barbados	23 April 2022
54. Montserrat	26 April 2022
55. Dominica	29 April 2022
56. British Virgin Islands	3 May 2022
57. St. Kitts & Nevis	6 May 2022
58. Anguilla	9 May 2022
59. Antigua & Barbuda	13 May 2022
60. St. Lucia	16 May 2022
61. St. Vincent & The Grenadines	19 May 2022
62. Bermuda	22 May 2022
63. Canada	26 May 2022
64. Gibraltar	31 May 2022
65. Falkland Islands	7 June 2022
66. Jersey	10 June 2022
67. Guernsey	13 June 2022
68. Isle of Man	16 June 2022
69. Scotland	18 June 2022
70. Northern Ireland	24 June 2022
71. Wales	29 June 2022
72. England	4 July 2022

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