

**COMMONWEALTH DAY 2026
CONNECTING MALAWI AND NORTHAMPTON
'UNLOCKING OPPORTUNITIES TOGETHER'**

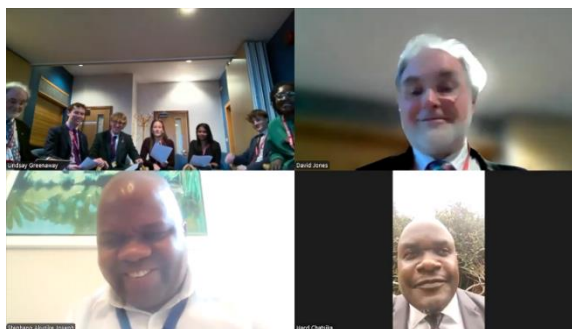
Commonwealth Day
connecting
Northampton & Malawi



COSW celebrated Commonwealth Day 2026 with Northampton on Monday 9th March with a dialogue between Malawi and Northampton, making a reality of the personal relationships which lie at the heart of Commonwealth connectivity.

Facilitated by the Lord-Lieutenant of Northamptonshire, [James Saunders Watson](#), the celebrations were organised by the [Commonwealth Organisation for Social Work](#) and hosted by [Northampton School for Boys \(NSB\)](#). The Zoom link-up connected the Commonwealth Day event at the [UK High Commission in Lilongwe](#), Malawi, with students, social workers and residents from Malawi in the UK gathered at NSB.

Connecting by Zoom across more than 5,000 miles, the students at NSB questioned those in Lilongwe and Northampton about the value of the Commonwealth. The discussion recognised the things which unite the 56 member countries and their peoples alongside the often-difficult shared colonial histories - but also celebrated the connections not only between governments but more importantly between peoples, demonstrating mutual respect at a time of great global tension. The excitement of the Commonwealth games was discussed as well as mutual help in promoting social development.



This year's theme '*Unlocking opportunities together for a prosperous Commonwealth*,' highlighted how the 56 member countries of the Commonwealth can rally together to face today's challenges and unlock opportunities that can deliver shared and lasting prosperity for all who live in the Commonwealth — from the smallest, most remote communities to the biggest cities.

Later on 9th March, COSW General Secretary and Northampton resident Dr David N Jones discussed Commonwealth Day with John Griff on NLive Radio. Listen again to the interview [here](#) (01.40) and [here](#) (02.17).



The video of the conversation between Malawi and Northampton is available [here](#).

Carlene Cornish and David N Jones later represented COSW at the Westminster Abbey multi-faith service and David was honoured to meet the King, Head of the Commonwealth, at the Commonwealth Day reception at St James Palace in London.

PRESS RELEASE

31 March 2026



Carlene Cornish & David N Jones at the Abbey



David N Jones with King Charles III

NOTES For Editors

COSW is an organisation for citizens of the Commonwealth who are interested in supporting social work and social development. It is supported by social work associations in the Commonwealth. It aims to promote and support communication and collaboration between social workers and social work associations of Commonwealth countries, and to uphold and promote the code of ethics of the International Federation of Social Workers.

This statement can be found on the [COSW website](#).



Dr K. S. Ramesh became the new President of the Commonwealth Organisations for Social Work in late 2025. He is based in his home city of Chennai, India. He has 25 years of professional social work practice experience in physical and mental healthcare, and leadership of professional associations. Dr Ramesh is Director - Education, Social Action and Administration at Banyan Academy of Leadership in Mental Health. He has been a member of the COSW Board since 2010.

Dr David N Jones is General Secretary (honorary) of the Commonwealth Organisation for Social Work. He is also Chair of the Independent Forum of Commonwealth Organisations and a qualified social worker with over 50 years of experience in social work and international social policy.

Stephano Joseph is a member of the COSW Council and a qualified social worker in Malawi. He is Principal Child Development Officer (PCDO) at Ministry of Gender, Children, Disability and Social Welfare, Malawi and a member of the leadership of the Association of Social Workers in Malawi.

Hard Chatsika is Adolescent Development/School Health and Nutrition Worker at Save the Children International Malawi and a member of the leadership of the Association of Social Workers in Malawi.

Anstance Fometu is a qualified social worker based in the UK, a leading member of the BASW Diaspora Social Workers Special Interest Group and actively involved in supporting the development of social work in Malawi, her country of origin.

Carlene Cornish is a member of the COSW Board, a qualified social worker originating from South Africa and Associate Professor of Social Work at the University of East Anglia, England.

Contact

Dr K. S. Ramesh (COSW President)
David N Jones (COSW Secretary General)

Ramesh@SamoogapPani.com
COSW.cw@gmail.com

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