

Thank you, Sir Terrance, for the introduction.

Sir Terrance, Dr Curtis distinguished guests, I am extremely pleased to have the opportunity to meet with the trustees and friends of Basrah Museum. Let me first honour the work of Dr Lamia Al-Gailani, one of the founding trustees, who sadly is not with us anymore.

Basrah Museum is beginning a new chapter in the protection of Iraqi's cultural heritage, thanks to the devoted work of the museum's trustees and thanks to its stakeholders, in particular the principal funder BP. It is an important partner not just to the museum, but across a range of community projects in Iraq where it is supporting positive social change and helping Iraqis conserve, celebrate and protect our past.

The Basrah Museum, housed in a beautiful former Lakeside Palace by the Shatt Al Arab, will be a major cultural resource in the region, not only for Southern Iraq.

We have an exciting future ahead of us.

Thank you for being here today and for your continued support. None of this would be possible without you.

I also want to thank the British Institute for the Study of Iraq for their support and organising this event.

Thank you