Wilton Park celebrates 80th anniversary and launches new mission to serve as the UK's multilateral facilitator

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• Wilton Park celebrates eight decades as one of the world's foremost international dialogue convenors

• New strategy positions it as a modern multilateral facilitator supporting UK diplomacy

• Expanded focus on flexible partnerships with private sector, faith groups and civil society to broaden UK engagement

The UK's ability to address global challenges through innovative diplomacy will be strengthened as Wilton Park, the Foreign, Commonwealth & Development Office's executive agency, marks its 80th anniversary with a renewed mission to serve as the nation's key multilateral facilitator.

The move comes as traditional diplomatic structures face mounting pressure from shifting global power dynamics, and responds to calls for greater diplomatic innovation in the Western world.

Since 1946, Wilton Park has convened decision-makers from government, civil society and business to tackle pressing international issues. It has helped shape post-war Germany, supported transatlantic security, advanced climate action and helped to strengthen global health systems.

Its newly expanded role will see it deepen dialogues with key partner countries whilst emphasising both support for major multilateral institutions and development of smaller, more agile arrangements. Wilton Park is broadening how the UK convenes internationally by working with a range of international players, including faith actors, civil society representatives, and business leaders, alongside established traditional diplomatic channels.

A newly created Global Impact Group connects key businesses with policymakers, allowing for greater coordination and testing of ideas. Wilton Park will also support the newly established College of British Diplomacy, providing civil servants with opportunities to develop their skills and engage with international networks.

Tom Cargill, Wilton Park CEO, said: *"At a time of global disruption and instability, the UK needs new ways to connect and influence. Wilton Park is adapting and expanding its role to serve more explicitly as a modern multilateral facilitator, for UK and global benefit. Our focus is on bringing together diverse voices, including faith actors, civil society, and business leaders, to address the challenges traditional diplomacy alone cannot solve."*

As part of this effort Wilton Park plans to host a major dialogue in the summer of 2026 to explore the future of international diplomacy, draw lessons from what is working, and develop concrete proposals for how to create more entrepreneurial approaches to international engagement.

Baroness Gisela Stuart, Wilton Park Chair, said: *"In a fast-changing and uncertain world, Wilton Park's ability to convene trusted, discreet dialogue has never been more needed. British diplomacy has to evolve to serve the UK's national interests whilst bringing together the breadth of perspectives needed to navigate complex international challenges. The UK has been and will continue to be a leader for convening global partners and Wilton Park is a crucial diplomatic asset."*

Notes to editors:

1. Wilton Park was established on January 12, 1946, by Sir Heinz Koeppler as a centre to help educate German prisoners of war and rebuild democratic institutions in post-war Germany.
2. An executive agency of the Foreign, Commonwealth & Development Office, Wilton Park hosts approximately 80 events annually, bringing together over 3,000 participants from well over 100 countries.
3. Wilton Park is based at Wiston House in West Sussex and has operated from there since 1951.

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4. You can learn more about Wilton Park's history here.

5. Supporting images can be downloaded here.

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