

The Church Commissioners for England (the Commissioners) announced today the expansion of their corporate engagement team and the appointment of an external engagement provider as the Commissioners continue their ambitious plans to influence companies on high profile ethical and ESG issues.

The Church Commissioners announced today the appointment of two engagement analysts starting in September to lead on the delivery of the Commissioners' engagement ambitions. They will report to the Head of Responsible Investment, Edward Mason, with direct accountability to the Church Commissioners' trustees and will be based in Church House Westminster.

Olga Hancock joins as a Senior Engagement Analyst and Harry Ashman as Engagement Analyst. The appointments reflect an expansion in the Commissioners' resources dedicated to engagement and bring the Responsible Investment team total to 5 with a further hire planned.

Olga Hancock joins the Commissioners with over 15 years' experience in environmental and human rights law, including advising least-developed countries in the UN climate change negotiations for the Paris Agreement. As a qualified environmental lawyer, she has worked in a number of roles including most recently the Pro Bono Lead at international law firm Simmons & Simmons.

Harry Ashman joins as an engagement analyst from the Capgemini group where he was most recently a sustainability manager, responsible for integrating and delivering sustainability strategies across a range of sectors, having held previous positions in the management consultancy division, working on process optimisation and business change projects.

The Commissioners also announced the appointment of Hermes EOS as their newly appointed external engagement provider. Effective September, Hermes EOS's extensive engagement activities on a wide range of environmental, social and governance issues will complement the work of the newly strengthened engagement team in support of the Commissioners' ambitious agenda to promote responsible and sustainable business practice.

The Commissioners' pre-eminent focus remains climate change and ensuring that companies align their strategies with the requirements of the Paris Agreement. Key priorities also include the environmental & social performance of extractive industries, human rights, corporate tax, responsible alcohol marketing, executive remuneration & diversity. In 2018 the Commissioners' in-house engagement team engaged directly with 78 companies through 107 engagement interactions.

Commenting on the recent appointments, Loretta Minghella, First Church Estates Commissioner at the Church Commissioners for England said: "The strengthening of the team with these high calibre appointments, including Hermes EOS, is part of our deep-seated commitment to develop and implement cutting-edge engagement programmes that demonstrably change corporate strategy and performance.

"Our steadfast intention is to be one of the leading global players in responsible investment, meeting the expectations of the Church Commissioners' beneficiaries and our broad range of stakeholders."

Edward Mason, Head of Responsible Investment at the Church Commissioners for England, added: "Today's announcement sends a clear signal

that the Church Commissioners are deeply committed to active ownership and our belief that strong long-term returns on investment and better, fairer and more sustainable outcomes for society go hand in hand.”

Today’s announcement follows the recent inclusion of the Church Commissioners for England in the PRI (Principles for Responsible Investment) Leaders’ Group 2019.

The PRI Leaders’ Group 2019 showcases PRI signatories that demonstrate responsible investment excellence in the selection, appointment and monitoring of external managers.

The Church Commissioners were one of 47 asset owner signatories included in the PRI Leaders’ Group 2019. The group of leading signatories is roughly equivalent to 10% of all asset owner PRI signatories.

Further information

- [Church of England achieves 2nd place in global Responsible Investment industry rankings](#)
- [The PRI Leaders’ Group 2019 showcases PRI signatories](#)
- [Hermes Investment Management - Stewardship](#)

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