

Britain

Border with EU being created

Brexit taking concrete form in English county

SEVINGTON, England, Oct 12, (AP) — Four years after Britain voted to leave the European Union, Brexit can still seem abstract. But in the county known as the Garden of England, it is literally taking concrete form.

Just beyond the ancient oaks and yews that surround medieval St Mary's Church in the village of Sevington, bulldozers, dump trucks and cement mixers swarm noisily over a field. They are chewing up land to create part of Britain's new border with the European Union — a customs clearance depot with room for up to 2,000 trucks.



Johnson

No one asked local people for permission, and even in this Brexit-backing area, the disruption is straining support for the UK's rupture with the EU.

"The first anyone knew about it was when a sign went up saying the footpaths had been closed," said Sharon Swandale, whose home in the village of Mersham used to be a 20-minute walk from Sevington. Closure of the path for construction work means it's now an almost 4-mile (6.4-km) drive.

This county, Kent, voted by 60 percent-40 percent to leave the EU in Britain's 2016 referendum, but Swandale said visions of truck stops and customs depots were not uppermost in their minds.

"That was never part of the actual selling and the marketing for Brexit," she said.

The two prosperous villages of Sevington and Mersham are 15 miles (24 kms) from the Channel Tunnel to France and 20 miles (32 kms) from Britain's biggest ferry port at Dover. Between them, the two routes carry 4 million trucks a year, filled with food and all manner of other essential items.

Customs

Those goods moved back and forth freely while Britain was part of the EU's single market and customs union. The UK left the bloc's political structures in January, and will make an economic break when a transition period ends Dec 31. That means Britain must erect a customs border with the 27-nation EU, its biggest trading partner.

Opponents of Brexit say it is a waste of money and effort that will hurt businesses on both sides. For supporters, it's all part of taking back control of the country's borders and trade.

But everyone agrees it means new red tape, with the need for customs declarations and inspections. If the UK and the EU fail to strike a free trade deal before the end of the year, tariffs will be slapped on many goods, bringing more disruption, bureaucracy and expense.

Prime Minister **Boris Johnson's** Conservative government has been reluctant to disclose details of its border plans. But last month it admitted its "reasonable worst-case scenario" involved "7,000 port-bound trucks in Kent and associated maximum delays of up to two days."

The government's plans for limiting the disruption include converting parts of a highway into a temporary parking lot for trucks, and imposing a "Kent access pass" — essentially a passport that truckers heading for the EU must have to enter Kent from other parts of Britain.

The Sevington site is intended for customs checks, and could also be a "temporary traffic management facility" — a parking lot — for trucks if there are border delays, the government says.

The 27-acre field is one of 10 sites around the country earmarked for potential border infrastructure, under powers the government has given itself to buy and build without consulting local authorities or residents first.

"Up to now no local resident has seen the plans," said Rick Martin, chairman of Sevington parish council, adding that locals are worried about gridlock and the effect the site will have on property prices.

"People are quite perplexed at the moment about what it's going to look like when there's 1,000 lorries parked across the road," he said.

Sevington and Mersham are ancient settlements, mentioned in the 1086 census known as the Domesday Book, but the residents can't be said to reject modern life. They already live with the hum of traffic on the M20 highway that cuts through the area, and the sound of trains whooshing at 185 mph (300 kph) toward the Channel Tunnel.

That makes them even more determined to preserve the remaining rural character of their communities.

With the support of local politicians, villagers are trying to limit the damage by saving an adjoining field, also bought by the government but not yet slated for development. It's the last green space between them and the sprawling town of Ashford nearby.

"It would be the perfect place to save as a green buffer between all the development here and the village," said Swandale, a member of the Village Alliance, a local campaigning group.

Construction has already chased off the skylarks that used to inhabit the future customs site. Swandale says preserving the other field could save great crested newts and dormice and the paths used by walkers, cyclists and horse riders.

"It's taking back control," she said, echoing the Brexiteer slogan. "It's having this for the local people, it's using it. It's planting trees to reduce carbon, it's increasing its biodiversity ... It would go a long way to mitigate this development."

Britons still don't know whether New Year's Day 2021 will bring the government's worst-case scenario or a smoother exit. Talks on a UK-EU trade deal are deadlocked over fishing rights and fair-competition rules. At a summit this week, EU leaders will assess whether a breakthrough is possible. There are only weeks left to seal a deal if it is to be ratified by year's end.

Paul Bartlett, a Conservative member of Kent County Council who lives right beside the huge construction site, acknowledges the customs facility on his doorstep came as a surprise. But as a staunch supporter of Brexit, he is determined to see the positive side of the new customs site.

"We need jobs," he said, after the coronavirus pandemic plunged the UK into recession. "I hope we'll have 300 jobs and there's a good system of apprenticeships that young people can sign up to and develop a career for themselves."

"It's a beautiful part of the country to live in, and sometimes you've got to take the rough with the smooth."

Also:

LONDON: The British government is set to announce new restrictions Monday on business and socializing in major northern England cities with high infection rates. But pubs, restaurants and other businesses are pushing back, arguing that they are not to blame for a resurgent outbreak.

Local authorities in hard-hit cities including Liverpool and Manchester are seeking financial support for businesses that are ordered to close, and details of an exit strategy from local lockdowns.

After falling in the summer, coronavirus cases are on the rise in the UK as winter approaches. Under the new measures, areas of England will be placed in "tiers," classing them as at medium, high or very high risk, and placed under restrictions of varying severity.

Liverpool mayor Steve Rotherham said his city was to be placed in the highest category.

"We were told we were going into Tier 3 - no ifs, no buts," he said.

Rotherham, mayor of the greater Liverpool region in north-west England, said local officials have not yet agreed with Prime Minister Boris Johnson's Conservative government what the exact restrictions will be.

Businesses including gyms and pubs are expected to be shut, but restaurants are lobbying to be allowed to remain open. Rotherham said cities also wanted to know what the exit strategy would be from the measures, which are set to be reviewed after a month.



The children of Supreme Court nominee Amy Coney Barrett arrive at Capitol Hill before she will begin her confirmation hearing before the Senate Judiciary Committee on Oct 12, 2020 on Capitol Hill in Washington. (AP)

Politics

Republicans fear losing Senate control

Trump aims to reset campaign

WASHINGTON, Oct 12, (AP) — President Donald Trump is running out of time to recover from a series of self-inflicted setbacks that have rattled his base of support and triggered alarm among Republicans who fear the White House is on the verge of being lost to Democrat Joe Biden.

The one-two punch of Trump's coronavirus diagnosis and his widely panned debate performance also has Republicans worried they could lose control of the Senate. With just over three weeks until Election Day, Senate races in some reliably red states, including South Carolina and Kansas, are competitive, aided by a surge in Democratic fundraising that has put both the Republican Party and Trump's own campaign at an unexpected financial disadvantage.

The president will aim for a reset this week, hoping an aggressive travel schedule and Judge Amy Coney Barrett's Supreme Court confirmation hearings will energize his most loyal supporters and shift attention away from a virus that has killed more than 214,000 Americans on his watch.

Optimists in the president's inner circle point to his unique ability to command attention and to his 2016 campaign, which also seemed destined for defeat before a late shift. But that comeback was aided by outside forces against an unpopular opponent. This year's campaign, other Republicans worry, may instead resemble 1980 or 2008: a close race until, at the end, it decidedly wasn't.

Swing

"It's not good for my side," said veteran GOP pollster Whit Ayres. "Pretty obviously, in many ways down-ballot Republicans are in the boat with Donald Trump. That's good for Republicans in deep-red states, but more problematic for those in swing states."

Asked for any bright spots for the Republican field, Ayres said, "I'm wracking my brain and just struggling."

This account of Trump's reelection effort was compiled from interviews with nearly two dozen White House and campaign officials and Republicans close to the West Wing, many of whom were not authorized to publicly discuss private conversations. It describes how a race that has generally been stable for months has endured a series of historic jolts.

Republicans began sensing warning signs last month.

The death of Supreme Court Justice

Ruth Bader Ginsburg animated conservatives but also electrified Democrats, driving a tsunami of cash toward Biden and down-ballot Democrats. Trump's heavily derided debate performance only exacerbated the problem, as even his own supporters found him rude as he so frequently interrupted Biden.

Reviewing data afterward, campaign aides worried as they started to see Trump's support begin to slip. They saw the president's coronavirus diagnosis as only compounding the problem, particularly with seniors. "It's not good," said Alex Conant, a senior campaign adviser to Sen Marco Rubio's 2016 presidential campaign. "It's been a long time since Donald Trump has had any good news, and when he does have good news, he manages to step on it."

The Trump campaign insists the president can win reelection, saying his return to the road will excite his base while claiming that public polling has undercounted their supporters.

Polls

But national polls have shown Biden with a significant lead. And while the margins in the battleground states are smaller, Trump has faced stubborn deficits in most of the states that will decide the election.

Sen Ted Cruz, R-Texas, said Friday if that people are depressed and upset on Election Day, "I think we could lose the White House and both houses of Congress, that it could be a blood-bath of Watergate proportions." In November 1974, the first congressional election after the Watergate scandal drove Republican President Richard Nixon from office, Democrats added significantly to their majorities in both houses. They took back the White House in 1976 and added still more seats in Congress.

Trump's campaign worries that it is losing support among suburban voters, women and older voters. The loss of older voters would be especially concerning in states like Florida and Arizona, where aides felt pre-debate Trump had pulled even with or slightly ahead Biden in part due to his improved standing with Latino voters.

Advisers privately concede that Trump, who has not moderated his tone on the virus after getting sick, has little chance of victory without Florida, which will be the site of his first post-diagnosis rally on Monday. And a loss in Arizona would require Trump to hold onto Pennsylvania.

Biden in recent weeks has pushed

into states that once were considered safe for Trump, among them Iowa, Georgia and Texas, forcing the president to spend valuable time and resources to play defense. The Democrat on Monday will make a trip to Ohio for his general election campaign, another state Trump won convincingly in 2016.

"He's in trouble, there's no question. By every traditional measuring stick, this looks like a Biden landslide," said Ari Fleischer, former press secretary for President George W. Bush. "It's hard to predict what will happen in Congress, but anytime there is a large-scale victory, it has the potential to create tides to sweep people out."

Races

The fate of the Senate has increasingly weighed on Republicans, who see tough races in Maine, Colorado, Arizona and North Carolina and even worries in deep-red Kansas and South Carolina. Some Trump backers are warning that GOP Senate candidates are now at an inflection point and some, including Sens. John Cornyn of Texas and Martha McSally of Arizona, took small steps to distance themselves from the president in recent days.

Dan Eberhart, a prominent GOP donor and Trump supporter, said there is no doubt that Trump's handling of the pandemic is eroding support for down-ballot Republicans and could lead to a Democratic sweep of government.

"I hope the polls have it wrong," Eberhart said. "But Republicans... need to develop a campaign strategy committed to protecting the Senate at all costs, even if it means sacrificing the Oval Office."

One significant opportunity to potentially change the trajectory of the race is Barrett's Senate confirmation hearings this week. Trump's campaign believes the hearings could change the political narrative away from the virus and draw attention to Biden's refusal to say whether he would expand or "pack" the Supreme Court.

But there has been second-guessing of Trump and campaign senior staff, including Bill Stepien, the campaign manager also ill with COVID-19, for balking at appearing in a remote debate last week. The move, like Trump's impulsive decision to blow up COVID relief talks only to later restart them, was one of several recent episodes that felt less like an effort to win and more about creating excuses for a loss.

McBrayer dies at 83: Terry McBrayer, a political power broker in Kentucky as a lawmaker and a Democratic Party leader whose influence reached beyond the state, has died. He was 83.

The Lexington law firm that McBrayer founded in 1963 in Greenup said in a statement that he died Sunday after a long battle with cancer.

McBrayer was a longtime Democratic National Committee member.

He led the Kentucky campaign for President Bill Clinton in 1992 and 1996. (AP)

Protesters overturned statues of former Presidents Theodore Roosevelt and Abraham Lincoln in Portland, Oregon, on Sunday night in a declaration of "rage" toward Columbus Day.

Protest organizers dubbed the event "Indigenous Peoples Day of Rage," in response to Monday's federal holiday named after 15th-century Italian explorer Christopher Columbus, a polarizing figure who Native American advocates have said spurred centuries of genocide against indigenous populations in the Americas.

The crowd pulled down the statue just before 9:00 pm. The group later turned their attention toward Lincoln's statue, pulling it down about eight minutes later. (AP)



With two bandages on his hand, President Donald Trump removes his face mask to speak from the Blue Room Balcony of the White House to a crowd of supporters on Oct 10, in Washington. (AP)



McConnell



McGrath

America

McConnell set to debate rival: Kentucky voters will get their first, and potentially only, chance to see a debate between Republican Senate leader **Mitch McConnell** and Democratic challenger **Amy McGrath** when they meet Monday evening for a socially distanced encounter.

The hourlong debate will be aired on Gray Television's Kentucky-based stations. It comes near the end of a big-spending campaign that has been waged in distance, with the two sparring in hard-hitting TV ads. McConnell, who is seeking a seventh term, has consistently led in polling.

The rivals will debate at WKYT, and the Lexington station took a number of precautions in response to the coronavirus. Kentucky is in the midst of another spike of COVID-19 cases.

During the debate, only the moderator and candidates will be in the studio, which uses robotic cameras, said WKYT news director Robert Thomas. (AP)

Funeral held for detective: An Arkansas police officer who was fatally shot last week was remembered by officials, friends and family for his dedication to his job and community.

The funeral for Pine Bluff Detective Kevin Collins, who was killed Monday in an exchange of gunfire at a hotel during an investigation, was held Saturday at the Pine Bluff Convention Center.

Pine Bluff Mayor Shirley Washington said Collins, 35, was a "commanding force and a gentle giant" known for his professionalism, diligence, vision and determination. She said Collins, who served as her driver and escort, was like an extension of her family. (AP)

Thousands in LA protest: Thousands of people protested Sunday in Los Angeles to condemn Azerbaijan and Turkey's role in hostilities against Armenia in the separatist Nagorno-Karabakh region.

The protest came as Azerbaijan and Armenia accuse each other of violating a cease-fire deal, brokered by Russia, that took effect at noon Saturday. The deal stipulated that the truce should pave the way for talks on settling the conflict.

Crowds gathered in front of the Turkish Consulate in California's largest city Sunday afternoon, waving Armenian flags, chanting and toting signs that said "peace for Armenians," among other messages. Earlier, groups gathered along streets, with some climbing on top of cars to wave the banners. (AP)

Black man sues Texas city: A Black man who was led by a rope by two white officers on horseback has sued a southeast Texas city and its police department for \$1 million, saying he suffered humiliation and fear during his arrest.

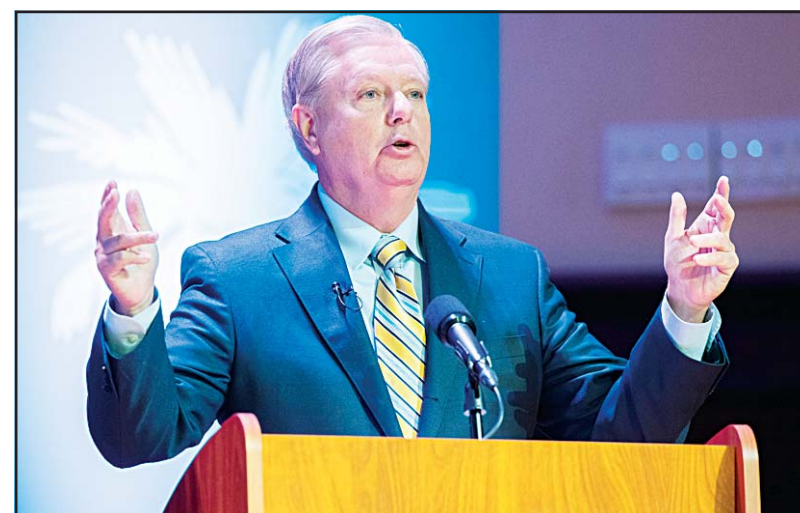
A lawsuit filed last week in Galveston County district court on behalf of Donald Neely, 44, alleged the officers' conduct was "extreme and outrageous," both physically injuring Neely and causing him emotional distress, news outlets reported, citing the court documents.

Photos of the August 2019 encounter showed Neely being led by the officers on a

rope linked to handcuffs — reminiscent of pictures showing slaves in chains.

Neely, who was homeless at the time, was sleeping on a sidewalk when he was arrested for criminal trespass and led around the block

to a mounted patrol staging area. In body-camera video, one officer could be heard twice saying that leading Neely by rope down city streets would look "bad." (AP)



US Sen Lindsey Graham faces off in the South Carolina US Senate debate with Democratic challenger Jaime Harrison at Allen University in Columbia, South Carolina on Oct 3, 2020. (AP)