

SKY NEWS

HAPPENING THIS MONTH...

Almost 2,000 troops will return to the UK in a planned withdrawal from German Bases as part of the Strategic Defence Review.

Sunday 1 January

The Queen publishes her New Year Honours list. Last year, actors David Suchet and Sheila Hancock, composer Howard Goodall, golfer Graeme McDowell and singer and political activist Annie Lennox were recognised for their outstanding achievement and service across the UK.

The main fuel duty rate is set to increase by 3.02 pence per litre. If the rise goes ahead, it is reported it will take around £3.5 billion from the consumer's pockets at a time when household finances are under strain.

The UK's strict pet quarantine rules will be relaxed. The UK law will be harmonised with the rest of the EU, making it easier and cheaper for owners to travel abroad with their pets. Pets will no longer have to spend six months in quarantine after arriving in the UK, thanks to much improved rabies vaccines and treatment.

Battery hen cages are banned across the European Union. Over a third of the EU's 390 million egg-laying hens currently live in confined 'barren' battery cages.

Monday 2 January

The national increase in rail fares comes into effect. Transport for London will raise its fares by 7% in the new year. Other fares across the country are expected to go up by as much as 13%.

Thursday 5 January

The Royal Mail launches a set of four new stamps heralding the Olympic and Paralympic games. The first and second class stamps each feature the London 2012 logo.

Friday 6 January

The 2012 London Boat Show begins. Running until the 15 January, over 500 exhibitors will descend on the city's Excel centre for the 54th show, which promises action, stalls and over 1,000 boats and yachts for water lovers to enjoy.

Tuesday 10 January

Parliament returns from winter recess. The House of Commons and the House of Lords spring back into life as MPs return to Westminster following their three-week Christmas break.

Thursday 12 January

Tesco, the UK's number one supermarket, publishes its Christmas trading statement. It has been estimated that last year's festive period marked the retailer's weakest performance in its home market for more than 20 years.

The Bank of England makes its latest decision regarding UK interest rates.



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Programme Information Highlights

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Thursday 12 January

The Secondary School league tables are published. Last year, over 200 schools failed to reach the coalition's threshold of 35% of pupils achieving five GCSEs at grades A*-C including English and Maths. This year, education secretary Michael Gove set a more ambitious target requiring that 50% of pupils gain five good GCSE passes.

Friday 13 January

News Corp can once again bid for BSkyB. Rupert Murdoch's News Corp, which owns 39% of shares in the satellite broadcaster, withdrew its bid to take over BSkyB in July 2011.

Tuesday 17 January

The UK's monthly inflation figures are announced.

The 2011 BAFTA nominations are announced. The Tree of Life, War Horse and The Ides of March are among those tipped for the coveted award of Best Film.

Friday 20 January

The Office for National Statistics releases its retail sales figures for the Christmas period.

Monday 23 January

The start of the Chinese Year of the Dragon is celebrated in central London the following Sunday with a festival and parade from Chinatown to Trafalgar Square.

Tuesday 24 January

Nominees for the 84th Academy Awards are announced in Los Angeles, as Hollywood prepares to honour the best films of 2011.



The start of the Chinese Year of the Dragon is celebrated in London