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# Charles: A modern prince

**While Prince Charles has been criticised for traditional views on issues like hunting, he can be remarkably modern.**

He takes a keen interest in architecture, young people, the environment and health, believing people should have access to both complementary and orthodox medicine.

The 56-year-old supported organic farming as far back as 1984, long before it became a mass consumer issue and his vociferous belief in conservation has often been ahead of the times.

The prince's view that, when King, he might change his title of "Defender of the Faith" to "Defender of Faith", to reflect multi-cultural modern Britain, cheered many.

### Future vision

The prince unveiled his vision for the future of the environment, farming and food during a BBC interview from his farm, Home Farm in Gloucestershire, in the autumn last year.

He said climate change should be seen as the "greatest challenge to face man" and was the issue that really worried him.

And in February 2006, he called on UK farmers to "restore the romance" in agriculture by producing high quality meat and selling it locally.

The Prince of Wales has called for a more holistic approach towards the nation's health. Last May he told a medics' conference that complementary and orthodox methods of tackling disease should be used in tandem.

At the start of 2006, he urged



Prince Charles recognises the multi-cultural nature of modern Britain

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Prince Charles: "I could simply go off skiing"

more people to walk and cycle and raised concerns Britain was following the US in the consumption of fast food and exercise.

"We are perhaps not far behind our American cousins in the 'supersizing' epidemic," he said.

### Prince's Trust

The Prince of Wales title carries no established or formal role and he has had to create his own by active involvement in his organisations.

His work at the Prince's Trust, created in 1976, has allowed tens of thousands of disadvantaged youngsters to set up their own businesses.

But since the death of Diana, Princess of Wales, he has also been busy trying to protect his own sons - particularly Prince Harry, who has been at the centre of several media stories.

In 2002 the prince was praised for sending Harry to a drugs rehabilitation clinic for a day after the then 17-year-old apparently admitted smoking cannabis and drinking.

More recently he has had to deal with the fallout of a scuffle outside a nightclub and the Nazi costume Harry chose to wear to a fancy dress party.

And Prince Charles is no stranger to controversy in his own right.

His reputation, severely damaged during his estrangement and eventual divorce from Princess Diana, has been slowly but surely rebuilt.

“ I hardly dare say anything ”  
Prince Charles

But several stories, from his reference to the proposed National Gallery extension as a "monstrous carbuncle" back in 1984, to warnings about the risks of nanotechnology have invited criticism.

After the furore over a memo to a former PA, in which he said the UK's "learning culture" gave people hope beyond their capabilities, the prince said his comments had been "misrepresented".

He added: "I hardly dare say anything. I don't really want to teach any more grandmothers to suck eggs."

### Marriage to Camilla

The seeming acceptance by the Royal Family of the prince's new wife, the Duchess of Cornwall, has also been hard won.

But since his marriage, Camilla has accompanied her royal husband on his official duties and his happiness has become clear to a nation that until a few years ago felt largely antipathy



for the "other woman".

The couple were well received in the US on a high-profile tour of the country last autumn.

During the visit, they laid a wreath in Washington in tribute to Americans killed in World War II and they also honoured victims of the 11 September attacks at Ground Zero in Manhattan.

The prince donated \$25,000 (£14,000) from an architecture prize he received in Washington to help rebuild towns hit by Hurricane Katrina.

While visiting New Orleans, Charles gave his impression. "Incredible resilience, despite awful loss. Where there's life, there's hope," he said.

### **Environment plea**

During the US visit, the prince also made an impassioned plea to US business leaders to take action on the "environmental crisis" threatening the world.

And in a post-dinner toast at the White House, Charles told President George Bush that the world looks to the US for a lead on "the most crucial issues that face our planet".

Ahead of his US tour he told CBS television channel he hoped he would be appreciated "a little bit more" for his contributions to UK life, including the Prince's Trust, after his death.

Prince Charles once said of his future role that "the most important thing will be to have concern for people and give some form of leadership".

But he has also quipped that, if he so wished, he could "simply go off and spend the rest of my life skiing".

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