

Letter from Westminster



Steve Brine
MP. Launch of

AN MP's postbag can be a revealing snapshot of what constituents feel passionate about. Mine is no different but its contents may surprise you.

One of the topics people have written to me about most these past seven years is bees. It's

a subject I've taken an interest in and I would recommend *A world without Bees* by Alison Benjamin for your Christmas list; if you dare.

Meeting a number of Environment Secretaries - and supportive MPs - over the course of the last three Parliaments I've ensured the 'protect the pollinators' voice is heard.

So it's good news that Michael Gove has now backed new restrictions on harmful pesticides. He clearly recognises that without a healthy pollinator population we risk the whole ecological balance.

As someone who joined Friends of the Earth many years ago, I was pleased to see its chief executive praise Mr Gove for listening to the experts and taking action.

It's been a busy few months for the new Environment Secretary who also announced plans to consult on a new, independent body for environmental standards to deliver a Green Brexit, and pledged action to reduce plastic waste choking our oceans. Two mailbag favourites there.

More than one million birds, and over 100,000 other sea mammals and turtles die every year from eating and getting tangled in plastic waste. So we will specifically look at taxes and charges to help prevent pollution, and protect the environment. This work will form a major part of the Government's 25-year Environment Plan.

And following an extremely positive reaction to our consultation this Summer we will enshrine into law that CCTV will be required in every slaughterhouse where live animals are present. It really has been a flying start for the rehabilitated Michael Gove.

It has been a busy month locally too as I have visited a number of businesses and charities keeping me right up-to-date. I was especially pleased to drop into the Winchester Churches Nightshelter annual general meeting last week where we saw them presented with the richly deserved Queen's Award for Voluntary Service.

At the Remembrance Sunday Service in Winchester Cathedral I was moved as always and struck by the sermon given by the Right Rev Nigel Stock, former Bishop to the Forces. Blessed are the peace MAKERS he said; reminding us that peace is no accident in today's dangerous world.

I wish all local shops and businesses a successful and Christmas period. Let's make it a record year.

Steve Brine,
MP for Winchester and Chandler's
Ford

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