



HOUSE OF COMMONS

LONDON SW1A 0AA

20th August 2021

Jean Comthivent,

RE: MEADOWS & GRASSLANDS

Thank you for your recent correspondence in respect of our meadows and grasslands; your comments upon which I have read with great interest.

It is disappointing that we have lost more than 90 percent of our meadows over the last 100 years. I am therefore pleased that the Government is taking action to reverse those losses by managing designated sites, providing incentives for habitat management and creation, and forging strong partnerships with landowners, communities and conservation bodies.

Regarding Early Day Motion (EDM) 335 on this issue, notwithstanding the fact that as a Government Minister I am unable to sign EDMs, in any event, I have general concerns about the effectiveness and expense of the EDM system, and I think it is much more effective to raise concerns directly with Ministers, both verbally, and in writing, rather than signing EDMs. With that in mind, I have relayed your concerns to my ministerial colleagues.

The 'Agricultural Transition Plan' sets out the path to an ambitious new agricultural system which will reward farmers and land managers for the work they do to look after and enhance our environment. Ministers are introducing three schemes that will reward the delivery of environmental benefits: the 'Sustainable Farming Incentive', the 'Local Nature Recovery' scheme, and the 'Landscape Recovery' scheme. These schemes will pay for sustainable farming practices, creating and preserving habitats such as species-rich grassland, and making landscape-scale environmental changes.

Later this year, Ministers will pilot the initial land management actions under the 'Sustainable Farming Incentive'. These include an improved grassland standard which will help increase biodiversity and resilience to climate change, improve soil condition and carbon storage, and improve water and air quality, as well as an improved grassland soils standard which will be paid out to farmers who maintain and improve the condition and structure of their soil to promote clean water and improve climate resilience, biodiversity and food production.

Across the country, the Government is investing in protecting, restoring and recovering wildlife-rich habitats and species. The *25 Year Environment Plan* sets out plans for nature recovery and Ministers have invested £80 million through the 'Green Recovery Challenge Fund' to help charities and environmental organisations start work on conservation projects across England. Furthermore, the Prime Minister has committed to protecting 30 percent of the UK's land by 2030 and Ministers have amended the *Environment Bill* to require a historic, new legally binding target on species abundance for 2030, with the aim of halting the decline of nature in England.



Finally, I also hear your suggestion that this specific issue should be on the COP26 agenda in Glasgow in November - a suggestion I will happily pass on during the discussions I have.

Once again, thank you for having taken the time to contact me and if I can ever be of any further assistance to you then please do not hesitate to contact me again.

With best wishes,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read 'Tom Pursglove'.

**TOM PURSGLOVE MP
MEMBER OF PARLIAMENT
CORBY & EAST NORTHAMPTONSHIRE**