



**HOUSE OF COMMONS**

LONDON SW1A 0AA

29<sup>th</sup> September 2021

*Jean Carthwright*

**RE: HEDGEROWS**

Thank you for your recent correspondence in respect to hedgerows. I have read your comments on this issue with interest.

I welcome the CPRE report highlighting the benefits of hedgerows and their role to improve air quality, store carbon, and benefit the rural economy. I agree that hedgerows and field boundaries are the very essence of our British countryside. They provide vital resources for mammals, birds, and insect species. As well as being an important habitat, they act as wildlife corridors allowing dispersal between isolated habitats. I know that many are also important historical and cultural landscape features.

Now that we have left the EU and the 'Transition Period' is over, the Government is able to reward farmers for the work they do to sustainably manage every metre of hedgerow on their land in a way that is right for their area. The sustainable farming incentive, one of the three component parts of the UK's future agricultural policy, will pay farmers for management of their land in a more environmentally sustainable way. Part of this scheme is the hedgerow standard, under which Ministers will pay farmers to plant more hedgerows, leave them uncut, or raise the cutting height. To provide habitat for wildlife, farmers and land managers will be incentivised to maintain and plant more hedgerow trees. I know that simple actions like planting trees within the footprint of existing hedges can make a big difference.

I know that legal protection for hedgerows is provided by the *Hedgerows Regulations 1997* which prohibit the removal of countryside hedgerows without first seeking approval from the local planning authority. The authority is required to decide whether a hedgerow is 'important' according to the criteria in the regulations and should not be removed. Although there is local variation, research has indicated that, nationally, over 70 percent of the hedgerows in England and Wales are 'important'. The regulations therefore play a valuable role in providing statutory protection for a large proportion of hedgerows in the countryside. When granting planning permission, a local authority has the power to impose enforceable planning conditions on a developer in order to protect hedges or trees assessed as being worthy of retention, which might otherwise be harmed by construction or the new land-use.



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 be 'Tom Pursglove', with a horizontal line underneath.

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