

TOM PURSGLOVE MP
CORBY & EAST NORTHAMPTONSHIRE



HOUSE OF COMMONS

LONDON SW1A 0AA

27th August 2022

Dear Constance,

RE: HEDGEROWS

Thank you for your recent correspondence in respect of hedgerows, with specific reference to the 'Hedgerow Hero' initiative. I have read your comments with interest.

Hedgerows are one of the most important ecological building blocks in our farmed landscape. They maintain the distinctive character of our countryside and provide crucial habitats and food for wildlife. Hedgerows can store carbon, improve local air quality and benefit the rural economy, by boosting job creation for hedgerow planting and management in local communities.

The Department for Environment, Food & Rural Affairs (DEFRA) wants to reward the work that farmers do to manage hedgerows on their holdings sustainably. The primary tools to deliver environmentally beneficial hedgerow management and hedgerow creation are the Environmental Stewardship (ES) and Countryside Stewardship (CS) schemes. These schemes fund hedgerow management, with CS funding restoration and laying to deliver recognised benefits for wildlife, the landscape, and the historic environment. Hedgerow management is one of the most popular options within CS, with several options available for planting, managing and restoring hedgerows.

Ministers continue to offer grants for hedgerows and boundaries in CS. In February 2022, the Countryside Stewardship scheme opened for applications for Higher Tier, Mid Tier and Wildlife Offer agreements, starting on the 1st January 2023, and standalone Capital Grants agreements starting throughout 2022.

Further, through the UK's new agricultural schemes, the Government will be able to reach more farmers and landowners. DEFRA aims for at least 70 percent of farms to participate in the Government's new schemes. The first of the agricultural schemes, the Sustainable Farming Incentive, will pay for a variety of actions that all farmers can do to manage their land in an environmentally sustainable way. Part of this scheme is the Hedgerow Standard, under which farmers will be paid to plant more hedgerows, leave them uncut, or raise the cutting height. To provide habitats for wildlife, the Government will incentivise farmers and land managers to maintain and plant more hedgerow trees.

Rest assured, I will be sure to follow the progress of these vital initiatives closely.

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

TOM PURSGLOVE MP
MEMBER OF PARLIAMENT
CORBY & EAST NORTHAMPTONSHIRE