

President: Rt.Hon. the Lord Randall of Uxbridge Kt.PC.

The Rt Hon Boris Johnson MP
Joy Morrissey MP
House Of Commons
London
SW1A 0AA



January 2023

Dear Mr Johnson and Ms Morrissey,

Thank you for sparing the time to visit the Colne valley Regional Park (CVRP) earlier this month. It was heartening to hear you talk about how important you think the Park is and your acknowledgement that it must be protected for the benefit of people and wildlife. We look forward to continuing that conversation with you, other local MPs and government ministers in the coming weeks and months.

The key to doing this as far as local residents and users of the CVRP are concerned, is tangible action to counter the rising tide of threats facing it. The key steps are:

- Halting the increasingly frequent exploitation of 'very special circumstances' and 'exceptional circumstances', justifying development in the Green Belt's most vulnerable part - the urban fringe. Certainly, in the Colne Valley Regional Park the system has become a free for all and we are witnessing the loss of the Green Belt's long-term benefit for communities, the environment and the integrity of our countryside. Green Belt as a strategic policy, and a workable mechanism for cross-border planning is vital to deflect development pressures away from the Green Belt.
- Refocusing the way planning talks about Green Belt, emphasising its positive purpose and the considerable benefits it can bring for wildlife, food production, public access to the natural environment (with the health and wellbeing benefits this brings) and combatting climate change.
- Specific protection for the Colne Valley Regional Park. Its only defence to date has been the Green Belt which is now clearly beginning to crumble. If the Park is to survive, its protection must be underpinned by resources for restoration, proper planning and enforcement. We stand ready to play our part in finding creative solutions to these problems, but the starting point is the political will to effect change.
- Ensuring conscious co-ordination of planning across county boundaries and proper consideration and mitigation of the cumulative impact of multiple development proposals.

Colne Valley Park Trust

Charity Registration Number: 1181303

Colne Valley Park Community Interest Company

A company limited by guarantee. Registered in England. Company No. 08131867

Registered Office: c/o Colne Valley Park Visitor Centre, Denham Court Drive, Denham,
Buckinghamshire, UB9 5PG
www.colnevalleypark.org.uk

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- Driving far better and properly effective regulation, monitoring and enforcement of river water quality. Including dealing with the increasingly common discharges of untreated sewage into rivers.

As discussed when we met, we welcome your commitment to talk to Rt Hon Michael Gove MP to:

- Ask Government to adopt the seven ways to enhance National Planning Policy Framework that we sent to him in December 2021 and December 2022. See <https://www.colnevalleypark.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2021/11/19Nov21-NPPF-Changes-CVRP-Final.pdf>
- Request that he (or one of his ministers) speaks at our Rural/Urban fringe conference to be held in April 2023. Its purpose is to raise awareness of the challenges facing the 'inner' Green Belt where development pressure is at its greatest, and to examine how the planning system can be speedily improved.

Thank you once again for taking the time and trouble to see some of the Colne Valley Regional Park for yourselves. We greatly look forward to meeting you again soon to explore the grave and urgent challenges facing the Green Belt and the Park in more depth.

Should you have any further questions, or require more detailed information at any time, please let us know and we will do our best to help.

Yours sincerely



Stewart Pomeroy
Colne Valley Managing Agent

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