

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

Dany Beales MP
House of Commons
London
SW1A 0AA



2nd April 2026

Dear Danny

Thanks to support from you and other local MPs the Colne Valley Regional Park has made great strides forward over the last nine months:

- The Minister for Housing and Planning, Rt. Hon. Matthew Pennycook, stated in the Adjournment Debate about the CVRP that government recognises the value of the CVRP and he shares the desire to see it protected.
- The Minister for Nature, Mary Creagh, has asked Natural England to support the Colne Valley.

I write now because we have reached a crucial stage where tangible action is needed if we want to see the Minister's ambition for the Colne Valley to be "protected for current and future generations" fulfilled.

Asks of Minister for Housing & Planning:

We have submitted a response to the NPPF consultation. I would be grateful if you could ask the Minister to incorporate these points into national policy. Including:

- Spatial Development Strategies be obligated to plan for cross boundary protection and enhancement of significant landscapes, river catchments and biodiversity areas.
- Minor tweaks to NPPF to ensure we don't sleepwalk into losing the enormous benefits and opportunities of this part of the Green Belt e.g the 'golden rules' should apply to all development, not just housing. Consideration of green belt and grey belt within the whole landscape, not just within 'the plan area'.
- Development near train stations to incorporate high-quality green corridors to give residents and city dwellers attractive routes to reach the countryside.

We have also identified an unintentional contradiction that means the government's positive intention is thwarted by the framing of its associated policy. The situation is this: the government's land use framework, published by DEFRA in March, shows excellent strategic thinking, allowing space for houses, nature, food production etc, and we warmly welcome and fully support this.

BUT, closer examination reveals this positive strategic work doesn't form part of the planning policy. Without it, the broader vision will be impossible to deliver in areas such as the CVRP that are subject to competing land uses.

In a nutshell, the only way the land use framework can be delivered in the CVRP is if tweaks are made to the NPPF (by MHCLG); and that the core wildlife/GI areas within the Park are formally protected (by DEFRA).

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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Asks of Minister for Nature:

Following instruction from Rt. Hon Mary Creagh, Natural England is being helpful as far as its powers and resources allow, but this doesn't go as far as protecting the important parts of the Colne Valley.

Please ask the Minister for Nature to direct Natural England to prioritise protection for the important green corridors within the Colne Valley for people and wildlife and to allocate resources to Natural England to allow it to explore all opportunities and to implement the most appropriate option.

Both of the above asks to Ministers can facilitate:

- government's stated 'win wins for growth and nature'
- CVRP's campaign 'A corridor for life'
(<https://www.colnevalleypark.org.uk/project/campaign/>)

I re-iterate that our campaign is not anti-development – it is a pro-planning campaign. In fact, well-planned development in and around the Colne Valley can pay for restoration and enhancement of this Corridor for Life, at no additional cost to the public purse.

This is an a-political matter with strong cross party support. With that in mind I would appreciate your views on how the Ministers are to be approached – e.g. a joint letter signed by nine local MPs? I have sent similar letters to the other eight MPs whose constituencies cover parts of the Regional Park.

I would be happy to discuss this in advance of your approach to the Ministers. Please ask your office to contact me to arrange a date to meet. In advance of this, a summary of the reasons why urgent action is needed, and what will happen if the status quo is maintained, are attached as Appendix.

Regards,

Stewart Pomeroy, Colne Valley Managing Agent

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Appendix: Why urgent action is needed

We are at a crucial crossroads in the actions to be taken by government, there are two futures for the Colne Valley - an area of national importance for wildlife on the doorstep of 10 million people:

Future 1) If the Colne Valley's vision for 'A Corridor for Life' is implemented this will lead to **steady restoration**:

Well-planned development to an overall masterplan drives restoration of the landscape for people and wildlife resulting in healthier and resilient communities with a stronger economy and an environment in which it is pleasant to live and work.

OR

Future 2) The status quo, leading to **swift decline**:

Un-coordinated development without a masterplan severs links for people and wildlife between remaining nature reserves and country parks leading to decline and a landscape full of fly-tipping, pollution and dereliction. New businesses and houses will sit in this unattractive landscape, contributing to poor mental health and lower wellbeing along with a loss of productivity.

A simple, if brutal, choice: a win-win for growth and the natural environment, or a lose-lose for both.

The Colne Valley Regional Park is not the only urban fringe area with a multitude of different government and non-government actors where these changes to policy and additional protection will help.

Therefore, the CVRP could serve as an exemplar for the management of complex cross-boundary issues. Particularly as it has cross-party support, interest from local authorities, millions of users and potential beneficiaries - and a record of delivery over the decades.

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