

Dear Candidate,

I actively campaign for the environment, our local environment and in particular our irreplaceable and valuable natural assets - mature trees. I strongly believe that mature trees should be retained wherever possible and that greater protections on them must be something prioritised by the next government.

Trees, and in particular urban trees, not only look pleasant and improve the areas we live in, but they offer wide ranging benefits, for example they help reduce instances of flooding, capture vast amounts of carbon and support wildlife. They also offer benefits which directly improve our health and in doing so can reduce the pressure on the NHS. They help mitigate against the increasingly hot periods in the summer, they filter air pollution, they can help improve people's mental health.

I understand the importance of tree planting, but the damage caused by the loss of existing trees must be avoided wherever possible to protect our health, and to help minimise further impacts on wildlife and the climate.

As well as being concerned for the trees in our local area I have joined the new national coalition of tree campaigners called Canopy. As a member of Canopy, I would like to know what you are planning on doing to support some of the important issues Canopy are calling for action on.

- Greater protections for the three-quarters of veteran and ancient trees which are outside legally protected sites, which currently have no protection over and above the protection afforded to all other trees in the UK. We believe that very important trees should be protected in the same way many important buildings are. Will you support The Woodland Trust's Living Legends campaign to make this happen?
- Greater pressure on landowners and councils to retain trees in developments. These trees are our ancient and veteran trees of the future. Will you encourage landowners and local authorities to make decisions on existing trees based on the benefits already being provided to the environment and the health and well-being of the community?
- More severe consequences for those who fail to protect trees in their care. Do you agree that there must be an appropriate deterrent to reduce the instances of trees being felled without permission or unnecessarily?
- Greater protection for street trees in law. We must review policies, law and guidance which affect our trees, including the effectiveness of Tree Preservation Orders, the impact of insurance claims and Permitted Development Rights. Will you commit to doing more to protect our trees and to making available greater budget to councils, so they can be more effective in managing and protecting trees?

I look forward to hearing your thoughts on these important issues.

Yours sincerely,