



The Rt Hon George Eustice MP
Secretary of State for Environment, Food
& Rural Affairs
Seacole Building
2 Marsham Street
London
SW1P 4DF

Date: 10 May 2021

Email: james.mallinder@eastsoffolk.gov.uk

Dear Secretary of State

Environmental Commitments

Further to our letter dated 10 December 2020, we write again with additional concerns on behalf of the East Suffolk Greenprint Forum (ESGF) and East Suffolk Council's Environment Task Group (ETG).

Since our previous letter, the ESGF has determined that its focus for the year 2021 will be the theme of 'Nature First' to reflect the ESGF's vision of an East Suffolk where everyone values nature and actively cares for it. Not only the Council, but many concerned communities in our district, are actively trying to encourage biodiversity through efforts to make our verges, cemeteries, churchyards and other public and community assets more nature-friendly and are trying to inspire and encourage others to follow suit. The three issues we wish to raise in this letter support this theme of putting nature at the heart of decision making.

Firstly, both the ETG and the ESGF are concerned that, in January 2021, Defra partially revoked the existing partial ban on the use of neonicotinoids by permitting controlled use of the neonicotinoid thiamethoxam for treating sugar beet seed in response to a virus. In 2017, Defra stated that restrictions would be maintained post-Brexit unless the scientific evidence changed.

Defra was satisfied, in 2018, that the scientific evidence relating to the risks posed to our environment, particularly to bees and other pollinators which play such an indispensable part of our £100bn food industry, justified a ban on the use of this product outdoors. We would point out that this emergency authorisation has only been granted for a crop that produces something that the

LEGAL ADDRESS East Suffolk House, Station Road, Melton, Woodbridge IP12 1RT

Postal address Riverside, 4 Canning Road, Lowestoft NR33 0EQ

Government has separately stated it would like all of us to consume less of, ie sugar, and has gone so far as to impose a levy on sales of fizzy drinks to support this laudable aim to improve our health.

Secondly, the ETG and the ESGF are concerned about the negative impact of fireworks, not only on nature, but on the environment, pets, livestock and people. There are many documented cases of sometimes fatal injuries resulting from the use of fireworks suffered by people and animals and the sudden loud noises also impact on the welfare of some in our society, such as veterans of armed conflict and those with conditions such as Hyperacusis. East Suffolk Council is conducting a formal consultation of its local community in order to determine whether to take those steps within its control to reduce the impact of fireworks on its local community, environment and animals, and we would encourage the Government to reconsider its recent refusal, in the face of petitions securing over 100,000 signatures, to tighten existing legislation by considering an outright ban on the use of fireworks outside of displays conducted professionally and held on significant dates.

Thirdly, the ETG and the ESGF would also welcome tighter restrictions on mass balloon releases and the sale and release of sky lanterns which, like fireworks, have caused many documented cases of detriment to humans and animals alike. The Council has a ban in place on these releases from its own land and promotes the adoption of lower-impact alternatives by those who wish to hold charity or fund-raising events. However, we cannot prevent releases from land outside our control and we again encourage the Government to consider imposing an outright ban on mass balloon releases and the sale and release of sky lanterns.

We hope that this letter sets out our concerns and our suggestions for how we can work together to achieve a better environment in a constructive way. We look forward to receiving your response to this, and our previous letter.

Yours sincerely



Cllr James Mallinder | Chair
Environment Task Group



Jane Healey | Chair
East Suffolk Greenprint Forum

