

25 February 2025

Dear Secretary of State,

**It's time to fill the grassland gap.**

Protecting, restoring and managing grasslands is crucial to tackling the climate and biodiversity emergencies, whilst producing food.

However, the untapped potential of grasslands continues to be overlooked by government.

We welcome your commitment to developing a Land Use Framework for England; this is a crucial opportunity to maximise the co-benefits of nature-rich grasslands, which play a vital role in producing sustainable food, sequestering carbon, cleaning our air and water, supporting wildlife, building a circular economy, providing accessible greenspace, and benefiting health.

From urban green spaces to upland pastures, grasslands are the largest land use category in England, covering at least 40% of land, yet there is no dedicated resource within DEFRA working specifically on them. Unlike trees and peatland, there is no equivalent Action Plan or Taskforce for grasslands that can leverage opportunities such as private finance mechanisms for species recovery and habitat management, restoration and creation.

We need a new approach.

**We are calling on UK Government to establish a cross-departmental Grassland Taskforce, in order to build a strategic programme of evidence and policy development that maximises the contribution of grasslands to the Government's policies, such as the Land Use Framework and 25-year farming roadmap, as well as targets on biodiversity, net zero, food, land use, a circular economy, and health and wellbeing.**

Unlocking grasslands' economic and environmental value will bring huge benefits for farmers, local authorities, national agencies, and local communities across England.

We must act now to fill the grassland gap; a Grassland Taskforce would start the process of realising the potential of this national asset.

Due to the cross-departmental relevance of this issue, this letter is copied to other relevant Secretaries of State and Ministers.

Yours Sincerely,

Nicola Hutchinson Deputy Chief Executive/Director of Conservation, **Plantlife**

Becky Willson, Technical Director, **Farm CarbonToolkit**

Caroline Hanks, Director, **Herefordshire Meadows**

Christopher Price, Chief Executive Officer, **Rare Breeds Survival Trust**

Emily Linton, Farming Futures, **Food, Farming and Countryside Commission**

Glen Tarman, Director of Policy and Advocacy, **Sustain: The Alliance for Better Food and Farming**

Jimmy Woodrow, Chief Executive, **Pasture for Life**

Professor Maggie Gill, Chair, **Stapledon Memorial Trust**

Maggie Mitchell, Chief Executive, **British Society of Animal Science**

Martin Lines, Chief Executive Officer, **Nature Friendly Farming Network**

Tom Goatman, Chief Executive Officer, **British Grassland Society**

Craig Llewellyn, Associate Ecologist, **Atkins**

Professor Dave Goulson, Professor of Biology, **University of Sussex, Author**

Professor David Gowing, Director, **Floodplain Meadows Partnership**

Professor James Bullock, Senior Researcher, **UK Centre for Ecology & Hydrology**

Tom Wild, School of Architecture & Landscape, **University of Sheffield**

Ellen Bradley, Co-Director, **UK Youth for Nature**

Flo Blackburn, General Manager, **Curlew Action**

Gareth Morgan, Head of Farming Policy, **Soil Association**

Gill Perkins, Chief Executive, **Bumblebee Conservation Trust**

Kate Ashbrook, General Secretary, **Open Spaces Society**

Kevin Newell, Founder, **Humane Wildlife Solutions**

Mary Colwell, Director, Curlew Action & Chair, **Curlew Recovery Partnership**

Mike Hill, Chief Executive, **Friends of the Lake District**

Nick Mann, Founder, **Habitat Aid**

Nida Al-Fulaij, Chief Executive Officer, **People's Trust For Endangered Species**

Polly Martin, Chief Executive, **National Trails UK**

Rachel Richards, B-Lines Officer, **Buglife**

Russel Hobson, Director of Business and Research, **Butterfly Conservation**

Ryan Burrell, Director, **Curlew Recovery Partnership**

Sasha Woods, Director of Science and Policy, **Earthwatch Europe**

Andrew Blake, Wye Valley National Landscape Manager & Chair, **Wye Valley National Landscape Farming in Protected Landscapes (FiPL) Local Assessment Panel**

Chris Woodley-Stewart, Director, **North Pennines National Landscape**

Henry Oliver, Director, **North Wessex Downs National Landscape Partnership**

Iain Mann, Manager, **Nidderdale National Landscape**

Jason Lavender, Director, **High Weald National Landscape Partnership**

John Watkins, Chief Executive, **National Landscapes Association**

Linda Nunn, Director, **Cranborne Chase National Landscape**

Rebecca Waite, Chief Executive, **Cotswolds National Landscape**

Richard Benwell, Chair, **Oxfordshire Local Nature Partnership**

Richard Grogan, Manager, **Isle of Wight National Landscape Partnership**

Roger English, Manager, **South Devon National Landscape**

Dr Rose O'Neill, Chief Executive, **Campaign for National Parks**

Tom Munro, Director, **Dorset National Landscape Partnership**