

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

Rt. Hon. Matthew Pennycook MP
Minister for Planning & Housing
House of Commons
London
SW1A 0AA



24th June 2026

Dear Mr Pennycook,

The Colne Valley Regional Park (CVRP) was hugely grateful for the support you voiced during the adjournment debate on Protection of the CVRP in July 2025, especially your acknowledgement of the vital role this precious landscape plays on the edge of London.

At the time, you said: *“Government recognises the vital role that the Colne Valley Regional Park plays in providing access to the countryside for people [and] its importance for biodiversity... I share the desire to ensure it is protected for current and future generations.”*

This, alongside the active support of Rt. Hon. Mary Creagh, Minister for Nature, Natural England, and cross-party support from our area’s nine MPs, is very helpful as we plan to restore the CVRP to create [A Corridor for Life](#) for public benefit.

The CVRP can fulfil the government’s oft-stated ‘win-wins for growth and nature’, given the development pressures on the Colne Valley. For the avoidance of any doubt, **we must stress that we are not arguing against development**, and we fully understand the demands and challenges the 21st century has brought with it. We are simply making the case for a joined-up plan for ‘win-wins for growth and nature’ rather than the current situation of piecemeal bites being taken out of the CVRP *without commensurate improvement*. This is leading to the **UK sleepwalking into massive change to the landscape next to major cities**.

There remains a fundamental disconnect between the government’s stated support for the CVRP, and the government’s actions and policy. The purpose of the adjournment debate was to highlight the urgent and genuinely existential threat facing the Regional Park.

But time is short, and getting shorter, as decisions on planning applications are made that do not take into account the legitimate material considerations of the place-based needs of the CVRP. The latest example of this disconnect between words and actions is the Manor Farm Propco data centre in Slough (ref: P/10076/013)

The BBC reported your comments relating to this development: *“Planning minister Matthew Pennycook... said he agreed ‘significant weight’ had to be given to ‘the need to support economic growth and productivity’.”*

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

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If that is the prevailing view, then 'win-wins for growth and nature' have not happened in this instance:

- environmental mitigation is minimal for a development of this scale
- the cumulative effect of multiple developments has not been considered in any way that is meaningful for residents and users of the CVRP

Local communities experience the negative effects of the fact that each development proposal is considered in isolation. Addressing this is something that featured strongly in your manifesto and in statements before and after the election: "*greenbelt land is regularly released for development but haphazardly.*"

We are deeply dismayed to see that **haphazard approach where developments are approved in isolation instead of decisions informed by a masterplan and vision, is continuing**, and indeed gathering pace.

The Colne Valley Regional Park is an ideal area to trial a joined-up approach to creating 'win wins' because:

- It is nationally important for wildlife
- Its strategic green infrastructure serves one of the most densely populated parts of the UK; it delivers multiple government objectives simultaneously but lacks the status needed to secure them.
- There is a partnership of 100 organisations advocating for restoration of this area on the edge of five counties.
- We have commissioned a vision for the CVRP. This can give reassurance to government that we are not just pointing out problems, we are also doing the legwork to find solutions. We will share this evidence-led vision with local authorities to inform Local Plan production, and with government ministers for consideration when forming policy, when making decisions on planning enquiries or requests for Green Belt release under the 1938 Green Belt Act.
- The governance challenge is larger than any one council can solve, the CVRP spans numerous administrative boundaries and experiences development pressures generated by decisions made at a national level.

The CVRP can become a **national example of how well-planned growth can lead to restoration of the landscape** to become one of the best green corridors round any city in the country – for the benefit of millions of people.

However, the development pressure on the Colne Valley Regional Park has now reached the point where it will be wiped out within just a few years by piecemeal proposals and 'planning by dereliction' unless it is given some kind of formal protection, either through specific policy or statute. This was the reason for holding the adjournment debate.

We see proposals that threaten the park on an almost weekly basis, and would at the very least welcome an assurance that suitable weight will be put on the material consideration of the future of the Colne Valley Regional Park.

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We invite you to visit the Colne Valley to see unintended effects of government policy and discuss how we can work together to realise your statement of support. If you are unable to attend, please send government officials and advisers so they can see the issues and opportunities at first hand.

Thank you for your active help.

Yours sincerely,



Stewart Pomeroy
Colne Valley Managing Agent

CC

- Rt. Hon. Mary Creagh MP, Minister for Nature
- MP's whose constituencies include part of the CVRP:
- Danny Beales MP
 - John McDonnell MP
 - Tan Dhesi MP
 - Gagan Mohindra MP
 - Sarah Green MP
 - Joy Morrissey MP
 - David Simmonds MP
 - Jack Rankin MP
 - Lincoln Jopp MP

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