

## Climate and Ecological Emergency Correspondence

At the Climate and Ecological Emergency Event in Clunbury Village Hall on 25 January 2020, those who attended were asked if they would like to sign petitions to our County Councillor, Nigel Hartin, and our MP, Philip Dunne, expressing their deep concern and asking their elected representatives to re-double their efforts to combat this dual emergency.

Pat Harding, a Parish Councillor and a member of the Action Group supported by the Council, sent the petition to Philip Dunne; herewith his response:

RT HON PHILIP DUNNE MP  
(LUDLOW)



HOUSE OF COMMONS  
LONDON SW1A 0AA

Mrs Pat Harding  
The Orchard  
Clunton  
Craven Arms  
Shropshire SY7 0HZ

24 February 2020  
Our ref: AV/PH/24.02.20/173

Dear Pat

Thank you for your letter of 6<sup>th</sup> February enclosing a petition from a Clunbury Parish Council event about climate change. I am sorry I was unable to attend the event on 25<sup>th</sup> January, but am pleased it was well attended.

Climate change is one of the greatest challenges we face, and I can assure you that I recognise the importance and urgency of public debate on this issue. This is why I have decided to focus on this issue in my own work in Parliament and last week was elected Chairman of the Environmental Audit Committee, the main body of MPs which scrutinises Government progress & climate change undertakings.

The threat of global warming has never been more apparent, as highlighted by the sobering conclusions of the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change's special report on global warming of 1.5°C.

However, I am proud of the UK's world-leading role in tackling climate change and the transition to Clean Growth, with the UK being the first country to legislate to eliminate our contribution to climate change by 2050, and the fastest in the G20 to cut emissions. Since 1990, the UK has cut emissions by more than 40 per cent while growing the economy by more than two thirds, and we are a world-leader in offshore wind.

To continue this momentum, the Government has announced around £2 billion for new policies since setting the Net Zero targets and a new Prime Minister-chaired Cabinet Committee on Climate Change has been set up to ensure all arms of Government are focussed on tackling this challenge. The UK will also continue to use its position as a global leader by hosting the UN Climate Change Summit in Glasgow in 2020 and will ask international partners to match the UK's ambition.



At the same time, the ambitious Environment Bill is being introduced to protect and improve the environment for future generations, enshrining in law environmental principles and legally-binding targets.

Ultimately, I am looking to ensure that this Government will take action so that future generations will look back on climate change as a problem that was solved with the UK leading from the front, protecting our planet for centuries to come.

As recently elected Chairman of the Environmental Audit Committee, I am well placed in Parliament to scrutinise the Government's actions to achieve its ambitions in this area.

Yours sincerely

Rt. Hon. Philip Dunne  
MP for Ludlow

The Action Group found that our MP's response failed to reflect both the gravity of the situation and the level of action required to respond to it. Accordingly, it drafted the letter which it would have liked to have received.

It runs as follows:

Dear Clunbury Parish

Thank you so much for your petition. I am heartened that so many of you are aware of, and care about, the climate and ecological emergency.

We know that the past decades of endless extraction and exploitation of resources is no longer sustainable. It never was, but I want you to know that we're doing everything in our power to change the system to something regenerative and sustainable - designed so that people and the planet flourish. This has to be our baseline now - in every act of parliament, in every local and regional action, we will ask ourselves 'How does this empower people? How does it enhance the local communities and local ecosystems? Does it enable people to source more of their needs locally in a sustainable way? Does it draw in carbon so that we can reduce our carbon emissions to zero by 2025 and then actively draw in carbon from the atmosphere thereafter? Until recently, we thought that wasn't possible, but if the Covid-19 pandemic has taught us anything, it's that we can support ourselves with far less fossil fuel use than previously.

So, our government has ceased to provide the stunningly large tax breaks to fossil fuel companies. We have stopped investing billions in fossil fuel exploration in other countries and we have stopped all plans for runways, major roads and all the other infrastructure projects that were predicated on endless, unsustainable growth. Instead, we are investing heavily in renewables. We have lifted the ban on on-shore wind: current evidence shows that on-shore wind farms are far and away the most efficient forms of locally produced power. Now that we understand the need for local resilience with power as part of that equation, we will continue to help to develop local micro-grids in every village.

Our investments don't stop at renewables. We are moving wholesale to regenerative agriculture with the three-fold aim of sequestering carbon in growing soil, increasing biodiversity and feeding ourselves from our own land. We will encourage Parishes to establish community farms and help young people who want to earn a living from the land to do so with training in best practice to promote soil growth/prevent erosion, with flood-prevention, planting and polycultures to ensure soil biodiversity. Livestock are an integral part of our plan for local farms, but they will be managed in ways that allow the land to thrive.

If I had more room I would tell you of some of the things that we are learning from the pandemic and on which your government will be taking action: that by cutting back on discretionary travel by air, sea and road we can make a real, planet-protecting reduction in carbon emissions; that our society is strongest when we're all resilient and resourced and have meaningful jobs that don't drain us, or leave us desperate; that human contact and kindness is what matters not an ever growing spiral of consumption in a finite world.

Yours truly  
Your MP

[We will be sending this letter to Philip Dunne.](#)