



**Jess Brown-Fuller MP**  
Member of Parliament for Chichester  
House of Commons, London SW1A 0AA

Steve Reed MP  
Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs  
*Nobel House, 17 Smith Square,  
London, SW1P 3JR*

11 July 2024

Dear Mr Reed,

Congratulations on your new role as Secretary of State for the Environment. The large majority Labour has won, together with successful cross-party working, could produce a positive future for Britain in addressing environmental issues, climate change adaptation and domestic food production.

As the new MP for Chichester, I would love to meet with you to discuss all of these points, for which my constituency is at the forefront. I strongly believe that Chichester's situation and experience provides a blueprint for an approach and solutions that have applicability across the country.

Chichester's coastal plain contains a large proportion of the top-grade farmland in the southeast of England as well as the best growing climate in the country. My constituency also contains some of the most important wetlands in the south of England, around Chichester and Pagham Harbours, and Medmerry. Wetlands are the fastest disappearing habitat in the UK and across the world. Wetlands are the most effective ecosystem for carbon sequestration, making them invaluable in combatting climate change.

Chichester's community is a world-leader in environmental protection. Medmerry, is a wetland area created by a managed coastal realignment scheme that was the largest of its kind in Europe when it was opened in 2013 and is recognised internationally as a ground-breaking example of coastal management and climate change adaptation. Acutely aware of its vulnerability to climate change, my community's proactivity in confronting and adapting to climate change is evidenced by the Medmerry scheme. Chichester has faced an uphill struggle during the last few years in persuading the previous government to engage with our attempts to increase our economic, social, and environmental resilience.

While Chichester has successfully demonstrated new ways of adapting to climate change, reducing flood risk, and increasing wetland habitat, these successes are being put at risk by the actions, inactions and prevarications of Southern Water. In some parts of the Chichester area, six times more sewage was released in 2023 vs 2022. Sewage contamination in our area, including in our chalk streams and rivers, has resulted in Chichester Harbour being identified by Natural England as 'in a declining condition.' This continuing environmental pollution is



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adversely impacting our vital tourism industry, as well as threatening the health of our swimmers, sailors, surfers and wildlife. Inadequate investment in sewerage infrastructure is exacerbating these issues.

**Collaborative, cross-party working can address Chichester's issues and benefit the whole of the UK.** Can we please meet urgently to discuss and agree actions to safeguard Chichester's environment and exploit its vital role at the forefront of proactive climate change management and food production for the UK?

I have been voted in by a vocal and proactive community to address these issues. I believe that the solutions to tackling these issues can be brought about by positive political will enabled by collaborative cross-party working – and that the blueprint Chichester offers can be beneficial to the rest of the country also.

I look forward to your early reply on these pressing issues.

Regards

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "J Brown-Fuller".

Jess Brown-Fuller  
Member of Parliament for Chichester