

Tree planting

I am glad the government shares my enthusiasm for more trees. We need to keep the woodlands we still have left, and expand our forest cover. Trees enhance the landscape, help bind the soil, act as windbreaks and often improve the view. Properly tended they can also be an important source of raw material and income when harvested and replaced with saplings.

Locally our Councils are working to boost tree numbers. Nationally the government has committed to 11 million extra trees. It is making money available through both urban and rural tree funds. It is backing the Forestry Commission who have a big programme.

This work needs to be part of better planning. I am working with Wokingham Borough Council on the next local plan which I want to slow the rate of development after the substantial housebuilding of the current plan period. I want the Plan to make proper provision for green gaps between settlements, Sites of Special Scientific Interest, parks, woodlands and other amenity areas.

Many of us get a lift from our green environment. One of the best features of England is our fabled "green and pleasant land". The mild temperate climate gives us green fields and leafy trees for much of the year which provides a good local environment close to nature. I am glad our local Councils are busy protecting and enhancing our green environment.

We also need to have a fair and controlled system of immigration. Our welcome to new people needs to be at a sustainable pace.