



HOUSE OF COMMONS

LONDON SW1A 0AA

Mary Creagh CBE MP
Minister for Nature
Daniel Zeichner MP
Minister for Food Security and Rural Affairs
Alex Norris MP
Minister for Building Safety, Fire and Local Growth
By email

Our Ref: EC02626

Dear Mary, Daniel and Alex,

I have been contacted by a constituent, who is also a cider maker, on the subject of traditional orchard preservation. I'm writing to ask for your support on measures to stop the drastic and continuing decline in traditional orchards which are so important to North Herefordshire for a host of environmental, socio-cultural and historical reasons. Figures from the People's Trust for Endangered Species suggest 90% of traditional orchards have been lost in England and Wales since 1950.

From the constituent's (and co-signatories') perspective, the decline could be stemmed by

- **Reviewing the Countryside Stewardship Scheme**
 - Is the scheme helping to tackle the significant issue of mistletoe killing trees; the planting of suitable varieties, and encouraging standing deadwood?
- **Amending the scope of Environmental Impact Assessments**
 - Currently, chopping down a traditional orchard and replacing it with a modern intensive bush orchard is not subject to an Environmental Impact Assessment.
- **Deeming traditional orchards to be an Irreplaceable Habitat**
 - Another option for improved statutory protection could be to elevate traditional orchards to an irreplaceable habitat, on a par with ancient woodland.
- **Improving legal minimum standards for cider**
 - Increasing the legal minimum juice content for cider from the current 35% to at least 50% would bring the UK into line with other countries. This would increase the demand for juice and therefore the commercial viability of traditional orchards.
- **Promoting British fruit**
 - Reduce the amount of imported fruit and concentrate liquid that can be used in British cider.
- **Updating the alcohol premises licence process and costs**
 - Currently, small producers are treated the same as large scale commercial producers in the premises licence application process and costs. This requirement proves a major barrier to small producers. If small producers were supported to sell at the doorstep this would encourage the use of traditional

Ellie Chowns MP
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orchards for small scale cider and perry production.

What are your views on opportunities to take these ideas forwards?

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'E Chowns', written in a cursive style.

Ellie Chowns MP
Member of Parliament for North Herefordshire