



HOUSE OF COMMONS

LONDON SW1A 0AA

Owls and Otters Classes
Ardingly College Pre-Prep
Ardingly College
Ardingly
West Sussex
RH17 6SQ

11 January 2022

JQ35348

Dear Owls and Otters,

Thank you for your letters about plastic waste and its effect on oceans.

I enjoyed reading all of your letters and I think it is fantastic that at such a young age you are all so incredibly passionate about the issues facing our planet.

The Government recently created a 25-Year Plan to Improve the Environment. This plan sets the long-term approach to protecting and enhancing the environment in England, so young people like you can enjoy it in the future. It will help make our water and air cleaner and create more areas for plants and animals to live.

It is really bad how much plastic produced every year is single-use and I was interested to read your suggestions of more sustainable alternatives. There are things however we are already getting right which are having a difference. Since the introduction of the plastic bag charge, the average person in England now buys just four single-use carrier bags a year from the main supermarkets, compared with 140 in 2014. I am also glad that a ban on the supply of drinks stirrers, cotton buds and plastic straws (excluding those needed for medical purposes) came into force in October 2020.

In addition, the UK's world-leading ban on microbeads will help stop potentially billions of tiny pieces of plastic from entering the aquatic environment every year.

Ministers are also looking at other ways the Government can change the way we manage waste in the UK. They are looking at the possibility of introducing a deposit return scheme for drinks containers and asking those who make waste to take more responsibility for items that can be harder or costly to recycle, including polystyrene, electrical goods and batteries.

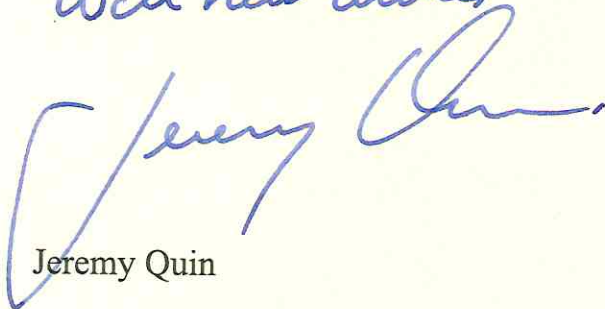
From April 2022, a Plastic Packaging Tax will be paid by manufacturers and importers of plastic packaging that contains less than 30 per cent recycled plastic.

I agree that litter spoils our towns, roadsides and our local environment. I am glad that the Waste and Resources Action Programme recently published guidance for local authorities on providing public bins. To support this, local councils can now apply for grants of between £10,000 and £25,000 to buy new bins.

I agree with your suggestion of fines for those who litter. Local councils have the power to issue on-the-spot fines of up to £150 for littering. Ministers have also given councils new powers to hold the keeper of a vehicle responsible for litter thrown from it by issuing a civil penalty.

Thank you again for taking the time to contact me about this very important issue.

With best wishes

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read 'Jeremy Quin', written in a cursive style.

Jeremy Quin