

## Letter from Westminster



**Winchester MP:  
Steve Brine**

REGULAR readers of my column will remember how, back in November, I made reference to the zeal with which Michael Gove has set about his work as Environment Secretary. I think it is fair to say in the time since he

has not let up!

We have all seen how the environment, and especially concerns about single use plastics, are front and centre of our domestic politics right now, and I know constituents welcomed the Prime Minister's recent launch of a landmark 25 Year Environment Plan.

As promised in our 2017 manifesto, it sets out how the United Kingdom will improve the quality of air and water, create richer habitats for wildlife and crucially, tackle plastic in the oceans. Furthermore, and to wide acclaim, we've said in coming years we will crackdown on plastics by eliminating all avoidable plastic waste.

But the announcement just before Easter that DEFRA will consult on plans to introduce a bottle deposit return scheme in order to increase recycling rates and slash the amount of waste polluting our land and seas was even more warmly welcomed. I am convinced this is right as we must act now to tackle this threat and curb the millions of plastic bottles a day that go unrecycled. We have already banned harmful microbeads and cut plastic bag use, and now we want to take action on plastic bottles to help clean up our oceans.

These are all measures that I know resonate with so many of my constituents, including my own young children, and locally I sense the commitment to this agenda is stronger than ever. Coming, as they do, on top of the recent news from Winchester City Council that it will now introduce doorstep glass collections, I think we're really in a very good place at this time and residents are certainly taking notice judging by my postbag.

Finally, and sticking to the point, I recently met a working mum who lives in Winchester with a passion for the environment. As a working dad with the same, we hit it off and you have to take your hat off to the momentum Michele Ingerslev has already generated for her "Final Straw Winchester" campaign which is asking local businesses to stop using single-use plastic straws. Her recent straw 'amnesty' was a huge success and you will hear much more from us, working together, in coming weeks and months. Michelle is a cracking example of Winchester's Big Society in action.

You can find out more and back Michele's campaign at facebook.com or follow her on Twitter @FinalStrawWinch, and as ever, you can see more of my work at [www.stevebrine.com](http://www.stevebrine.com).

19.4.18

Steve Brine,  
MP for Winchester and Chandler's  
Ford,  
Parliamentary Under-Secretary  
(Department of Health and Social  
Care)