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Office for Environmental  
Protection  
Wildwood  
Wildwood Drive  
Worcester  
WR5 2QT

03300 416 581  
[www.theoep.org.uk](http://www.theoep.org.uk)

Rt Hon Alistair Carmichael MP  
Chair, Environment, Food and Rural Affairs Committee  
House of Commons  
LONDON  
SW1A 0AA

20 August 2026

Dear Alistair,

I was delighted to be appointed as the OEP Chair in June and am very much looking forward to playing my part to support the OEP's important work to protect and improve the environment.

In doing so, I am keen to develop the constructive relationship between your Committee and the OEP. The Committee's scrutiny of Defra and its arm's-length bodies is of course central to ensuring that environmental policy and delivery achieve the outcomes intended, which is similarly core to the role of the OEP.

In my pre-appointment hearing, I heard the Committee's interest in ensuring the OEP's work supports effective scrutiny of government performance, and of engaging well with all stakeholders in relation to the environment. I also heard the Committee's concerns about the pace of government's progress in improving the environment, and the importance of maintaining the OEP's independence and effectiveness. These are priorities I fully share.

I would welcome an early opportunity to discuss these issues with you, and to explore the Committee's hopes and expectations of the OEP, areas of potential mutual interest and concern in relation to environmental protection and improvement, and how the OEP can best support Parliament's scrutiny.

I hope we can meet soon, and to working with you and the Committee as we continue the vital task of protecting and improving the natural environment.

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Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Dame Helen Ghosh". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Dame Helen Ghosh  
Chair, Office for Environmental Protection

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