

Date: 19 September 2023  
Ask for: Councillor Alan Baldock  
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Rt Hon Rishi Sunak MP  
Prime Minister  
10 Downing Street  
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Dear Prime Minister

In July, Canterbury City Council became the 15th council across the country to sign the [Local Government Association's Motion for the Ocean](#) and commit itself to embedding marine ecology at the heart of its strategic decision making.

The sea literally and metaphorically puts food on the table for hundreds of our residents and we believe conserving and improving its biodiversity is essential to the economic and environmental future of our coastal towns of Herne Bay and Whitstable.

The cleanliness of our waters lays at the heart of many of our residents' mental and physical wellbeing all year round.

As Prime Minister we ask you to instruct your Cabinet to:

- **strengthen regulations to reduce single-use plastics at source**

[A 2020 study](#) from the University of London revealed the Thames and its estuary are home to the highest density of plastic pollutants in the world.

The [European Commission](#) has highlighted how effective changes to the filtration of washing machines would be in reducing the proliferation of nanoplastics.

We call on you to follow the French government in ensuring microfibre catching filters are fitted on all new washing machines.

- **increase the financial penalties on water companies found to be dumping sewage in our seas**

You need to set legally-binding targets for water companies to substantially reduce the use of combined sewage overflows (CSOs) at pace.

We call on you to ensure the burden of any new investment in infrastructure is carried by shareholders first and that senior managers in any water company found to have broken the law should be prevented from serving elsewhere in the industry.

- **produce a national Ocean Recovery Strategy**

This needs to work to proactively improve the quality of our marine ecosystems and consider coastal management, marine conservation and fisheries holistically rather than as competing interests.

We call on you to manage the health of the entire ocean and move beyond Marine Protected Areas.

- **ensure the necessary resources are available to police our fishing waters**

Inshore fishery and conservation authorities are increasingly finding it difficult to set and enforce appropriate fishing levels and deliver environmental sustainability.

We are concerned that inflation has significantly eroded the value of the grant received from Defra for this activity and are concerned at reports the removal of the ring fence for this budget may jeopardise future work.

We welcome the Environment Agency's successful prosecution of Southern Water in 2021 but believe more resources are needed to increase enforcement, water quality and public trust in the system.

- **Appoint a dedicated Minister for Coastal Communities**

Almost [one in five English residents](#) live in a coastal community and these communities are, statistically, likely to have higher levels of deprivation, suffer slower population growth and experience a greater decline in job opportunities than non-coastal areas.

This weekend thousands of our residents will congregate on Whitstable Beach as part of SOS Whitstable's protest against pollution along our coast.

The safety of our waters is something that our residents care about passionately and something our council is doing everything in its power to protect.

We would very much welcome the opportunity to host members of the Cabinet to explore these issues further with our fishing community, seabathing groups and coastal environment groups.

Yours

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