



# **Nottinghamshire** Wildlife Trust

The Old Ragged School, Brook Street, Nottingham, NG1 1EA  
Tel: 0115 958 8242 Email: [info@nottswt.co.uk](mailto:info@nottswt.co.uk)

## **Media Release**

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**Hot on the heels of concerns over the Government decision to lift the moratorium on fracking, Nottinghamshire Wildlife Trust outlines anger at further Government measures it fears could scupper the prospects for nature's recovery and undermine people's quality of life.**

Just days after highlighting the threat posed to the county's wildlife and landscape by the Government's decision to lift the moratorium on fracking, Nottinghamshire Wildlife Trust, the county's largest locally based environmental charity, has spoken of its anger at further measures it believes could scupper the prospects for nature's recovery and undermine people's quality of life.

The Retained EU Law Bill – introduced into the House of Commons by Business Secretary, Jacob Rees-Mogg on Thursday 22<sup>nd</sup> September – did not generate the same level of headlines as Friday's 'mini budget'. However, the Wildlife Trust believes that plans to reform and revoke hundreds of laws that have their origins in policies from the European Union could seriously undermine the Government's commitments to restoring nature and hamper, rather than encourage, economic growth.

Nottinghamshire Wildlife Trust fears that the ideological drive to unpick these laws threatens its ambitions to restore nature across the county and to secure wilder lives for communities.



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It is also believes that rather unleashing economic growth, the measures could unleash environmental impacts that stifle the transition to a successful green economy and damage people's quality of life.

Speaking about the threat Chief Executive Paul Wilkinson said:

*"In the last few days, our Government has started on a path of potential environmental degradation and destruction in the name of economic growth. We're angry that the Government is preparing to unpick the legislation that protects our wildlife, wild places, water and air quality. It would seem that they're doing this for no other reason that the laws originated in Europe – ignoring the fact that the UK was a key player in drafting them. These laws were not forced upon us; we helped to shape them to protect the places and species we cherish."*

Playing on people's genuine concerns over fuel prices the Government has used the war in Ukraine as something of a Trojan Horse to justify lifting the moratorium on fracking. But in the words of the Chancellor Kwasi Kwateng – lifting it "would come at a high cost for communities and our precious countryside." and "No amount of shale gas from hundreds of wells dotted across rural England would be enough to lower the European price any time soon."

Now, we have the so called 'Bonfire of red tape' - largely affecting rules designed to protect our shared environment, precious places and threatened species - being presented as a means of unshackling growth.

A thriving economy, and society, is dependent on a healthy natural environment and the Wildlife Trust is concerned that this could backfire spectacularly with devastating consequences for the country and communities.

Paul explained: *"We face an urgent nature and climate crisis but instead of a plan for nature's recovery, the UK Government is pursuing a dangerous agenda of deregulation that puts the very laws protecting wildlife at risk. Deregulation is often characterised as "cutting red tape" but in reality, it means removing rules and protections that prevent polluters from*



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*getting away with poisoning our rivers and countryside; ripping up the rules that protect our most important wildlife sites and threatened species and removing funding that supports farmers to restore wildlife across our landscapes.”*

The Trust fears that if retained EU legislation is replaced with weaker alternatives, our natural environment will be left unprotected from those who prioritise profit over protecting the planet.

Paul continued: “Whatever our views on Brexit, many of these laws provide vital environmental protections for our air, rivers, wildlife and food standards. They helped remove the UK’s 1970’s reputation of being the ‘dirty man of Europe’ by cleaning up our waters. Far from being a ‘bonfire of red tape’, changing these laws will require extensive procedural change with little benefit for nature and could lead to more litigation and greater costs for both developers and conservationists.”

**Rather than pursuing its deregulation agenda, The Wildlife Trusts believes the UK Government must:**

**1. Strengthen the rules that protect our most important wildlife and habitats – don’t just remove them.**

Defra has more EU retained law than any other Government department, with 570 retained laws on environmental issues. Key laws include the Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations, the cornerstone protection for our most treasured sites, and the Water Framework Directives that set strict standards for pollution of rivers. The Air Quality Standards Regulations impose limits for toxic air pollution, whilst the Marine Strategy Regulations ensures the government protects our seas.

The removal of the Habitats Regulations is a particular concern. They defend 18.8 million hectares of our most precious wildlife across the UK from inappropriate and damaging development – from the New Forest and Norfolk Broads, to hazel dormice and harbour porpoises. Without them, nature will struggle to secure us against the



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impacts of climate change, prevent flooding, and provide people with wellbeing benefits. Protections like the Habitats Regulations must be strengthened, not removed, if we are to have any hope of delivering on the UK Government's own promises for nature's restoration.

## **2. Increase support for nature friendly farming to secure a sustainable future for British farming and nature.**

The Government's Food Security Report 2021 is clear: "The biggest medium to long term risk to the UK's domestic production comes from climate change and other environmental pressures like soil degradation, water quality and biodiversity". The estimated cost to UK farmers of soil degradation alone is £1.2 billion each year. To secure a sustainable future for British food and farming, we need more nature.

Delays to schemes to reward farmers to restore nature would be bad value for money, providing billions of taxpayer funding to the wealthiest farms in England, hold back the recovery of nature, and hinder the UK's progress to Net Zero. The UK Government must urgently announce details of its long-awaited proposals for a local nature recovery scheme for farmers and reverse the cut in funding for large-scale landscape and river restoration.

Paul added: *"This drive for economic growth at all costs ignores the fact that a thriving economy, and society, is dependent on a healthy natural environment. We are facing a huge battle to, at the very least, hold on to the environmental protections we have secured over the last few decades, let alone move into a period of nature recovery. Here at Nottinghamshire Wildlife Trust, we are preparing for the battles ahead, and will speak out loudly on behalf of our wildlife and wild places. It's time to mount the barricades and turn our passion and love of nature into the fuel for the fight ahead."*

**ENDS**



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## PHOTO



Nottinghamshire Wildlife Trust CEO, Paul Wilkinson holding the Strategy for Natures Recovery

*For further information or to request interviews please contact Erin McDaid on 07734 573862 [emcdaid@nottswt.co.uk](mailto:emcdaid@nottswt.co.uk) or Rachel Rutherford on 07519 633236 [rutherford@nottswt.co.uk](mailto:rutherford@nottswt.co.uk)*

### **Notes for Editors**

1) The Nottinghamshire Wildlife Trust, a registered charity, manages dozens of nature reserves throughout the county. It advises local authorities, community groups and landowners on nature conservation issues, and makes a major input into decision-making on planning matters and other issues.

2) The Trust is part of a nation-wide network of local Trusts which work to protect wildlife in town and country - The Wildlife Trusts. The Wildlife Trusts now boast over 875,000 members. For more information, please see our website: [www.nottinghamshirewildlife.org](http://www.nottinghamshirewildlife.org)