

Britain Leading Again

On Monday, Donald Trump will be sworn in again as President of the United States.

In his first term, Trump withdrew the US from the Paris Climate Agreement and the UN Human Rights Council. He has praised Putin's invasion of Ukraine as "genius", and said he would encourage Russia to do "whatever the hell they want" to NATO allies. He's even refused to rule out invading a NATO ally himself.

And he's threatening to plunge the world into a trade war. He proudly calls himself "tariff man".

So let's not kid ourselves. The incoming Trump Administration is a threat to peace and prosperity in the UK, across Europe, and around the world.

For the next four years, the UK cannot depend on the President of the United States to be a reliable partner on security, defence or the economy.

So how do we deal with Donald Trump? We need to do it from a position of strength.

And that means urgently strengthening our relationships with the UK's other partners – most importantly our European neighbours, whose economic and security interests are so closely intertwined with ours.

That is why, today, I am calling on the Government to negotiate this year a brand-new deal with the EU.

Not just tinkering around the edges of the Conservatives' botched Brexit deal, but agreeing a better deal for Britain. **A deal to form a new UK-EU Customs Union by 2030 at the latest.**

This will help to deliver on the roadmap we have already set out to fix our broken relationship – renewing the ties of trust and friendship so that we can apply to join the Single Market when the time is right and one day get the UK back in the heart of Europe.

But an agreement to work towards a Customs Union will also unlock big benefits now. We can start tearing down the Conservatives' damaging trade barriers this year. Ripping up the expensive red tape that is holding back British firms from selling into Europe, costing our economy billions in lost exports.

That is how we can protect our economy from whatever Trump decides to do. It's how we can deal with him from a position of strength, not weakness. And – most importantly – it's how we can turbocharge our economy in the medium and long term.

Yet again, the Liberal Democrats are leading the way with ambitious plans to

grow our economy and restore Britain's positive role on the world stage.

Speech in Full

This year, we will celebrate eighty years since the end of the Second World War. Eighty years since Britain and her allies defeated the Nazis. Ended the Holocaust and liberated the concentration camps. Brought peace to Europe. One of our country's finest hours. We led the world – not just in standing up to Hitler and winning the war, but in building what came next.

Creating new forums to foster peace and uphold human rights: The United Nations, led at its birth by the British Liberal Gladwyn Jebb. NATO, driven by Labour's Ernest Bevin and led by its first Secretary General: the British General Lord Ismay. The European Convention on Human Rights, drafted by the Conservative Sir David Maxwell Fyfe. And new forums for trade and economic cooperation, forged at Bretton Woods where that great British Liberal, John Maynard Keynes, played such a crucial role. Ambitiously designed not just to rebuild after years of destruction, but also to prevent the tit-for-tat trade barriers and nationalist, protectionist economic policies that had caused so much hardship and ultimately led to war.

Now, some of those institutions have been more successful than others. Some have withstood the test of time well, some less so. But the point is this: When the world was in crisis, fragile and fearful, Britain took the lead, working with others to create a new order of things. Recognising that the concerns of one nation inevitably become the concerns of all nations...

And guided by our fundamental British values of democracy, liberty and respect for the rule of law, we stepped up. Amidst the rubble of war, in the shadow of the Holocaust, and with the new spectre of nuclear weapons, British leadership offered real hope. And despite all the challenges that have followed – all the trials and tribulations of the past eighty years – there is no doubt that the world has been better for it. More peaceful and more prosperous than it would have been without Britain's leadership.

The United Kingdom, standing tall in the world. Championing our values. Working together with others. A powerful force for good. That is what the world needed eighty years ago. And it is what the world needs so badly again now.

Because the world feels very fragile right now, doesn't it?

In Eastern Europe, where Vladimir Putin continues to murder Ukrainian civilians and destroy their homes. And where he is trying to extend his grip into Georgia, Moldova and Romania too.

Across the Middle East, where we have seen so much appalling death and destruction. Where – despite the welcome news of a ceasefire – Palestinians in Gaza still face a humanitarian crisis. Where Hamas still holds innocent people hostage. And where we still have a long road towards a lasting peace.

In Sudan, where tens of thousands have been slaughtered and twelve million forced to flee their homes. Where the reports of mass killings and horrifying sexual violence against women are stomach-churning.

And from devastating wildfires in Los Angeles – To horrifying floods in Valencia – To catastrophic typhoons in the Pacific – We see the terrible effects of climate change all around us.

And we see the impact of it all here in the United Kingdom too. From the refugee crisis on our shores, to the rising food prices in our shops, to the sky-high cost of heating our homes.

The concerns of one nation inevitably become the concerns of all nations. So much instability and insecurity. So many challenges facing our country and our planet. And all of these challenges are about to be made much tougher, when President Trump is sworn in on Monday.

Because the truth is, while British leadership helped to shape so many of those crucial post-war creations – the UN, NATO and the rest. They were also built on the fundamental assumption that the United States – the world's largest economy and its most powerful military force – could be relied upon to play by the rules and uphold the agreements we forged. And whatever else you might say about Donald Trump, it is clear he cannot be relied upon to play by the rules or stick to international agreements.

On Monday, he will become the first convicted criminal to take the oath of office. And this is the President who, in his first term, withdrew the United States from the Paris Climate Agreement, the Iran Nuclear Deal and the UN Human Rights Council. And who started the process of withdrawing from the World Health Organization – something he reportedly plans to finish this time around. So much for "The Art of the Deal". More like the art of breaking the deal.

More dangerously, this is the man who has praised Putin's invasion of Ukraine as "genius", and said he would encourage Russia to do "whatever the hell they want" to NATO allies. The man who has even refused to rule out invading a NATO ally himself. The man who says "trade wars are good", and proudly calls himself "tariff man". When he was last in the White House, President Trump hit our economy with tariffs on British steel and Scotch whisky. This time, he's threatening to go even further.

So the reality is, unfortunately, very clear. The incoming Trump Administration is a threat to peace and prosperity in the UK, across Europe, and around the world. For the next four years, the UK cannot depend on the President of the United States to be a reliable partner on security, defence or the economy. With Donald Trump as unpredictable as he is, we cannot leave the destiny of the free world in his hands alone. Other democracies must step up, and the UK must help lead that effort.

Whether it is supporting Ukraine as it resists Putin's war machine, securing lasting peace in the Middle East, tackling climate change, or promoting free and fair trade to grow our economies... The UK must once again stand tall,

leading on the world stage and working closely with those who share our interests – including, above all, our partners in Europe. We cannot simply rely on the US to be there, as we too often have done in the past.

But let us also be clear: nor can we simply ignore Donald Trump or the United States for the next four years. The US will still be the world's largest economy. It will still spend more on its military than any other country. And it will still be our biggest trading partner after the European Union.

So the question is not whether we deal with Donald Trump. We have to. The question is how.

How we deal with The Donald.

And the answer cannot be to do what some – like Kemi Badenoch – would have us do: Approach Trump from a position of weakness. Go to him cap in hand and beg for whatever trade deal he'll give us. In the hope of avoiding the worst of his tariffs. Nor can we take the Farage approach of fawning over Trump and licking his boots. Seemingly more interested in advancing Trump's agenda over here than the UK's interests over there. Neither of those is the way to get a good deal for Britain. Neither is the way to get Trump to take us seriously.

Just look at what The Donald says in his famous book, *The Art of the Deal*: "The worst thing you can possibly do in a deal is seem desperate to make it. That makes the other guy smell blood, and then you're dead. The best thing you can do is deal from strength".

If we seem as weak or as desperate as the Conservatives or Reform would have us appear, Trump will treat the UK the same way he has treated so many throughout his career.

The Trump-led trade deal that the Conservatives would have us meekly accept would allow big American firms to buy up our NHS, or indeed to undercut responsible British farmers with lower animal welfare and environmental standards – Just like the farmer-betraying trade deals the Conservatives signed with Australia and New Zealand in the last Parliament. And in reality it wouldn't even protect us from Trump imposing outrageous tariffs on the UK if he feels like it. Because he has repeatedly shown himself to be so unpredictable, and so willing to break America's deals if he decides they aren't working for him anymore.

So how do we deal with Trump from strength?

How do we maximise our influence on his administration, to try and prevent the worst fears of a Trump presidency becoming reality – Whether it's handing Vladimir Putin victory in Ukraine, rolling back the progress we've made on climate change, or plunging the world into a destructive trade war?

The answer is to show we are not so reliant on the United States. That the UK has alternatives, and won't be bullied into taking whatever Trump offers us.

And we do that by urgently strengthening our relationships with the UK's other partners – Whether that be Commonwealth nations like Canada or India,

also figuring out how to deal with Trump – Or, most importantly, our European neighbours, whose economic and security interests are so closely intertwined with ours.

I am not going to pretend this will be easy. We have looked on with justified horror at the rise of far-right parties in many EU countries, like France and Italy, Austria and Germany, Hungary and the Netherlands. Some of those countries are led by people whose values we find as objectionable as Trump's – perhaps even more so. And other countries may soon join them.

But that doesn't change the fundamental fact that we and our European partners have closely shared interests when it comes to our economies and our national security. We are neighbours. An emboldened Putin is a direct threat to us all in Europe. A Trump trade war will mean hardship and misery for all our people, across Europe. So we must work together to prevent it. To deal with Trump together, from a position of maximum combined strength. And to make Europe more secure in its own right, at a time when we can no longer rely on America to help us secure it.

Now, there may be some who scoff at the idea of Britain leading beyond our shores, after all the damage the Conservative Party did to our reputation on the world stage and our relationship with Europe. But when you look at the crises engulfing capitals across the continent, I have no doubt that the prospect of renewed UK leadership – from a government truly committed to cooperation – would be heartily welcomed. After all, if we don't show that leadership, who will?

But there is a lot of work to do, after the Conservatives spent years cutting ties of trade, trust and cooperation, and sowing bitterness and hostility instead. The Prime Minister has at least recognised the need to reset our relationship with the EU. But so far, I'm afraid, that only seems to amount to saying "No" more politely than the Conservatives. The UK must be far more positive, far more ambitious, and act with far more urgency.

That is why, today, I am calling on the Government to negotiate this year a brand-new deal with the EU. Not just tinkering around the edges of the botched deal the Conservatives signed four years ago – But negotiating a better deal for Britain, that has at its heart a new UK-EU Customs Union, to come into force by 2030 at the latest.

Forming a Customs Union with the EU is not only the single biggest thing we can do to turbocharge our economy in the medium and long term, but an agreement to work towards one will unlock big economic benefits for the UK now. We can start tearing down those Conservative trade barriers this year... Ripping up the expensive red tape that is holding back British firms – especially small businesses – from selling into Europe, costing our economy billions in lost exports. This isn't just a plan to deal with Trump, it's a growth plan for our country – and how badly we need one of those.

And this new deal should include a reciprocal Youth Mobility Scheme – Giving our young people incredible new opportunities to live, work and travel across Europe, while also boosting British employers by helping them recruit the

workers they need – especially in hospitality, construction, the creative industries and care, where they are desperately needed. It would be a win-win for our country, and I still can't understand why the Government continues to rule it out.

Let me give you one other, small but important example of the enormous benefits to be gained from a new, more positive and ambitious approach to Europe. It involves a constituent of mine who runs a new air cargo firm. Now in its second year, the business is expanding. They've just added a third Boeing seven-four-seven to their fleet. Exactly the sort of growing British start-up that will grow our economy and create jobs. But he explained how it is being hurt badly by new rules that make no sense. Rules that mean they can't have repair work done in Europe, apart from the one German workshop that is recognised by the UK. So last year they had to fly twice to the US just to get their planes serviced, at a cost of £400,000 a time, and who knows how many pointless carbon emissions.

Why don't we let European engineers service those planes? And why are we wasting time and money on a completely separate regulatory regime for aviation – for an industry that by its very nature works across borders? We can get rid of that ridiculous red tape – and so much more like it – if we are part of bodies like the EU Aviation Safety Agency... And if we negotiate mutual recognition of qualifications for engineers, for flight crew, and for other professionals from doctors and dentists to actuaries and accountants.

Those are benefits we can secure now, before we form a UK-EU Customs Union – But by making that our explicit goal by 2030, by starting the work towards it now, we can make it so much easier to negotiate so many other economic and social benefits. We can rebuild our crucial relationship with Europe so much faster.

And this isn't just about economic security. It's about defending our democracies from the threat of Vladimir Putin – and anyone else who would seek to trample on our sovereignty. With Trump coming into office, European nations must be ready to step up our support for Ukraine if America steps back. And at the same time, we must try and influence the Trump administration to do the right thing too.

On defence, as on trade, we have no choice but to deal with The Donald – from a position of strength, not weakness, and with our eyes wide open to the kind of man he is. He's transactional, so let's treat him that way.

The good news is, we have leverage. We have something Trump desperately wants: a state visit. The pageantry at Buckingham Palace. A banquet with the King. We all know he craves it. So I say we give it to him. But only if he delivers what we need first, for Britain and Europe's defence and security.

And that is this:

President Trump must sit down with President Zelenskyy and other European leaders – in a summit convened by the UK. To agree how we collectively use the hundreds of billions of dollars, pounds and Euros of frozen Russian

assets to pay for the weapons Ukraine needs to win the war and beat Putin. To put it in Donald Trump's language: we are going to protect Ukraine and we are going to make Russia pay for it.

And if Trump delivers on that deal, pushing the necessary measures through Congress... Then, and only then, do we roll out the red carpet for a state visit.

Just think of it. Britain, leading again on the world stage. Working together with our partners in Europe and beyond. For defence, security and economic prosperity. Just like we did eighty years ago.

That is how we can protect our economy from whatever Trump decides to do. That is how we can defend European security – with or without his help. That is how we can deal with President Trump from a position of strength, not weakness. And that is how the UK can once again offer real hope in turbulent times.

Thank you.

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Author:

Protecting children from sexual abuse

No child should ever have to experience sexual abuse. These are horrifying crimes that cause so much harm to the children who are victims.

We need urgent action to stop child sexual abuse in all its forms. That means ensuring that perpetrators face the full force of the law, while steps are taken to make sure these sorts of crimes can't keep happening in the future.

Liberal Democrats will support whatever works best to bring that change forward. If another inquiry will make that happen, of course we'll support it.

But we should not forget that a seven year long inquiry into child sexual abuse – chaired by Professor Alexis Jay – has already happened, which brought forward 20 recommendations to better protect children in the future. The previous Conservative government sat on their hands and failed to make any progress at implementing these.

The Conservatives' inaction was shameful – and it's disgraceful that they are now choosing to use the victims of this scandal as a political football.

Now, the Conservatives have tabled a motion blocking the Children's Wellbeing Bill that they're saying would secure a national inquiry for victims of child

sexual abuse – but that just isn't true.

Ultimately, voting for their motion would have only one result – killing the Children's Wellbeing Bill altogether. That Bill includes many important measures relating to child protection and safeguarding which we have long been calling for.

So we did not support the Conservatives' motion which – rather than introduce an inquiry – would prevent the passage of important child safeguarding measures. Instead, Liberal Democrats are laying an amendment to the Bill at committee stage calling on the recommendations to be enacted in full.

This is proper opposition, not cheap politicking. Our amendments will seek to strengthen, not wreck the Bill.

Liberal Democrats will be using every opportunity we have to push for real action to tackle the child sexual abuse scandal, including by implementing the 20 Jay recommendations as quickly as possible.

And we will keep up the pressure to make sure the government doesn't drag its heels – so that the action needed to make our communities safe for girls and all children finally happens.

Munira Wilson MP is the Liberal Democrats Spokesperson for Education, Children and Families

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[This Christmas, Love is Enough](#)

When I sang '*In the Bleak Midwinter*' in my local church, age 13, neither I nor my brothers nor my mum fully appreciated how much our lives were all about to change.

For mum's cancer was getting worse and I was becoming a young carer. The next two-and-a-half years before my mum eventually died were extremely tough, but they were also full of love.



<https://slinky.to/LoveIsEnough>

So I am delighted to team up with the Bath Philharmonia's Young Carers' Choir on a brand new, original charity Christmas single in support of Carers Trust and Bath Philharmonia.

[Download now](#)

Written by six young carers and former young carers, *'Love is Enough'* is a tribute to the caring responsibilities of young carers and the bond they share with the people they care for. When I heard the opening lyrics, they really hit home:

"Every second we have left is worth a thousand others."



It was a joy to spend time with this amazing group of young carers, to see their incredible talents, energy and love. And our launch yesterday was a fabulous chance to highlight the challenges facing young carers and the support available for them – with great coverage on BBC Breakfast, the Today Programme, Radio 2, ITV News and much more.

I hope you'll download the song and enjoy it this Christmas, taking some time to think about this amazing group of people who look after their loved ones from such an early age.

All the money raised will go to Carers Trust and Bath Philharmonia. Buying and downloading the song from [iTunes](#) or [Amazon](#), instead of just streaming it, will help boost us up the charts and raise more money for these great causes – but of course it is available on [Spotify](#) and [all other streaming sites](#).

This time of year is tough for all carers, particularly young ones. Let's put them in the spotlight.

Thank you and Merry Christmas!

Ed

Download or Stream Love is Enough

If you are a young carer and need support, or if you know someone who is a young carer and needs support, please visit www.carers.org, and enter your postcode in the Get Support search engine to find support in your area.

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Author:

[“I left COP29 with hope in my heart”](#)

In the early hours of Sunday morning, after extending for 33 hours and amid fears of a collapse in the talks, a climate deal was finally struck at COP29 in Baku. Not a deal that satisfies everyone but, nonetheless, a key agreement between countries to continue efforts to save our planet for our children and grandchildren, and to support those most vulnerable communities battered by extreme flooding, drought and storms.



Given all that is happening in our local area, across the country and across the world, many people think that these climate summits, the COP process, are pointless and just a talking shop – and that they come and go without any real effect. They may indeed seem very distant to our lives here but the decisions between leaders of nations at COP can be monumentally significant.

In some ways, it has never been more important for our world leaders to be talking and taking collective decisions for our common future. COP can be a frontline in the climate battle.

In the last week **I have witnessed the battle at COP29 firsthand**, in Baku, representing the Liberal Democrats. I have seen exhausted negotiators going in for another late night round of discussions. I have watched Ministers from different countries huddle and work together. I have felt the frustration of island states and heard the hopes and fears of young people gathered, willing the governments to reach an agreement for their future. All this in the context of a second term for Trump in the US, threatening to pull out of future climate talks.

COP29 finally delivered a result:

An agreement on a new climate fund to support developing countries who are bearing the brunt of climate change and who desperately need more support. Recent months have seen cities flattened, homes lost to water, ash where forests once were, crops devastated – and not just in the developing world now. Recent scenes of flooding from Spain, Italy and France have been a terrifying wake-up call for many in countries which felt insulated from the effects of climate change.

COP29 is an exercise in hope as much as anything else; hope that in our collective effort to tackle climate change we can keep to our pledge to limit global warming below 1.5°C alive, that we can save the most vulnerable people in the world from living in desperate conditions; we can protect and restore Nature which is so critical to life; create new jobs in the booming green technologies and energy transformation; and enable, happier, healthier and more sustainable ways to exist. It is also an exercise in believing that international discussion – across geographical and ideological divides – can still yield real and productive agreements between countries, not a fashionable view in 2024. However, the climate crisis can only be solved by countries acting together. And “hope is rooted in collective action”, as Obama said in Paris at COP21 when the big breakthrough climate agreement was reached.

We urgently need to rebuild trust in the UK as a world leader on climate.

That makes the task of the Liberal Democrats all the more important. **We urgently need to rebuild trust in the UK as a world leader on climate.** This time on both Climate and Nature, something that we Liberal Democrats are championing – and which the world is crying out for. I saw such relief among many country negotiators to see us back at the table in COP29. The former Conservative government undermined our leadership terribly. Their actions were disastrous globally and domestically. The renegeing of the UK's 0.7% international development spend and their disgraceful rowing back on our climate pledges here in the UK on home insulation, building standards and onshore wind have thrown us off course badly in meeting our targets; not to

speak of the damage they have done to our relationship with Europe, our ally in the fight against climate change.

COP29 reminded me of all the lost years since 2015 here in the UK. The Conservatives were not just callous and careless in undermining the UK as a world climate leader – they were also grossly incompetent. With a strong sciences and university sector, and an abundance of natural renewable energy, the UK's economic future clearly lies with being at the forefront of green transition, with the creation of many jobs for young and old. The Conservative Party decided to put party before country, despite the consistent national polling showing that the majority of people think we should be doing more to combat climate change.

COP29 hit home most by reminding me how vital it is that the UK gets back on track with its climate targets. Even now, only a third of our UK targets have credible plans to achieve them. It's right that the UK government showed leadership at COP29 by presenting early, alongside Brazil, our national pledge (our Nationally Determined Contribution, NDC). However, promises are meaningless unless there is a credible action plan and incentives. We cannot afford a further 9 lost years under Labour.

The measure of our success will be how we rise to those challenges when those moments arrive.

Liberal Democrats are not interested in screaming from the sidelines. We will be a constructive opposition, and we support Labour's clean energy ambition but they must go further – most especially on the programme for Warm Homes. It's common sense: keeping the elderly warm at home, protecting the NHS against a winter crisis, saving money on their skyrocketing energy bills, reducing our reliance on Russian oil and gas, and reducing carbon emissions. Our homes are the oldest (on average) in Europe and among the least energy efficient. As I have said repeatedly in Parliament, delaying Labour's Warm Homes plan until Spring next year fails to grasp the urgency of the situation. This should have been tackled in the first 100 days of this

government. It is now up to Liberal Democrat-led local authorities being on the frontline delivering support, while Labour dithers.

As Liberal Democrats, we believe in empowering the individual and the community. We work with and alongside many local sustainability and community energy groups and eco-councils. I only need to look at my constituency of South Cambridgeshire with the Zero Carbon Communities network, Haslingfield and Harlton Eco-Group, Sustainable Shepreth and many others. **In Parliament, it's the Liberal Democrats that have led the way championing community energy**, pushing for its inclusion in the Great British Energy Bill, something which Labour has been slow to do. That's why at COP29, I backed the global local government movement to get councils, cities and local community action recognised in the Baku agreed final text. The COP29 declaration on Multisectoral Actions Pathways (MAP) to Resilient and Healthy Cities signifies a step change for global recognition of the role local leadership has in tackling climate change. I was proud to back this change: every day our councillors and activists can build on this, showing how this is the right approach – turning COP29 words into concrete results.



At COP29, I had the honour of presenting the Climate and Nature Bill (CANBill) – a Private Members Bill tabled by my fellow Liberal Democrat colleague Roz Savage MP. If Labour agree to pass our legislation, it will be groundbreaking not just for unlocking local leadership and a voice for civil society through climate citizen assemblies; it will enshrine in law a duty on the government to have a joined-up strategy for achieving our climate and nature targets, and for reporting on both.

Climate change is the greatest threat to nature and wildlife around us. At the same time, we can't tackle climate change without the natural ways in

which trees, oceans, soils absorb and store carbon; nor be able to withstand flooding, heatwaves and drought without nature-based solutions. Nature, Water and Ocean Day at COP29 was a welcome opportunity to address nature and climate change together. The ocean is the world's largest carbon sink but our oceans are in dire condition. Oceans are heating up more quickly and sea level rise is accelerating. We must pull back the threat of marine pollution for the survival of our seas and ocean wildlife – something the CANBill would help to address. There is still more to do: the UK's 2035 Nationally Determined Contribution does not include emissions from international aviation and shipping (IAS) in its headline target. At COP29, I supported the call for shipping and aviation to be included to tackle marine pollution and ensure industries responsible for exacerbating pollution levels and emissions are better regulated.

It matters what we do in our everyday lives – and everywhere I see examples of local people and communities doing that. It matters that we elect politicians at all levels who know that we need to do more to protect our environment in order to hand down a healthy planet to our children and grandchildren. It's worrying that President Trump has been elected for a second term. There's no sense pretending that it isn't. That is why Liberal Democrats will be working with you and, every more closely, with our allies in Europe and beyond, to be robust in the face of climate-sceptic, right-wing politics. We cannot wait out four years in the hope that political reality will change. We also need a groundswell of climate action on the ground – and the election of Liberal Democrat politicians at all levels so that we can stand up for a common future, a fair deal for the environment, the rights of all to clean air, clean water and clean soil. **There will be difficult moments ahead. But I left Baku with hope in my heart. The measure of our success will be how we rise to those challenges when those moments arrive.**

Now is such a moment, we cannot afford to lose our ambition for one second.

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Author:

[The Family Farm Tax explained](#)

What the Government's doing, and why we're opposing it

This is a tremendously difficult time for farmers. They are key allies in tackling climate change and restoring the countryside to good health, while producing high quality food for our tables.

For years, farmers were let down and taken for granted by the Conservatives. They deserve better now.

What is the Family Farm Tax?

At the moment, farmland is exempt from inheritance tax under a policy called "Agricultural Property Relief" (APR). In the Budget, the Chancellor announced that she will end that exemption by restricting APR.

The cut to APR will mean that from April 2026, a tax of 20% will apply to agricultural assets over £1 million. (Because of the existing tax-free threshold for inheritance tax, two parents leaving a farm to their children could potentially limit the tax to assets over £3 million.)

Why is the Government doing this?

The Chancellor claims we need this change to raise money for our public services – and we certainly understand the challenge of repairing the terrible damage the Conservatives did to both our public services and our public finances.

But the Family Farm Tax is only expected to raise around £115 million a year – less than 0.01% of government spending and less than 0.3% of all the tax rises announced by Rachel Reeves in this Budget.

(The Treasury hasn't published the £115 million figure – it only says that the cut to APR, combined with a similar cut to the much bigger Business Property Relief, is expected to raise around £520 million a year.)

Why are we opposing it?

This Family Farm Tax will be a hammer blow to many farmers and cause real harm to our rural communities.

There are thousands of families across the UK with farms that are worth a lot on paper, but who are earning less than the minimum wage. They have endured cuts to their incomes while the cost of energy, fertiliser and feed bills has soared. They have been undermined by botched Conservative trade deals. And they are contending with the devastating impacts of adverse weather events.



To pay this new inheritance tax bill, many farmers will be forced to sell their farms, likely to private equity firms and large corporations who have no interest in looking after our countryside. That isn't fair to hardworking farmers. It will reduce food production and undermine food security. And it will harm our environment, by taking land away from those who have nurtured it for generations.

The Government didn't consult on these plans or produce a proper impact assessment. The Treasury even ignored the Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs (DEFRA), who urged it to at least water the change down.

What would we do instead?

The Government didn't need to do this. We have set out a number of ways the Government could raise revenue much more fairly for the NHS, social care and our other public services.

It could have reversed the Conservatives' tax cuts for the big banks. It could have increased Remote Gaming Duty on the growing profits of online gambling firms, or raised the Digital Services Tax on social media companies and other tech giants.

Instead of hurting British farmers, we would support them. [Our manifesto](#) set out plans for an extra £1 billion a year to support profitable, sustainable and nature-friendly farming across the UK. We have also set out a detailed plan to rebuild our relationship with Europe, bringing down barriers to trade – including a comprehensive veterinary agreement to help our farmers.

How were farmers let down by the Conservatives?

The Conservatives lost the right to speak up for rural communities when they betrayed our farmers with bad trade deals and a bungled transition away from the Basic Payments Scheme.



We support the move to public money for public goods, but many farmers are seeing their incomes threatened as their old payments are cut and new payments are not fully rolled out or properly funded. Farming subsidies have fallen by 20% in real terms since 2015 – equivalent to the loss of £722 million in public funding for farmers.

The Conservatives' botched Brexit deal put up new barriers to trade with our nearest neighbours, making it harder for British farmers to sell to Europe. And their trade deals with Australia and New Zealand undermine our animal welfare and environmental standards, undercutting responsible British farmers.

What other challenges are farmers facing now?

If we care about our environment and if we care about our food security, we must provide farmers with more support.

Last year alone 8,100 UK farms closed their doors – equal to one in 25 of all farms in the country. The Government's own figures show that farm business income last year was lower for all types of farm but one.

And yet, the government has also decided to accelerate the phase out of direct payments to farmers under the Basic Payment Scheme – all recipients

will see the base amount of their payments cut by 76% next year.

These cuts must be urgently reviewed if we're to give farmers a fighting chance of sustainably and profitably feeding the nation and protecting our natural environment.

Join the campaign

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