



HOUSE OF COMMONS

LONDON SW1A 0AA

Abbey Grange Church of England
Academy
Butcher Hill,
Leeds
LS16 5EA

House of Commons,
London,
SW1A 0AA

5 June 2025

Dear Students of Abbey Grange,

Thank you for your excellent letters about plastic pollution and for taking the time to write to me on this important issue. It is great to see young people demonstrating passion and concern for the environment, and engaging with the work of environmentalists like Sir David Attenborough.

Plastic pollution is a serious environmental challenge, and you are absolutely right to be concerned. As many of you mentioned, millions of tonnes of plastic end up in our oceans, harming wildlife, and damaging ecosystems. This pollution also affects us, as microplastics can enter our food and water.

It's also worrying to learn that researchers estimate there are around 300 billion pieces of plastic in the Atlantic Ocean alone. This makes it even more concerning that global plastic production is expected to double by 2050. We're already seeing the impact of plastic waste around the world, such as in the Great Pacific Garbage Patch, and in the decline of marine life.

However, it is encouraging to read the many practical suggestions you all made about reducing plastic pollution and cleaning up our environment.

A great suggestion was to encourage the use of Deposit Return Schemes. As many of you mentioned, these schemes are already used in other countries. These schemes work really well because they help people return bottles and cans more easily and lead to much better recycling rates. I believe we need everyone to take part if we want to make real progress for the planet, and these schemes are clear and effective ways to do that.

I am pleased that the Government has pledged to implement a Deposit Return Scheme in October 2027. This is a big step forward and will help reduce litter, increase recycling rates, and it could also help us move toward refill systems in the future, which would be even greater for the environment.

Many of you also mentioned the need to recycle. I agree that recycling is one of the most important ways we can all help protect the planet. When we recycle properly, we use fewer natural resources, create less waste, and reduce pollution. There's always more we can do to improve recycling systems, make rules simpler to understand, and encourage everyone to take part.

We can also make a real difference in our local communities such as by supporting litter picks, as many of you suggested. This simple action can have a big impact by protecting local wildlife and keeping our shared spaces clean and welcoming for everyone.

All of these are important steps towards creating a “circular economy” in which we repair, reuse, and recycle products so we produce less waste, save natural resources, and reduce pollution and carbon emissions.

Thank you again for writing to me and for caring so much about our environment. It is inspiring to hear from young people who are thinking about solutions and speaking up for change. Your letters have given me some excellent ideas to think about. As your local MP, I'll carry your ideas with me as I continue to work on these issues in Parliament.

Please keep learning about these important issues and keep sharing your ideas - your voices really do make a difference.

Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, reading "Alex Sobel". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Alex Sobel MP