

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

## **Environmentalists congratulate new Government Secretaries of State**

### **A New Way Forward**

Coventry, England (2 August 2016)

The Society for the Environment (SocEnv) has congratulated new Secretaries of State Andrea Leadsom and Greg Clark on their appointments and offered the Society's support. The letters, sent by SocEnv Chair Dr Peter Matthews and Chief Executive Dr Emma Wilcox, set out six key points in a framework for the way forward on the management of the environment and natural resources following the Referendum decision to leave the European Union. These are:

1. The Society recognises that our Nations face a challenge in moving forward with our new future. We have made significant progress with the quality and quantity of our natural resources over the last 40 years whilst we were members of the European Union and we wish to protect that progress and indeed to maintain and enhance it in the future. This includes the threats from climate change and the ways in which we deal with mitigation and adaptation. May we use a quote made during previous debates about investment in our environment, 'don't let the gains go down the drain'
2. The Society recognises that one of the issues which vexes both those people who voted to leave and those who voted to stay in the European Union, was the bureaucracy associated with regulation. Excessive bureaucracy can be inimical to the objectives of legislation. So we would be pleased to work with the Government in finding ways and means of transposing national legislation made in pursuit of European Union legislation into purely UK driven legislation, which sustain the objectives but which are at the same time efficient and effective. It is essential that this wisdom is applied to new legislation in future. This will add additional impetus to current efforts for better regulation and the work of the BRDO. However, we urge the Government not to deregulate essential environmental and natural resources management.
3. Threats to our natural resources do not recognise national boundaries and for the last 40 years we have shared our wisdom with Continental colleagues. We will maintain our European contacts and we urge the Governments of the UK to do the same. Because of the international nature of environmental and natural resources management, we believe that it must be a key component of Pan European Policy. This is our description of the Policy which recognises that the UK is part of the Great European Project, but as an independent Nation and not part of the EU. The objectives shared with the EU and other components of Europe must be in pursuit of the highest principles of individual and environmental wellbeing which transcends the needs of a common trading agreement. The Society will continue to pursue our European partnerships on that basis and we would be pleased to assist the Government.
4. The relationship of the UK with the EU has been a Reserved Matter which has restricted the flexibility of developed administrations to implement appropriate national legislation. So devolution of environmental and natural resources legislation will be a key component of the way forward.
5. We recognise that the result of the EU referendum highlighted a need to re-engage with communities in decision making, in order to replenish their trust in governments and decision making bodies. The wellbeing of society is paramount to a thriving economy and, with this in mind, we would welcome an opportunity to discuss potential models for doing so, such as the

Welsh Wellbeing of Future Generations Act, and how that might be adapted to strengthen community resilience across the UK as an essential part of future environmental strategy

6. Our preferred structure for political leadership of confronting climate change is that there should be a distinct position within the Cabinet, but we can see opportunities for the new Department of Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy (DBEIS) in embedding climate change awareness and action for adaptation and mitigation at the highest levels in business. There are number of Corporate and Director codes on governance; we would like to see these revised to ensure that those in high office, wherever and whatever that might be, will act in the best interests of our future on sustainability, including climate change. The creation of a link between climate change and business must be beneficial and DBEIS is well placed to properly embed climate change policy within the UK 's Industrial Strategy and to help develop a sustainable circular economy. We call upon DBEIS to honour the commitments made by the former Department Energy and Climate Change.

SocEnv Chief Executive Dr Emma Wilcox said that” the Society has created this framework as its contribution to the way forward for ‘Team Environment GB and NI’. This will guide our actions and contributions and we will be developing it over the coming months with contributions from many sources .UK policy needs clarity and consistency “

SocEnv Chair, Dr Peter Matthews, said “this is a critical time and we must all pull together to ensure the mitigation of environmental harm and the protection of natural resources are a key part of our new future. But we must remember that sustainability must be an inherent part of our evolving national culture and that we all have a role to play. Mankind cannot be green by regulation alone “.

The Society is looking forward to continuing to support both Departments to ensure that environmental and natural resources policies are progressive and continue to benefit the United Kingdom.

**END**

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**NOTES TO EDITOR:**

The Society for the Environment, is comprised of 24 Constituent Licenced Bodies, with 500,000 members. It received a Royal Charter in 2004, which empowers it to regulate the Chartered Environmentalist (CEnv) qualification in the UK. There are now over 7,000 CEnvs who share a common vision of delivering sustainability through environmental professionalism. Further information can be found at [www.socenv.org.uk](http://www.socenv.org.uk). A list of Constituent Bodies is given at the end of this Press Release and this demonstrates the diversity of membership.

**About Dr Peter Matthews**

Peter Matthews is a Chartered Environmentalist, Chartered Chemist, and Water and Environment Manager. He has held a variety of senior positions in the environmental field, in both the private and public sectors. After a career in the water industry spanning almost 35 years, he retired from Anglian Water International as Deputy Managing Director International in 1999. And after serving on the board of the Environment Agency and as Chair of the Northern Ireland Utility regulator, he was appointed in August 2012 as Founding Chair of the Welsh Government’s new body for managing natural resources in Wales, Natural Resources Wales NRW, a position he held until December 2015.

### **About Dr Emma Wilcox**

Emma has been CEO of the Society since July 2015 and since joining the organisation has led the development of a new five-year strategy increasing registrations and profile for Chartered Environmentalists and Registered Environmental Technicians.

Her career has spanned a number of disciplines including scientific research, knowledge and technology transfer, skills and education, programme and business management and stakeholder and relationship management. Emma's strong academic background is supported by an in-depth knowledge of both public and private sector landscapes.

### **The Licensed Bodies of the Society for the Environment are:**

Arboricultural Association (AA)  
Chartered Association of Building Engineers (CABE)  
Chartered Institute of Architectural Technologists (CIAT)  
Chartered Institute of Ecology and Environmental Management (CIEEM)  
Chartered Institute of Building (CIOB)  
Chartered Institution of Wastes Management (CIWM)  
Chartered Institution of Water and Environmental Management (CIWEM)  
Energy Institute (EI)  
Institute of Agricultural Management (IAgrM)  
Institute of Chartered Foresters (ICF)  
Institute of Environmental Management and Assessment (IEMA)  
Institute of Fisheries Management (IFM)  
Institute of Materials, Minerals & Mining (IOM3)  
Institute of Water (IWater)  
Institution of Agricultural Engineers (IAgrE)  
Institution of Chemical Engineers (ICHEM)  
Institution of Civil Engineers (ICE)  
Institution of Engineering Designers (IED)  
Institution of Environmental Sciences (IES)  
Institution of Mechanical Engineers (IMECHE)  
Royal Institution of Chartered Surveyors (RICS)  
Royal Society of Chemistry (RSC)  
Society of Environmental Engineers (SEE)  
Society of Operations Engineers (SOE)