

 **www.buildbackbetteruk.org**

Dear Daisy Cooper MP,

We are Build Back Better St Albans,  a broad range of local organisations, groups and communities in St Albans, united behind a shared vision of building back better from the COVID-19 pandemic.

As the Lib Dems’ elected spokesperson for Justice, and given your track record as a vocal advocate for equality, diversity of representation and LGBTQ+ rights, we hope you will be sympathetic to the notion that our recovery from the pandemic must address the inequality and injustice which existed long before COVID-19, and now risks being intensified. As Vice-Chair of the APPCC, a supporter of the Climate and Ecological Emergency Bill, and as you made clear in the Climate Coalition Lobby on 30th June, we understand that you are strongly in favour of urgent action to tackle the climate crisis. This is another crucial element of Build Back Better’s campaign for a just recovery from the pandemic: any economic recovery action must consider people and the planet before private profit.

Choices being made right now will shape our society for years, if not decades to come. This is a time to be decisive in saving lives, and bold in charting a path to a genuinely healthier and more equitable future for all. Our communities need to know that we will not only get through the pandemic, but we will also learn from it and seize the opportunity to build our society back better. We, the undersigned organisations, businesses, groups and communities, are asking you to advocate for a fair and sustainable future for St Albans.

Such a future requires an investment-led new deal that protects public services, tackles inequality in our communities, provides secure well-paid jobs and creates a shockproof economy which can fight the climate crisis. Our response to recovery, at all levels, must:

* **Protect people and communities in this moment** by maintaining income support, and continuing the furlough scheme for workers until it is safe for them to return to work. We need debt and rent cancellations for those who need it, to ensure people have secure housing, energy and food,  and aren’t saddled with debt into the future. This includes investment in the public services that we all rely on.
* **Ensure support for British industry (including Project Birch and the CCFF) are not blank cheques**, and come with conditions to protect workers, the public, and the environment - in the UK and abroad - to ensure we build back better from this crisis.
* **Invest in a mass job creation Green New Deal programme,** creating good, well-paid jobs across the country focused on decarbonising, upgrading and leveling-up the economy. Jobs to upgrade our housing, build green technology and restore habitats, as well as boosting health, care, education and other sectors that form the base of a low-carbon economy.
* **Deliver quality public health for everybody and for the long-term.** This means ensuring the NHS and social care are properly funded and protected from privatisation, as well as tackling the drivers of poor health including inequality in wages, education, housing and access to healthcare, green spaces and clean air.
* **Recognise and respect the key workers** that brought us through this crisis by improving pay, working conditions and ability to organise. This must include tackling workplace discrimination and recognising the huge contribution of unpaid carers.
* **Ensure the UK stops fuelling global injustice.** The UK must recognise, and act upon, its huge historical responsibility for the global climate and inequality crises. Our recovery can not stop at the UK border and should support global progress on tackling conflict, oppression and environmental degradation - this is not a moment to retreat from the world or cut vital aid.

The recovery process gives us a chance to look at our economy and society as a whole and ask ourselves what was not working, and who and what we cherish the most. We are hopeful about the opportunity that lies ahead to answer these questions and are committed to being a part of reshaping the St Albans community for the better and providing a high quality of life for all. In sending this letter, we are echoing the calls of thousands of people, communities and organisations who have joined the Build Back Better campaign in the last few months.

We would like the opportunity to discuss our vision with you further and to hear your thoughts on this and the government's plans to date. **We ask that, on our behalf, you write to the Prime Minister and Chancellor about this vision as they begin discussing how to recover and build back better.**

Yours sincerely,

Build Back Better St Albans

Friends of the Earth St Albans

Greenpeace (St Albans)

Hope in Action (St Albans)

UK Student Climate Network (Herts)

BFAWU - Bakers, Food and Allied Workers’ Union (UK)

St Albans District Green Party

Ye Olde Fighting Cocks pub

Herts & Middlesex Wildlife Trust

Soroptimist International St Albans and District

LifeSkills21.club

16th St Albans Cubs

Ember Designs

Trade & Retail

Phase Out Plastic

Jefferson Crafts

Grow Community - Sopwell

Grow Community - St Michael’s

The White Lion, St Albans

Wilderhood Watch

Tommy & Lottie

Aerende

Butterfly World 2.0