

Letters to the Editor



Landscape legacy

Sir, We were pleased to see your report "Over 400,000 trees planted in road schemes fail to survive" (news, Aug 5; letters, Aug 7). This reflects our concerns about National Highways' neglect of 860,000 trees planted in 2018 along the A14 Cambridge to Peterborough trunk road. It is ironic that this landscaping project was nominated for the BBC Countryfile magazine's prestigious "conservation success of the year" award. Despite advice from tree experts, National Highways' management of planting and aftercare fell so short of basic requirements that the majority died. We launched a campaign about this, which also detailed National Highways' use of plastic tree guards (when biodegradable alternatives are available). Its pledge to remove these after three to five years has been ignored along another of our major roads, the A428. Here they remain after 20 years, blighting and polluting our precious countryside.

When our MP, Jonathan Djanogly, took up this issue with Martin Fellows, regional director of National Highways, he received this response: "Whilst we have no current plans for removing the tree guards from the A428, we are working on a longer-term plan to clear these along part of the A428 with a volunteering opportunity." We are amazed that a government agency with an acknowledged responsibility for clearing up after itself should expect volunteers to do it for them.

Graham Campbell
Chairman, Great Ouse Valley Trust

Mental health and 'o'

We were glad to see your report about mental health in the workplace. It is vital that employers and employees are aware of the signs and symptoms of mental health problems, and that they seek help if they are experiencing difficulties. The NHS website has a wealth of information on mental health, and there are many organisations that provide support and advice. It is important to remember that mental health problems are not a sign of weakness, and that people with mental health problems can lead successful lives. We hope that your report will raise awareness of these issues, and that it will encourage employers to take steps to support the mental health of their employees.

Chief executive, Mental Health UK

As Matthew Parson's suggestion that the government be permitted independence of the mental health services, I am disappointed. It is a disheartening sign that the government is not taking the mental health of its citizens seriously. Mental health problems are a major cause of disability, and they can be prevented by early intervention. We need to invest more in mental health services, and we need to ensure that people with mental health problems are treated with respect and dignity. We need to ensure that mental health is a high priority for the government.

Greenpeace's status

I have long respected Greenpeace and counterterrorism policing. Now I feel myself disappointed with both and anxious about their directions of travel. Concerning policing, as a former international member of domestic legislation I am astonished that politicians were able to respond as though on the prime minister's private home when a leading article, Aug 5 letter, Aug 7. This demonstrates a failure of surveillance and a serious lapse of attention. Concerning the Greenpeace Environmental Trust...

...the report...
...the NHS...
...the government...
...the police...
...the environment...
...the mental health...