

RESCUE

The British Archaeological Trust
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Mrs Angela Rayner
Secretary of State for Housing, Communities and Local Government
Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government
2 Marsham Street
London
SW1P 4DF

23 July 2024

Dear Mrs Rayner

I am writing on behalf of Rescue – The British Archaeological Trust. We are an independent, non-political, charitable trust dedicated to supporting archaeology and the historic environment in Britain and abroad. We were founded more than 50 years ago. We have been instrumental in fighting for and winning a place for archaeology within the planning system and in raising the profile of archaeology across the UK.

We would like to congratulate your party for its success in the general election, and we would like to congratulate you personally on your appointment as Secretary of State for Housing, Communities and Local Government, and as Deputy Prime Minister.

Planning policy has the potential to have a big impact on archaeology, and as this comes under your portfolio, we will be taking a keen interest in the work of your department. We look forward to engaging positively and constructively on any review of the planning system. We note that the Government has already made a number of proposals in this area.

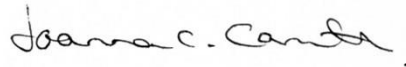
Rescue is not, as you might imagine, opposed to housing or infrastructure development. We accept that such development is necessary to grow the economy and improves people's lives. Archaeology should not stop development, but neither should development ride roughshod over archaeology, or over the views of local people. In order to facilitate the process of development while minimising the adverse impact on archaeology, it is important to take account of archaeology early on in the process so that the archaeological heritage can be recovered appropriately, or preserved if possible, during pre-development excavation.

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And it is important to engage local people and respect their views. The importance of archaeology in creating community and enriching peoples lives should not be underestimated. The historic environment connects us with our past and in doing so establishes a local identity, provides a sense of community and encourages people to value that community. It is something in which everyone can get involved and which helps to connect people with each other and with their community. The public reaction to recent events such as the demolition of the Crooked House pub in Staffordshire and the felling of the Sycamore Gap tree demonstrate how important a sense of place, character and history are to the public.

I would be happy to provide more information on Rescue or to meet with you to discuss archaeology if that would be helpful.

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Joanna C. Caruth". The signature is written in a cursive style with a small dot at the end.

Jo Caruth
Chair, RESCUE the British Archaeological Trust

RESCUE is a charitable trust which works to promote archaeology and the historic environment. We are wholly independent of all political parties and are entirely dependent on our members for our operating budget: www.rescuearchaeology.org.uk