

**Open letter from Totnes Constituency Labour Party (Executive Committee) to Anthony Mangnall MP, 1 June 2020: Please stand up for your constituents in these difficult times**

We respect the fact that you have apologised for your insensitive social media post about the coronavirus crisis. However, it is tragically consistent with your behaviour since the General Election, that has seen you time and again putting Conservative doctrine before the welfare of your constituents.

You know from your own postbag that constituents are outraged at Dominic Cummings' flouting of the lockdown rules – rules designed to protect us from another surge in virus cases. But you have not joined the 45 Conservative MP calling on him to resign. Instead you have expressed regret that he '*chose to follow the rules differently*'. How do you expect Devon and Cornwall Police to respond when people '*follow the rules differently*' in our area?

On 10 May your Prime Minister encouraged people to '*drive to the beach*' from anywhere in England. There are still no RNLI lifeguards on duty, and this weekend has seen a string of incidents on the Devon coast. Our rescue services put themselves at risk every time they interact with the public. Yet your government's policy seems designed to encourage irresponsible behaviour and put pressure on emergency services. As our MP, will you issue your own clear advice for visitors to stay away from the coast?

During the election campaign you promised to protect the livelihoods of local farmers through the Brexit process. Six other South West Conservative MPs voted for a recent amendment to the Agriculture Bill, requiring '*products imported into the United Kingdom to comply with World Trade Organisation safety rules and the United Kingdom's own standards*'. But you did not join them. The risks to our farming and food security were clear to your colleagues, but you preferred to follow the party whip.

You also voted against a '*Coronavirus emergency food plan*' that would support local services in meeting the huge rise in demand for food aid. Our local charities are doing incredible work to plug the gaps, but this bill would have given your hardest-hit constituents a guarantee of food on the table. You failed to reassure them.

We now face perhaps the most critical time in the pandemic. Schools and businesses are under pressure to reopen, against the advice of many scientists, including prominent members of the Government's own SAGE committee. With travel abroad restricted, we may see record numbers of visitors to Devon in the coming months. Some will undoubtedly bring the virus from other parts of the UK. One in five local care homes is already affected. Track, trace and isolate is still not in place. Our low levels of ICU and critical care capacity mean that a second wave could quickly overwhelm our hospitals.

Instead of confusion, we need clear guidance that everyone can follow. Instead of cut-and-paste condolences, we need action on behalf of your constituents. Instead of platitudes and diversions, we need you to challenge the government's strategy, that so far has the distinction of delivering the highest death rate in the world. Now is the time to meet your election promises and put your constituents ahead of your career. Our lives depend on it.

**Totnes Constituency Labour Party**

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