



Ein cyf/Our ref DC/JJ/05066/19

To all Heads of Planning  
Development Industry Representative Bodies  
Help to Buy House Builders Distribution List

6 June 2019

Dear Colleagues,

### Netting of Trees and Hedgerows

I write regarding the practice of using netting on trees and hedgerows in and around development sites ahead of and during building work.

In Wales, we have a strong legislative and policy framework to maintain and enhance biodiversity. Welsh Government are committed to deliver this objective. Planning Policy Wales 10 is clear that the planning system has a key role to play in helping to reverse the decline in biodiversity and increase the resilience of ecosystems by ensuring that mechanisms are in place to protect against loss and to secure enhancement.

Through early engagement developers should avoid circumstances that require netting to be used. Planning Policy Wales 10 sets out a step-wise approach to maintaining and enhancing biodiversity through ensuring that adverse environmental impacts are firstly avoided (i.e. existing trees and hedgerow features should be retained in the project design), then minimised, mitigated and as a last resort compensated for.

I do not support the use of netting as a routine practice. It is my view that netting should only be considered as a last resort measure, after a full consideration of other alternatives and under exceptional circumstances only following the grant of planning permission.

(Further guidance on the appropriate management of netting in the very limited and exceptional circumstances where it is used is provided by Chartered Institute of Ecology and Environmental Managers (CIEEM) at <https://cieem.net/cieem-and-rspb-advise-against-netting-on-hedges-and-trees/>)

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Rydym yn croesawu derbyn gohebiaeth yn Gymraeg. Byddwn yn ateb gohebiaeth a dderbynnir yn Gymraeg yn Gymraeg ac ni fydd gohebu yn Gymraeg yn arwain at oedi.

The practice of using netting during construction phases of a scheme is a very public demonstration of an imbalance in society's relationship with nature. It is essential that all those involved in the development process are familiar with and engaged to deliver wider Welsh Government legislation and policy to maintain and enhance biodiversity.

Yours faithfully,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Julie James". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

**Julie James AC/AM**

Y Gweinidog Tai a Llywodraeth Leol  
Minister for Housing and Local Government