

14 February 2023

**An open letter to Lucy Frazer,
Secretary of State for Culture, Media and Sport**

Dear Secretary of State

Congratulations on your recent appointment.

At the English Folk Dance and Song Society we represent everyone who values the folk arts in England. These people cover the widest range of ages, social backgrounds and increasingly ethnic backgrounds – and they include many of your own constituents, whom we have invited to share this open letter.

On behalf of these passionate advocates of folk music, folk dance, folk storytelling and related activities, we wish to impress upon you the essential place of folk arts at the heart of England's rich and diverse cultural landscape.

The folk arts are embedded throughout our culture. They are constantly evolving and challenging preconceptions. When you attended the Brit Awards last week, you saw the dynamic all-women morris side Boss Morris dancing centre-stage with the award-winning Wet Leg. Two days ago, on 12 February, The Observer declared that 'folklore customs dating back centuries are suddenly cool with a new generation'.

There is a rich and vibrant folk scene in and around your own constituency, where folk organisations include Ely Folk Festival; Ely Folk Club; Ely and Littleport Riot Border Morris; Coton Morris; Sutton Masque; Ouse Washes Molly Dancers; Mepal Molly; the Mark Jones Day of Dance in Ely; the regular Folk Club radio show in Ely; live music at Drayman's Son Micropub in Ely and Sutton Masque at the Chequers in Sutton; the Isle 'Ave a Shanty group; and ceilidh bands such as Catch the Pigeon and Frog on a Bike. Your constituents also travel to many well-established folk events in Cambridge including the renowned Cambridge Folk Festival, and to the annual Burwell Bash folk music summer school.

We urge you to remember the significant contribution of the folk arts to the cultural life of England – past, present and future.

Yours sincerely



Katy Spicer

Chief Executive and Artistic Director

On behalf of everyone involved in the folk arts

President Eliza Carthy MBE