

Maintaining the standards

The viability of most Cumbria farmers would be threatened if they were undercut by cheaper food imports from US industrial-scale farming. This could become a reality if politicians continue to ignore the consequences of TTIP, the Transatlantic Trade and Investment Partnership under negotiation between the EU and the US. And our food safety is also under threat.

So well done Jamie Oliver for challenging Vince Cable about TTIP: "to tell him my massive concerns about any possibility of the UK's and Europe's Food standards being compromised... We have fought long and hard to get where we are today and I really don't want beef with growth hormones... nor chickens washed with chlorine, or food produced with banned pesticides and additives to name but a few and I certainly don't want our farmers undermined."

He is right to raise this because the US has fewer and weaker regulations on food and farming standards than the UK and EU, and thus any compromise on these in TTIP will level down our regulatory standards towards those of the US, thus exposing our farmers to competition from cheaper industrial-scale US food products that are currently banned by our tougher regulations.

Deregulation is already happening alongside the ongoing TTIP negotiations, so as to help 'harmonize' EU regulations with those of the US, and to comply with lobbying pressure to put profit before our health and

safety and environment.

An example is the recent relaxation of the EU-wide restrictions on the import and use of GM.

Also the US is openly insisting on the removal of the EU's precautionary principle, which would expose the public as "guinea pigs" to untested products.

The leaflet "TTIP - recipe for disaster", from a respected group of NGOs, neatly summarises how TTIP would impact on food and farming: "TTIP will promote the industrial model of food and farming, further threatening the survival of small family farms, local food initiatives, standards for healthy and safe food, animal welfare, the environment, and public health". For more information and references see bit.ly/TTIPfarming

Do ask prospective parliamentary candidates how they will ensure food and farming standards are not eroded by TTIP to allow in cheaper and less safe food products that would unfairly undercut local farmers and threaten our health.

Be suspicious of any hollow complacent "reassurances", such as those from coalition government ministers - who are very pro-TTIP. The Green Party is against TTIP

Dr Henry Adams
Member of STOP TTIP
South Lakes
Kendal

Treat building with care

A report in the March 5 edition concerning Tesco coming into the former

Re-stocking the river



RIVER STOCKING: Fishermen at Mint Bridge

This photograph shows young trout being put into the river at Mint Bridge by fishermen around 1937-39.

The tall man wearing a trilby is Cyril Hogarth, the jeweller on Branthwaite Brow. Next to him (hands in pockets) is Tal Warriner, a banker in Martin's Bank (now Barclays).

Cyril died in the Kendal County Hospital of a kidney complaint in 1942, aged 40. Alan, his son, the now retired jeweller, remembers his father was also keen on

rabbiting with ferrets, which he and Gordon Todd (the saddler) kept in hutches and cages in the cellar of Thomas Atkinson's Sports Shop on Stricklandgate in about 1936-38.

Cyril bought J. Moore's jewellery business on Branthwaite Brow in 1923, having trained in watch making and jewellery in Preston. The jewellers today is now in the third and fourth generation of Hogarth Jewellers.

Rita J. Hogarth, Kendal

Millet's store at 28 Highgate, Kendal, stated the store was supported by Kendal Town Council and Kendal Civic Society (Plan for store is backed). This is incorrect, as Kendal Civic Society has made its opinion very clear in response to the two applications from Tesco.

We stated: "We are not altogether happy with this historic Webster building being occupied by Tesco, but we would prefer this to an empty and neglected property. We ask that every

effort is made to conserve the building as it is, and to retain its character, especially to keep the leaded lights in the first and second floors which should not be altered, but preserved."

The Civic Society has been very concerned, over several years, at the way the building has been allowed to decay and we have urged South Lakeland District Council on many occasions to take action.

The present building dates from 1828-29 when it was

built by the renowned Kendal firm of Websters, on an earlier 17th century property, and its architectural features, both internal and external, are Listed Grade II* by English Heritage.

Tesco does not have a reputation for enhancing high streets visually, and we can only hope here the firm will demonstrate the care and sensitivity which the building warrants.

Kendal has lost too much of its historic past, and we shall be watching this development very keenly.

Patricia Hovey
Kendal Civic Society

We need to retain firemen

The large blaze at industrial premises on Mintsfeet Industrial Estate at Kendal (*Gazette*, March 12,), highlights why Cumbria Fire and Rescue Service must maintain a service that is fit for purpose.

Reports indicated a large number of both appliances and manpower was required for many hours before the fire was extinguished, only for it to flare up again early on the following Monday. Appliances from both Carlisle and Barrow, plus other stations, were required.

Over recent months discussions and decisions have taken place about withdrawing fire appliances and reducing full-time firemen to retained firemen at a number of fire stations within Cumbria. Yet in South Lakeland Glaxo intends to build a new plant, plus hundreds of new homes are planned along with hopes for a further 1,000 jobs.

Yes, homes are less of a fire risk nowadays, and health and safety plus production processes have seen vast improvements, yet the risk of serious fire remains.

Perhaps the decision-makers work on the theory that as the Kendal fire was the largest in 30 years it is safe to assume it will not happen again.

Peter Gaukroger, Kendal

Money should be spent here

Peter Storey (Letters, February 5, Europe is not like America) sets out a cogent analysis of why the EU is failing. I would also like to draw attention to some of the costs we, the UK taxpayer, pay to keep this failing organisation propped up.

Our Government hands over £15 billion of UK taxpayers' money to the EU each year in net contributions. That is more than one thousand million pounds each and every month.

Just think of the difference this money could make to our NHS, local councils, schools, elderly care, farming industry, environment and our

national parks. It could take the edge off the deficit and the escalation of the austerity programme due after the election.

In fact, it is roughly how much the Eurocratic machine itself swallows up. They still move physically, lock stock and barrel, between Brussels and Strasbourg on a regular basis at a cost of millions. Incredible, but true. The machine harbours some 4,000 Eurocrats earning more than 100,000 Euros per year. Unlike our own public sector they have suffered no cuts in their budget.

What isn't taken by the Eurocratic machine is handed to member states but has never received a clean audit sign-off.

Despite our enormous financial contribution our Government's voice counts for little in the EU. For instance, our attempts to limit EU immigrants and the benefits we pay them are swatted aside with disdain. Some may suspect that the EU is having a laugh at our expense and the only rational course is to quit as soon as possible.

Mr Storey's fraternity of co-operative but free countries would be an attractive alternative.

Mr C. Laughton
London

Crisis has to be resolved

On this four-year anniversary of the crisis in Syria, Kendal Amnesty International group is calling on UK and world leaders to:

* Boost the humanitarian response - fully fund the aid response and ensure refugees seeking safety find asylum, including through increased resettlement for the most vulnerable (with millions of Syrians now refugees, Amnesty has called for the UK to take several thousand of the most vulnerable refugees)

* Stop attacks on civilians - send an unequivocal message to parties to the conflict that attacks on civilians and blocks to aid will not be tolerated

* Prioritise a political solution with human rights at its heart, recognising that an end to the suffering can only be achieved if negotiations include safeguards to ensure respect for international humanitarian and human rights law

Amnesty is pressing for increased humanitarian aid to be delivered into Syria, especially for those besieged by Syrian government or armed opposition group forces. We need to see the world powers coming together and demanding increased access for humanitarian aid especially into besieged and hard-to-reach areas of Syria. We desperately need to see this terrible crisis resolved.

Dave Plumb
Secretary, Amnesty
International Kendal

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SHEAFFER

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