



HOUSE OF COMMONS
LONDON SW1A 0AA

October 2017

Dear Constituent,

Thank you for contacting me about the badger cull and the Hunting Act.

Bovine TB is a serious disease, so I support the Government's commitment to use all available means to address it through a comprehensive strategy for England to be TB free by 2038.

Cattle movement controls and testing are being strengthened to stop infection spreading between herds, and herd owners are being encouraged to improve their own biosecurity. Nevertheless, as lessons have shown from countries such as Australia, New Zealand and Ireland, where there is a reservoir of disease in wildlife this must be tackled through culling. Leading vets have supported this approach and improvements to humaneness and effectiveness are being made following the first trial year based on recommendations from the Independent Expert Panel.

I appreciate the strong feelings many people have on the issue of hunting and I share your concern for ensuring the welfare of animals. The Government's manifesto includes a free vote on hunting, but there are no plans to bring forward a free vote in this session.

In the event of such a vote, I would vote to repeal the Act. In my judgement it does nothing to protect wild animals and, in many cases, is actually detrimental to animal welfare when other methods of control are deployed, several of which can be indiscriminate.

I am sorry if this is not the response you were seeking but I do appreciate that many people have strongly held views about hunting. I respect this and that is why the issue has been voted subject to a free vote for many years.

Once again, many thanks for taking the time to contact me.

Yours faithfully,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read 'Chris'.

CHRIS HEATON-HARRIS MP
MEMBER OF PARLIAMENT FOR DAVENTRY