



November 2021

Dear Constituent,

Thank you for contacting me about our peatlands.

Peatlands are our biggest terrestrial carbon store and home to some of our rarest species. Healthy peatlands can help us adapt to the effects of climate change and restored upland peatland can reduce the risk of flooding. With only 13% of them in a near-natural state, I am glad that the Government has set out how it will restore, sustainably manage, and protect our peatlands through the newly published England Peat Action Plan.

In line with this action plan, Ministers have launched the Nature for Climate Peatland Grant Scheme which intends to invest over £50 million by 2025 to fund the restoration of at least 35,000 hectares of degraded peatlands across England, including in Sites of Special Scientific Interest. My ministerial colleagues have also outlined the action that they will take to phase out the most damaging practices to our peatland, phasing out managed burning on protected peatlands and reducing the risk of wildfire. New legislation has now come into force banning the burning, without a licence, of specified vegetation on protected blanket bog habitats. This will protect some 142,000ha of England's upland deep peat.

The Government has also committed to undertaking a full consultation on banning the sale of peat and peat containing products in the amateur sector by the end of this Parliament. I am assured that ministers will work with industry to understand the implications of these proposals and to identify blockages, and with the private sector to develop and enact solutions, therefore making the transition to peat alternatives as seamless as possible.

In areas like the Pennines, incentives under the future agriculture policy will be developed to support projects that deliver both the capital required to achieve the re-wetting of land, coupled with maintenance payments to preserve it for the future. Further, the Lowland Agricultural Peat Task Force is coordinating work and developing new solutions to manage peatlands that are important for food and farming. By summer 2022, ministers will have recommendations for a more sustainable future and the possibility of new schemes that reward farmers and land managers for producing public goods.

Thank you again for taking the time to contact me.

Yours faithfully,

CHRIS HEATON-HARRIS MP
MEMBER OF PARLIAMENT FOR DAVENTRY