



May 2022

Dear Constituent,

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Thank you for contacting me about ivory sales. Ivory is one of the world's most iconic and treasured species and it should never be seen as a commodity for financial gain or a status symbol.

I am therefore glad that the Ivory Act 2018 will introduce one of the world's toughest bans on ivory sales. This includes a ban on the purchase or hire of items containing elephant ivory and applies to UK exports and imports. The ban will cover items of all ages and the maximum available penalty for contravention will be an unlimited fine or up to five years in prison. The ban will also include certain narrowly defined exemptions for items that do not contribute to poaching, where a ban would be unwarranted. The recently launched digital ivory service will allow anyone wishing to deal in exempted ivory items to register and certify them. It will provide a register of items and the evidence to demonstrate compliance with the Ivory Act 2018. This legislation will be enforced by the Animal and Plant Health Agency.

Progress on implementing the legislation was delayed by a legal challenge which the Government successfully defended. I welcome that ministers have confirmed that the Ivory Act will come into force in the spring.

I understand that the Act will not affect the ownership of ivory items. Ministers recognise that some owners may decide it is not cost-effective to register their low value items for sale and that this is a decision for individual owners. These items may instead be gifted, donated or bequeathed rather than discarded. Ministers have committed to an awareness raising campaign to explain to owners their options.

Further, ministers have also consulted separately on extending the Ivory Act to afford greater protections to a range of ivory-bearing species, including hippopotamuses and walruses, and I look forward to reading the Government's official response to this once this has been published.

Banning ivory sales will reaffirm the UK's global leadership on this critical issue, demonstrating our belief that this abhorrent trade should become a thing of the past.

The Government is moving forward with plans to deliver one of the toughest bans in the world on the import of hunting trophies from thousands of endangered and threatened species. Ministers are firmly committed to the ban and this will be brought forward as soon as Parliamentary time



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allows. I know that ministers are also looking at further measures to protect animals abroad, including banning the import and export of detached fins, and taking action against low welfare animal experiences.

The Government is considering a ban on keeping elephants in zoos in England. I understand that a 10-year-long report from the UK's Elephant Welfare Group (EWG) was commissioned to examine the conditions in which elephants are kept, to make improvements and to make recommendations as to if and how those conditions can be further improved. I know that the EWG's report will be completed considered by the UK's Zoos Expert Committee. I am assured that the Government will consider the report's recommendations carefully.

Thank you again 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**