



December 2023

Dear Constituent,

Thank you for contacting me about the May 2023 local elections.

A secure electoral system is vital to a healthy democracy, and the public must have confidence that our elections are secure and fit for the 21st century. I firmly believe that asking voters to bring photographic identification to their polling station is an important way of achieving this.

It is absolutely right that the Government stamps out the potential for voter fraud and brings the rest of the UK in line with Northern Ireland, which has had photographic identification to vote in elections since 2003. As you may be aware, the introduction of voter identification follows successful pilots carried out in 2018 and 2019.

The May 2023 local elections saw the implementation of two new Elections Act policies: the requirement for voter identification and enhanced support for disabled voters. I recognise that a great deal of work was undertaken by Returning Officers, Electoral Registration Officers and their electoral services teams to deliver the polls, and I am grateful for their efforts in ensuring a smooth delivery of these new measures. I absolutely agree about the importance of the numerous independent reports which have been produced into the impact of voter identification. The Government is committed in legislation to conducting further evaluations of the voter identification policy at the next two UK Parliamentary general elections.

The Government is grateful to the Electoral Commission for its report on the May 2023 elections and I too am pleased that the Electoral Commission found that the polls in May were well run, with 90% of voters satisfied with the voting process. I join Ministers in welcoming the Commission's finding that 99.75% of voters in polling stations were able to successfully cast their vote under the new voter identification regulations. However, the Government has been clear that there is always room to learn and has carefully considered and responded to all of the Commission's recommendations.

The Government will carefully consider the independent IFF Research report's recommendations for ongoing improvements. It is worth noting that many of the report's recommendations relate to the work of Returning Officers, Electoral Registration Officers, their electoral service teams, the Electoral Commission and other partners, but I have been assured that the Government will continue to provide support.



Chris Heaton-Harris

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Please be assured that the Government remains committed to regularly reviewing the list of accepted photographic identification and will legislate accordingly if suitable additions are found. The Government will also continue to work closely in support of the Electoral Commission on raising awareness of the Voter Authority Certificate which was created so that anyone without identification has the option to apply for a free new one from their local authority.

Ministers have always been clear that the list of accepted identification needs to strike the right balance between security and accessibility. It must also be manageable for staff in polling stations. Following the local elections in May, the Government undertook a review of the list of accepted forms of identification, with the intention of identifying and exploring any further possible additions. From these considerations, the Government has said it has been unable to identify any additions that would succeed in significantly increasing coverage, both in the groups identified as having the highest proportions of people without an accepted form of identification and more generally.

The Government remains committed to regularly reviewing the list of accepted photographic identification and will legislate accordingly if suitable additions are found. The Government will also continue raising awareness of the Voter Authority Certificate which was created so that elector has the option to apply for a free Certificate from their local authority.

Thank you again for taking the time to contact me.

Yours faithfully,

CHRIS HEATON-HARRIS MP
MEMBER OF PARLIAMENT FOR DAVENTRY