

CHRIS HEATON-HARRIS MP



HOUSE OF COMMONS

LONDON SW1A 0AA

April 2017

Dear Constituent,

Thank you for contacting me about Britain's hedgehog population.

The hedgehog is an extraordinary creature with a long and celebrated history in this country. Like you I am concerned to ensure that its future is similarly bright, so I would commend the efforts of my colleague, Oliver Colvile MP, who has campaigned tirelessly to arrest the recent decline in its numbers.

I am aware of Mr Colvile's petition to list the hedgehog as a protected species, but the Government has responded that this would not be appropriate because this status is best reserved for species that are often deliberately killed or injured by humans. I am pleased to note that the Environment Secretary met with him and the British Hedgehog Preservation Society in a 'hedgehog summit' to discuss how best to look after their interests.

It is important to consider how to improve the kinds of habitats where hedgehogs thrive. A classic example is the hedgerow, and I'm pleased to tell you that since 2005 farmers and land managers have restored or newly planted 30,000 kilometres of these thanks to grants from agri-environment schemes.

Lastly I would like to highlight the Hedgehog Street initiative, also promoted by Mr Colvile, which asks gardeners to cut holes in the bottom of their hedges so that hedgehogs can roam. I am pleased to support this suggestion.

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