



June 2020

Dear Constituent,

I absolutely stand with all those across the globe who are appalled and horrified by the way George Floyd lost his life. Justice and accountability should now follow.

I completely understand your sense of anger and dismay. I felt the same when I saw the video of the incident. In fact, for me personally, it was traumatising as it took me back to my late teens. I was living in Wolverhampton as a student when, on 20th February 1987, Clinton McCurbin, died of asphyxia just a few minutes after being arrested for allegedly shoplifting and trying to use a stolen credit card.

I happened to be in a large group of students very close to the scene and as the situation developed and word spread, I experienced the same shock, horror and anger that people feel today when they see what happened in Minneapolis.

I'm not complacent about things in the slightest, as we have a long way to go and racism raises its ugly head constantly and in different forms, but I can say with confidence that here, in the UK, we are now in a much better place than where we were in 1987.

We have a long-established tradition of policing by consent and Police Forces strive to continuously learn and improve - and tackle bias, racism or discrimination wherever it exists.

Indeed, our Police work with and in communities to prevent crime and solve problems. Officers are trained to use force proportionately, lawfully, and only when absolutely necessary.

The question everyone is asking is what can they do to rid our society of racism forever? If there were a straightforward simple answer to that question, we wouldn't have the issues we have seen in recent days.

There are many things that need to happen in the endeavour to achieve equality. They are simple to write, but difficult to achieve. Let me list just a few, so you understand what I mean: we all need to be respectful of and kind to each other and reinforce this in all of our interactions with others; we need to create wealth evenly through our society, removing people from poverty and give everyone an equal chance in life to achieve their goals. These are just some of the principles we aspire to in modern day Britain and they have no "party" politics.



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It would however be wrong not to mention and condemn the criminal damage and the violence towards our police in the UK over the weekend from a small minority of protesters. I was disgusted to read the number of our hard working and devoted officers who have been injured, some seriously so.

This type of action does nothing for the cause, will not change anything and only serves to distract from George Floyd's death and the important message we have seen subsequently. To carry this cause we need institutions and purpose rather than thugs and chaos. It is sad that I have to address this issue and I hope that this will be the last time I have to.

I know people want to make their voices heard on this matter and so I genuinely welcome you communicating your views to me. I agree with you that Black Lives Matter - and I would like to think I do not just say those words but demonstrate by deed and action that I believe them.

I would like to assure you that the Government takes its export control responsibilities very seriously. Indeed, the UK operates one of the world's most robust and transparent export control regimes. Regarding UK exports, I attach a letter which has been shared with me, sent by The Rt Hon Elizabeth Truss MP, the Secretary of State for International Trade.

Thank you again for taking the time to contact me.

Yours,

CHRIS HEATON-HARRIS MP
MEMBER OF PARLIAMENT FOR DAVENTRY