



September 2023

Dear Constituent,

Thank you for contacting me about protections for our historic landscapes.

Like you, I believe that the landscapes that inspired some of country's most treasured works of literature should be protected for future generations to enjoy. I agree that our planning system should protect important natural landscapes and heritage assets, and I would like to assure you that my ministerial colleagues are committed to ensuring it does just that.

Already, the National Planning Policy Framework – which sets out planning guidance for local authorities in England – makes clear that local planning authorities' planning policies should conserve and enhance the natural, built and historic environment, including landscapes. The framework also states that planning policies should recognise the intrinsic character and beauty of the countryside.

The Government is introducing changes to the planning system to incentivise more local authorities to adopt and update local plans. Local plans provide a framework for local authorities to set out their vision for their area and a platform for local people to shape their surroundings. Crucially, local plans can protect the important landscapes communities cherish and direct homes to the places local people prefer. The Levelling Up and Regeneration Bill will increase the weight given to local plans when making decisions on applications, so that there must be strong reasons to override the plan. The legislation will also help to foster better environmental outcomes, with a new requirement to prepare Environmental Outcomes Reports to assess the potential environmental effects of relevant plans and major projects.

Further, I understand that the Government is working on a review of protections for ancient woodlands and ancient and veteran trees in national planning policy. This will consider the options for further protecting these important habitats through the planning system.

Ministers intend to undertake a fuller review of the National Planning Policy Framework later this year to ensure the reformed planning system can effectively mitigate and adapt to climate change and maximise environmental benefits. I would encourage you to share your views when this consultation launches.



**Chris Heaton-Harris**

Member of Parliament for Daventry  
House of Commons, London SW1A 0AA  
Tel: 020 7219 7048

I believe that, together, these measures will help protect our beautiful countryside and landscapes for decades to come.

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**