



James [REDACTED]

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**RE: RE: Restriction of access to Ash Ranges**

1 message

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**James** [REDACTED]

3 April 2020 at 10:42

To: "michael.gove.mp@parliament.uk" &lt;michael.gove.mp@parliament.uk&gt;

Cc: "REYNOLDS, Frances" &lt;frances.reynolds@parliament.uk&gt;, Jo Randall &lt;Jo.Randall@guildford.gov.uk&gt;, Nigel Manning &lt;Nigel.Manning@guildford.gov.uk&gt;

Dear Mr Gove,

I am writing to you in reply to our previous correspondence (see below) regarding the MoD's behaviour towards local residents and their abuse of their position in relation to Ash Ranges.

The letter from the Secretary of State for Defence and Procurement is nothing but a sob story of how poorly done by the MoD are because a small number of local teenagers (who should be dealt with better by the law, but the police are powerless to ) are vandalising the ranges. It completely ignores the issues I have raised around the MoD not caring about the vandalism as it is happening. Myself and a number of people I have spoken to have reported vandalism as it is happening and the military response is "not our problem". A great tactic by the MoD who clearly want the vandalism to happen to they can use this to try and argue closing down the ranges.

Everyone suffers from the work of vandals. Councils, bus & train companies, local businesses and even local residents. I dont see the bus or train companies closing down their stops just because some one has knocked over one of their signs!

Since our last correspondence and in the past couple of days the MoD have taken it upon themselves to significantly restrict local access to the ranges, as they had always planned. The most disgusting part of the MoD's behaviour being that they are using the back drop of the current COVID-19 pandemic as an excuse to enact their plans to restrict access. I find their actions totally deplorable given the pandemic, the fact that the nation is on lock-down and large numbers of people including frontline NHS workers are dying in the battle against COVID-19.

I myself although only 45 am in "shielding" from the pandemic due to an underlying medical condition and have been for 3 weeks although I only received my letter from the NHS yesterday. I live immediately opposite the ranges, the nearest gate is 20metres from my house. I have been using the ranges once a day to walk my dog and get that much needed exercise for the past 36 months. During shielding this is the only time I leave the house. Due to the MoD's actions this is now not possible. What is even worse is there are large numbers of local residents who do the same, a significant proportion of whom are elderly. Without this much needed exercise their health is likely to deteriorate.

We are being told by the government, including yourself, to distance ourselves from others but to get regular exercise and not to travel by car to do so. I, like most residents, now need to travel by car to the nearest place to walk. So am I now to stop exercising? What is your and the government's advice for this? Will the government immediately start providing transport for the local residents including the elderly so that they can safely travel, with their dogs to a place where they can exercise? Please could you share your plans, as our MP so that myself and local residents know what to do?

It is clear that despite raising the issue with you previously:

1. Democratic process has failed me as hard working, law abiding tax-payer

2. The incredible community spirit here in Ash Vale (part of your constituency) is being eroded by the actions of a jumped up Commandant in the MoD.
3. The MoD have a blatant disregard to:
  - a. The law (by closing of access to a public space in contravention to the local byelaws protecting local rights dating back to the 1870s)
  - b. Local residents full stop
  - c. Due process
4. The MoD have:
  - a. used the pandemic as a smoke screen to enact their selfish and illegal plans to close of access to the ranges
  - b. Ignored all attempts by the local council to discuss the situation
  - c. installed new gates (in January) which they are now using to restrict public access to land that they are bound, by law, to allow when they aren't using it for military purposes and thus the flags are down.

I understand that you are busy man, and have to follow due to process. This meant that you needed to pass my previous request on to the correct MP but by them not doing an adequate job in investigating and responding to my correspondence, in turn you have not done an adequate job as my MP.

Given the current Pandemic the actions of the MoD here are counter to government advice and forcing people to either completely stop exercise (which will be a ticking time bomb for the NHS post pandemic) or ignore government advice on social distancing and self-isolation (which is a ticking time bomb during the pandemic).

You are welcome to come and visit me so we can discuss this in person and so that you can see for yourself the impact this has. I will have to ask you to stay at a distance of at least 2 metres and you wont be able to come into my house or shake my hand. I do have plenty of home made hand sanitiser that you can make use of. Or I am happy for you to phone me. I can always take a call from some an important member of society, even though I am working from home.

So that you can contact me for any future correspondence my number is [REDACTED]  
My address is [REDACTED]

I would really welcome some direct dialogue with yourself to discuss this further.

I am hoping that our third interaction, as my MP, will result in a more favourable outcome than the previous two from which no action or positive outcome was produced.

I eagerly await your swift and thorough reply and apologise if the tone of my email is a little coarse but as you can probably tell I am very frustrated and angry by the MoD's behaviour as outlined above.

Best Regards

James [REDACTED]

Sent from [Mail](#) for Windows 10

**From:** REYNOLDS, Frances  
**Sent:** 12 March 2020 16:15  
**To:** james [REDACTED]  
**Subject:** RE: Restriction of access to Ash Ranges

Dear Mr [REDACTED]

Further to Michael's email, he has received the attached response from the Minister of State for Defence Procurement, which he has asked me to pass on to you.

Also, regarding the proposed changes to the byelaws affecting MoD land, Michael has discussed this issue with local Councillors, and has also requested a meeting with the Secretary of State for Defence.

With best wishes,

Frances

**Frances Reynolds – Senior Parliamentary Assistant**  
**Office of the Rt Hon. Michael Gove MP**

☎ 0207 219 8826

🌐 [www.michaelgove.com](http://www.michaelgove.com)

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**From:** GOVE, Michael  
**Sent:** 06 February 2020 16:52  
**To:** james [REDACTED]  
**Subject:** [REDACTED] f access to Ash Ranges

Dear Mr [REDACTED]

Thank you very much for your email of 10 January regarding restriction of access to the Ash Ranges. Please accept my apologies for the delay in my reply.

I have written on your behalf to the Defence Secretary, the Rt Hon Ben Wallace MP, to bring your concerns to his attention. I have asked him to respond to the comprehensive complaints you raise, and I shall let you know as soon as I have a response.

Thank you again for getting in touch.

With every good wish,

Michael

**Rt Hon. Michael Gove MP**

**Member of Parliament for Surrey Heath**

☎ 0207 219 6804

🌐 [www.michaelgove.com](http://www.michaelgove.com)

📍 House of Commons, London, SW1A 0AA



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<https://www.michaelgove.com/privacy>

Dear Mr Gove,