



HOUSE OF COMMONS
LONDON SW1A 0AA

Dear Haydon Wick Parish Council

28 October 2024

I am writing to bring attention to a critical issue affecting the health and safety of our community: the availability of defibrillators in public spaces. Recently, I had the privilege of attending a 'drop in' event at Parliament to learn more about the ongoing "defib crisis." There, I met Jack Hurley, a young man whose life was saved by a defibrillator at his local football ground. Jack was just 19 years old with no known heart conditions when he collapsed on the pitch last year. Thankfully, a nearby defibrillator was used within 6 minutes to restart his heart, before paramedics arrived. Had that defibrillator been used any later, Jack may not be here today.

In emergencies like Jack's, having quick access to a defibrillator can mean the difference between life and death. Alarming, the Heart Restart Tax campaign estimates that **56% of residents in Swindon North live in a "defib desert"**—areas where a defibrillator cannot be accessed within the crucial 3-5 minute window that significantly improves survival rates. While only 8% of people survive cardiac arrests that occur outside of hospital, defibrillation within those vital first few minutes can increase survival rates to as high as 70%.

I understand that several parish councils in North Swindon are already making important strides to install accessible defibrillators in our area. However, much more needs to be done to reduce the "defib desert" and ensure that lifesaving devices are available where they are most needed. **I ask you to review the number and location of public defibrillators and consider increasing their presence in key community areas** such as sports grounds, shopping areas, and locations with high foot traffic.

Given that **Swindon North only has 6 defibrillators per 10,000 residents**—well below both the national average of 10 and the recommended 50-100 per 10,000—it is crucial that we take immediate action to bridge this gap. Doing so could significantly improve the chances of survival for anyone who suffers a cardiac arrest in our parish.

I look forward to learning how the council plans to address this vital issue, and I am more than willing to assist in any initiatives to enhance defibrillator access in our community. Thank you for your time and consideration.

Kind regards,

Will Stone
Member of Parliament for Swindon North