

# St Edmundsbury Cathedral

Following in the footsteps of Edmund, King and Martyr



From the Dean, The Very Revd Dr Frances Ward

David Ruffley MP  
House of Commons  
London  
SW1A 0AA

[david.ruffley.mp@parliament.uk](mailto:david.ruffley.mp@parliament.uk)

18 July 2014

Dear David

You phoned me last Monday, because you had heard that I was concerned about recent events in your private life and the impact of those events upon your position as the Member of Parliament for Bury St Edmunds.

I had received sufficient comment and concern from a wide circle of people, both within the Cathedral and through the town and county, to have arrived at the opinion that your position is untenable. This concern prompted me to speak confidentially last week to Lord Tebbit, who advised me to speak to Cllr John Griffiths, which I did.

On Monday, on the phone, I heard your lengthy justification and defence of yourself, but I think I need to question your version of events. You tried to convince me that in the 'incident' back in March there was blame on both sides. When I visited [REDACTED] in March a day or so after the event and went to hug her as my usual greeting, she winced in obvious pain. She told me as a friend and her priest of the events of the evening that had led to your arrest, and how frightened she had been of your rage and violent behaviour. I know that out of concern for your vulnerability in your public role, and also because she is anxious that you might harm yourself, she has remained unwilling to speak out; but I cannot let you try to tell me that it was only a 'little local incident' or that she was at fault. I must remind you of the seriousness of the assault and that you were arrested, not her.

I have not in recent months said anything which would breach the confidentiality of that pastoral visit with [REDACTED] in March. She has given me her permission to send this letter.

It is my opinion that you need help to come to terms with your behaviour, and I suggest that you seek professional guidance about your health and wellbeing. I have copied others

into this letter in the hope that such help might be forthcoming to support you through this difficult time.

I hope you take on board the extent of the concerns that I shared with you, for the sake of the town of Bury St Edmunds and the Conservative Party. It is my belief that you have lost the confidence of a significant proportion of your former supporters and should consider your position.

Yours sincerely

*Frances Hurd*

Dean of St Edmundsbury

cc:

Lord Tebbit (by hand)

The Acting Bishop of St Edmundsbury and Ipswich

Michael Gove, MP (by post)

Mr Andrew Speed

Cllr Mark Bee

Cllr Joanna Spicer

Chief Constable Douglas Paxton

Mrs Betty Milburn

Cllr John Griffiths

Mr Tim Passmore