



MINISTER'S LETTER

TOWN COUNCIL MEETING

REPORT 95/14

10 NOVEMBER 2014

The purpose of this paper is to ask Members to consider whether any response to the letter from the Coastal Communities Minister is appropriate.

No. DETAIL

1) BACKGROUND

- a) Following a discussion of the comparison between the Government's commitment of financial assistance in response to the fire damage to Eastbourne Pier and the absence of any support for the damage to the homes, businesses and tourism in St Lawrence caused by the landslip, the Town Council Meeting of 11 August 2014 resolved to write directly to the Minister for High Streets and Coastal Communities, Penny Mordaunt on the matter.
 - b) The letter, attached to this Report, was sent on 12 August 2014
-

2) RESPONSE

- a) A reply was received from Penny Mordaunt MP on 24 October and is attached to this Report
 - b) Members are asked to consider whether any further action is required.
-



VENTNOR TOWN COUNCIL



Salisbury Gardens, Dudley Road, Ventnor, Isle of Wight PO38 1EJ

Penny Mordaunt MP
Minister for High Streets and Coastal Communities
Department for Communities and Local Government
Elland House, Bressenden Place
London SW1 5DU

12 August 2014

Dear Minister

At its Meeting last night Ventnor Town Council unanimously supported a proposal to write to you from a Member resident in an area of this Town seriously affected by an event that is felt comparable in its impact to that of the Eastbourne Pier fire.

While fully supportive of the government's action in awarding up to £2m to restore that important facility, it is felt by this Town Council that the collapse of Undercliff Drive in St Lawrence is having an equally catastrophic impact on the Island's vital tourism offer as well as devastating the residents of eight homes and one business.

The landslide occurred in February during the reconstruction of the road and, as you may be aware given your Portsmouth base, necessitated emergency help from the armed forces to evacuate the affected families and closed a vital road link in South Wight forcing traffic into a four-mile detour through a small village on unsuitable roads and shutting off the major tourist attraction of the truly remarkable drive along the South Wight coastline.

Seven months on that closure remains in place; the affected families - who are mainly elderly - remain unable to access their homes, have to pay for alternative rental accommodation and storage costs and deal with the daily disruption of their lives; the caravan tourism business now has no income. Your colleague, our MP Andrew Turner, hosted a meeting for residents last week and will be able to convey to you directly the very serious impact of the landslide. This letter has been copied to him.

We hope that you and your colleagues will give serious consideration to supportive action with an equivalence to that applied to Eastbourne. The Isle of Wight Council is supportive of our approach to you and has received a copy of this letter. They are currently investigating a number of options in relation to the road and potential action in mitigation against further landslips.

Jason Mack
Mayor

David Bartlett
Town Clerk



Department for
Communities and
Local Government

Penny Mordaunt MP
Parliamentary Under Secretary of State

**Department for Communities and Local
Government**
Fry Building
2 Marsham Street
London
SW1P 4DF

Jason Mack
Ventnor Town Council
The Coastal Centre
Dudley Road
Ventnor
Isle of Wight
PO38 1EJ

Tel: 0303 444 3459
E-Mail: Penny.Mordaunt@communities.gsi.gov.uk

www.gov.uk/dclg

Our Ref: 263306

22 OCT 2014

1107 100 17

Dear Jason,

Thank you for your letter of 12 August and I apologise for the delay in replying to you.

I am truly sorry to hear about the landslip and the devastating impact this has had on local residents and business.

As you will know, Isle of Wight Council has a statutory duty to maintain the highways network in the area. Government agreed to provide up to £477 million in funding to Isle of Wight Council through the Private Finance Initiative for a highways maintenance project. This enables the Council to carry out vital improvements and maintenance to local roads in need of repair based over a 25 year period. They are best placed to both assess and fund the sections of the highways network, based on their local knowledge of the area.

I understand that the Environment Agency has been working very closely with Isle of Wight Council in identifying possible long-term remedies and the Council have agreed to allocate £500,000 to fund research on options for repairing Undercliff Drive. I welcome this news and hope that this marks the beginning of the recovery process for residents and businesses.

Yours,
Penny

PENNY MORDAUNT MP