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16th December 2015

Arun District Council,
Civic Centre,
Maltravers Road,
Littlehampton,
West Sussex.
BN17 5LF

Dear Sirs,

Planning Application P/97/115/PL

I write to give my support to the above planning application for the following reasons.

1. The absence of any viable alternative solution.
2. The project is absolutely vital for the continuation of Pagham Beach and Village.
3. The benefit of cutting the spit is financially prudent. The cost of the work and its long term benefits far outweigh the cost of emergency repairs to the beach which offers only temporary benefits.
4. This is a solvable problem unlike some parts of our coastline which cannot be defended.

Leading experts on coastal environment APB Mer have studied the area in great depth. They have examined all the options available and concluded that the best result would be achieved by reinstating the harbour entrance to its original position.

The local knowledge of people who have lived in the area for many years support this application. Although they may not be classed as expert they see the cause and effect of what is happening on a daily basis and are in tune with the history and the remedies that have worked in the past. This local information should not be ignored as in the Somerset Levels.

Adaptive management by Arun District Council has done sterling work in protecting homes along the beach. Unfortunately due to funding constraints they have been unable to carry out any pro active protection resulting in the devastating loss of the shingle taking with it the flora and fauna that makes Pagham so beautiful. The cost of the Emergency work carried out so far is in the region of £2.5 million. This work includes the rock revetment (which has saved properties and was partly funded by residents) re shingling work and rock protection between groyne three and four and shingle movement in the area of the Yacht Club. However as the Church Norton Spit continues to grow towards Aldwick the depletion of the beach continues but the funds available to protect it are limited.

Financially the cost to cut through the spit including ongoing maintenance and compensatory habitat is estimated between £750,000 to £1,000,000. The cost of patch and repair will be much greater than this based on the cost of work carried out so far. Unfortunately the work carried out to date is only temporary and has no lasting benefit and does not address the cause of the problem. The work offers emergency repairs and provides a small amount of protection for a short period of time. This work is often viewed as throwing money to the sea due to its short period of benefit.

The do nothing approach does not bear contemplating. This would result in the continued depletion of the beach towards Aldwick and Bognor Regis. The beach is the highest point and forms a protective barrier between the sea and the village. If this is allowed to weaken the result could be a breach allowing sea water to flood into nearby homes and amenities. This flooding would be disastrous (as we have seen recently in the news). If we do nothing and the sea demolishes homes they are gone forever and the people will be homeless. The cost of this eventuality including emergency evacuation and long term re housing etc. will be vastly more expensive in the long run than the cost of work required to cut through the spit and prevent any further destruction.

Environmentally the soft engineering approach makes sense. The plan incorporates the re use of the shingle removed from the spit to block the cross shore channel thus cutting off the fierce scour current that causes the damage to the beach and prevents the natural shingle supply of long shore drift. Once this channel is blocked the shingle will then be able to progress towards the beach gradually replenishing the lost shingle over a period of time.

Shingle will also be used to make a compensatory island within the harbour for the little terns to nest on.

It is imperative this project is granted planning permission.

The beach will recover.

The public will return to enjoy it again with the knowledge that it is once again safe.

The community will thrive.

The residents will be able to live in peace and enjoy Pagham for the beautiful place it is and not the NIGHTMARE it has become.

This is for the good of all. The environment, the village and all the agencies who have worked so tirelessly to bring about this solution. We can then start again to encourage nature to take its course, the flora and fauna to re establish, the little terns to nest on tern Island in peace.