

Sent: 23 December 2015 13:18

To: Planning

Subject: Planning Application: Pagham Beach managed breach of spit Ref: P/97/15/PL

For the attention of Simon Davis

I write in support of the planning application for a managed breach of the shingle spit at Pagham Harbour.

It is vital that this is achieved as a matter of great urgency. It is also key that the two relevant Local Planning Authorities, together with the Environment Agency, Natural England and RSPB, should all work together constructively to achieve this.

I write as a local supporter, living just along the beach from Pagham, in Aldwick. Over the last three years I have watched as the sea has aggressively destroyed the beach protecting the Pagham community from inundation. The growing spit has been the obvious cause of the tidal destruction. Indeed, I have been so moved by the plight of the Pagham community that I was instrumental in suggesting that the community choirs of South Bersted, Arundel & Southbourne should hold their combined Christmas concert this year in Pagham to raise funds for the Save Pagham Beach & Village campaign. The concert & its recording were a great success, and Pagham is now exploring whether to start its own community choir as a continuing source of fund-raising.

But local action is not enough on its own. We need our local authorities to take the necessary action to protect Pagham & its people.

In addition to these key considerations, the following factors are also important in urgently undertaking the spit breach:

1. People - Whilst there are known ecological interests that will need to be safeguarded, these should not be at the expense of people, their homes and livelihoods.
2. Mitigation - Whilst nature conservation interests have a degree of protection, the opportunity exists to mitigate any harm that might arise by way of creative solutions that could better safeguard the nature conservation interests in the long run.
3. SSSI - Arising from the need to safeguard homes, much engineering work has been carried out to the beach, to the detriment of the Site of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI). These too are nature conservation interests. A quick solution will allow the SSSI to recover.
4. Public Health - For some years now the health of numerous residents' and businesses has suffered due to delays in key decisions. They need a solution now.
5. Recreation - The activities and attractions provided by Pagham Beach and its facilities are both varied and significant. Through the period of coast erosion, which has brought with it damage, heavy machinery, barriers, and dangerous currents, there has been a decline in the attractiveness of Pagham Beach for residents', businesses, activity groups and visitors. This needs to be reversed.
6. Cost and local economy - The cost to people's lives, property and businesses has been significant. In fact, the ultimate cost will never be known, nor could it be calculated. To those that live with this reality, it is vast. The funds already raised by local residents', businesses and visitors to Pagham are testament to the significant interest and support that exists for the proposal to cut the spit. However, it is time to address the decline in property values, harm to businesses and activity groups, to help them address their financial losses and to help repair the harm to the local economy.

7. Value for money – The cost of 'temporary fixes' is vast and their success mediocre. Cutting the spit will provide a longer term solution and be more cost effective.

8. Other impacts – Without a favourable decision to cut the spit, beautiful and historic Pagham will continue to be blighted and will further decline. By contrast, a decision to cut the spit will kickstart a recovery. Notably, today's impacts at Pagham, will be tomorrow's Aldwick and Bognor Regis. The people of Pagham, and further afield, both local and visitors, acknowledge that the Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA) for the managed breach of Pagham Harbour, is a stage leading to an engineered solution.

I commend the proposals and request Arun DC & Chichester DC to do the same as a matter of the greatest urgency.

Kind regards,
David Henderson