



HOUSE OF COMMONS

LONDON SW1A 0AA

6 August 2020

Sir James Bevan
Chief Executive
Environment Agency
C/O Orchard House
Endeavour Park
London Road
Addington
West Malling
Kent
ME19 5SH

Our Ref: TT38295

Dear Sir James,

Please find enclosed a copy of a letter that I have been copied into from Mr Kevin Storey of Bridge House, Rogues Hill, Penshurst, Tonbridge, Kent, TN11 8BQ, and was sent to Tim Connell at the Environment Agency on 31 July 2020, in relation to the application for the enlargement of the Leigh Flood Storage Area and amendment to the River Medway (Flood Relief) Act 1976

As you can see, Mr Storey is deeply disappointed that the Environment Agency has sought to re-write the submission from Penshurst residents to the consultation regarding the amendment to the act that has been submitted to the Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs (DEFRA). My office has been in touch with Mr Storey and he is concerned about the reluctance of the Environment Agency to agree to three asks of residents in Penshurst which would address their situation while also allowing the much needed expansion to go ahead, considering the substantial benefit for communities downstream. These asks are that a measuring station be installed at Penshurst to provide evidence of timing and levels so that actual flood levels after the confluence of the River Medway and River Eden would be known, that the Environment Agency pay the cost of making Mr Storey's neighbours studio resilient to flood, and that agreement is reached towards the implementation of already given planning permission at Bridge House to defend it from flood water.

I would be grateful if you could let me know whether the Environment Agency could look at these three issues as part of this process, in order to ensure that residents in Penshurst also benefit from the scheme. I know that Mr Storey and his neighbours would appreciate the opportunity to meet with you and discuss this too.

I look forward to hearing back from you. I have copied this letter to the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, the Floods Casework Team at DEFRA and the Area Director of the Environment Agency

Member of Parliament for Tonbridge and Malling

130 Vale Road, Tonbridge, Kent TN9 1SP

01732 441 563 - tom.tugendhat.mp@parliament.uk - www.tomtugendhat.org.uk

Best wishes,

A handwritten signature in black ink, reading "Tom Tugendhat". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style with a large initial 'T'.

TOM TUGENDHAT

CC:

The Rt Hon George Eustice MP, Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs
Floods Casework Team, Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs
Sally Harvey, Area Director for Kent and South London, Environment Agency

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Tom Tugendhat MP for Tonbridge &
Malling

tom.tugendhat.mp@parliament.uk

Our reference: CE7884

Your reference: TT38295

Date: 13 August 2020

Dear Tom

Re: Mr & Mrs Storey: Bridge House, Penshurst

Thank you for your letter dated 6 August 2020, sent to our Chief Executive, Sir James Bevan, regarding Mr and Mrs Storey of Bridge House, Penshurst. Sir James has asked me to respond on his behalf and we will provide him with a copy of our response.

I am sorry that Mr Storey is disappointed with the way that we have approached our consultation on our request to vary the Scheme within the River Medway (Flood Relief) Act 1976.

Since receiving Mr Storey's letter dated 31 July, Tim Connell has emailed Mr Storey to apologise for any offence caused, as this was certainly not our intention. We recognise the time and thought which went into Mr Storey's objections to our proposal. It was not our intention to rewrite these objections, but rather to summarise and check our understanding of the points being made so that we can respond appropriately. Tim has spoken with Mr Storey on the phone a number of times since then and met with him on 7 August 2020 to discuss his objections with a view to understanding what we can do to address these.

In terms of the three requests that you note in your letter, we would be more than happy to consider these issues and will discuss them with the relevant landowners. The gauging station is clearly something that would be valued by the local community, and we will look into the practicalities associated with this.

With regard to paying the cost of making Mr Storey's neighbour's studio resistant to flooding, we plan to discuss the issue of flooding at this location with the owner's of the property. There are different means to achieve the best resolution for any issues they may have and we want to ensure we are considering them properly.

At Bridge House, we are working with Mr Storey to establish the likely cost of the modifications to his property to improve its resilience to flooding, and we have agreed to reimburse his professional fees for this. Once this cost information is

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available, we have invited Mr Storey to work with us to determine a mutually agreeable means to reduce the impact of flooding to the property.

We are looking to resolve the objections of the residents in Penshurst and are currently collating written responses to the points made in each submission. We will offer meetings with each respondent to discuss their concerns and establish if we have been able to resolve any of them and which remain unresolved.

I will keep you informed of our progress.

If you would like to discuss these matters further please do not hesitate to contact me at sally.harvey@environment-agency.gov.uk or my area team on 0208 474 6848.

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Sally Harvey".

Sally Harvey
Area Director
Kent, South London and East Sussex