

True Friends of Penzance & Isles of Scilly

www.truefriend.org.uk

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Rt Hon Phillip Hammond MP
Secretary of State for Transport
Great Minster House
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31 July 2010

Dear Minister,

Isles of Scilly Ferry Link Project/Penzance Harbour.

We believe you have been heavily lobbied by objectors to proposed plans for Penzance Harbour, part of the vitally important Isles of Scilly Ferry Link project. Below we summarize the position of many affected individuals and businesses who are desperately concerned that this project goes ahead and is not derailed. Whilst different ministries are responsible for Listed Building Consent and approval of funding this letter addresses both issues as they are intimately connected.

We enclose our recent letter to Cornwall Council which covers issues in more detail and our justification for claiming that we represent the majority view of people affected by the IOS Ferry Link project. We would draw your attention to the attached diagram of Penzance Harbour and the Barbican showing regeneration proposals currently out for consultation with the public. Item 3 on this diagram shows the proposed new ferry terminal on reclaimed foreshore in front of The Barbican.

Listed Building Consent.

In considering the Penzance Harbour element of the IOS Ferry Link project and whether to grant Listed Building Consent, the issue comes down to priorities and how they affect vital interests. Which is more important? A strategic project to replace an ageing lifeline to the Isles of Scilly which supports the livelihoods of thousands of people in one of the UK's poorest areas or keeping an historic harbour (with a 500+ yr history of constant adaptation) as an inviolable historic monument? If the decision is not obvious then consideration should be given to the fact that Cornwall is losing its historic harbours because, when they cease to be working harbours, the need and the resources to repair and protect them dries up.

Mullion Harbour, an archetypal Grade 2 listed Cornish harbour on the Lizard Peninsula, is managed by the National Trust. There is probably no more respected guardian of heritage assets in the country, but the National Trust has been forced to adopt a policy of managed retreat (abandonment to the sea) by the prohibitive cost of maintaining the harbour. Nobody is claiming that this fate awaits Penzance Harbour immediately but the loss of the ferry would put a question mark over the long term viability of Penzance Harbour as a working harbour and create a problem in maintaining it to the standards appropriate for a Grade 2* listed structure.

The Case for Funding.

When considering funding it should be recognized that the IOS Ferry Link is in a class of its own; it is a truly vital lifeline to a remote community. All elements of the ferry link are a serious risk to its continued reliable operation; the vessels because of their age and the harbours because of their lack of facilities and regulatory non-compliance. With over £11 million of EU convergence funding available but due to expire if not committed by 2013, there is a high risk that delaying this project could backfire. A failure of the ferry service

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would be a very public failure. Rescuing the link in the event of failure would be expensive because the EU funding for approximately 32% of the harbour costs will have been lost and some temporary solution would be needed whilst the final solution was built.

At a time of stringent Government cuts, funding the ferry project demonstrates, in an easily communicated way, that truly vital projects are being funded when needed. In funding this project no dangerous precedent is set because the IOS Ferry Link is unique.

We hope, after consideration of all the necessary factors, the ministers involved will grant listed building consent, planning consent and fund this project. A large majority of residents in West Cornwall and the Isles of Scilly hope this will be the case. We are in unknown territory without a solution for this vital link.

Yours faithfully,

DICK CLIFFE
For True Friends of Penzance
And Isles of Scilly

MICHAEL ADAMS
For Future Penzance

MIKE WATER
Chairman
Penzance Chamber of Commerce

ANDY CURTIS
Chairman
Penzance & District Tourism Association

Enclosures:

Map of Penzance Harbour and the Barbican (showing project site and regeneration proposals).

Letter to Cornwall Council dated 30 Jul 2010

Addressees:

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An umbrella group for individuals and organizations supporting Penzance Harbour developments proposed under the Isles of Scilly Ferry Link Project. Communications/Secretary: Dick Cliffe support@truefriend.org.uk Tel: 01736 331734. Spokesperson: Rebecca Farrington spokesperson@truefriend.org.uk Mob: 0777 999 8590.