

METROPOLITAN BOROUGH OF WIRRAL

MINUTES OF A MEETING OF THE HILBRE ISLAND NATURE RESERVE MANAGEMENT  
COMMITTEE HELD ON HILBRE ISLAND ON 28 JUNE 2000

Present: Councillor D W Christian (Chair)  
Councillors Anna McLaughlin  
W Smith  
G J Ellis

1. **EXISTING COASTAL WORKS AND EROSION OF THE NORTH WEST SANDSTONE CLIFFS**

The Director of Leisure Services and Tourism submitted a report of the Borough Engineer's Coastal Protection Section on the existing coastal works and erosion of the sandstone cliffs on the North West coast of Hilbre Island.

The report provided a general summary of the geology of the island, and confirmed that the preferred option of the Borough Engineer, and the most cost effective, was for rock armour. However, it was unlikely that this would be acceptable to English Nature who would have to approve any works. The option which was likely to be preferred by conservation groups and others with an interest in the island was existing block work and joint repairs. A properly funded programme of works to repair the block work over the next two years would ensure a reasonable level of protection to the North West coast of the island, and he indicated that the cost would be in the order of £20,000. Recent advice from MAFF did offer an opportunity to apply for grant aid for coastal defence on the island.

**Resolved -**

**(1) That £20,000 be requested from the Authority's PPM programme allocated over two years to allow significant repairs to be carried out to the block work on the North West coast of Hilbre Island.**

**(2) That the Borough Engineer be requested to continue to monitor the condition of the North West coast of Hilbre assisted by the Hilbre Ranger, and that he advise on any works to be carried out.**

**(3) That the Borough Engineer be requested to further investigate the potential for funding from MAFF for coastal defence works for the island.**

**(4) That consideration be given to erecting safety signs as recommended in the Borough Engineer's report.**

2. **FORMER BUOY MASTERS HOUSE AND STORE**

The Director of Leisure Services and Tourism reported upon the proposed short-term use and maintenance of the group of buildings on Hilbre known as the buoy masters house and store, which were originally built in the 1850's by Trinity House to service the buoys in Liverpool bay, but more recently had been used as private holiday accommodation. The buildings were of stone construction with slate

roofs and were Grade II Listed. They were at present divided into three - the buoy masters house, the buoy store, and the cottage. The buildings had all been vacant since 1989.

The present bunkhouse was well used by voluntary groups who in return for free accommodation undertook work on the island directed by the Ranger. The Director indicated that it was possible that the former buoy masters store could be adapted for accommodation for small groups of up to six people who were participating in a study course such as bird watching or botany. If successful, then further improvements could be undertaken to upgrade the former buoy masters house and adapt the store to provide a lecture room. Courses would be ran by rangers and conservation groups under the overall control of the ranger service.

The Director reported on the condition of the buildings, which had been surveyed by the Department's Building Inspectors, and he outlined the works which would be required to allow the buildings to be brought into use.

**Resolved - That the proposal to utilise the former buoy masters store to provide residential courses related to nature conservation, be supported.**