

CITY AND COUNTY OF SWANSEA

DINAS A SIR ABERTAWE

Our Ref: ID/JT3957 Date: 18 July 2014
Ein Cyf: *Dyddiad:*

Please ask for: Iwan Davies Direct Line: 635403
Gofynnwch am: *Llinell Uniongyrchol:*

E-Mail: iwan.davies@swansea.gov.uk
E-Bost:

Dear Ms Deeble

Caswell Bay – Issues regarding pebble build up

Thank you for your recent letter outlining your concerns about the build-up of pebbles on Caswell Bay beach. The Council is equally concerned with the situation and has sought independent advice regarding the apparent change in the topography of Caswell Bay and this letter will hopefully provide some clarity on the advice that the Council has received and the options available to deal with the matter.

The storms last winter resulted in significant beach and foreshore damage across much of Swansea's coastline. In particular, Caswell suffered significant damage to its main promenade area, which required several thousands of pounds of investment to ensure that the damage was rectified and that Caswell maintained its Blue Flag status.

In order to ensure that the beach remained accessible and to prevent further damage, the stones that had washed up onto the main promenade and steps were cleared. They were relocated to the area below the lifeguard station on the Redcliff side of the beach. This is the general area in which the stones were located before the storms occurred and has accumulated over many years.

It is true that since the storms that we suffered in late spring there has been a significant increase in the extent of exposed rock and pebbles on all areas of Caswell, but most notably in the western part of the bay in front of the Redcliff Apartments.

Cont...

As part of the Council's ongoing beach management responsibilities, a study has been commissioned so that we may better understand what may have caused this change in topography and whether the Council could effectively intervene to aid beach recovery.

This study was carried out by Professor Kenneth Pye who provides specialist advice on coastal, estuarine and marine environments. He was commissioned with the purpose of determining the extent of the beach lowering and to assess what caused the stone accumulations which are presently exposed in a number of parts of the bay.

The study has indicated that the storms which occurred during the winter and also stormy periods in April and May have resulted in significant beach erosion. Consequently this has progressively exposed larger areas of rock and gravel on the beach which have been there for many years. The majority of the rock and pebbles now exposed are much larger than the material relocated by the Council.

The report determined that the increase in rock and pebble exposure seen since April would have occurred with or without the relocation of material by the Council and our actions have had no significant effect on the general trend of the beach lowering. The topographical survey shows that beach levels at Caswell are now lower than any time since 1999.

The study concludes that there would be no benefit of removing the pebbles which are now exposed on the Redcliff side of the beach and importantly it is considered that such action would further lower beach levels. It is likely that such action would result in further pebbles becoming exposed. Additionally, the pebble beach cusps which have now formed are providing wave protection to the strip of sand on this part of the beach and removal of this would not be beneficial. Therefore, the Council feels that after careful consideration no further action is required in terms of removal of any beach material.

Previous studies have shown that there have been periods of similar beach lowering at Caswell Bay and this has been followed by recovery as sand has moved back onshore during periods of constructive swell waves, but this may take some time.

The Council considers the safety of beach users and swimmers at all of beaches a priority. Together with the RNLI we ensure that the relevant procedures are in place to manage beach safety and the RNLI Beach Risk Assessments have been updated in order to account for the increase in rocks and pebbles at Caswell.

Cont...

The RNLI are satisfied that the current change in topography does not create a problem in terms of the operations at Caswell Bay. The lifeguards are adequately trained and experienced to be able to safely manage any changes in beach materials that may occur. The current beach profile does not affect the bathing zone, or the ability to be able to perform rescues.

I hope that this clarifies the Council position on this matter, and that the information provided has given a clear understanding of the current situation. We will of course be monitoring the situation carefully over the next few months and will communicate with you if the situation changes.

Kind regards.

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "I. Davies."

Iwan Davies
Head of Culture, Tourism and Leisure