

**PETITION TITLE: IMMEDIATE REVISION OF HAYLING ISLAND
COASTAL DEFENCE POLICY WITH INTERIM MEASURES**

**Being presented by David Parham on behalf of Mike Owens to the
HBC Council Meeting 23 September 2020**

[Click here to see the petition](#) – now closed

I am David Parham, and I am presenting this petition on behalf of the petition organiser, Mike Owens.

This petition called for the west Hayling Island beach area to be treated as the highest priority in the ESCP HI Coastal Strategy, and that interim protection measures be implemented to prevent irreversible and dangerous erosion in the short-term.

The HBC decision to stop funding the West Beach defences back in 2008 was made before the latest predictions on climate change were known and clearly understood. We know this because the ESCP have expressed surprise at the speed of erosion and the increase in frequency and severity of named storms. It is also a fact that the Coastal Strategy was not in place and has only now been initiated with a report date of 2022.

This first section of revetment was removed in 2013 and was followed with the removal of its supporting groynes. By late-2019 the beach had eroded 50 mtrs north requiring the repositioning of approximately 60 beach huts. This erosion was at a rate 5 times the ESCP prediction. This was soon followed in February 2020 by two large storms which caused a further erosion of 20 mtrs, destroying the car park, causing property damage and flooding the area up to the Ferry Road. This situation was partly mitigated for a short time as HBC brought forward the bi-annual building of the shingle access route to Gunner Point as part of the annual Eastoke replenishment programme. This is no longer an option as the large stones required for the Eastoke regeneration no longer migrate to Gunner Point, probably as a result of the change in the beach profile. This access route has been almost completely eroded again within six months and cannot be seen as a mitigation moving forward.

In July 2020, the next section of revetment was removed (leaving only approximately 50 mtrs west of the Inn on the Beach.) The supporting groynes were left as they were considered to still be performing a service.

But only a few weeks later they had been bypassed by a summer storm and now stand isolated 20 mtrs south of the beachline and now constitute a hazard to water users – requiring their removal. When the last section of the revetment is removed and the Inn on the Beach becomes isolated, in line with the current ESCP plan, the beach will take its natural line from the hard point at the Coastguard revetment all the way to Gunner Point, reducing the area available for beach huts and car parking, and will impact the Beachlands and West Beach Regeneration Projects.

During the February 2020 storms we were very lucky – even though the sea was violent with waves 4 mtrs high and 25 seconds apart, carrying a massive and fast-moving kinetic power, and a wind just below hurricane force – the tide was not very high at 4.6 mtrs and the air pressure was not extremely low.

These storms are unpredictable and the tide could easily have been 1 mtr higher. This autumn we will experience high tides of 5.3 mtrs. If this should coincide with a February-type storm, the sea height will easily exceed 6 mtrs. If we look at the current Environment Agency predictions, we can look forward to adding a further 1.5 mtrs to this over time. These predictions are certainly going to increase further in line with Global Warming.

We should not be planning our future on luck. This situation – if not contained – presents a clear and present risk to us all, as Global Warming is a reality.

With the likelihood in the future of a tide height of 7 to 7.5 mtrs – plus a 4 mtr high storm wave – the current policy of no intervention will allow continuous erosion of infrastructure and local businesses. At some stage, a threat to the local community will become undeniable, and a ‘hold the line’ strategy will become inevitable.

Please take action now !