

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

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



Sally Harvey
Area Director
Kent, South London and East Sussex