

## **HILARY ST CLARE'S STATEMENT FOR THE PUBLIC INQUIRY**

Good morning, and thank you for allowing me to speak at this Inquiry.

I am a local resident of Seabrook and have lived here for over 14 years. I was also a School Governor, and a leading member of Seabrook Primary School's Parents and Teachers Association. I object most strongly to the Stopping Up Order of Princes Parade and I am hoping that this Inquiry will fully consider and address the concerns I have before coming to a decision.

Approaching this proposal from a local concerned parents perspective, I am exceedingly worried about the close proximity of the School and its precious children to any proposed works on the south side of the Royal Military Canal, for a number of reasons.

I am utterly horrified at the thought of the children being exposed to all nature of toxic and hazardous waste released into the air whilst playing innocently in the playground directly opposite the site, irrespective of the Councils dismissal of such an occurrence. Indeed, there can be no 100% reassurance and guarantees for the teachers, parents and children at the school, along with all the residents of Seabrook. Will they all be issued with protective suits and breathing equipment similar to those working on the site affording them the same level of protection? I think not. The site is well known for containing asbestos, heavy metals, medical waste, munitions, etc as is documented by the Council in its initial investigative works.

It is also of grave concern the inevitable increase in traffic along Seabrook Road this proposal would bring should the road be stopped up. The proposed new road would primarily be access for the residents of Princes Parade, with traffic calming measures and speed bumps – this would mean traffic would be discouraged from using this alternative, so would therefore use the A259, thereby increasing its volume and pollution.

There is already a shortage of parking spaces for residents and parents. You will indeed witness first hand when you visit the area the traffic chaos, especially at peak commuter times and school opening and closing times. The already high volume of traffic passing Seabrook Primary School at the bottom of Hospital Hill and Horn Street will only increase. Both my children attended this Primary School. It has no safe crossing point, illegal parking, bus stops right outside, and very narrow passing points especially around Olivia Court at Seabrook Point. The whole area will be made substantially worse by the increased disruption from the building works, heavy duty vehicles, trucks, noise, dust and pollution, which will by definition increase the risk of accidents and god forbid, danger to the children. I have personally witnessed a child nearly run over on the pavement by a car trying to avoid an oncoming truck thundering down Seabrook Road.

Parents at the School shared their concerns with me regarding these risks while my children attended, along with the higher pollution levels right at their childrens height as they walk to and from school and while in the playground. It would be of value to know the pollution levels along Seabrook Road - the high levels of carbon monoxide and nitrogen dioxide on vulnerable children, together with the statistics on increased child asthma cases in the area. There was much publicity surrounding the landmark legal case in South London in 2020 of a little girl called Ella losing her life to pollution from her journey to and from school. Don't let this happen to the children at Seabrook Primary School.

The Royal Military Canal and beach affords wonderful open space for the children of Seabrook to learn from, to exercise along and enjoy its unpolluted beauty and tranquility – indeed, it is their open air classroom. Many deprived children do not have access to this precious amenity – this area is extremely important for them. My children were personally blessed with countless precious opportunities to experience this through the School – they canoed on the Canal, ran mini miles along its pathways, enjoyed Beach School directly on the seafront, walked the pathways on both sides for art classes and drawing, passed their Cycling proficiency awards along the Canal's paths and roadways, collected autumn leaves along the Canal banks for Harvest Festival, and a special treat was to visit the wooden playground on Princes Parade after all their excellent achievements and hard work. Do not destroy this for future generations, because this is what would happen if this Stopping Up Order proceeds.

Perhaps it would have been more prudent of the Council to carry out a more detailed and up-to-date traffic and pollution survey, and not rely on one taken over 3 years ago? And it goes without saying, that if the Stopping Up Order proceeds and the large increase in traffic along Seabrook Road ensues, this would result in limited and difficult access for our Emergency Services to respond quickly, and I include our Coastguard in this too - given the traffic chaos we all live with now on a daily basis. It takes only 1 truck, 1 delivery van or 1 refuse collector to snarl up the road. It will be game over for any poor soul needing emergency assistance if this work proceeds.

We were all informed of the criteria for this Inquiry - Necessity and Merit.

Necessity - none, just pollution and destruction

Merit - setting of the Royal Military Canal – gone  
biodiversity and environment - gone  
disabled access & seafront parking – gone  
risk to children and residents - untold  
traffic - chaos

NO MERIT, NO NECESSITY

Thank you