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Tel./Ffon: 01633 644020
Date/Dyddiad: 28th October 2024

Philip Young
Head of Estates
Reserve Forces and Cadets Association for Wales
Maindy Barracks
Cardiff CF14 3YE

By email: wa-est-hd@rfca.mod.uk

Dear Phil,

Thank you for your email of the 21st of October.

I am very disappointed that in our discussions we seem to have been unable to find a way forward in restoring access across Inglis Bridge for walkers and cyclists on a permanent or even on temporary basis.

I am concerned that the communication of such bad news is being left to local councillors and the Council. A Grade II listed structure is in danger in falling into a state of deterioration which puts it beyond repair. Moreover, the loss of a vital right of way will have a serious impact on the local community. We can anticipate an increase in vehicular usage elsewhere and further traffic congestion as a consequence of people using cars instead of walking or cycling across the bridge. Members of the public are rightly angry. Already, 1,600 residents have signed a petition asking for the restoration of their right of way across the bridge. I am meeting the head teacher and board of governors of Osbaston school who are seriously worried about the effects that the continuing closure of the bridge is having on the well-being of learners and carers alike. The MoD has lost much public support locally and is facing long term reputational damage if no action is being seen to be taken in a timely manner. You are aware of this and of the enormous discontent felt in seeing MoD resources being spent stopping access to the bridge, rather than making access possible for local people.

Until now we have supported you behind the scenes. Reserve Forces and Cadets for Wales, as well as local MoD colleagues want to see the bridge reopened. And I accept that some financial constraints and changes in procurement arrangements make a locally-led solution more difficult. We may need to consider the leverage the Council can exert, if local MoD leverage is limited.

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But the County Council cannot continue to remain silent. We require the bridge to be repaired to full working order within a reasonable timeframe, with swift interim arrangements clearly signalled by MoD.

I will not risk the Council's own reputation while the bridge remains closed with no end in sight. Nor am I prepared for the time of officers or our very limited resources to be spent on dealing with the fall out of a long-term closure.

I fear we will not be able to stop the escalation of bad feelings and even some people taking the law in to their own hands in demonstrating their frustration with the MoD.

I have no option but to go public with my concerns and engage directly with campaigners. To do otherwise would be seen as the Council colluding in the MoD's inability to take urgent action in restoring access across the Monnow.

Yours Sincerely



**County Councillor Mary Ann Brocklesby
Leader of the Council**

Cc: Catherine Fookes MP

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