Miss Williams – Geography Homework

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We are a relatively small country with limited space and thanks to major cities our population is always increasing. The cost of buying homes in the UK has shot up since the 1950’s and the number of properties available has decreased. Buying affordable homes in cities has become near impossible.

We have very little open land left and the small towns along the East Yorkshire coastline provided some people affordable seafront homes in country settings. We have lived and worked in this area our whole lives. My wife is a school teacher in Mappleton and I work as a greens keeper at the Hornsea Golf Club. With the help of a mortgage, we bought our home from my wife’s parents when they retired. Since then, interest rates and insurance premiums have gone up dramatically while our incomes have not.

We have seen this coastline disappear in front of our eyes. The beaches that we played on as children have been lost. At school we learned that several towns had been swallowed up by the sea over history but now, more than ever, we can see how our home is going to follow the same sad path.

When Mappleton received its 2 million pound sea defences, we were overjoyed. The project brought relief to the residents and businesses of the town. Homes were saved, business protected and peoples earnings saved. It however soon became clear that the rock groynes, the rocks imported from Norway and the rock revetments (although protecting Mappleton) actually diverted the destruction. The erosion of the coastline south of Mappleton and north of the River Humber increased. The groynes stopped the longshore drift that deposited silt and other materials onto beaches further south and the diversion of the waves energies by sea walls (revetments) means that our soft clay cliffs are pounded by persistent aggressive waves driven by the prevailing north and north east winds. If the constant hydraulic action doesn’t destroy the cliff, the constant drenching of the clay causes the cliffs to slump anyway.

We cannot sell our home as no one buys a home that is about to be swallowed by the sea. We cannot walk away as we have a mortgage to pay every month and can not afford to rent or buy another house. We are not city people anyway and don’t want leave the place we’ve always known.

We respectfully request that the Environment Agency reconsider the plight of the residents of the areas south of Mappleton before it is too late. We propose that the cost of providing some coast protection will be less than the cost of the lives, businesses, farms and private properties lost to the sea. We suggest continuing the groynes along the coast, all the way up until the Humber where the river mouth exits and longshore drift is no longer a factor. We don’t believe that sea walls are necessary as these only deflect the wave energy, rock armour is more efficient by absorbing the wave energy. We feel a third and final method, cliff drainage, will support the two previous methods. If the soft clay is no longer drenched all the time, the cliffs will stop slumping into the sea.

Beaches will be recreated, land will be saved and properties will no longer disappear under water. The lives of many residents and animals will be saved and the conscience of the Environmental Agency will be clear.