



**National
Trust**

7th March 2020

Mrs Caroline Sumeray
H.M. SENIOR CORONER FOR THE ISLE OF WIGHT
Coroner's Office
Seaclose Offices
Fairlee Road
Newport
Isle of Wight
PO30 2QS

Dear Mrs Sumeray,

RESPONSE TO REGULATION 28 REPORTS ISSUED IN REGARD TO MS A LEWIS AND MS J ORPIN - SUICIDE PREVENTION ON NATIONAL TRUST LAND ON THE ISLE OF WIGHT

In your Regulation 28 reports issued as a result of the investigations in to deaths of Joanna Orpin and Annette Lewis dated 31 Dec 19 and 13 Jan 20 respectively, you requested a response from the National Trust as to what action could be taken to prevent a recurrence of these incidents.

As you may be aware, the National Trust is the largest landowner on the island and currently has responsibility for just over 2,100ha. As an organisation, we take our role in safeguarding our visitors extremely seriously and will always seek to avoid accident, incident or injury wherever possible, but implicit in this is that we are also responsible for large areas of unsupervised open access public land with only a small team to manage it.

Nationally within the Trust, we manage a number of areas which face similar challenges with attempted or completed suicide attempts, most notably in the Birling Gap and Beachy Head area and further east in the White Cliffs of Dover area. The teams at those sites have been dealing first hand with distressed individuals and their relatives for a number of years.

I can confirm that a number of measures were already in place at Culver Down, including a total of seven Samaritans signs placed within the past few years. A schematic showing the locations of these signs is at Annex A. In addition, 'dragons teeth' (wooden bollards to prevent vehicle access) are in place opposite the exits from the car park and there is a ditch to ground vehicles approaching the cliff edge. There is also a barbed wire fence running the

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length of the cliff edge in which a vehicle became entangled during one attempt, but it is primarily a stock fence and it would not be economically viable or aesthetically appropriate to fence the several miles of coastline owned by the Trust.

In direct response to your request, the following actions have been undertaken:

1. **Engagement with Public Health Principal: Health and Wellbeing – [REDACTED]**
[REDACTED] We are due to have a meeting on Wednesday 18th March in advance of meeting with the groups listed below to discuss the island-wide Suicide Prevention Plan, how this might apply specifically to our land and how we can best support it.
2. **Engagement with the Suicide Prevention & Intervention, Isle of Wight team.** A meeting with [REDACTED] from the group has been scheduled for Friday 3rd April 2020 to conduct site visits to both Culver and Tennyson Downs.
3. **Engagement with the IOW Samaritans.** [REDACTED] is also due to attend the meeting listed above on 3rd April.
4. **Sought feedback from the National Trust South Downs and White Cliffs teams.** Regarding best practice and to learn from their experience. We have received detailed feedback from these teams and have their continued support whilst assessing what measures may or may not be suitable.
5. **Engagement with the Police.** To seek advice and guidance. Countryside Manager to speak to [REDACTED]
6. **Conduct a full internal review of our suicide prevention measures.** Once all the above meetings are complete, we will conduct a full review of our measures and implement changes where appropriate.

Should you require an update beyond this response, I will be more than happy to provide one. I strongly believe it is in the best interests of all concerned that we work together to assist those in distress and ensure help is there when needed.

Yours sincerely,

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

General Manager – Isle of Wight

Annex:

- A. Map of existing Samaritans' signage at Culver Down.

