

Belgrave Road works programme **Frequently Asked Questions**

What caused the initial collapse?

The cause/causes of the failing are currently subject to an investigation. An initial report by independent experts has considered a number of possible causes and rated these according to their probability. This report is currently being reviewed by industry experts and until his process is completed it is not yet possible to conclude the causes of the failure.

Are these reports available to the public?

The report itself is currently being independently reviewed so its conclusions are not yet finalised.

Why has it taken so long to begin the major investigations?

There are a number of reasons for this. Firstly, the priority has always been safety, and this meant the immediate task was to ensure lives and property were not endangered. Consequently, our initial focus was on making sure residents and their properties were not at risk from further movement or from falling debris – hence the installation of the wire netting and pedestrian barriers

Furthermore, while our ongoing regular monitoring has detected no major movement, the site is still one of significant risk and while that remains the case, we must be careful about putting staff in danger. That is why the recent vegetation removal was done by specialist rope teams.

The COVID-19 pandemic has also affected the supply of both labour and equipment. Now working practices within the industry have normalised and while there has been no significant movement for a while, the time is now right to proceed with more detailed investigations which will involve moving both personnel and equipment on site.

How can you publish a timetable for repairs when you do not yet know what the issue is?

The published timetable is indicative but based on the experience of Island Roads' engineers and is one we believe is achievable. We must however stress that this timetable can change due to a number of factors. Residents can be assured that we are working as quickly and as safely as we can to identify a solution.

Is there any danger to nearby properties from the failure or from any future stabilisation and repair work?

It is widely known that the geology in the Ventnor area is prone to movement, sometimes catastrophically so. Some residents have expressed the view that there is a geological fault affecting this particular site over many years. In all the

circumstances we can never say that properties in this area will not be affected by ground movement. We are however undertaking structural surveys of six homes in Belgrave Road so the current conditions of properties can be known. This will provide a benchmark for the period to come. There is no suggestion that these properties will be in any way affected by the works.

Is it possible that the road will never be re-opened?

Given the above, it is impossible to make predictions with complete certainty. However, Island Roads is committed to identifying a solution that will stabilise the area and enable the road to be re-opened.

Is it acceptable that residents will have waited almost two years to have their road re-opened?

We understand the difficulties residents have faced since the failure and we really appreciate their support, understanding and co-operation. It has clearly been a very difficult time for them.

However, progress in finding a solution is governed by many factors, most of all the need to keep the site, residents, and workers safe.

We are working as quickly as we can in the circumstances and hope residents are assured by the indicative timetable we have issued. The important thing is that the solution identified is the right one for the site.

About the ground investigations work:

Are the engineers taking soil or rock samples for lab testing. If so, how deep are they going?

Yes, they are taking a series of soil and rock core samples for identification and testing. These samples will be to a depth of up to 15 metres.

What are they measuring?

This work will reveal the rock formations and composition of the ground in this part of Ventnor. The information will help us establish a greater understanding of the ground conditions at the site which will help the process of designing a solution to enable the re-opening of Belgrave Road.

What equipment are they using?

The holes are being drilled using a specialist rotary coring rig. Piezometers are being installed in selected boreholes to establish and monitor groundwater levels in the ground. Borehole inclinometers are also being installed in selected boreholes to monitor ground behaviour. Cone penetration testing is not suitable in these ground conditions as this technique cannot penetrate rock.

Is this the only borehole?

No. There will be five rotary cored boreholes at this location (Belgrave Road and Esplanade Road) and some trial pits and hand driven boreholes in the less accessible terrace areas.