

Environmental impacts on heritage assets: Kingsand Institute, Rame, Cornwall

The winter of 2013/14 was the wettest on record. Some of the thousands of homes and businesses affected by storms and flooding were much loved historic buildings.

Situated on the sea wall of the Cornish village of Kingsand, The Institute and its distinctive clock tower is a grade II listed building erected by local people to commemorate the coronation of George V in 1911. The structure was severely damaged by storms on 6 and 14 February, the second event resulting in substantial loss of fabric to the lower clock tower. The 70ft waves of the 'Valentine's Day Storm' also caused twenty adjacent homes to be evacuated.

The extensive damage prompted fears for the Institute's future amongst the local community, who use it on a daily basis. The beleaguered clock tower quickly became symbolic of the storm impacts on the community of Kingsand and its survival important for local morale. The granddaughter of one of the Institute's trustees said 'we have to save The Institute because it IS our village'.

The trustees of the Maker with Rame Institute, who run the building on behalf of the village, worked with Cornwall Council's structural engineer, historic environment service and English Heritage to plan the repairs. With central Government funding, works to strengthen the sea wall have since been completed, protecting the Institute and dwellings directly behind from future storms. Further repairs to The Institute can now be carried out. A planned break in the repairs during the summer holidays enabled holidaymakers and locals to use and enjoy the seafront, helping local businesses to recoup some of their losses resulting from the impacts of the winter storms in Cornwall and the wider South West.



Repair work on the Kingsand Institute © John Grimes Partnership Ltd.

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