



## ALISON GRIFFITHS MP

*Member of Parliament for Bognor Regis and Littlehampton*

Mr Leigh Whitehouse  
Chief Executive  
West Sussex County Council  
County Hall  
Chichester  
West Sussex  
PO19 1RQ

Wednesday 17 December 2025

Ref: AG/TG/2512

Dear Leigh,

I write regarding the *Baltic Klipper* incident, the loss of containers and cargo, and the resulting debris washing up along the West Sussex coastline.

Having been on site myself several times, I want to begin by thanking everyone involved in the clean-up operation, not least my constituents who have been tirelessly volunteering their time and efforts to help sort out the mess. Whilst it is right that the formal response is being led by the local authorities, without the ongoing support of residents, the situation on the ground would be much worse than it already is.

However, I am concerned that not enough is being done to ensure that the wider community is being given the information it needs. I am receiving high volumes of correspondence from constituents about this, many of whom have questions which need to be answered as soon as possible. It is vital that there is openness and transparency about what is happening now to sort this out, and about what comes next.

To help me in my role as the constituency Member of Parliament, and so that I can fully understand what is happening on a day-by-day basis, I would be grateful for a standing invitation to attend all inter-agency meetings and calls coordinating the response to this incident. That includes the clean-up operation, environmental impacts, public safety concerns, cost recovery, and wider incident reviews.

It would be helpful to understand which authority is acting as the overall coordinating lead for the onshore response, and who the named lead officer is for this incident. I also want to understand what the plan is for winding down Ambipar's contractual responsibilities: who makes that decision, against what criteria, and when.



Separately, I would welcome being included at the outset when something of this scale affects the constituency, particularly where it crosses local authority boundaries. I am here to help where I can, to ensure my constituents receive clear and accurate information, and to raise questions in Parliament where necessary.

On the clean-up itself, constituents have asked whether all material will be removed, not just what is visible on the beaches. They want assurances that you are forward managing the risk of debris that may currently be waterborne or submerged coming ashore at a later date, and that you are tackling smaller fragments that are already becoming buried along the shoreline. Similarly, some have raised concerns that material is entering the Arun and potentially being redistributed more widely by tidal action.

With regards to waste, I understand that volunteers have been asked not to dispose of material through the usual household channels. However, in some locations, bags of collected debris have been left to pile up on beaches. What is being done to ensure that all waste from the clean-up is logged, removed promptly, and properly disposed of? I have also been asked where it is being disposed of; whether the use of our landfill, incineration, and recycling facilities is being recorded, and whether associated costs will form part of your wider claim?

I have been asked what work is being done to mitigate the impact on wildlife, including aquatic life and birdlife, and to assess any longer-term implications on these populations. What environmental assessments are being undertaken, what monitoring will be done once the clean-up phase has concluded, and for how long will this continue?

I know that you will be keenly aware of the need to prioritise public safety, particularly regarding material and containers that may still be waterborne. What assessments have been made about safety on affected beaches – including swimming, leisure activity and use of pleasure craft, and general access – and how is this being communicated out to ensure as wide a reach as possible?

On the costs that you are incurring, it is vital that the community is not left to pick up the tab. Residents want to know that every penny of their money that is being spent on this will be accounted for and recouped from those responsible. This needs to include staff time, contractors, equipment, waste disposal, environmental work, and any ongoing monitoring. I would also ask whether costs incurred by organised charity and wildlife groups involved in the clean-up are being considered as part of this process, where appropriate. Indeed, given the extraordinary scale of the support from the community, the suggestion might be put to the vessel's owners that they may wish to consider additional ways of recompense, above and beyond the statutory, as a gesture of goodwill. There are many worthwhile community projects across the constituency, for example.





Once the immediate situation has been dealt with, we will need to look at how this happened and why. Residents are rightly asking what went wrong, and who beyond the vessel's owners and crew bears responsibility for what has ended up on their beaches. They are also seeking a clearer understanding of the timeline, and whether a formal review of the response by local authorities will be undertaken.

I appreciate that this is landing on your desk just ahead of the Christmas holidays. However, I would be grateful for a detailed written response to the points raised above, so that I can relay clear and accurate information back to my constituents.

Yours sincerely,

Alison Griffiths MP

Member of Parliament for Bognor Regis and Littlehampton

Cc: Dawn Hudd, Chief Executive, Arun District Council  
Diane Shepherd, Chief Executive, Chichester District Council

