

Mr Carson - for info + file 10/5
Mr Loughran 9/5/00

DETI

from the Permanent Secretary
G Loughran

PSDETI 0199/00

cc PS/SOS
Mr Semple
Mr McConnell
Mr Briant
Mr McAuley
MC

To: Mr Ingram

From: G Loughran

Team 10/5
Mr Loughran 9/5 AM 15/5
To note + file 10/5

GIANT'S CAUSEWAY VISITOR CENTRE

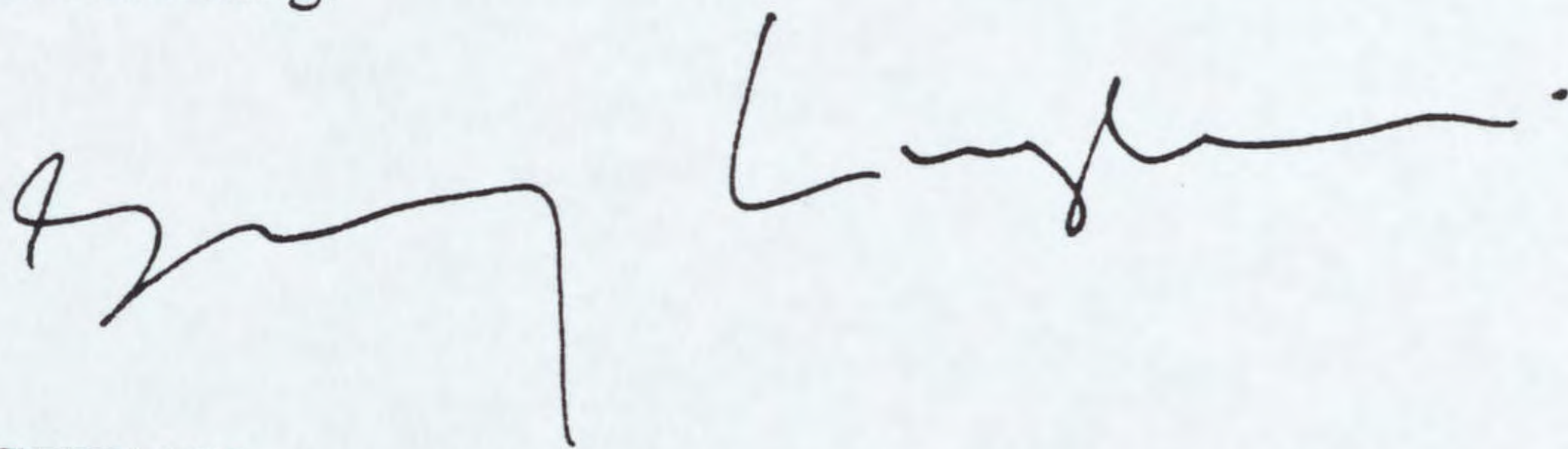
Dr Paisley, supported by Ian Paisley Jnr and Gardner Kane (Moyle District Council), called to see me this morning to discuss the position on the Giant's Causeway.

Firstly he wanted it known that he was very grateful for the clear interest that Government was showing in the solution to the problems caused by the fire at the Giant's Causeway Visitor Centre.

Dr Paisley considered that a new centre should be larger and more applicable to the modern tourism needs and not just a replacement. It would be an advantage for the tourism industry of all Northern Ireland as well as being of immense importance to the economy of the North Antrim area. He thought this was a golden opportunity. This of course accords with our own strong views. Dr Paisley also agreed that there will be a minimum of two years before the final product could be built and that in the interim reasonable temporary accommodation should be provided which would have to cater for over 1 million visitors in that period.

DEPT 1130

Interestingly Dr Paisley was of the opinion that Moyle Council had not the capacity, particularly in staffing terms, to develop innovatively a new centre. He asked for consideration of direct Departmental leadership. I explained – and he agreed – the sensitivities but I said that I had already asked the NITB to take a proactive interest at senior level. Dr Paisley responded that he would speak to Moyle Councillors and officials this afternoon and suggest that the Council should actively pursue a partnership with the Department/NITB in taking forward the project. Councillor Kane intends to propose such co-operation and that the Council should operate in conjunction with the Department/NITB at next Monday's council meeting.



GERRY LOUGHRAN

5 May 2000

