

# Flood Prevention Scheme Update

January 2011



*On Tuesday, 25th January members of Bandon Town Council met with Mr. Ezra MacManamon from the OPW. This was a very informative meeting and outlined clearly the procedure for the proposed Flood Prevention Scheme in Bandon. I was very pleased with the level of consultation with townspeople. Bandonians have a wealth of knowledge on how to solve this issue and this knowledge will be vital in developing a system that will defend our town from future flood events. Mr. MacManamon stated that he hopes work will begin on the project in January 2012. This is welcomed but the fact that Bandon will remain defenceless for another twelve months is worrying. There will need to be investment in interm measures to safeguard our community until the prevention scheme is 100% complete. Further cleaning of the river is an obvious solution that should be carried out immediately. I would urge everyone to make this issue a hot topic during the upcoming General Election. In the past year, members of our community have been lobbying all representatives to deliver both interm and long term flood prevention measures. We must now support this by ensuring that, who ever is elected to Dáil Éireann, their first job will be to deliver for Bandon.*

*Mise le meas,*

*Gearóid*

## What has happened so far?

- Announcement of Scheme by Minister Martin Mansergh - January 2010.
- Steering Group of OPW, Town & County Councils & Consultants established.
- Surveyors appointed – Maltby Land Surveys Ltd. & Terralmaging (work now completed).
- Consultants Appointed. Engineering – WYG Engineering (Ireland) Ltd, with, JBA Consulting Environmental – Ryan Hanley with, Mc Carthy, Keville, O Sullivan.
- Initial Public Consultation (25th January 2011).

## What happens now:

- Surveying must be completed (nearly finished).
- A Hydrology & Hydraulics study will be carried out. This will measure the river's capacity and indicate exactly how much water the flood prevention scheme must deal with.
- A series of options will be then proposed and analysed. If you have a solution that is valid, you should submit it now so it can be assessed.
- Solutions/measures will then go to public consultation.
- Public views will be taken into account and a decision made. The preferred scheme will then go to public consultation. The public can propose alterations to the scheme at this point.
- Bandon Town Council will then vote for the preferred scheme and programme of works.
- The scheme will then be drawn up in detail and sent to tender.
- The Minister for Finance must then sign off on funding. (Note the OPW have budgeted for these works in their three year plan).
- Scheme will then be constructed.
- The scheme will subsequently be maintained by the OPW.

# Fire Brigade saves Bandon - lessons need to be learnt from Saturday, 15th January

On Saturday 15th January last Bandon recorded a serious flood event. Hundreds of townspeople witnessed the Bandon river rise rapidly throughout the early hours of the morning. It rose two metres in the course of the day and peaked at 2.99 metres at 1.45am. This dangerous level finally began to subside at 3am.

Residents of Bridge Street and Brady's Lane, historically the first to suffer from flood events, watched on while water became backed up in the drains and flowed onto the street. Only a small number of premises were affected and the fire brigade acted fast to alleviate further damage.

I wish to pay tribute to the emergency services who acted so fast on the night. The Fire Brigade wasted no time and effort to limit the damage to property. They strategically pumped the flood water back into the river and this saved the town from serious flood damage. Both Bandon & Clonakilty Fire brigade must be applauded for acting so fast. The fire brigade pumped out a total of 1.5million gallons of water.

For many people the night resembled that of November 19th 2009 (Bandon's worst flooding on record). There was an air of déjà vu as townspeople looked on in dismay.

The Early Warning System text alert system did not operate satisfactorily. I spoke to RPS Consulting and they have stated that this was a technical issue and is currently being addressed. The new system is now under review and hopefully changes will be made soon. However, the online gauge did enable local media outlets to keep the community informed throughout the afternoon.

I have regularly raised the urgent need for a Flood Emergency Plan at Bandon Town Council meetings. Members of the community have developed a plan that has worked. The civic authorities must now develop a plan which will work in unison with the community plan. A plan that will kick into action on the threat of flooding, and most importantly a plan that the entire community (including Council, Gardaí, Civil Defence, etc.) can support and have faith in.

I urge all residents and business owners in flood prone areas to develop their own flood plan for their own property - ensuring the safety of family and employees is paramount.

It is also critical that works are carried out on the river to ensure there is not a repeat of this flood event before the long term scheme is in place. There has been much gravel and silt deposited since January 15th and this needs to be taken out immediately.

## Fisheries Blockade could be unlikely in 2011

As part of the OPW proposed works prior to developing the flood prevention scheme there will be an environmental impact study of the river. This study will look at the habitat and could indicate that dredging will not have an effect on the fish stocks in the Bandon river.



*Do you have an idea which will solve the Bandon flooding problem. Contact Cllr Gearóid Buckley today and ensure your idea is brought to the attention of the OPW and is supported on Bandon Town Council*



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If you have any further questions do not hesitate to contact me

