# Residents derail coastal railings over spoilt views as planning fears grow



# Residents Oppose Coastal Railings, Claiming Views Have Been Spoiled

In an ongoing dispute along the picturesque coastline of County Antrim, residents have voiced their frustrations over a newly erected fence that many feel obstructs their cherished coastal views. Local opinions are sharply divided, with community members and politicians alike expressing discontent, describing the structure as an eyesore that diminishes the natural beauty of the area.

The community outcry centres around an ‘ugly fence’ being promoted ostensibly for safety reasons. UUP councillor Carl McClean articulated the dilemma beautifully, acknowledging that while some form of boundary was necessary, the current design is not only unattractive but has incited a flurry of complaints from residents. According to McClean, the aesthetic impact is a significant concern, leading to 51 formal objections that question why alternative designs were not considered.

Local resident Pat Carvill echoed these sentiments, expressing disappointment at what she sees as a failure to engage with public opinion. “It feels like we’ve been ignored,” she remarked. The DUP councillor Jennifer Gilmour also raised alarms about the planning process, formally objecting to the proposal on the grounds that existing planning legislation mandates consideration of visual impact. Despite official assertions that the fence has minimal visual impact when viewed from a distance, many residents argue its presence disrupts the coastal landscape.

The planning committee did ultimately decide to defer the project, signalling that more aesthetically appealing proposals need to be brought forth by NI Water. This decision reflects broader sentiments regarding community engagement in planning decisions, not only in North Down but across various localities.

In a separate but similarly concerning context, the frustrations of local communities regarding planning and development are echoed in other parts of Northern Ireland. For example, residents in Antrim have protested against proposed developments on Bridge Street, claiming that new buildings are out of character with the area and raise concerns about flood risks. Dawn Aiken, a participant in a recent public meeting, highlighted ongoing flooding issues and lamented the lack of infrastructure improvements despite rapid development.

The strong feelings emerging from these community meetings underscore a growing frustration among residents who feel that their concerns regarding aesthetic and practical implications of new projects are often sidelined. Such discontent raises an important question about the balance between necessary infrastructure and the preservation of local character and natural heritage.

Conversely, a positive development in County Antrim has received accolades as the Randalstown Viaduct, transformed into a community garden akin to New York's High Line, showcases how thoughtful development can enhance a community. This project has been embraced by residents, promoting tourism and community well-being while maintaining the area’s heritage. Local volunteer group chair Helen Boyd spoke passionately about how the garden provides a welcome retreat from urban hustle, demonstrating that with careful planning and local engagement, it is possible to foster communal spaces that respect and enhance the landscape.

The ongoing debates around the coastal railing, the Bridge Street developments, and the Randalstown garden serve as a microcosm of broader trends in urban planning within Northern Ireland. With increasing pressures on natural spaces, the challenge remains to develop solutions that honour both community needs and environmental ethos while promoting public involvement in planning processes. Without such engagement, the future of Northern Ireland’s splendid landscapes—and the wellbeing of its communities—hangs in the balance.

## Reference Map:

* Paragraph 1 – [[1]](https://m.belfasttelegraph.co.uk/news/northern-ireland/co-antrim-residents-angered-by-new-railings-spoiling-coastal-view-it-feels-like-a-prison/a905626389.html), [[2]](https://www.belfasttelegraph.co.uk/news/northern-ireland/politicians-and-residents-frustration-over-ugly-fence-erected-on-north-down-coast-as-decision-deferred/40736063.html)
* Paragraph 2 – [[2]](https://www.belfasttelegraph.co.uk/news/northern-ireland/politicians-and-residents-frustration-over-ugly-fence-erected-on-north-down-coast-as-decision-deferred/40736063.html)
* Paragraph 3 – [[2]](https://www.belfasttelegraph.co.uk/news/northern-ireland/politicians-and-residents-frustration-over-ugly-fence-erected-on-north-down-coast-as-decision-deferred/40736063.html), [[4]](https://www.antrimguardian.co.uk/news/2024/02/09/gallery/residents-galvanise-over-bridge-street-proposals-at-public-meeting-49573/)
* Paragraph 4 – [[4]](https://www.antrimguardian.co.uk/news/2024/02/09/gallery/residents-galvanise-over-bridge-street-proposals-at-public-meeting-49573/), [[5]](https://www.belfasttelegraph.co.uk/news/northern-ireland/co-antrims-answer-to-the-high-line-in-new-york-opened/41607564.html)

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## Bibliography

1. <https://m.belfasttelegraph.co.uk/news/northern-ireland/co-antrim-residents-angered-by-new-railings-spoiling-coastal-view-it-feels-like-a-prison/a905626389.html> - Please view link - unable to able to access data
2. <https://www.belfasttelegraph.co.uk/news/northern-ireland/politicians-and-residents-frustration-over-ugly-fence-erected-on-north-down-coast-as-decision-deferred/40736063.html> - Residents and politicians in North Down have expressed frustration over the erection of an 'ugly fence' along the coast. UUP councillor Carl McClean acknowledged the necessity of a fence but criticized its aesthetic impact, describing it as 'very ugly' and a source of numerous complaints. Local resident Pat Carvill highlighted the lack of consideration for alternative designs, noting that 51 objections had been submitted, questioning the dismissal of public opinion. DUP councillor Jennifer Gilmour formally objected to the application, citing planning legislation and emphasizing the fence's excessive and obstructive nature. The planning committee deferred the decision, urging NI Water to present more aesthetically pleasing proposals. A council officer noted minimal visual impact but acknowledged the fence's requirement for health and safety reasons. The officer also mentioned that the fence's design blends into the landscape when viewed from a distance. ([belfasttelegraph.co.uk](https://www.belfasttelegraph.co.uk/news/northern-ireland/politicians-and-residents-frustration-over-ugly-fence-erected-on-north-down-coast-as-decision-deferred/40736063.html?utm_source=openai))
3. <https://armaghi.com/news/dungannon-news/judge-criticises-freeman-of-the-land-defences-after-dungannon-man-says-he-is-supreme-being/231157> - In a Dungannon Magistrates’ Court case, District Judge Michael Ranaghan criticized the use of 'Freeman of the Land' and 'Supreme Being' defenses. The defendant, Paul Kevin Canavan, 41, claimed to be a 'supreme being' and refused to consent to the charges. Judge Ranaghan described such tactics as 'pseudo-legal nonsense' and emphasized that the defendant was not above the law. He noted that Canavan's behavior had consistently wasted court time and public resources, and warned that such conduct could result in costs being awarded against him. The judge advised the defendant to seek legal advice rather than relying on internet-sourced defenses. ([armaghi.com](https://armaghi.com/news/dungannon-news/judge-criticises-freeman-of-the-land-defences-after-dungannon-man-says-he-is-supreme-being/231157?utm_source=openai))
4. <https://www.antrimguardian.co.uk/news/2024/02/09/gallery/residents-galvanise-over-bridge-street-proposals-at-public-meeting-49573/> - Residents in Antrim have expressed concerns over proposed developments on Bridge Street. At a public meeting, attendees criticized the size and architectural style of the proposed buildings, stating they were out of character with the surroundings. There were also worries about increased flooding risks and inadequate sewage systems. Dawn Aiken, a local resident, highlighted previous flooding issues and the lack of promised infrastructure improvements. Attendees voiced frustrations about the town's development, expressing that it was becoming a commuter town with insufficient services. Objection letters were distributed for residents to sign and submit to the council. ([antrimguardian.co.uk](https://www.antrimguardian.co.uk/news/2024/02/09/gallery/residents-galvanise-over-bridge-street-proposals-at-public-meeting-49573/?utm_source=openai))
5. <https://www.belfasttelegraph.co.uk/news/northern-ireland/co-antrims-answer-to-the-high-line-in-new-york-opened/41607564.html> - The Randalstown Viaduct in Co Antrim has been transformed into a community garden, drawing comparisons to New York's High Line. The project repurposed the iconic heritage landmark into a picturesque space aimed at boosting tourism and the local economy. The garden features seating areas and spaces for workshops, maintained by an intergenerational team. Helen Boyd, chair of the local volunteer group, emphasized the garden's role as a restorative space for the community, providing fresh air and beautiful plants away from busy roads. The initiative reflects a collaborative effort to revitalize the area and enhance community well-being. ([belfasttelegraph.co.uk](https://www.belfasttelegraph.co.uk/news/northern-ireland/co-antrims-answer-to-the-high-line-in-new-york-opened/41607564.html?utm_source=openai))