# Bettystown flood defence plans stall amid mounting community pressure after home losses



The recent developments in Bettystown's flood defence strategy highlight the urgent efforts to prevent a recurrence of devastating flooding that has severely impacted the community. Following significant flooding events in August and October 2023, where over 30 homes were destroyed, local authorities, in collaboration with the Office of Public Works (OPW) and engineering consultants RPS, have embarked on an ambitious flood mitigation project aimed at safeguarding residents and properties along the east coast.

The proposed plan encompasses a new storm pump station, channels, embankments, walls, and the creation of a designated floodplain. At a recent meeting of the Laytown/Bettystown Municipal District, councillors received an update on this project, detailing its multistage approach. The first phase involves thorough data collection and a review of local hydrology, followed by recommendations and proposals for actionable measures. RPS Consulting Engineers’ contributions emphasise the necessity for structural changes, including new embankments and channels, to effectively mitigate future flood risks.

Councillors expressed their frustration regarding the delays in implementing these vital measures, noting the emotional toll on residents who have been living with the spectre of flooding looming over them. Fine Gael’s Councillor Sharon Tolan articulated the community's distress, stating that the prolonged anxieties over every storm event are unendurable. “Every single storm that we get, every high tide, every time it rains, people are checking what time the tide is in at. That’s no way to live for anybody,” she remarked. Tolan underscored the need for rapid progress to alleviate the situation, stressing the importance of coordination in implementing the comprehensive scheme.

There is a clear acknowledgment of the legacy issues stemming from past land zoning decisions that have compounded the flooding risk, particularly in areas such as Northlands. Councillor Wayne Harding highlighted this challenge, pointing to the flawed planning that placed homes in proximity to tidal streams. This oversight stresses the need for caution in future zoning decisions, with fellow councillor Paddy Meade agreeing that there must be no further residential developments on floodplains.

The flood event in August has been pivotal in shaping the response and defensive strategies going forward. It facilitated the gathering of crucial data for future flood defence design, ensuring that the community’s needs are fundamentally addressed. In a broader context, the recent conversation around the establishment of a National Flood Support Fund reflects the rising recognition of government responsibility in providing assistance to those affected by climate-related disasters.

Looking ahead, the opportune removal of older flood defences and their replacement with more effective measures will contribute to a long-term solution that prioritises community safety over short-term fixes. The goal is to have the report finalised and move towards environmental assessments and detailed designs by early next year, yet concerns remain about how quickly these recommendations can manifest into tangible results.

Ultimately, while the proposed flood defence works in Bettystown promise to bring hope to a community beleaguered by flooding, realization of these plans hinges not only on the technical execution but also on time-sensitive political will and community engagement. The path forward must blend urgency with sustainability to ensure that the mistakes of the past do not echo into the future.

### Reference Map

1. Paragraph 1 - [[1]](https://www.meathchronicle.ie/2025/05/22/moves-on-east-coast-flood-defence-works-a-long-time-coming/), [[2]](https://www.meathchronicle.ie/2023/08/10/opw-and-meath-co-council-meet-to-discuss-measures-to-manage-flood-risk-in-the-bettystown-mornington-area/)
2. Paragraph 2 - [[1]](https://www.meathchronicle.ie/2025/05/22/moves-on-east-coast-flood-defence-works-a-long-time-coming/), [[3]](https://www.meathchronicle.ie/2023/08/07/over-30-homes-destroyed-by-flooding-in-bettystown/)
3. Paragraph 3 - [[1]](https://www.meathchronicle.ie/2025/05/22/moves-on-east-coast-flood-defence-works-a-long-time-coming/), [[5]](https://www.meathchronicle.ie/2025/01/23/cllrs-dismay-at-delay-in-tackling-flooding-threat-in-bettystown/)
4. Paragraph 4 - [[1]](https://www.meathchronicle.ie/2025/05/22/moves-on-east-coast-flood-defence-works-a-long-time-coming/), [[7]](https://www.meathchronicle.ie/2023/10/23/second-flood-event-in-weeks-devastates-bettystown-housing-estates/)
5. Paragraph 5 - [[1]](https://www.meathchronicle.ie/2025/05/22/moves-on-east-coast-flood-defence-works-a-long-time-coming/), [[6]](https://www.meathchronicle.ie/2023/08/10/bettystown-flood-event-will-provide-vital-and-necessary-data-in-designing-further-flood-defence-measures-opw/)
6. Paragraph 6 - [[4]](https://www.meathchronicle.ie/2023/10/20/tolan-calls-for-national-flood-support-fund-to-be-established/), [[2]](https://www.meathchronicle.ie/2023/08/10/opw-and-meath-co-council-meet-to-discuss-measures-to-manage-flood-risk-in-the-bettystown-mornington-area/)
7. Paragraph 7 - [[1]](https://www.meathchronicle.ie/2025/05/22/moves-on-east-coast-flood-defence-works-a-long-time-coming/), [[6]](https://www.meathchronicle.ie/2023/08/10/bettystown-flood-event-will-provide-vital-and-necessary-data-in-designing-further-flood-defence-measures-opw/)

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## Bibliography

1. <https://www.meathchronicle.ie/2025/05/22/moves-on-east-coast-flood-defence-works-a-long-time-coming/> - Please view link - unable to able to access data
2. <https://www.meathchronicle.ie/2023/08/10/opw-and-meath-co-council-meet-to-discuss-measures-to-manage-flood-risk-in-the-bettystown-mornington-area/> - In August 2023, the Office of Public Works (OPW) and Meath County Council met to discuss managing flood risks in the Bettystown/Mornington area. Following severe flooding that destroyed over 30 homes in Bettystown, the OPW reviewed short-term measures and began designing an augmented flood relief scheme as part of the Government’s €1.3 billion investment in flood relief under the National Development Plan. The collaboration with engineering consultants RPS aims to address the immediate and long-term flood risks in the region.
3. <https://www.meathchronicle.ie/2023/08/07/over-30-homes-destroyed-by-flooding-in-bettystown/> - In August 2023, torrential rain combined with high tides led to severe flooding in Bettystown, destroying over 30 homes. Emergency services assisted residents, and local authorities called for urgent flood prevention measures. Councillor Sharon Tolan highlighted the severity of the situation, noting that most homes in the Village Estate were affected. The flooding underscored the need for effective flood mitigation strategies in the area.
4. <https://www.meathchronicle.ie/2023/10/20/tolan-calls-for-national-flood-support-fund-to-be-established/> - In October 2023, Councillor Sharon Tolan called for the establishment of a National Flood Support Fund to assist homeowners affected by flooding not covered by insurance. She criticized the existing Humanitarian Assistance Scheme for being means-tested and insufficient for those impacted by climate change and development. Tolan emphasized the financial and emotional toll on residents and urged the government to act swiftly to support flood victims.
5. <https://www.meathchronicle.ie/2025/01/23/cllrs-dismay-at-delay-in-tackling-flooding-threat-in-bettystown/> - In January 2025, Meath County Councilors expressed frustration over the lack of progress in addressing flooding threats in Bettystown. Despite previous severe flooding events in August and October 2023, the Office of Public Works (OPW) had yet to implement effective measures. The councilors criticized the slow pace of action and called for immediate flood prevention works to protect residents and properties in the area.
6. <https://www.meathchronicle.ie/2023/08/10/bettystown-flood-event-will-provide-vital-and-necessary-data-in-designing-further-flood-defence-measures-opw/> - Following the August 2023 flooding in Bettystown, the Office of Public Works (OPW) stated that the event provided vital data for designing further flood defense measures. The OPW, Meath County Council, and engineering consultants RPS collaborated to review short-term and long-term strategies to manage flood risks in the area. The data collected from the flooding event was considered essential for informing future flood relief schemes.
7. <https://www.meathchronicle.ie/2023/10/23/second-flood-event-in-weeks-devastates-bettystown-housing-estates/> - In October 2023, a second major flooding event in less than three months devastated Bettystown housing estates. Torrential rain combined with high tides led to significant flooding, affecting homes in areas such as the Golf Links Road and the Village Estate. Councillor Sharon Tolan called for the publication of the OPW report on the previous flood event and emphasized the need for a comprehensive flood relief scheme to protect residents.