

Crossmolina Flood Alleviation Scheme  
Department of Public Expenditure and Reform

Comments on the proposed OPW Scheme.

A Chara,

The concern of the people in Crossmolina is “**What is the Maximum Depth of Water**” that will be allowed to flow through the town under the proposed scheme. This question has been asked several times in public meetings and privately. Personally I have asked it three times in the past two months and each time I have got the same answer “*I don’t have that figure but I will get it from the consultants and pass it on to you*”. I have still not got any answer.

The term “**100 year flood**” or its equivalents as used by the OPW is one with which we have become very familiar since 1982. However it is one that as they use it is quite meaningless. Over the last forty years the “100 year Flood” has been exceeded frequently. Most recently twice in December 2015. In the flood of 15/16th of December 2016 the flood water inside my house reached a depth of approximately 1m. This is equivalent to a rise of 6m above the normal level of the river.

**The proposed scheme has a critical inherent weakness.** It depends on the automatic operation of additional gates to allow higher than usual flood waters to flow down the bypass channel. This in turn depends on continuous and effective maintenance of these gates and their controlling mechanisms. In meetings with the OPW we were told that these gates would be electronically controlled by sensors placed in the town. This raises a number of difficulties,

- Maintenance
  - Of the gates,
    - Frequency of maintenance – more than once a year
    - Efficacy of the maintenance – quality and diligence of the work
    - Responsibility, check list and monitoring of the work
    - Extent, surroundings, cut back grass and brush
- Communications
  - Hostile environment,
    - wet, damp, cold
    - Subject to interference from animals, children and others.
  - Effectiveness of the communication, regardless of where the sensors are placed the gates themselves are located in a hollow between several hills.
  - Wired broadband is not yet available at the site.

Initial discussions with the OPW identified a number of schemes. Most of these were agreed, for various reasons, to be impractical. This left the by pass option as the preferred scheme. One of the reasons why this was designed as a bypass channel rather than a diversion of the river was to ensure that the Deel would continue to have a cleansing effect on Crossmolina town and down stream installations, viz. the Crossmolina Sewage Works up stream of Knockadine bridge. As regards Crossmolina town a flow depth of 1.5m at the bridge is sufficient to keep the town clean. Raising the question of why the scheme was not designed to ensure that this would be the maximum depth allowed through the town in any eventuality. Such a design would ensure that Crossmolina would be safe from flooding regardless of the OPW's inability to forecast the "100 year flood" level into the future.

Thank you for your patience,

John Garrett

