

BUILDING COMMUNITY
RESILIENCE TO
FLOODING

TOWN HALL REPORT 2024

Presented By
**Youghal Blue and
Green Community
Network**



Community Resilience
Planning for Future

Town Hall

Thursday 14th M

Mall Arts Centre, Y

Refreshments f

Join us for a Q&A with a panel of experts
preparing Youghal for rising sea levels

Booking Essential

info@youghalblueandgreen.com



YOUGHAL
BLUE & GREEN
Community Network

Introduction

On November 14th 2024 an open town hall public meeting was organised to explore and discuss community needs and responses to future flood events. This event was organised by the Youghal Blue & Green Community Network. The meeting was attended by approximately 55 people and allowed time for networking at the outset, Creative Ireland Pathways Project Youghal art display, presentation of local flood maps, a sound installation to open the event and graphic harvesting by an artist who captured the essence of the meeting. The meeting itself was divided into two parts; one giving scientific and community inputs in relation to flooding and the second part was organised around thematic focus groups. Here is a summary of the evening:

Chairperson: Aoife Deane, MaREI, UCC

Panelists:

Professor Robert Devoy, UCC

Jordan Delmar, Met Eireann

David Moran, Office of Public Works

Veronica Santorum, Youghal Creative Ireland project

Caroline Leahy, Middleton Flood Protection Group

Mary Linehan Foley, Local Councillor

Panelists and Volunteers

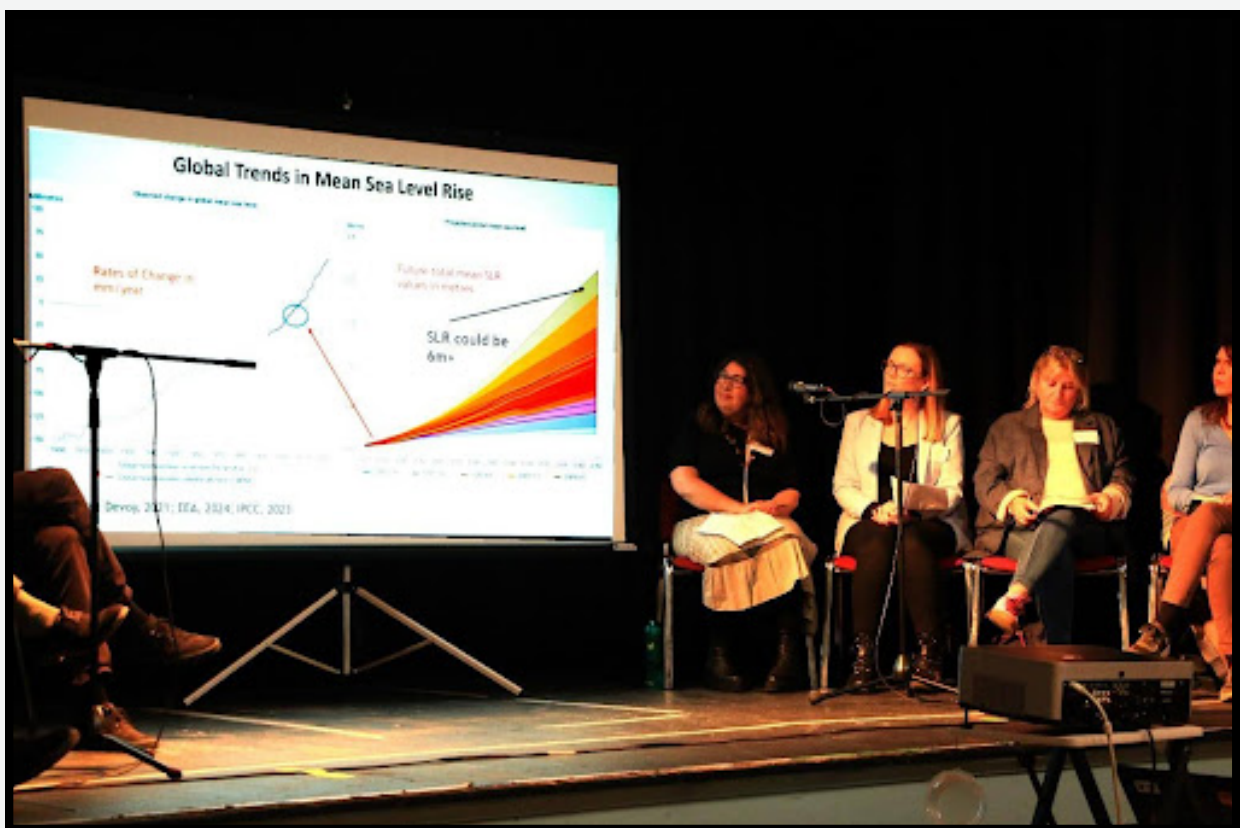


Powerpoint presentations where used are available from all speakers at <https://www.youghalblueandgreennetwork.ie/>

The second half of the evening had four thematic focus groups, each group had its own facilitator and notetaker, provided by volunteers of the Network. The themes chosen for discussion were: Prevent, Prepare, Respond, Recover.

Below are the main discussion points from each focus group. The evening ended with a short summary of the findings and with 32 people signed up to continue the work of developing a community resilience plan for flooding in Youghal, in 2025.

Presentation on rising sea levels



Thematic Focus Groups – summary of findings:

1. Prevent

What does Community Action look like?

- Put up flood barriers at individual houses
- Build flood wall along quays – tranche 2 in OPW plan i.e. Buttimmers Quay, (aka Green's Quay/Macdonalds Quay)
- Plan to put drain on Buttimmers Dock. This is in court at the moment, as concern over pollution of muscle beds.
- Increase dykes on farm land
- Keep drains cleared - fine sand blocks the drains, e.g. on Strand Street and Mall
- Quay needs dredging
- Future developments need risk assessments for flooding
- Allow marshes to absorb water
- Don't tarmac front and back gardens - allow soakage
- The streets have been tarmacked many times over the years so that the level of the streets are now higher, potentially increasing risk to houses
- Move and to live somewhere else?
- Repair groynes at Claycastle beach. The sand from the beach is moving to market dock, if this is slowed down then dredging would be less necessary
- Sand in the Mall Dock is acting like a sponge - should not be taken out
- Sandbag collection and delivery at several well-advertised locations

What community supports are needed?

- Local group to identify measures and feed into Cork County Council
- Help needed in putting up flood barriers
- Grant for the purchase of flood barriers
- Council need to clear drains, review and maintain drains regularly
- Neighbours could take turns to clear drains
- People to report on the state of blocked drains
- People need to know who to call
- Ask the immigrant communities to help in return for a stipend

“Prevent” breakout group



2. Prepare

What does Community Action look like?

- Being ready in your own home
- Fishermen have good knowledge of the sea, they give advice to those passing i.e. Credit Union, Cumann na Daoine, when they suspect a flood is coming
- Localised information on rising levels and risks of flooding
- Local knowledge
- Direction of winds is a big factor in flooding
- River gauges online can be monitored to see height of rivers
- Transfer of information between Youghal - Mogeely - Middleton etc., surrounding areas and experiences
- Being vigilant - knowing the signs of flooding – increasing awareness
- Being educated on what to do
- Unique response needed for each area
- Put a plan together and get it out to the community
- Practical preparation, access to sandbags
- Leaflet info on access to sandbags
- Have sandbags accessible, make sure they are stored properly i.e. under a cover
- Emergency pack at home - an emergency bag and an emergency plan
- Emergency response - Drains reporting system - Alert system for flooding
- A Flood response group in Youghal
- Local radio
- Social media
- Support/Emergency plan
- Citizens monitor levels of sea and river
- Creative events as a lighter way of introducing/learning about flooding

What community supports are needed?

- Midleton Group would support a Youghal group
- Creation of community sandbag depots, a few around town. Credit Union would have one in their yard - would need the council to provide the sandbags.
- Ask the Council to work with key community group to develop a joint plan
- Important to act now prior to a flooding event
- Tips and advice on a leaflet - keep on fridge

“Prepare” breakout group



3. Respond

What does Community Action look like?

- Take action yourself so you are available to help others
- Making emergency numbers available in every household
- Create local networks (online/physical) to share flood warnings & support strategies
- Use multiple warning systems to support people who are deaf or vulnerable
- Local people keeping drains clear in their own area - not enough Council staff to do this
- Know your neighbours and keep them in mind during floods
- Support leaders in local communities (estates/streets) who know where resources can be found
- In the longer term, abandon properties - sacrifice areas
- Forward planning for the next flood
- Identifying community locations where people can go if flooded out
- Roads need to be closed as soon as possible to prevent people driving through floods and pushing water into houses

What community supports are needed?

- Support for those who have to abandon their homes
- Places at risk should have sandbags delivered
- Need to see ourselves and local citizens in partnership with our local council
- Everyone should have contact emergency numbers and understand the role of various emergency services
- Clarify how to get sandbags
- Knowing each other and building support networks within local communities.
- Having someone to call if a person is away from their home or on holiday during a flood

4. Recover

What does Community Action look like?

- Create Flood Action Group for Youghal to plan, prepare and help out
- Need skips to dump destroyed carpets etc
- Help cleaning and clearing
- Stop cars going through flooded areas - driving water back into homes
- Close roads
- Clear plan to know what has to be done especially as people will be in high levels of stress
- Local coordination
- One stop shop for flood response + one phone number
- Community centre open - volunteers gather here to coordinate response, where to go
- Multi layered approach - different organisations, different roles
- Audit in advance what needs to be done - carry out drills
- Register of houses in danger of flooding - contact details for these to central group

What community supports are needed?

- Drains to be cleared regularly
- Sluices/drain wardens
- Docks need to be dredged
- Installation of groynes
- County Council support with local community coordination group
- Town hall can be contacted about warnings, Crisis team in council 24/7, HSE emergency services, OPW – info leaflet needs to collate all relevant info.
- Community Radio can be used to communicate alerts etc
- Pest control in aftermath
- Counselling and support group services
- Firsts Aid Services
- Response time is critical

“Respond” breakout group



“Recover” breakout group



Other points raised by attendees

- Lift Manhole covers
- Sewage comes up in back gardens after rain
- Concern about solar farm 1000 acres covering current drainage in banks of Tourig River
- Sign up for warning system
- Stop/reroute traffic

Recommendations

There are several key themes emerging:

1. Initially:

- Need for one plan to highlight the responses required for future flood events by the Council and by the Community – need buy in by all including one local co-ordination group
- Need for one alert system that people can sign up to
- Need for guidelines/instructions on what to do if preparing for floods and if flooded
- Need to know where to get sandbags/other resources
- Need to know where to get help and support

2. Subsequently:

- Need for a plan which incorporates prevention and mitigation measures (most of which are the responsibility of state agencies) e.g. clearing drains, widen wetlands, maintain groynes, build hard flood defences, etc.

3. Next Steps: Invite all those interested to attend a meeting end of January/early February to:

- Agree the findings of this report
- Agree the key themes emerging above
- Agree the steps required to develop a community resilience plan for Youghal
- Seek commitment to bi-monthly meetings by local volunteers and Council departments
- Secure resources to coordinate the development of a plan – this will take a number of months/year to achieve

Acknowledgements

This event and report would not have been possible without the the efforts of our volunteers and everyone who gave their time on the evening.

A special thank you to Aoife Deane MaREI, Professor Robert Devoy, UCC Jordan Delmar Met Eireann, David Moran Office of Public Works, Veronica Santorum and Daniel Clancy Youghal Creative Ireland Pathways Project, Caroline Leahy Midleton Flood Protection Group, Mary Linehan Foley Local Councillor, Hazel Hurley, Lorraine Hogan, Noreen Brennan, Angela Glen, Hayley Fox-Roberts, Irene Tanner, Julie O'Shea, Yvonne Smith, Ithel McKenna, Martina Flavin, Living Youghal, Cork County Council, Le Gourmet Café, Cumann Na Daoine, and all network members of the Youghal Blue and Green Community Network

Attendees in breakout groups



Feedback from breakout groups to the room



Pathways Artwork Hanging in the Town Hall Atrium



Graphic Harvesting from the Town Hall



Useful links

- <https://www.floodinfo.ie/map/floodmaps/>
- <https://www.hpsc.ie/a-z/environmentandhealth/severeweatherevents/flooding/>
- <https://www.met.ie/warnings-today.html>
- <https://www.rte.ie/player/series/10-things-to-know-about/S10000000009?epguid=A110006667-10-0005>
- <https://www.youghalblueandgreennetwork.ie/>