



Opening Public Participation Day - Consultation Report

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**OPW**

Oifig na
nOibreacha Poiblí
Office of Public Works



Comhairle Contae Chorcaí
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Revision History

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Contract

This report describes work commissioned by Office of Public Works (OPW), on behalf of Cork County Council (CCC). Elizabeth Russell and Ben Murphy of JBA Consulting carried out this work.

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Purpose

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Table of Contents

1	Introduction	1
	1.1 Purpose of Report.....	1
	1.2 Event Details.....	1
2	Promoting the Event.....	2
	2.1 Overview	2
	2.2 Means of Promotion.....	2
3	On the Day	3
	3.1 Project team representation.....	3
	3.2 Supporting Material.....	3
	3.3 Attendance.....	3
4	Feedback received	4
	4.1 Questionnaire analysis	4
5	Summary of PPD	4
	5.1 Practical arrangements	4
	5.2 Input to the scheme development	4
	Appendix A – PPD Presentation	5

List of Figures

Figure 4-1: Question 1	4
Figure 4-2: Question 2	5
Figure 4-4: Question 8	1
Figure 4-5: Question 9	2

List of Table

Table 4-1: Question 3	6
Table 4-2: Question 6	0

1 Introduction

1.1 Purpose of Report

The first project Public Participation Day (PPD) for the Bantry Flood Relief Scheme was held on Wednesday 18 May 2022. This report presents the details of the PPD itself and provides a summary of the feedback received.

1.2 Event Details

Aims	The purpose of the opening PPD was to raise awareness of the project, seek initial views from the public and other interested parties in relation to the key issues that the study should address, the options to manage the flood risk in the area, including the Scheme proposed in the FRMP, to highlight points of local importance that might constrain the design and/or viability of any potential flood alleviation measures, collate information on any flood events that have occurred since the CFRAM Study was undertaken with particular reference to the flood event of the August 2020, and to find out about other flooding incidents.
Venue	Áras Beantraí, Wolfe Tone Square, Bantry, P75TD82
Date and Time	Wednesday 18 May 2pm - Set up by project team 3-4pm – Invited elected members – presentation and discussion 4-8pm – Public drop-in 8pm - Close
Target Audience	Any and all interested parties, including political stakeholders.
Event Format	Opening presentation to invited elected members Registration (host role) and one-to-one or small group discussions Drop-in format, which included presentations by project team at 5pm and 7pm. Information stand / posters set-up

2 Promoting the Event

2.1 Overview

A variety of means of promoting / advertising the workshop were used to increase awareness of the day and aim to maximise attendance. It was anticipated that this event would be well supported by elected members and local residents and businesses.

2.2 Means of Promotion

Direct contact	Direct contact and word of mouth was useful as the community, and housing estates, are relatively small. This helped spread the message between people who had seen leaflets / posters and those who had not.
Project Websites	Information in relation to the PPD was uploaded to the study website along with appropriate supporting materials. After the event, all posters and a copy of the questionnaire was also uploaded.
Local Authority mechanisms	CCC promoted the event through: Upload of information to CCC website Announcements on social media
Poster campaign	Posters were displayed in cafes, churches, schools, supermarkets, post offices, garda stations, community centres, libraries etc.
Mail drop	Approximately 150 letters were distributed to residential properties
Media campaign	A press release was issued to the local media in advance of the event, reporting on the contract signing and advertising the PPD. This was published in the Southern Star newspaper and adverts were run on 103fm. The Echo also published an article on 11/05/22 publicizing the event. Follow up articles were also published.
Social Media	Social media sites, such as Facebook Groups, provided opportunities to promote messages and information about the Study. Several local groups were contacted to promote the event.

Attendees reported hearing about the event from a range of sources, including newspapers, facebook, posters through town, letters through the door, parish newsletter and word of mouth.

3 On the Day

3.1 Project team representation

There were 10 representatives from the project team (Cork County Council, OPW, and the JBB/JBA joint venture).

3.2 Supporting Material

The following materials were available on the day:

- Copy of the questionnaire - handed to each attendee on arrival
- Series of posters which covered the following topics:
 - Introduction to the project, including background, programme, statutory stages and opportunities for further involvement
 - Background to the ecological, archaeological and heritage challenges specific to the scheme
 - Examples of similar works (such as flood walls and embankments)
 - Maps of both Bantry Town itself and the wider Bantry catchment showing a boundary of where we consider measures may be implemented
- Copies of the posters were subsequently uploaded to the website.
- Posters presenting various general topics, including different flood management options

3.3 Attendance

59 attendees were recorded on the sign in sheet with several more in attendance who did not sign in.

25 questionnaires were received either on the day, or by post/email after the event.

4 Feedback received

4.1 Questionnaire analysis

There were 20 questionnaires returned on the day and another 5 posted/emailed back to JBA Consulting offices, although every attendee was given a questionnaire and they were also made available on the project website following the event.

The responses to the various questions are summarised below.

4.1.1 Question 1

Have you been affected by flooding? Which of the following best describes you? Please tick

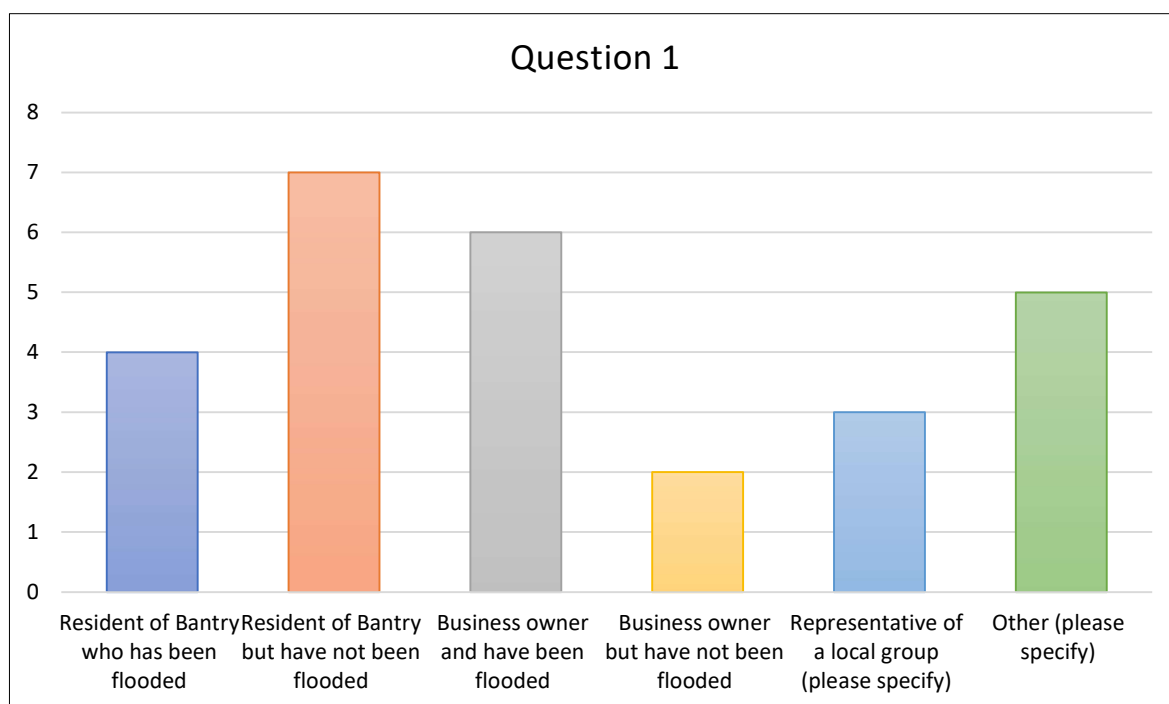


Figure 4-1: Question 1

One of the respondents did not indicate an option and two respondents indicated being a 'Resident of Bantry who has been flooded' and a 'Business owner who has been flooded'. Five of the attendees indicated 'Other' and can be broken down as follows; two attendees were from outside the study area, one attendee indicated they were within the study area but part of the wider catchment, one attendee indicated that they were a local resident and one attendee indicated as been a 'Resident of Bantry but have not been flooded' and 'Other'.

4.1.2 Question 2

Which area of Bantry or the wider study area is of most interest to you? Please specify 'whole town', or a particular area or road. The Scheme Area Map is available in the presentations and the website (Project Information).

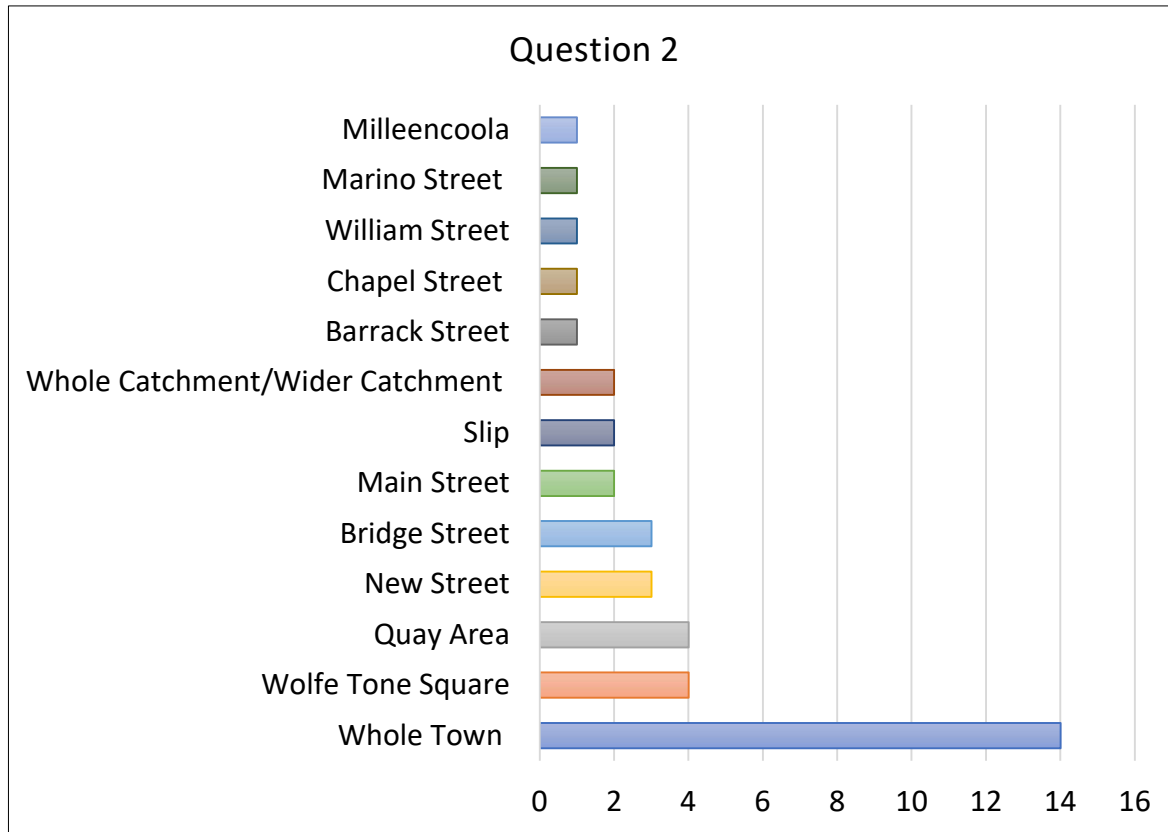


Figure 4-2: Question 2

The responses to Question 2 indicate that stakeholders are interested in Bantry Town as a whole.

4.1.3 Question 3

If you have been flooded, what impact did it have on your property? i.e. where did it happen, how did it happen (point of ingress), and when did it happen? Please indicate which year(s)?

There were eight responses to Question 3. The has been summarised in Table 4-1 below.

Table 4-1: Question 3

Impact	Location	Flood Mechanism	Date
-	Wolfe Tone Square	High Tides	2020
Thousands of euros of stock damage. Minimal property damage but required extensive cleaning	-	-	-
Water came in at front door and flooded to back of shop	Bridge Street	-	2020
-	-	-	Autumn 2020 Spring 2021 December 2021
Flood water came in from back where Alley River flows and went out the front of building onto Main street	Main Street	Fluvial (Alley River)	Early 2000's
Considerable damage to flooring, stock and some liftings	New Street	-	Aug-20
Damaged Contents	-	-	-
Water coming through doors and maybe through floor	Wolfe Tone Square	-	-

4.1.4 Question 4

Do you have any thoughts on how flooding should be managed in Bantry?

There were a range of proposals to managing flooding in Bantry but nearly all respondents included following best practice for nature based solutions, river maintenance, dredging of inner Bantry Bay around Quay area and culvert upgrade/maintenance in their answers.

4.1.5 Question 5

Is there any information that you think we should take into account as we tackle the issues of flooding and work with you to develop solutions in Bantry?

The themes arising from Question 5 are similar to the answers in Question 4. The main theme that is prevalent is nature based solutions. Land use management was also mentioned with emphasis on soft engineering as opposed to hard engineering. The protection of businesses and livelihoods was mentioned, with many respondents seeking short-term and long-term solutions. The importance of Bantry's cultural, heritage and tourism sectors was a key topic in Question 5. Bantry's culvert system is also a concern for stakeholders. Keeping communication transparent throughout the project lifecycle is an important aspect to the stakeholders.

4.1.6 Question 6

In your opinion, how important are the following in the development of a Flood Relief Scheme: (please tick appropriate boxes)

Table 4-2: Question 6

	Very Important	Important	Moderately Important	Of Little Importance	Unimportant
Flood Protection					
Impacts of tidal flooding	22	2			
Impacts of river flooding (fluvial) floods	20	4			
Impacts of surface and street run-off flooding (pluvial)	14	8	2		
Impacts of storm drainage flooding	18	3	2		
Impacts of foul sewer flooding	20	1	2		
Being prepared for the impacts of climate change giving higher river levels	20	4			
Community					
Safety of population	20	3			
Protection of homes and business	20	4			
Environment					
Protecting plants, animals and their habitats	14	6	2		
Local fisheries and angling	11	8	3		
Maintain or improve water quality in watercourses	19	2	1		
Social & Economic					
Local economy and employment (including port operations)	16	6	2		
Disruption to businesses during construction works	12	8	4		
Bantry Market	10	4	8	1	
Cultural					
Architectural heritage	13	9	2		
Coastal views	14	6	4		
Views to rivers and watercourse	8	9	5		
Access to Sand Quays and seafront facilities	10	9	2		1
Recreation (walking, sailing, sports etc.)	11	9	1		
Layout and design of Wolfe Square or other public spaces	12	5	4	1	

4.1.7 Question 7

Please use the space add any other comments or elaborate on any of your previous answers

The themes from Question 7 reflect the answers given in Questions 4 & 5. The themes include

- Business owners/residents do not want a scheme that is detrimental to functioning of Bantry Town
- Nature based solutions outside of Bantry Town i.e managing flows further up the catchment before flood water can enter the town which would be beneficial to attract eco-tourism to Bantry
- Local knowledge and the community to be involved throughout the project
- Lessons learnt from other Flood Relief Schemes

4.1.8 Question 8

Contact details for the project team are at the end of this questionnaire. Let us know how you would like us to keep you informed about the project as it develops?

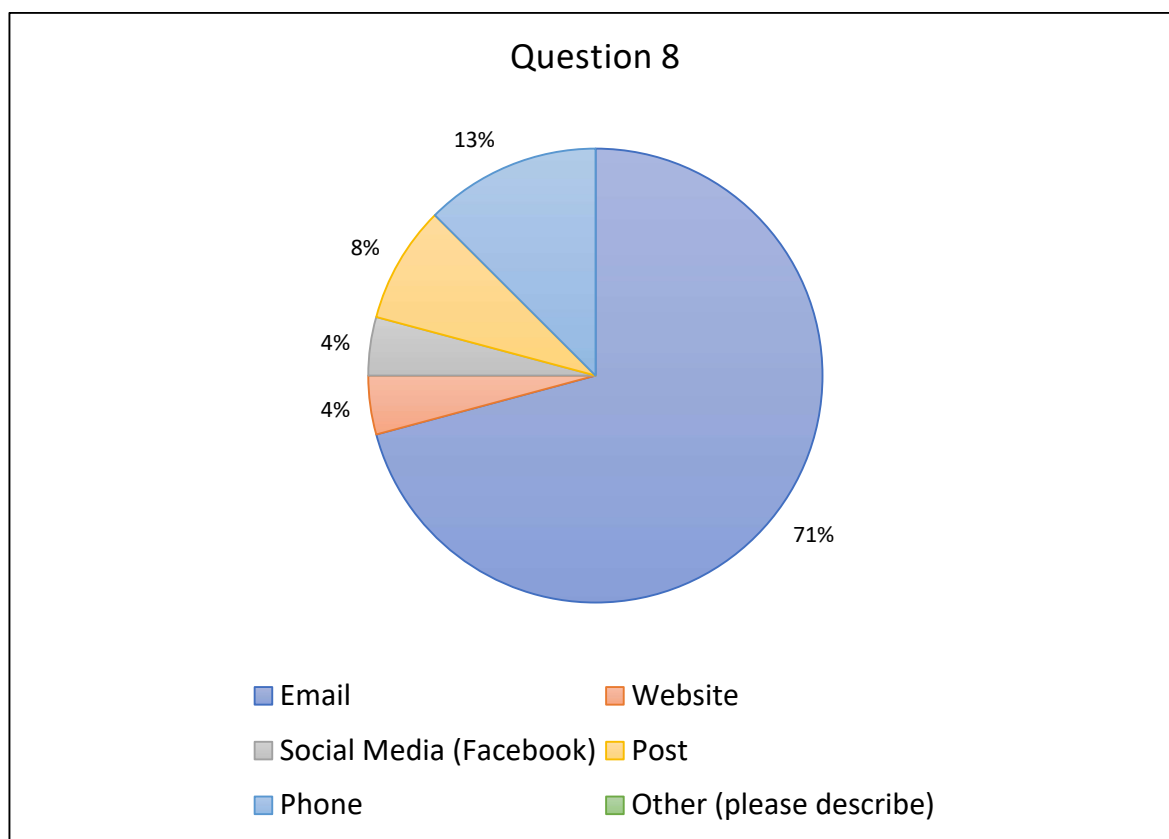


Figure 4-3: Question 8

4.1.9 Question 9

How did you hear about today?

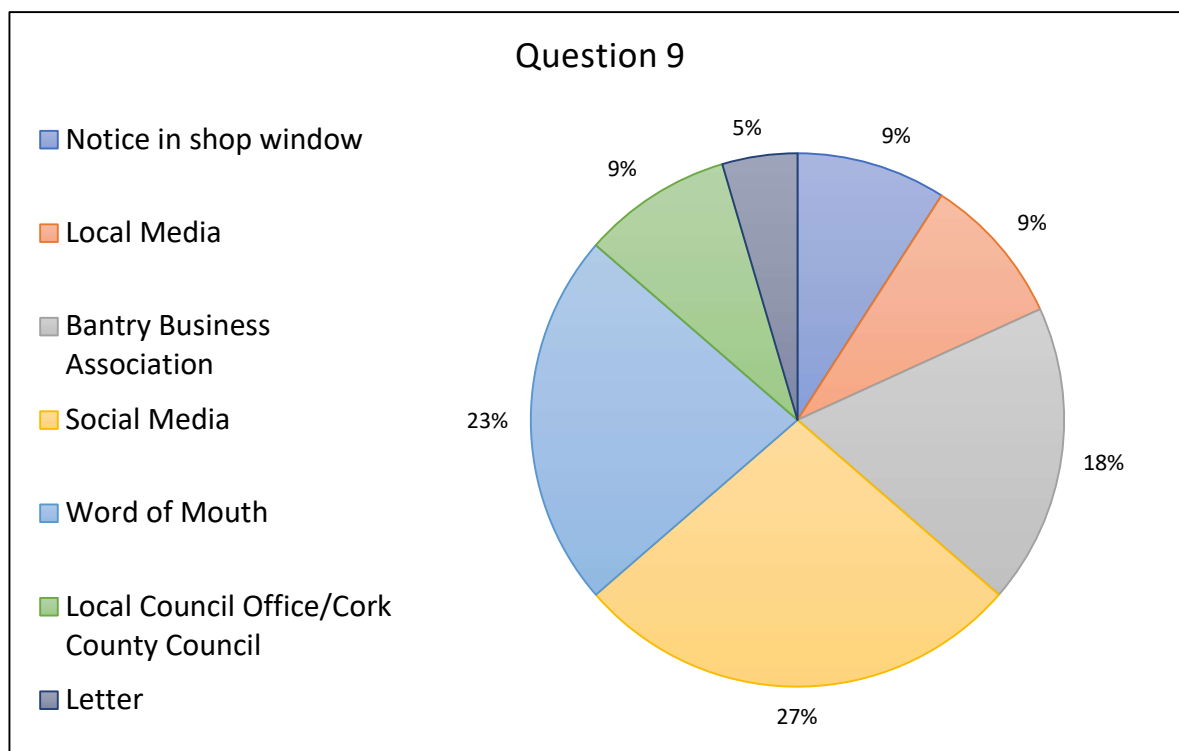


Figure 4-4: Question 9

4.1.10 Question 10

Getting in contact with you again could be very useful to the project team for the following reasons:

- Notifying you of future consultation opportunities
- Arranging access to your lands for the purposes of data collection by project staff and approved third party surveyors
- Clarifying information you have already provided to the project team and obtaining further inputs
- Discussing future works and options

By providing your contact details in the box below, you will need to understand and agree to the following:

- Your details will be collected by JBA Consulting Engineers and Scientists Ltd, JB Barry and Partners JV on behalf of Cork County Council to aid the development of the flood relief scheme for Bantry.
- The details will only be used JBA Consulting Engineers and Scientists Limited, JB Barry and Partners JV and /or Cork County Council for the purposes of contacting you in relation to the scheme, which may include some or all the items numbered 1 to 4 above.
- Your details will be securely kept on file for the duration of the project and will be securely deleted on completion of the Project.

- **Your details will not be shared with any party other than Cork County Council and OPW.**

Should you wish to opt out at any time, please let us know by post or email. Our contact details are on the next page.

A database of contact details has been created.

5 Summary of PPD

5.1 Practical arrangements

Some feedback was given in person on the day relating to the venue size and that it was not that suitable. This will be considered for any future Public Participation Day(s).

The event was widely advertised.

The advertising methods were appropriate, and the leaflet drop reached most members of the community.

5.2 Input to the scheme development

The feedback provided on the day, and in following conversations, will be extremely useful in developing the flood relief scheme. Attendees appeared glad to hear that the consultant was approaching potential solutions with an open mind. Some attendees advised that it was positive that input from members of the public was being invited very early in the design process.

Long-time residents who lived near to Wolfe Tone Square recalled events when flood waters entered some houses but not others due to the difference in floor levels. Attendees recalled a major event in 1961 and photos were shown to the project team. There had been flood events at Slip that were witnessed from the nearby housing estate. Attendees recalled significant flood volumes up to car door level that have occurred.

There was a lot of genuine interest in the works, and particularly in the timeline for construction. A number of attendees were clear what they didn't want as a solution or process. The Skibbereen scheme was singled out as not a positive approach to river management, by some attendees, and would not be welcomed.

The feeling from most attendees was that a solution was needed, and there were concerns about what would happen until the scheme was finished. A number of attendees were keen to contribute and be involved in the option selection. They had ideas on potential solutions that they were willing to discuss in more detail. They did not want to be presented with the preferred solution without having an opportunity to provide their input into the process.

There was also a lot of discussion of flooding from the combined system, with a number of attendees reporting this is the mechanism that caused flooding, rather than the river directly. South-easterly winds, combined with high tides were reported to be the conditions that contribute to the worst flood events.

Calls for river maintenance were expressed by many attendees.

Attendees emphasised the importance of nature-based solutions. They asked that tree planting and flood effective land management should be encouraged and considered. Other attendees expressed a preference for natural water retention measures, if possible, rather than hard engineering solutions, due to concerns regarding the environmental impact of the scheme. There was positive encouragement to utilise available lands for the storage. One attendee suggested shared use of the Community Garden for flood management, which is an area which will be investigated further as the project progresses.

A number of attendees referenced the consultation on the visioning of Bantry Harbour and that this will be considered further as the project progresses.

Appendix A – PPD Presentation



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