

Special funds needed to repair storm damage

The south east has borne the brunt of several storms in recent weeks, with Storm Christine causing considerable damage to many local coastal towns and villages, including Tramore.

As illustrated in last week's edition and in a TV3 documentary, considerable destruction has been wreaked on local coastal infrastructure, most evidenced by the 'sinkhole' on Tramore's Strand Street, which was promptly dealt with by Council staff.

But it already appears unlikely that the €45 million contingency fund for emergencies as detailed by OPW Minister Brian Hayes last week will come close to meeting the level of repairs that will need to be conducted around the southern and western seaboard.

Tramore and Passage both suffered, although Waterford city's flood defences stood up to the desired task on Monday week last, and while Poleberry was again affected, the flood waters there were not as noticeable as they were during previous deluges.

That Waterford, and indeed other traditional flood-prone areas along the River Suir such as Carrick-on-Suir and Clonmel, illustrated the value of adequate and fully funded flood defence systems.

And as we saw, the failure to deal with the same traditional problem affecting both Cork and Galway in recent weeks will lead to repeated levels of damage, causing devastation for many businesses.

Regarding Passage East, the high tides that coincided with the recent storms again led to problems in the fishing village, and, as Councillors John Carey and Pat Fitzgerald has repeatedly made reference too, we too noted the large amount of mud in the harbour.

This build-up undoubtedly contributed to flood waters which entered several houses in the area.

Surely the removal of this mud must be a priority measure in the coming year, which must include harbour dredging. Funding must be aside for this, and indeed for similar works in Dunmore East, although it may take further lobbying to bring this about.

As for Tramore, as we detailed last week, received its worst battering for many years, with the inclement conditions leading to the much photographed sinkhole appearing on Strand Street outside the apartment block between the Mens and Ladies' Slips.

While this has been dealt with, major remedial measures will be required to consolidate the foundations of the road and to ensure that the apartment block is not negatively affected.

Major work is now required to remedy the ills created in recent weeks; some estimates on the bill are quite high but until a full and comprehensive audit is conducted, the true figure required will remain undetermined.

Minister Hayes shall have to prioritise particular work - and both Passage and Tramore should be on his list. It should be noted that the completion of the Pill River Flood Relief Scheme is already well advanced.

Ardmore, another popular County Waterford tourist location, also suffered during the storms and it too shall require the necessary attention ahead of the summer period.

Our local and Oireachtas politicians, if they've not already done so, should visit the affected areas and see the reality of the problems in these areas so that they can get a clear understanding of the issues and commit themselves to the required level of lobbying.