

## CONTACT US

You can keep in touch with the project through our website where we will be posting updates on progress and details of works that are ongoing. For further enquiries feel free to contact us via email or post at:

### CASTLEFINN FRS Project Manager

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## RELEVANT LINKS

**Website:** <https://countydonegalfrs.ie/castlefinnfrs/>

COUNTY DONEGAL  
FLOOD RELIEF SCHEMES



Tionscaldal Éireann  
Project Ireland  
2040

OPW  
Oifig na  
nOibreacha Poiblí  
Office of Public Works

# CASTLEFINN

## Flood relief scheme

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[rpsgroup.com](https://rpsgroup.com)



## BACKGROUND TO THE SCHEME

Castlefinn (Caisleán na Finne) is a market town located in the Finn Valley in eastern Donegal. The town centre sits above the northern bank of the River Finn on the N15 national primary road between Lifford and Ballybofey – Stranorlar. The River Finn is a major tributary of the River Foyle, a Special Area of Conservation (SAC) and is designated for the protection of salmon. The River Finn has an active floodplain which contributes to rich farmland along the Finn Valley. A number of smaller watercourses flow through the town to join the River Finn on its way to Lifford, where it meets the River Mourne to become the River Foyle.

Castlefinn has had a history of serious flooding, the most recent occurrence being in November and December 2015. Numerous businesses and residential properties were flooded, including the Castlefinn Partnership Initiative (CPI) centre, during both events which were of a similar magnitude. Both of the flood events in 2015 were due to the River Finn exceeding its banks with flood waters extending into the town. Flood flows from the tributaries could not discharge freely to the Finn and these watercourses acted as a route for floodwaters to back up into the town. Flood levels in the Finn were impacted by the flood conditions at the confluence of the Finn with the Mourne at Lifford with water backing up through the Finn Valley. Development of flood relief options will consider the interaction of flows in each of these water bodies and the associated impact on flooding in Castlefinn. Development of flood relief options will consider the impact on neighbouring communities of Clady, Lifford and Strabane in line with requirements of the EU Floods Directive. The OPW's Flood Risk and Management Study, completed prior to the 2015 floods, identified Castlefinn as a town which would benefit from a flood relief scheme, the need for such a scheme has been brought into focus by the events of November and December 2015, particularly Storm Desmond.

As part of the Government's National Development Plan 2018-2027, €1 billion has been committed to the development of flood relief measures across Ireland. As part of this commitment, a steering group was established between the Office of Public Works (OPW) and Donegal County Council to progress a flood relief scheme to alleviate the risk of flooding for Castlefinn. In July 2020, RPS were appointed Engineering and Environmental Consultants to develop a flood relief scheme that is technically, socially, environmentally and economically acceptable for Castlefinn

**The project team will identify, design and implement a flood relief scheme that is technically, socially, environmentally and economically acceptable.**

## WHAT STAGE IS THE SCHEME AT?

Since appointment RPS has been working to ensure that all of the works planned are based on the most accurate and up to date information. They have been reviewing all relevant sources of information, procuring a contractor to undertake a detailed river and terrain survey; and analysing how the rivers react to rainfall events in their respective catchments. RPS has also developed a website to provide up-to date information throughout the duration of the project.

## OUTLINE SCHEME PROGRAMME

### Outline Castlefinn Scheme Programme

	Activity	2020	2021	2022	2023	2024	2025
Stage 1	Data Collection and surveys	█					
	Hydrological Analysis	█	█				
	Hydraulic Analysis		█	█			
	Scheme analysis & development		█	█			
Stage 2	Planning			█	█		
Stage 3	Detailed design of Scheme				█	█	
Stage 4	Construction works					█	█
Stage 5	Scheme Operational						█

*Timelines provided as current best estimate, but are subject to revision.*

## NEXT STEPS

**Data Collection:** RPS are interested in receiving photos, videos, sketches or any other relevant information in regards to previous floods from those who have experienced it first-hand, particularly from 2015 onwards. The information provided will help us to refine our river model and the design of the flood relief scheme. If you have any information which could be of use, please contact us.

**Public Consultation:** Due to the ongoing COVID-19 public health emergency an Opening Public Consultation Day (PCD) will not be held in person. Instead Opening Public Consultation will be via an online consultation portal (<https://countydonegalfrs.ie/castlefinnfrs/index.php/opening-public-consultation>) with postal drops commencing on 9th November 2020. The Public Consultation portal will remain open for the following six weeks.

The purpose of the consultation will be to introduce the project team, present and receive comments on flood risk in the area, particularly flood events that have occurred since the Catchment Flood Risk Assessment and Management (CFRAM) Study was undertaken, and to discuss scheme options and environmental constraints in managing the flood risk from your perspective.

**Surveys:** Appointment of a survey contractor to record up to date river channel and floodplain levels to be used in design.

**Hydrological Analysis:** Analysis of river and rainfall data including recent events to be used in design.

**Environmental Constraints Study:** This study will be completed in conjunction with the engineering design and will identify environmental constraints within the study area. Topics within the Constraints Study Report will include:

- **Population, Human Health**
- **Biodiversity**
- **Land, Soil, Water, Air and Climate**
- **Material Assets, Cultural Heritage and the Landscape**

**Invasive Species Treatment:** The Project Team have identified the presence of the invasive plants Giant Hogweed, Himalayan Balsam, Japanese Knotweed and Himalayan Knotweed within the potential works area of the scheme. Advance control treatment of these invasive species has been undertaken this Autumn to target areas which may interface with the potential scheme area.