

11 June 2020

Dear Resident

LAXEY FLOODING ALLEVIATION WORKS – PROGRESS UPDATE

I hope this finds you safe and well.

On behalf of Manx Utilities I am writing to reassure you that flood prevention remains a priority. We have been working with our colleagues and partners collaboratively to improve flood resilience in the Laxey catchment.

As you are aware the independent Arup report has made a number of recommendations to improve flood resilience. We are fully committed to working seamlessly with Government to ensure these are implemented.

This letter aims to provide you with a brief update on some of the progress we have made for the benefit of Laxey residents since the 1 October 2019 flood.

Laxey Flood Alleviation Scheme

A flood alleviation scheme looks to identify all flood risk reduction opportunities possible within a catchment. This covers river, surface water and tidal flood risk sources. It also considers natural flood risk management (in the upland catchment) and considers possibilities for flood warning systems and overall resilience. We are working with Government departments, Garff Commissioners and JBA Consultants to develop the options.

Prior to the event on 1 October 2019, Manx Utilities had commenced the 'surveying and modelling' phase required in any major flood alleviation scheme. We are now equipped with the necessary tools to be able to examine different flood alleviation options for the catchment as we have created a model which predicts how the catchment reacts to various flood scenarios; this model was used in the analysis of the October flood.

Currently the flood risk reduction options identified are being evaluated against set criteria, for example: suitability, build-ability, economic viability, environmental sustainability, etc. Community acceptability is also extremely important to us, so once we are confident that we have identified the correct set of options we will consult with the residents of Laxey.

Some elements of the flood risk alleviation programme are already complete or are being progressed to the design and build stage. Here is an update on each element:

- The super structures at the old MER weir were removed in October 2019 and we are considering grading this weir even further to increase flow through this section.
- The Department of Infrastructure (DOI) has carried out upgrades to the surface water drainage system by the old Police Station which should improve surface water flooding issues along Glen Road.

- The DOI have commenced reconstruction of the river wall along Glen Road; this is being built to modern standards and as a flood defense wall. The wall will include an access gate to allow machinery into the river concourse; this is NOT to allow flood waters out into the roadway.
- The DOI and ourselves are working together to design improvements at the culvert (tunnel carrying a watercourse) opposite the Laxey Football Club car park, with the aim of improving the river flow in this area as well as reducing the risk of blockages.
- As Laxey is a heavily wooded catchment, a tree debris catcher scheme is proposed for the Glen Roy catchment. The scheme involves placing debris poles across a section of the river, which is designed to catch trees, branches and other debris, to reduce the chance of blockages downstream near properties. The scheme must be designed appropriately to allow for safe maintenance/removal of debris. With regards to tree felling, it would be unrealistic and inappropriate to fell too many trees; in many cases trees and their root systems have a positive impact on flood risk management.
- To facilitate the debris catcher scheme and to highlight Glen Roy's importance in flood risk management we will be extending the designation of 'Main River' to include this tributary. This will enhance Manx Utilities' powers to effectively manage flood risk from a planning & management perspective and also during emergency circumstances.
- Agneash Reservoir (a small private dam) in the upper catchment has recently been structurally examined by a reservoir engineer who concluded the dam is structurally sound. Utilising features like this or creating new upstream storage has been analysed for Laxey. While some small scale storage schemes might be possible this has been ruled out due to the steepness of the catchment and size of dam that would be required to be effective in flood risk management.
- We have drafted an agreement with Garff Commissioners which vests some emergency powers to the Commissioners in order that prompt action can be taken if a material issue arises quickly. It should be possible to sign this agreement in the near future.



There are many more options we are considering and we will keep communicating with the Commissioners and Laxey residents on progress and updates to help maintain momentum. A list of the next steps which we will implement as quickly as possible are shown below:

What next

- Extend Manx Utilities' Designated Powers to the Glen Roy River
- Install arboreal debris catcher in the Glen Roy concourse
- Continue with essential maintenance activities
- Short list and proposed flood alleviation schemes
- Share findings with local community and key stakeholders
- Develop business case & secure funding
- Submit planning applications & public consultation
- Planning schemes into construction phase

River Maintenance

Since the flooding incident we have carried out both reactive and routine maintenance. As part of the reactive maintenance we have: undertaken scour protection repairs; provided bank protection using rock armour; and jointly with the DOI completed the temporary repairs to footpaths. In regards to routine maintenance, we have completed the removal of trees and vegetation along the river corridors to reduce potential blockage risk trees.

As part of our summer programme of works (the window where we are able to undertake works in the rivers) we will be carrying out maintenance to the banks of the rivers including wall repairs and scour protection.

At the end of this letter, I've included some additional information to questions you may have with regard to contact information.

I hope this letter has been informative and has offered reassurance that Manx Utilities is fully committed to the agenda set by Government following the ARUP report and is dedicated to improving flood resiliency in Laxey. If you have any questions or information you'd like to share with us then please do get in touch using the details provided.

Yours faithfully

Adrian Dobbins
Executive Director

CONTACT:

Who do I contact if I identify an obstruction in a river catchment?

If the obstruction is already causing flooding or is an emergency then call the Department of Infrastructure's Emergency Line on 850000. Otherwise, please email flooding@manxutilities.im or call Manx Utilities on 687687, providing information on the location, photographs and any further details on the obstruction itself (e.g. large tree fallen near bridge or culvert).

Who do I contact if I wish to carry out works on or near a watercourse?

Certain activities may require permissions from ourselves, as the Flood Risk advisor for the Island, or the Department of Environment, Food & Agriculture, who are responsible for inland fisheries. The consent application form for works affecting watercourses can be found on our website.