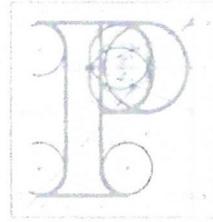


Our Case Number: ACP-323830-25



An
Coimisiún
Pleanála

Inland Fisheries Ireland
c/o Cormac Goulding
IFI Clonmel
Anglesea Street
Clonmel
Co. Tipperary
E91 RD25

Date: 21 January 2026

Re: Proposed flood relief scheme
in Mountmellick, County Laois

Dear Sir / Madam,

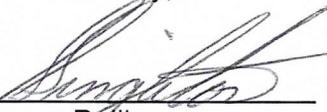
An Coimisiún Pleanála has received your recent submission in relation to the above mentioned proposed development and will take it into consideration in its determination of the matter. Please accept this letter as a receipt for the fee of €50 that you have paid.

Please note that the proposed development shall not be carried out unless the Commission has approved it or approved it with conditions.

If you have any queries in relation to the matter please do not hesitate to contact the undersigned officer of the Commission at laps@pleanala.ie

Please quote the above mentioned An Coimisiún Pleanála reference number in any correspondence or telephone contact with the Commission.

Yours faithfully,


Eimear Reilly
Executive Officer
Direct Line: 01-8737184

JA02

Teil
Glaó Áitiúil
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Láithreán Gréasáin
Ríomhphost

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64 Sráid Maoilbhríde
Baile Átha Cliath 1
D01 V902

64 Marlborough Street
Dublin 1
D01 V902

Eimear Reilly

From: LAPS
Sent: Monday 15 December 2025 18:11
To: Eimear Reilly
Subject: FW: Case reference: JA11.323830 - Mountmellick Flood Relief Scheme
Attachments: ACP 323830 IFI_Submission FINAL.pdf

Follow Up Flag: Follow up
Flag Status: Flagged

From: Cormac Goulding <Cormac.Goulding@fisheriesireland.ie>
Sent: Monday, December 15, 2025 4:30 PM
To: LAPS <laps@pleanala.ie>
Subject: Case reference: JA11.323830 - Mountmellick Flood Relief Scheme

You don't often get email from cormac.goulding@fisheriesireland.ie. [Learn why this is important](#)

Caution: This is an **External Email** and may have malicious content. Please take care when clicking links or opening attachments. When in doubt, contact the ICT Helpdesk.

To whom it may concern:

Please find attached a submission from Inland Fisheries Ireland in relation to the above application to An Coimisiún Pleanála.

Regards,

Cormac

Cormac Goulding
Senior Fisheries Environmental Officer

✉ Cormac.Goulding@fisheriesireland.ie • ☎ +353 (0)52 6180 055 • 🌐 www.fisheriesireland.ie • 🏠 E91 RD25



The banner features the Inland Fisheries Ireland logo on the left, which is a stylized fish inside a shield. To the right of the logo, the text reads "Iascach Iníre Éireann" and "Inland Fisheries Ireland". In the center, there is a circular inset image of a woman talking on a mobile phone. On the right side of the banner, the text "beolne / hotline" is written above the large number "0818 34 74 24". Below the number, it says "Oscailte 24 uair an lae / 7 lá in aghaidh na seachtaine" and "Open 24 hours a day / 7 days a week".

Help us protect Ireland's rivers, lakes and coastlines by reporting illegal fishing, water pollution or invasive species. Our confidential phone number is 0818 34 74 24, which is open 24 hours a day / 7 days a week.

To read our Privacy Policy and Email Disclaimer Notice, Please visit www.fisheriesireland.ie

An Coimisiún Pleanála,
64 Marlborough Street,
Dublin 1



Iascach Iníre Éireann
Inland Fisheries Ireland

15 December 2025

Case Reference: JA11.323830
Re: Mountmellick Flood Relief Scheme, Co. Laois
Submitted via email to: laps@pleanala.ie

To whom it may concern,

Inland Fisheries Ireland (IFI) is the statutory authority tasked under section 7(1) of the Inland Fisheries Act 2010 (No. 10 of 2010) with responsibility for the protection, management, and conservation of the inland fisheries resource.

The proposed flood relief scheme is located in the catchment areas of the Owenass_020, Barrow_040 (which includes the Pound River), and the Triogue_040 (which includes the Clontygar Stream) surface water bodies. The Owenass_020 and Barrow_040 have *Moderate* Ecological Status, whereas the Triogue_040 has *Poor* Ecological Status. All are considered *At Risk* of not meeting Good Status by 2027.

The Owenass_020 also lies within the Barrow-Nore SAC, and the sections of the Barrow_040 and Triogue_040 within the proposed scheme have direct hydrological connections to the SAC. Among the qualifying interests for the SAC are salmon and lamprey. These waterbodies also contain populations of European Eel, which is listed as a critically endangered species by the IUCN.

All public authorities are obliged under numerous legislative instruments and policy frameworks to protect and restore the ecological status of watercourses. In previous correspondence with JBA Consulting regarding the scheme, IFI has highlighted the obligation on the applicant to comply with the objectives of the Water Framework Directive (including the Surface Water Regulations of 2009), the Habitats Directive, the National Biodiversity Action Plan and the objectives in the Laois County Development Plan.

Article 4 of the Surface Water Regulations, SI 272 of 2009 (as amended), states that a public authority whose functions may affect the achievement of the environmental objectives of waterbodies shall undertake those functions in a manner that will promote compliance with the requirements of those Regulations. Article 5 states that there should be no deterioration in the Ecological Status of surface water bodies, and Article 28 (2) states that a surface water body whose status is determined to be less than Good shall be restored to at least Good status. Ecological Status of waterbodies includes their hydromorphological status.

The fourth National Biodiversity Action Plan requires stakeholders “to promote more catchment-wide and non-structural flood risk management measures” (Action 2D5). Action 2D7 requires proponents of flood relief schemes to “assess the potential of NBS-CM (Nature-based Solutions for Catchment Management) as part of the development of future flood relief schemes,” and Action 2D8 places an obligation on stakeholders with regard to “identifying opportunities for retrofit of biodiversity enhancement measures”.



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The Laois County Development Plan 2021-2027 also contains policies and objectives on the protection of biodiversity and natural heritage. These include BNH1 “*Protect, conserve, and seek to enhance the county’s biodiversity and ecological connectivity.*” Furthermore, FRM 9 states “*that where flood risk management works take place that the natural and cultural heritage, rivers, streams and watercourses are protected and enhanced.*”

The area of the proposed flood relief scheme has suffered from significant hydro-morphological damage. This has resulted in numerous channel diversions and realignments, as well as extensive over-widening and over-deepening of watercourses. This has had a negative impact upon gravel recruitment and resulted in excessive siltation, with a corresponding loss of instream habitat diversity and reduced biological diversity, particularly for salmonids. This in turn has diminished the physical and climate resilience of the watercourse. The removal of natural sinuosity by artificial straightening has reduced their carrying capacity and made the river system more vulnerable to flooding and extreme weather events.

In relation to the individual flood defences referred to below, IFI has identified a number of specific items which must be addressed to maximise compliance with the above regulations, EU Directives, and policy documents. Among works which can be considered are the restoration of lateral and longitudinal connectivity of watercourses and the reintroduction of gravels into previously over-widened and over-deepened channels. To this end, IFI requests that An Coimisiún Pleanála impose a condition on the applicant to consult with IFI regarding instream and riparian enhancement within the area of the flood relief scheme.

IFI has listed its comments below in relation to the specific flood defences. Following this, IFI has listed a series of general conditions for the works to minimise the risk of negative impacts on water quality or aquatic habitats.

Below are IFI’s comments regarding the specific works proposed at each flood defence site:

Defence No.1

1A – Embankment upstream of Owenass Bridge, on left side of Owenass River, Length 630m

IFI Comment – No site-specific comment

1B – Wall upstream of Owenass Bridge, on left side of Owenass River, Length 84m

IFI Comment – At a meeting with JBA Consultants on 6 March 2024, JBA provided a commitment to IFI that the wall would be located at least 5m from the top of the bank of the river, on the landward side of the treeline. This was confirmed by IFI in subsequent correspondence to JBA dated 27 March 2024. IFI requests that this commitment is included as a condition of planning. Regarding the proposed vegetation removal, see General Condition No. 9 below.



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Inland Fisheries Ireland**

Defence No. 2

2A – Embankment upstream of Owenass Bridge, on right side of Owenass River, Length 148m

IFI Comment – No site-specific comment

2B – Wall upstream of Owenass Bridge, on right side of Owenass River, Length 155m

IFI Comment – At the meeting on 6 March 2024, JBA committed to locating the wall along the line of the existing fence at the top of the bank of the river. IFI confirmed this in subsequent correspondence dated 27 March 2024. IFI requests that this commitment is included as a condition of planning. Regarding the proposed vegetation removal, see General Condition No. 9 below.

Owenass Bridge Replacement

Replacement of bridge with a new larger span arch structure, 18.1m in width, up to 2.8m in height and 15m in length. Retaining wing walls to tie-in to Defences Nos.1, 2 and 3.

IFI Comment – IFI have documented salmonid spawning downstream of the bridge, therefore this is a sensitive site. IFI's preferred method is that removal and replacement of the bridge does not require any instream works. Should instream be required, the applicant must be to comply with general conditions nos. 4 and 5 below.

Defence No.3

3A- Embankment on left side of Owenass River in Bakers field, Length 1275m

IFI Comment – IFI welcomes the applicant's commitment to reconnect the river with the floodplain and restore lateral connectivity along its left bank. Regarding the proposed vegetation removal, see General Condition No. 9 below.

3B – Wall downstream of Owenass Bridge, on left side of Owenass River, Length 87m

IFI Comment – Section 4.3.3 of the EIA Report and Section 2.4.3 of the AA Screening suggest that instream sheet piling will be used at this location, whereas Table 2-1 of the AA Screening states the wall will be set back from the river. As stated above, the area downstream of Owenass Bridge is an important spawning habitat for salmonids. At IFI's meeting with JBA on 6 March 2024, JBA informed IFI that the wall at 3B was to be set back from river by 5-10m. IFI request that the plans are amended to reflect this and that this is included as a condition of planning for the works. Regarding the proposed vegetation removal, see General Condition No. 9 below.

3C – Wall upstream of Mountmellick Mill Bridge, on left side of Owenass River, Length 315m

IFI Comment – The applicant's plans state that 5m of this wall be situated instream. No instream works were agreed with IFI at this site. IFI request that the plans are amended to reflect discussions and subsequent correspondence with the consultants in March 2024.



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Inland Fisheries Ireland**

3D – Wall upstream of Mountmellick Mill Bridge, on right side of Owenass River, Length 284m

IFI Comment – IFI request that the wall will be set back a minimum of 5m from the river at its downstream end, as agreed on 6 March 2024 and confirmed via subsequent correspondence on 27 March.

The applicant should also be required to explore the re-introduction of instream gravel along sections of the Owenass River upstream of Mill Bridge, as discussed by IFI and the consultants in March 2024 IFI request that this be included as a condition of any final grant of permission.

Raising of existing Mill Bridge parapet and wing walls

IFI Comment – IFI request that a method statement is provided to ensure that no discharge of cementitious materials or other contaminants occurs during the works.

Defence No.4

4A – Wall between Mountmellick Mill Bridge and Convent Bridge, left side of Owenass River, adjacent to playground, Length 525m

IFI Comment – The Owenass River between Mill Bridge and Convent Bridge contains salmonid spawning grounds. In its meeting on 6 March 2024, IFI agreed with JBA that the proposed wall 4A would be located along the current line of footpath in playground. Where trees must be felled the stumps will be preserved to maintain bank integrity. Additional planting may take place between the stumps. Further downstream IFI requested that the wall is to be a minimum of 5m from top of bank to Convent Bridge.

4B - Wall downstream of Mountmellick Mill Bridge, right side of Owenass River, raised footpath and wall. Length 115m

IFI Comment – The wall will be set back from the top of the riverbank for the initial 50m. From the ramp the wall will be located on the landward side of path. IFI expressed a preference that this wall does not extend downstream past tie-in with Defence 4C to maximise lateral connectivity with the proposed floodplain to the north of wall 4C.

4C - Wall on right side of Owenass River, to rear of properties in Grove Park, wrapping around the green space and to rear of Connolly St, Length 965m

IFI Comment – IFI request that the crossing of the watercourse linking the Clontygar Stream at link road complies with general condition no. 3 below.

4D – Raised footpath and wall upstream of Convent Bridge, right bank of Owenass River, length 112m

IFI Comment – Section 4.3.4 of the EIAR states that the applicant's plans propose 20m of instream walls at defence 4D. IFI have not agreed to instream works at this location. IFI request further clarification regarding these proposed works, and that the plans reflect discussions and subsequent correspondence with the consultants which took place in March 2024.

IFI also expressed a preference that the wall 4D does not extend upstream of the tie-in with wall 4C, to maximise lateral connectivity with the proposed floodplain to the north of 4C.



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Inland Fisheries Ireland**

Defence No. 5

5A - Wall downstream of Convent Bridge, right side of Owenass River, Length 164m

IFI Comment –IFI notes that this is an extremely confined site. It is also a sensitive site from a fisheries perspective, as there is salmonid spawning for c. 100m downstream of Convent Bridge. Section 4.3.5 of the EIAR and 2.4.5 of the AA Screening state that instream defences may be required at this site. No instream works were agreed with IFI however. IFI request that the plans are amended to reflect this.

Defence No. 6 – Pound River

6A – Embankment on right side of Pound River, Length 705m (distance on either side of a culverted stream to be confirmed)

IFI Comment – The proposed embankment crosses the Pound River. Culverts must comply with IFI's Fisheries Construction Guidelines (General Condition No. 3 below) with regard to design, sizing and placement so that fish passage is not obstructed. IFI will require a method statement for this crossing, including specifications for the proposed flow control measure.

Following IFI's meeting with JBA on 6 March 2024, JBA were to reinvestigate providing additional light-wells along the Manor Road section of Pound River. IFI requests these be considered as part of the final design.

Defence No. 7 – Garroon Stream

7A - Embankment on western side (left bank) of Garron Stream, Length 230m

IFI Comment – No site-specific comment

7B - Wall left side of Garron Stream, length 92m

IFI Comment – IFI request that wall 7B is set back a minimum of 5m from top of bank.

Defence No. 8 – Clontygar Stream

8A - Wall left side of Clontygar Stream, Length 475m. proposed stream diversion, new channel to be 385m in length.

IFI Comment –Realignment of channel must be agreed with IFI in advance of works occurring. IFI welcome the proposed re-meandering, which will increase hydraulic capacity and create habitat. IFI request that instream features (e.g. gravels, boulders and large woody debris) be added at bed level to create constriction at low-flow levels to benefit habitat. The retention of lateral (floodplain) connectivity along the Clontygar's western side is also welcomed by IFI. Finally, IFI requests the proposed pedestrian crossing complies with its Fisheries Construction Guidelines (General Condition no. 3).



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Inland Fisheries Ireland**

Defence No. 9 – Garden Centre

9A - Embankment right side of Wood Stream, Length 155m

IFI Comment – No site-specific comment

9B - Wall south of Garden Centre, Length 70m

IFI Comment – No site-specific comment

Defence No. 10 – Midland Steel

10A – Wall around western, northern and eastern side of factory, Length 428m

IFI Comment – IFI requests that the proposed wall is set back 5m from the riparian margin along the northern perimeter of the Midland Steel site.

General Conditions

In addition to the above site-specific comments, IFI request that the following general conditions apply to all works associated with this application:

1. The storage, management and conveyance of materials on site must not permit any deleterious matter to reach surface water systems either directly or indirectly, either during construction or post-construction. There must be no run-off of fuels, oils, concrete or from stockpiles of materials or general run-off to surface waters from the works.
2. There should be no interference with the bed, gradient, profile or alignment of any watercourse on or adjacent to the site without the prior notification and the written agreement of Inland Fisheries Ireland. Watercourses on or bordering the site must be maintained in their original state, their bankside vegetation preserved, and the existing line of the watercourse left unaltered, unless explicitly agreed otherwise.
3. All works must comply with IFI's *Guidelines on Protection of Fisheries during Construction Works in and adjacent to Waters (2016)*.
4. Instream works can only take place during the period 1 July to 30 September, unless a derogation licence under the Local Authority Works Act is applied for and is granted by the Inland Fisheries Division of the Department of Climate, Energy and the Environment.
5. Any instream works must take place in the dry. Electrofishing must be completed before dewatering of channels can take place. Authorisation under Section 14 of the Fisheries (Consolidation) Acts is required for same.
6. IFI request that minimum default setback distances from the top of the bank of the river of five metres are enforced for all embankments, walls and haul roads. Setback / buffer zones to protect aquatic zones and existing watercourses should be clearly marked in advance of works commencing e.g. by use of silt curtains etc. Machines should not enter these zones, except where it is unavoidable, and existing vegetation must be preserved.



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7. Any works proposed within the 5m buffer zone, including instream works, walls, embankments, haul roads, must be accompanied by a site-specific method statement. The method statement must outline the nature and the duration of the proposed works, and the mitigation measures proposed to prevent damage of or pollution to the watercourse.
8. The applicant should provide a commitment to provide the method statements to IFI at least ten working days in advance of works commencing. Written approval from IFI for these method statements should be obtained before works proceed.
9. Where removal of riparian vegetation is required, this should also be accompanied by a method statement outlining the mitigation measures proposed for these works. Vegetation removal should take using hand-tools only and from the landward side of the vegetation, unless specifically agreed in the method statement.
10. Material stockpiles or spoil heaps may not be permitted within the buffer zone e.g. for stockpiles of fill material. Buffer zones should not be removed until after the construction phase of the project has ended.
11. Where existing water crossings must undergo alteration, IFI request that these crossings are upgraded in the interests of habitat improvement and biodiversity enhancement. Crossings should be designed to meet IFI's Fisheries Construction Guidelines referred to above. IFI also recommends that the applicant refer to the OPW's *Design Guidance For Fish Passage On Small Barriers* (2021). IFI should be consulted at the design stage for any new crossings or alterations to existing crossings.
12. Should instream haul roads be required, IFI request the use of clean washed gravels and cobbles to enhance the instream habitat post-works.
13. All mitigation measures outlined in the applicant's NIS and Construction Environment Management Plan must be strictly adhered to. Mitigation measures must be in place in advance of works commencing and remain *in situ* until after works have been completed.
14. Site compounds and personal welfare facilities must be located at least 50m from any surface watercourses and outside the 1% AEP flooding zone.
15. Any works on ephemeral watercourses or drainage ditches must take place when such watercourses are dry and will not cause discharge into existing watercourses.
16. Surface water management features should attenuate run-off flow volume to mimic greenfield rates.
17. Only clean, uncontaminated waters should be discharged to soak-away systems or to surface water. Any soak pits should be on suitable ground and provide sufficient retention time to attenuate potential contaminated water.
18. No discharge containing cement or cementitious residues or any other hazardous substances may be permitted to ground or surface waters. Pre-cast concrete should be used where possible, to reduce the risk to aquatic life. When cast-in-place concrete is required, all work must be done in the dry and effectively isolated from any water for a period sufficient to cure the concrete.



**Iascach Intíre Éireann
Inland Fisheries Ireland**

19. With regard to the proposed imported fill, biosecurity protocols must be in place to ensure that no invasive species are introduced to riparian zones or aquatic habitats as a result of the works.
20. Maintenance, cleaning, refueling and repair work of vehicles and machinery must take place in dedicated areas which are bunded or protected to prevent discharge of materials into any surface waters. These must be located at least 50m from any surface watercourses and outside the 1% AEP flooding zone.
21. Fuels, oils or other hazardous substances must be stored in lockable bunded containers on a dry site. Bunding should be covered, and capacity should be 110% of the capacity of the largest tank or drum, or 25% of the total storage volume, plus 200mm freeboard. Spent oil must be collected and retained for correct off-site disposal.
22. Appropriately sized spill kits must be kept on site and staff trained in their use in case an incident occurs. Where temporary diesel or petrol driven pumps are required, they should be located within bunded units.
23. Provision should be made for the appointment of a suitably qualified Project Environmental Manager and Ecological Clerk of Works to oversee environmental monitoring and housekeeping on site.
24. Records should be kept of any water monitoring undertaken during the works. Records should also be kept of inspections made of the surface water mitigation measures outlined in the applicant's documents. These records should be made available upon request to any authorised person as defined under the Local Government (Water Pollution) Acts.
25. At all times the precautionary principle should be applied throughout the development.
26. IFI must be informed immediately at the contact details below should any discharge or potential discharge of deleterious matter to a surface water body occur.

Future correspondence in respect of this application may be sent by email to environmentalplanning@fisheriesireland.ie or by post to the address below.

Yours sincerely,

Cormac Goulding
Senior Fisheries Environmental Officer,
South-Eastern River Basin District