

# Mayor's praise for partnership working on West Kirby flood wall

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Wirral's Mayor with Mark Cronshaw from Volkerstevin and John Curtin of the Environment Agency

**Wirral's Mayor, Cllr Jeff Green, has unveiled a plaque to formally acknowledge the construction of the new flood defence wall in West Kirby.**

The final precast section of wall was installed along South Parade last week and, while there remains some associated works and finishing touches to be done, it represented a significant milestone in the project to install a new coastal defence at West Kirby's waterfront.

Cllr Green was joined at a civic ceremony by representatives from a range of organisations involved in the project, including the Environment Agency, which provided the majority of the funding, civil engineering specialists Volkerstevin, who were the construction partner on the project and AECOM, who designed the wall and whose representatives provided an independent oversight of the delivery of the scheme.

Addressing the gathering shortly before unveiling a plaque near to the Old Baths Site, Cllr Green said:

The design of the wall - the continuous wave effect - is a very attractive feature now it can be seen in all its glory. As well as fending off potential flood waters, it is also possibly the longest continuous bench seating found anywhere in the country.

As we move towards the summer, I can't wait to see visitors sat side by side along the length of the wall, with their ice creams or fish and chips, taking in those fantastic views across to north Wales.



A section of the new flood wall at West Kirby

John Curtin, Chief Executive of the Environment Agency, added:

The fantastic flood scheme at West Kirby is a great example of how it's possible to better protect a community from the inevitability of sea level rise whilst also improving the local environment for a coastal community.

I'd like to personally thank everyone involved from Wirral Council, VolkerStevin, AECOM and the Environment Agency for making it happen and of course those from the local community who have helped shape their scheme.



The plaque officially marking the construction of the flood wall at West Kirby

The West Kirby Flood Alleviation Scheme, with its 1km long, 1.2m high wall, will provide residents on South Parade and the surrounding areas with greater protection from potentially catastrophic flooding for many years to come.

Since December 2013, there have been more than 20 flood events at West Kirby with four considered significant. With sea levels rising, this risk is only going to increase and the scheme will protect 70 properties at risk of flooding now from extreme tidal events and give more than 500 properties improved protection over the next century.

As well as providing a barrier from flood waters, the design of the wall – resembling a wave with a continuous curve – also incorporates timber-slat seating, memorial or celebratory plaques (including replicas of those previously in place on the promenade), access points and crossing spaces.

The Old Baths Site, where the opening ceremony took place, will become a new public open space for West Kirby, suitable for a range of events such as food festivals, markets, music and art performances. It will provide the perfect vantage point for people visiting West Kirby for the prestigious Wilson Trophy, which takes place on the Marine Lake

this weekend, though there are still some finishing touches needed on the re-provided public shelter that sits on the site.

Some other aspects that members of the public said they wanted to see incorporated as part of the scheme are also in the process of being realised, including improved public realm with features such as gateways highlighted with icons linking to the local environment, a clearly marked cycle lane provided within the one-way highway arrangement and a circular trail around the promenade and lake, with distance markers counting up and down every 100m.



The revamped Old Baths Site at West Kirby