



Waves battering the coastline at Ballyhalbert during Storm Kathleen.

# Coastal erosion fears as storms hit area

**CONCERNS** have again been raised about ongoing coastal erosion on the Ards peninsula.

Storm Kathleen, which hit the province just over a week ago, caused damage in a number of places on the western side of the peninsula which has led a number of local politicians to express their concern.

Ulster Unionist councillor Pete Wray said the borough is facing a 'huge challenge' in terms of coastal erosion.

"Over recent weeks and months it is clear to see

the impact that climate change is having on our weather patterns," he said.

"On Ballyhalbert's Harbour Road the damage is particularly concerning. Members of the public should be aware of this, as not only is it an issue for us in terms of protecting our beaches and shorelines, but this damage presents a hazard to the public particularly when they can appear overnight."

Mr Wray also highlighted Kircubbin harbour which he said is 'in great danger'.

"I want to commend the work of the Ards Peninsula Coastal Erosion Group who are using

a multi agency approach involving Ards and North Down Borough Council, The National Trust, The Department for Infrastructure, The Department for Agriculture the Environment and Rural Affairs," added Mr Wray.

"It's important that we work collaboratively to monitor these changes and put in place a programme of work that can limit the damage. This may include seawalls, breakwaters, and natural preservation methods."

Strangford MP, Jim Shannon, has also highlighted his concerns about the effects of coastal erosion in Ballyhalbert. "In the recent storms, waves breached the footpath and concerned residents contacted myself and councillor Nigel Edmund about the increasing likelihood of the footpath collapsing with another bad storm and high tide," said Mr Shannon.

"We reported this to the Department for Infrastructure who responded quickly to inspect and we have been informed that three areas have been identified for remedial work," he added.



Councillor Pete Wray beside one of the damaged parts of the coastline in Ballyhalbert.

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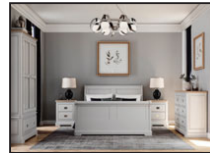
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