

Porthtowan Dune: Temporary Sand Dune Fencing

Introduction

The dune associated with Porthtowan provides few barriers (man-made or natural) to stop the landward movement of sand. Though efforts have been made to rebuild the toe of the dune, once sediment passes this point there is very little to prevent it blowing further inland. Given that the dune system is small any sediment that escapes is likely to impact on village life. It is important that this windblown sediment is trapped before it escapes from the dune system. Not only will this be beneficial for the community but will also be important for improving the dunes ecosystem value and its ability to protect the community from storm surges.

Proposal

Cormac Solutions Limited have offered to install a series of temporary nets on the dune. The intention is to provide three rows of windbreak fencing behind the dune ridge. The fencing needs to be robust, easy to use and easy to store when not in use. Plastic windbreak fencing meets these criteria but is only available in a narrow range of colours. Alternative windbreak materials could be considered but this would come at an additional cost to install/remove and replace.

These temporary windbreak fences will not be permanent features on Porthtowan. It is proposed that they are installed the week following the October half term (Monday 31st October, 2016) and will remain on site until the week before Easter (Friday 31st March, 2017). This coincides with a period when the beach is less busy and also a period when the wind-speed is more likely to blow sand inland.

The beach and dune system are highly dynamic and the proposal is only a trial that is unlikely to be 100% successful. Sand will always escape from the dune, the purpose of the scheme is to try and reduce the amount that blows inland. The scheme intends to learn from experiences in year 1 so that in the future fencing can be moved to where it has the greatest benefit in stopping sand escaping from the dunes system onto the surrounding area.