

Myherin and Tarenig Forest Resource Plan

Consultation newsletter

June 2025



Natural Resources Wales recently carried out a consultation on the new Forest Resource Plan (FRP), which covers a total area of 4,787 hectares and includes Myherin and Tarenig forests, as well as over 1,000 hectares of open hill land.

The consultation period ran from 14th April until 16th May, and was widely advertised in the local press, social media, and on posters at the forest entrances and community notice boards. Immediate neighbours of the forest were notified by letter, and we also contacted over forty organisations from our stakeholder list. Local community councils, MPs and MSs were informed.

During the consultation period, people were able to [view the new plans and make comments online](#), as well as contacting us by phone or email. Two village drop-in sessions were held, in the community centres in Llangurig (May 1st) and Pontarfynach (May 2nd).

The purpose of this newsletter is to give a summary of the feedback we received, and explain how we will use it to improve our management of the forests.

Firstly though we would like to send our thanks to everyone who took the time to participate in the consultation and give us their views. Thanks also to the volunteers who run the community centres in Llangurig and Pontarfynach, who helped us to organise the events.

Who responded?

Responses were mainly from local individuals, but also included visitors to the forest from further afield. Several regional and national organisations provided a detailed response on behalf of their members.

The drop-in sessions were attended mainly by local residents (about thirty people came along), and also by some forestry contractors, and staff from other organisations who came along to discuss the plans. NRW was well represented, with the Land and Assets Operations Manager, the Forest Resource Planner, and members of the Forest Operations and Land Management teams, present on both days.



What was the response?

Overall there was a positive response to the Forest Resource Plan, and people were keen to have a say on the management of the public forest estate. The general direction of the forest management (set out in the plan's Objectives) was well-received. There was considerable support for increasing tree species diversity, using Low-Impact Silvicultural Systems, and increasing the amount of broadleaf woodland. Several people were interested in peatland restoration, and we were able to provide more information about this. There were some concerns and negative comments too: these are addressed in more detail below.

What happens now?

We have gathered together the responses to the consultation, and responded separately to people and groups who sent us detailed comments via email. We have gathered the main issues together for the summary on the next few pages.



Issues raised in the consultation

Tree species and forest structure

Comments received: Supportive of increasing the species range, and reducing dominance of Sitka spruce. Generally people like the broadleaf areas and would like to see more within the forests, but there was understanding that the forests were established for conifer timber production, and this is still an important objective. It was suggested that we retain (for the long-term) an area of first-generation Sitka spruce, for its structural diversity, biodiversity, and potential research value.

NRW response: We welcome the positive comments on these aspects of the plan. Diversifying our forests is not a new initiative, but there have been difficulties in recent years (especially larch disease). We believe that – over time – the more diverse forests will become more attractive places to visit, and more resilient to the threats from climate change.

We have adopted the suggestion to retain some older spruce, and have assigned a stand in southern Myherin to “Long-term retention”.

Silvicultural systems

Comments received: There was widespread support for Low-Impact Silvicultural Systems (LISS), Continuous Cover Forestry, and reducing the size and impact of clearfelling. Some responders indicated that this will improve the visitor experience to the forests. We received a request for additional information, and a detailed response, from the Continuous Cover Forestry Group (CCFG). It was suggested that we should include silvicultural system and thinning maps as part of the consultation.

NRW response: We agree that LISS will improve the visitor experience and make the forests more pleasant places to visit. We have responded separately to all the points made by the CCFG, and have accepted some of their suggestions as alterations to the final plan.

The consultation maps already indicate areas to be managed by clearfelling, minimum intervention, and Low Impact Silvicultural Systems. We do not routinely assign LISS areas to more detailed silvicultural systems or operation prescriptions, while preparing Forest Resource Plans (those decisions are made by our Forest Operations team later on, at a more detailed scale, when they decide how best to implement the FRP). Similarly, detailed thinning prescriptions are not decided at this stage, although areas assigned to LISS will be prioritised for appropriate thinning.

Peatland restoration

Comments received: There was interest in peatland restoration (particularly at the drop-in days); we discussed this with a number of people, explaining the reasons for it, and showed photos of what a restored site looks like. Comments were generally positive. We received an enquiry from a local contractor about working with us on peatland restoration, who suggested using peatland restoration as an opportunity to create larger ponds for use as a water source in wildfire control.

NRW response: Visit the website of the [National Peatland Action Programme](#) for more information. Our colleagues in this team have contacted the contractor who enquired directly, to discuss tendering and training possibilities for work on the forest estate. We considered the suggestion about ponds, but it was felt that in this particular area, there is sufficient water storage in existing ponds and reservoirs nearby. We will consider this elsewhere, as ponds may also provide benefits for wildlife and landscape amenity.

Recreation in the forest

Comments received: Several respondents complained about fallen trees blocking paths and tracks (including Rights of Way). There was recognition that Storm Darragh (December 2024) created great difficulties, but concerns that it was taking so long to clear paths, and that there had been blocked paths in some places before the storm. We received comments on this, and related issues, from the County Council and Local Access Forum, the British Horse Society and the Cambrian Mountains Society.

There was concern about the risk of high visitor numbers causing disruption to the local community and local forest users (“Don’t open it up like Hafren”). Conversely, there were comments that Tarenig forest was perceived as unwelcoming to visitors, and we should do more to encourage its use.

We were asked to ensure that ditch-blocking (for river quality improvement) does not risk flooding Rights of Way, and that tree planting does not encroach on these paths.

There was concern expressed about the accessibility of paths for horse riders, the dangers of vehicles travelling too fast within the forest, and a request for improved signage.

We were asked to do more to help disabled people use the woodlands, and there was some discussion of ways to do this.

NRW response: We recognise that there is still work to do to clear all of the paths in the forests, and are continuing work to get the paths clear. We acknowledge our duty to keep ROWs clear and are prioritising this. Our staff and contractors worked flat-out in the immediate aftermath of Storm Darragh, clearing roads for the emergency services and local people, before moving on to clear tracks which enabled farmers to reach their livestock, and the main tracks needed for staff and contractors to access the forest; Rights of Way were cleared as soon as possible, and except for a few more remote paths, are now mostly clear. It takes a long time to get to all areas, and regrettably we are constrained by the availability of contractors and machinery.

We have responded by email to other detailed points made by various organisations. We have confirmed that ditch-blocking is not planned in the vicinity of Rights of Way; the new FRP includes wider buffers around some paths, and elsewhere our Forest Operations team will ensure that paths are not planted with trees during restocking operations.

There is limited potential for making Tarenig forest more welcoming to visitors, because we do not have parking facilities for visitors in this area and their development would be constrained by land ownership / lease issues. We note the concern of local people in relation to the high use of Hafren forest. Rights of Way (including the Wye Valley Walk) are very popular with locals and tourists alike and we continue to support this use of the forest.

We have spoken to contractors about the need to observe the speed limit and be considerate of other forest users; our staff have put up new speed limit signs and will continue to monitor this. Our Land Management Team is looking into opportunities to improve public access signage within the forest. Unfortunately at present we are not able to offer additional parking facilities for horse riders. Our position statement on Equestrian Access is [available online](#).

We would like to make the forests more usable for disabled people, and will look into liaising with local Access Groups to identify opportunities for improvements, as suggested by one of the respondents.

Welsh language

Comments received: Positive comments about particular staff members who deal with neighbours in Welsh. Comments suggested that the Welsh language provision in the consultation exercise was good.

NRW response: We welcome the feedback. All of our forestry consultations are published in Welsh and English. People can contact NRW in either language, and we will respond in Welsh if you prefer, without this leading to a delay.

Unauthorised vehicles

Comments received: Several people were concerned about use of the forest by off-road motorbikes and other vehicles, noting damage to the environment and paths, noise, and danger to people, horses and dogs if passing too quickly and without consideration.

We were also told that some contractors were thought to be travelling too fast on the forest roads. There were reports of people using cars to access the bothies in the forests (the Mountain Bothy Association are keen to prevent this).

NRW response: We are aware of unauthorised vehicles using the forests, and are working to discourage this. Since the consultation our Land Management team have arranged additional on-site supervision, including days with the Rural Policing Team. In Myherin / Tarenig the level of illegal vehicle use is low compared to some forests.

Forest barriers are generally kept closed and locked to prevent unauthorised vehicles, and there is a 15 MPH speed limit for all vehicles on the forest roads. We are aware that barriers are sometimes left open by contractors. Following this consultation our staff have contacted forestry contractors and windfarm managers to remind them of the importance of observing the speed limit and keeping barriers closed. We have a good relationship with the Mountain Bothy Association and will support them to prevent vehicle access in the forest.

Motorsports

Comments received: Supportive of motorsports in a carefully-managed way, noting the local economic benefits.

NRW response: Noted. We support careful management for safety and to minimise disruption to others. NRW policy on motorsports is [set at a higher level in the organisation](#); at forest-level we will continue to implement this policy.

Issues at The Arch (Myherin)

Comments received: Reports of vehicles travelling too fast on the forest road. Several people told us about unauthorised overnight stops by camper vans, and that some campers are defecating in the woods, and leaving litter. Calls for public toilets to be re-established (compost toilets were suggested). Some waymarked walking trails were still blocked with windblow after Storm Darragh. It was suggested that we put large logs at intervals along forest roads, to enable elderly and less-able walkers to sit and rest while walking from carpark.

NRW response: Our Land Management team have now put up new speed limit signs in this area, and spoken to contractors about vehicle speeds. More work is already planned to clear the blocked walking trails. Overnight camping (including vans) is not permitted, and our staff try to discourage this, but it is not possible to have staff there all the time. The Land Management team is considering how best to deal with the issues raised at The Arch. We like the suggestion of logs for people to rest on, and will arrange this soon.

Forest operations

Comments received: There was support for sustainable timber production with reference to the employment opportunities it creates. There were complaints about paths being blocked by contractors, that some clearfell sites were left untidy, and that there was too long a gap before ground preparation and restocking.

NRW response: It is sometimes necessary to restrict access to parts of the forest during operations, but this should always be done with clear signage, and paths should not remain blocked after operations are complete. We have looked into specific areas mentioned by respondents, and understand that those paths are now clear (though there are still some paths blocked by windblow elsewhere). Our Forest Operations team are aware of these issues, and carry out regular supervision visits to “live” harvesting sites; they are working to reduce the time between clearfelling and restocking.

Timber haulage

Comments received: Timber lorries from Myherin forest are passing through local villages, causing damage to roads; use of the mountain road between The Arch and Rhyader.

NRW response: Most of the timber harvested in the forests leaves via the A44 using the forest roads through Tarenig, however some timber from Myherin (heading to sawmills to the south) is taken to the public road network via The Arch. NRW has no legal authority over hauliers when they are on the public road network; however NRW are part of the Timber Transport Forum, and require our contractors to adhere to their Good Practice Guides. We are working with the Local Authorities in Ceredigion and Powys to identify preferred routes, aimed at reducing the use of smaller roads and keeping timber lorries away from vulnerable areas.

Day-to-day forest management

Comments received: There were concerns about people hunting without permission in the forests, and concern about foxes from the forest taking lambs on adjoining farmland. Farming neighbours commented seeking a good relationship in future.

Some of our immediate neighbours raised specific queries about tree safety management, access using our tracks, and barriers.

NRW response: Our Land Management Team have spoken directly with neighbours who raised concerns about access and tree safety, and are working to resolve these. They are keen to work effectively with our neighbours, and will be speaking to the people who were concerned about foxes. Unauthorised hunting on the land is illegal and we try to prevent this, though it is obviously not possible to have staff present at all times of day and night. We co-ordinate with the police Rural Crime team where possible.

The consultation itself, and communications with us

Comments received: Generally the consultation was well-received (by those that gave us feedback) and there were positive comments about the process at the drop-in days. A couple of people queried whether we had too many staff in attendance.

There were some negative comments about the maps available online (“difficult to use”) and somebody questioned whether we were using soil maps.

It was suggested that we provide a map showing *existing* forest composition, for comparison with the *Long-term vision* map.

NRW response: We will use this feedback to improve future consultations. It is difficult to get the staffing level exactly right for drop-in days, because we don’t know how many people will come along (the events are widely publicised). Too few staff, and people may be kept waiting, or leave without participating. We like to respond fully to detailed questions, so it is important to have at least the Forest Resource Planner, and people from the Forest Operations and Land Management teams, on hand to explain the plans and deal with the queries we receive.

We know that our current way of providing maps online (as pdf files) is not ideal. Following the feedback, we are trying to improve this for future consultations, using interactive webmaps instead, which will allow the user to pan and zoom the map and turn layers on and off. We hope this will be available for our next FRP consultation in mid-Wales (for the Cambrian Mountains later this year), subject to some tech issues being resolved.

We do use soil maps, however we don’t include them in the published information for consultations. We also have separate datasets for deep peats, and ongoing peat surveys. Anyone interested in the soils of the Forest Estate can view maps at the [UK Soil Observatory](#) and the [Peatland Data Portal](#).

We like the idea of providing a “current forest cover” map, and will look into doing this at future consultations. A detailed digital map showing existing forest composition is already available online at [Datamap Wales](#).