

Our Ref: CX24-130
Your Ref: P-06-1447

Jack Sargeant MS
Petitions Committee
Welsh Parliament

By email: petitions@senedd.wales

14 August 2024

Dear Jack,

Petition P-05-1447 Stop Natural Resources Wales closing the visitor centre at Ynyslas National Nature Reserve

Thank you for your recent letter regarding the status of Ynyslas Visitor Centre.

On Wednesday 31 July, we launched a consultation with our Trade Unions and started the process of engagement with staff on proposals to restructure our organisation and reduce our Grant in Aid staff budget by £13 million before 1 April 2025.

The purpose is to re-focus our resources on the activities that will have the most impact on nature, climate and minimising pollution, as well as the statutory work that only NRW can do. Our aim is to mitigate job losses as much as possible.

As a result of our prioritisation work, one proposal is that we will no longer operate catering and retail provision at our visitor centres at Bwlch Nant y Arian, Coed y Brenin and Ynyslas. Instead we propose to actively seek out other partners to run the centres, while site access will remain open for walking, biking, play areas, car parking and toilet provision.

The National Nature Reserves and forests around visitor centres are key sites for us. There is no question that we want to conserve and protect these sites so that nature can recover, and we are unequivocal that public access to these sites will be maintained. We will continue to carry out all statutory duties and will consider the indirect effects of any recommendations.

Following our consultation, which will run until Friday 13 September, the NRW Board will make a final decision on the change proposal. At that point, we will write again and explain what the changes mean for the delivery of services at these sites, and our plans to inform and engage with the local community.

There will not be a public consultation on our proposals. In 2022/23 we held a public consultation on our new Corporate Plan, Nature and People Thriving Together, which sets our strategic direction and priorities through to 2030. The current internal consultation is about how we ensure a focus on those Corporate Plan priorities whilst adapting to live within our financial means.

Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Clare Pillman', with a horizontal line underneath.

Clare Pillman

Prif Weithredwr, Cyfoeth Naturiol Cymru
Chief Executive, Natural Resources Wales

Croesewir gohebiaeth yn Gymraeg a byddwn yn ymateb yn Gymraeg, heb i hynny arwain at oedi.
Correspondence in Welsh is welcomed, and we will respond in Welsh without it leading to a delay.