

PENDINE COMMUNITY COUNCIL

EXTRAORDINARY MEETING – MORFA BYCHAN WILDFIRE & PREVENTATIVE MEASURES

Wednesday 19 August 2026 at 6.30pm

Museum of Speed, Pendine

MINUTES

Present:

Cllr Andrew Shaw (Chairman), Cllrs Steve, Barry and Hayley, Emily Bevan-Jones (Clerk/RFO), Cllr Jane Tremlett (Carmarthenshire County Council Cabinet Member), Ann Davies MP, Gareth Beer MS, Steve Whitehead and Dan Wood (National Trust), representative of Dyfed-Powys Police, and local residents/stakeholders.

Members of the public and other stakeholders were also present.

1. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies were received from those unable to attend.

2. DECLARATIONS OF PERSONAL INTEREST

No declarations of personal interest were made in relation to the matters discussed.

3. WELCOME AND INTRODUCTIONS

The Chairman, Cllr Andrew Shaw, welcomed residents, stakeholders, elected representatives and representatives of the National Trust, and Dyfed-Powys Police.

The Chairman explained that, although the meeting had originally been expected to form part of the Council's regular meeting arrangements, the seriousness of the recent wildfire and the wider concerns relating to Morfa Bychan had resulted in the meeting being convened as an Extraordinary Meeting to enable the wider community and relevant stakeholders to come together.

The Chairman acknowledged that the Community Council is a small Council and thanked those present for attending, particularly those who had made time to attend despite other commitments.

The meeting was advised that the proceedings were being transcribed to assist with preparation of the minutes.

The Chairman explained that the purpose of the meeting was not to speculate on the cause of the wildfire, but to consider the wider risks associated with Morfa Bychan and, importantly, what preventative measures could now be put in place.

4. BACKGROUND – MORFA BYCHAN

The Chairman provided background information regarding the area, including its environmental, historical and community importance.

It was explained that a significant proportion of Morfa Bychan is in National Trust ownership and that the area forms part of a **Site of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI)** and contains important archaeological and historic features, including burial chambers and World War II structures.

The National Trust representative, Steve Whitehead, provided further information regarding the significance of the landscape and its historic features.

The meeting heard that the area is considered an important and sensitive landscape and that concerns regarding its deterioration, camping, waste, fires and associated activity have been raised over a considerable period.

The Chairman explained that the Council had previously been involved in discussions with stakeholders regarding overnight camping, anti-social behaviour, vehicle access, fires and environmental damage.

It was noted that previous attempts to address the issues had not resulted in a satisfactory long-term solution.

The National Trust explained that the route is a **Byway Open to All Traffic (BOAT)** and that previous attempts to restrict or alter the status of the route had encountered objections.

The meeting discussed the difficulty created by the route's legal status and the distinction between civil matters, such as trespass, and criminal offences such as criminal damage.

5. THE CURRENT SITUATION – WILDFIRE OF 16 AUGUST 2026

The Chairman provided an overview of the wildfire which commenced on **16 August 2026**.

The meeting was shown photographs illustrating the scale and extent of the fire and the damage caused.

It was explained that the Fire and Rescue Service had experienced difficulties accessing parts of the site due to the terrain and that local farmers had assisted by providing water and helping to dampen the fire.

Particular concern was raised regarding the proximity of the fire to critical Welsh Water infrastructure and an **11,000-volt overhead electricity supply**. The pumping station was described as a significant asset supplying the local area and extending towards Narberth.

The potential consequences of damage to this infrastructure were discussed, including the possibility of prolonged disruption to water supplies.

The meeting was also informed that the fire had subsequently **reignited on 17th and 18th August 2026**, reinforcing concerns that the risk remained ongoing.

The Chairman emphasised that the direction of the prevailing wind had been a significant factor and that a change in wind direction could have resulted in the fire spreading towards the valley, surrounding farms and residential areas.

The meeting heard that the community had been extremely concerned and frightened by the incident.

A resident living on a farm backing onto the valley explained that they had been unaware of the fire until they opened their door and raised concerns regarding the lack of an effective warning system.

Cassandra, a local landowner, became visibly upset when describing watching the fire and the potential consequences had the wind changed direction. She explained that her own home, neighbouring properties, livestock and the surrounding woodland could have been at significant risk.

Another resident explained that she had been evacuated from her home during the incident and had only become aware of the fire when friends came to assist her. She stated that residents should not have to live in fear and that urgent action was required before there was loss of life.

A resident who had walked in the area on the day of the meeting reported seeing the fire reignite (19th August 2026) and explained that they had been unable to make an emergency call immediately because of poor mobile telephone reception in the area.

The meeting acknowledged the work of the Fire and Rescue Service, local farmers and others who had assisted during the incident.

6. STAKEHOLDER UPDATES AND PERSPECTIVES

National Trust

Steve Whitehead and Dan Wood provided information regarding National Trust land ownership, the sensitive nature of the site and the difficulties faced in managing the area.

The National Trust explained that it has a limited budget for the management of its wider coastline and that its ability to pursue court proceedings against individuals camping on the land would be financially difficult.

It was explained that trespass is generally a civil matter and that the National Trust does not have the same enforcement powers as the Police.

The National Trust confirmed that it has been considering measures including:

- strengthening the existing gate;
- additional security measures;
- CCTV;
- physical barriers;
- fire breaks and grazing;
- discussions with NRW regarding land management;
- maintaining appropriate access for Welsh Water and emergency services.

Steve explained that the existing gate had previously been reinforced with additional chain and a padlock but had subsequently been cut.

The possibility of CCTV was discussed. It was explained that Welsh Water had initially been supportive of CCTV but had concerns regarding the pumping station potentially becoming a target if its location or security arrangements were made more obvious.

The National Trust also explained that, if criminal damage was committed and evidence identifying the perpetrator could be obtained, the Police could potentially investigate.

The meeting discussed the importance of the pumping station and associated infrastructure.

It was emphasised that any physical or environmental intervention at Morfa Bychan must take Welsh Water infrastructure and access requirements into account.

The meeting recognised that emergency and Welsh Water access must be maintained.

Dyfed-Powys Police

A representative of Dyfed-Powys Police attended and apologised for arriving late due to another incident.

The Police representative explained the limitations on the powers available to a PCSO and that, where an offence is taking place, Police officers can consider arrest or other appropriate action depending on the circumstances.

A resident asked whether individuals currently in the area could simply be arrested where fires were reportedly prepared for use. The Police representative explained that this would depend upon whether an offence had actually been committed and the circumstances of the incident.

A resident asked about stop and search powers in relation to suspected weapons or drugs. The PCSO explained that this was not within their own powers but that the matter could be raised with Police officers/superiors.

The meeting discussed the potential evidential value of CCTV and trail cameras. The Police representative confirmed that CCTV footage can form part of an evidential package where a perpetrator can be identified.

The Police representative also indicated that trail cameras are used elsewhere for monitoring purposes and that there was no obvious reason why such monitoring could not potentially be considered at Morfa Bychan, subject to the appropriate arrangements and location.

Carmarthenshire County Council

Cllr Jane Tremlett explained that the County Council is aware of the wider wildfire situation across Carmarthenshire and that the current circumstances presented an opportunity to drive preventative measures forward urgently.

Cllr Tremlett indicated that she considered a **Temporary Traffic Regulation Order (TRO)** to be an option that should be pursued quickly and offered to assist in ensuring the matter reached the appropriate senior officers within the County Council.

Ann Davies MP

Ann Davies MP thanked the emergency services and local farmers for their work in responding to the wildfire.

She stated that the current dry conditions and increasingly hot summers demonstrated the need to consider climate and nature together and to prepare for similar incidents in the future.

Ann Davies advised that, having heard the information presented at the meeting, she considered the **TRO option** to be particularly worthy of urgent consideration because it could provide an enforceable restriction.

She also expressed support for exploring the possibility of re-wetting the area, subject to Welsh Water and the necessary environmental considerations.

Ann Davies offered to take the matter forward as constituency casework and to work with the Community Council, National Trust, NRW, Welsh Water and Cllr Jane Tremlett.

Gareth Beer MS

Gareth Beer MS thanked residents for attending and acknowledged the strength of feeling and fear within the community.

He stated that, in his view, the wider issue was not simply the wildfire but also the associated anti-social behaviour and the need for all organisations to work together to achieve practical change.

Mr Beer offered his support on a cross-party basis and undertook to take the information provided by the Clerk back to his office and assist with progressing the matter.

7. PREVENTATIVE OPTIONS CURRENTLY BEING CONSIDERED

The Chairman introduced a number of potential options which had been researched by the Community Council.

It was stressed that the options were being presented for discussion and that further legal, environmental and operational advice would be required before any measure could be implemented.

7.1 Definitive Map Modification Order (DMMO)

The meeting considered whether there may be grounds to investigate the recorded status of the route as a Byway Open to All Traffic.

It was explained that a DMMO would require evidence that the Definitive Map was incorrect and would be a lengthy process involving consultation and consideration of relevant evidence.

It was acknowledged that this would **not provide an immediate solution** to the current wildfire risk.

7.2 Temporary Traffic Regulation Order (TRO)

The Chairman explained the potential for a temporary restriction on motor-vehicle access in response to the current public-safety and wildfire risk.

The potential benefits discussed included:

- restricting motor-vehicle access;
- reducing the ability to bring camping equipment and firewood into the area;

- providing a clearer legal restriction for enforcement;
- potentially maintaining pedestrian, cycling, equestrian, emergency and authorised service access, subject to the final wording of any order.

An experimental TRO, potentially allowing the effectiveness of restrictions to be assessed over a longer period, was also discussed.

The meeting heard that the TRO was considered by several attendees to be the most immediate legal option requiring investigation.

7.3 Physical barriers, boulders and gate security

The Community Council explained that discussions had taken place with the National Trust regarding strategic placement of large boulders or other physical barriers.

The intention would be to prevent vehicles reaching areas currently used for camping while ensuring:

- emergency access;
- Welsh Water access;
- authorised land-management access;
- sufficient space for vehicles to turn.

The National Trust confirmed that it was considering strengthening the existing gate and investigating CCTV or other security measures.

The meeting recognised that previous damage to the gate demonstrated the need for measures which were sufficiently robust.

A number of residents supported a physical barrier, with one resident stating that the key was to prevent people from reaching the area in the first place rather than attempting to deal with the problem once individuals were already there.

7.4 Public Spaces Protection Order (PSPO)

The previously proposed PSPO was not progressed following confirmation from the National Trust that the land identified for the proposed Order is in National Trust ownership. Following advice from Carmarthenshire County Council's Legal Services team, concerns were raised about the appropriateness of committing limited Council resources to making and enforcing a PSPO on privately owned land, particularly where the National Trust, as landowner, has its own powers to regulate activities and work with the Police.

On that basis, Carmarthenshire County Council decided not to proceed with the PSPO at that time.

The meeting discussed whether the significant change in circumstances, including the wildfire, increased risk to life, environmental concerns and continuing camping issues, justified reconsideration.

7.5 Re-wetting/flooding the area

The meeting considered whether re-wetting or restoring parts of the area to a marshier condition could reduce the suitability of the land for camping and potentially provide environmental benefits.

Simon Thomas referred to historical changes to watercourses and suggested that restoring wet conditions could potentially provide a longer-term environmental solution.

The National Trust explained that the area is an SSSI and that appropriate permits and consultation would be required. It was also explained that historical alterations to water flow had been undertaken due to concerns regarding water quality and the pumping station.

The meeting recognised that any such proposal would require involvement from **Natural Resources Wales and Welsh Water**, and could not be undertaken without the appropriate permissions.

7.6 Fire breaks, grazing and land management

The meeting discussed the importance of managing vegetation and fuel loads within the valley.

Gareth Beer MS explained that discussions at Senedd level were already considering land management and the role of grazing in reducing fuel available to wildfires.

The National Trust confirmed that it had been communicating with NRW regarding fire breaks and grazing as part of wildfire prevention.

8. STAKEHOLDER DISCUSSION – WHAT CAN REALISTICALLY BE ACHIEVED?

The discussion focused on the need for both an **immediate response** and a **longer-term solution**.

A resident stated that the community required two solutions: an immediate measure capable of reducing the risk now, and a longer-term strategy.

The resident emphasised that residents were living in fear and that the presence of elected representatives and stakeholders at the meeting provided an opportunity to secure meaningful action.

Another resident asked specifically whether an emergency TRO could be implemented before the forthcoming Hot Rods event, when significant numbers of visitors are expected in Pendine.

Cllr Tremlett agreed that the TRO should be pursued urgently and requested that the Clerk provide her, Ann Davies MP and Gareth Beer MS with the application/information so that they could help ensure it reached the appropriate decision-makers.

Gareth Beer MS confirmed that he would work on the information from the following day.

The Clerk explained the limited staffing capacity of the Community Council and confirmed that, despite already having worked her contracted hours during the week due to the wildfire response, she would initiate the TRO process on **20 August 2026**.

The Chairman supported the proposal for a formal action plan with named responsibilities and timescales.

9. PUBLIC QUESTIONS AND COMMENTS

A number of residents raised concerns and suggestions.

Community fear and safety

Residents repeatedly described feeling frightened and unable to sleep following the wildfire.

One resident stated that the community had reached the point where there was a **serious risk to life** and that action was required before a further fire resulted in loss of life.

A resident who had been evacuated from their home described the fear experienced during the fire and urged that action be taken immediately.

Vehicle access

Residents repeatedly stated that preventing vehicles from reaching the camping area was likely to be more effective than attempting to remove individuals after they had arrived.

One resident stated:

“Once they get down there your options are limited.”

The view was expressed that a physical barrier or gate at the top of the route could provide an important preventative measure.

Criminal damage and enforcement

Residents reported previous incidents of damage to the gate and stated that they had reported incidents to Police but had been frustrated by the lack of apparent enforcement action.

A resident stated that they had provided vehicle registration numbers when reporting incidents but had not seen action taken.

The Chairman acknowledged the frustration but explained that the Council needed to continue pursuing available options rather than remain in the same position.

Social media and promotion

Simon Thomas raised concerns regarding Morfa Bychan being promoted online as a destination for camping, including through social media, YouTube and camping/parking applications.

He advised that he had previously requested removal of information from an application but noted that members of the public could continue to upload information themselves.

Residents were encouraged to report inappropriate promotional content and request its removal where possible.

Trail cameras/CCTV

A resident suggested that trail cameras could be purchased immediately and installed to monitor the area.

The Police representative indicated that such monitoring could potentially be used, subject to appropriate arrangements.

A resident, who stated that they already owned a trail camera, offered to donate it for use at Morfa Bychan.

It was proposed that a suitable location be identified with the assistance of **Chris King and PCSO 8046 Martin Dickeson**, with the camera then installed.

Warning/signage

A resident raised concerns regarding the existing sign at the top of the lane, suggesting that it effectively identifies the location of the access to Morfa Bychan.

Cllr Tremlett explained that she recalled supporting the installation of the sign but acknowledged the concern that it may now assist people in identifying the access.

It was indicated that, if the TRO process progressed, the sign could be removed.

Local residents' historic concerns

Residents explained that concerns regarding Morfa Bychan had been raised for many years and that previous stakeholder meetings had not resulted in sufficient practical action.

One resident stated that the community had been through similar discussions for approximately 20 years and expressed frustration that barriers and other measures had previously been damaged without an effective long-term solution.

Another resident stated that the current proposals were positive but questioned whether anything would actually be implemented before another fire occurred.

Local access and responsible users

A resident noted that many local families use Morfa Bychan appropriately and responsibly and expressed concern that measures such as gates could restrict access for people who respect the area.

The meeting acknowledged that any solution should be proportionate and should seek to prevent harmful or inappropriate activity while retaining legitimate public access where possible.

Emergency communications

A resident highlighted the difficulty of making an emergency telephone call from the area because of poor mobile reception.

The issue was noted as an additional safety consideration.

Wider emergency planning

A resident asked whether future wildfire response could involve greater coordination, including forestry management, fire breaks and potentially wider emergency resources.

Gareth Beer MS advised that wider work was already being considered regarding wildfire prevention, land management and reducing fuel loads.

Media and public awareness

A resident asked whether media coverage could be used to highlight the issues at Morfa Bychan and help raise awareness and potentially attract funding.

Gareth Beer MS supported appropriate publicity and stated that social media, despite its disadvantages, could also be used positively to raise awareness of the issues.

Funding

A resident suggested that funding should be considered to assist the National Trust and Community Council in implementing preventative measures.

The meeting acknowledged the limited resources available to the Community Council, National Trust and wider public bodies.

10. AGREEING A WAY FORWARD

Following extensive discussion, there was a strong consensus that the situation required **both immediate preventative action and a longer-term coordinated strategy**.

The meeting recognised that the recent wildfire had demonstrated the seriousness of the risk and that prolonged dry conditions may require a different approach to the management of Morfa Bychan in future.

The following actions were agreed:

1. Temporary Traffic Regulation Order

The Clerk will **immediately initiate the process for seeking a Temporary Traffic Regulation Order** restricting motor-vehicle access to Morfa Bychan, subject to confirmation of the appropriate legal mechanism and the requirements of Carmarthenshire County Council.

The Clerk will liaise with:

- Cllr Jane Tremlett;
- Ann Davies MP;
- Gareth Beer MS;
- Carmarthenshire County Council officers;
- National Trust;
- other relevant stakeholders.

The elected representatives confirmed their willingness to support and help progress the application through the appropriate channels.

2. Formal action plan

A **formal action plan** will be prepared setting out:

- the action required;
- lead organisation/person;
- supporting organisation/person;
- timescale;

- current status.

The purpose will be to ensure that matters discussed at the meeting are progressed and reported back to stakeholders.

3. Trail camera

A trail camera will be considered for installation at Morfa Bychan.

Chris King and PCSO 8046 Martin Dickeson will assist in identifying a suitable location and arrangements for installation.

A resident offered to provide a trail camera for this purpose.

4. Gate and physical security

The National Trust will continue investigating:

- strengthening the existing gate;
- additional security measures;
- CCTV;
- strategic placement of physical barriers/boulders with support from Pendine Community Council;
- maintaining emergency and Welsh Water access.

The exact location and design of any physical barriers will require further consideration.

5. Environmental and fire-prevention measures

The National Trust and relevant stakeholders will continue discussions regarding:

- fire breaks;
- vegetation management;
- grazing;
- fuel reduction;
- potential re-wetting/restoration of the area.

Any proposal involving water management will require appropriate consideration by **NRW and Welsh Water**, particularly given the SSSI designation and proximity to critical water infrastructure.

6. Enforcement

The meeting noted the importance of ensuring that any measures introduced provide a realistic and enforceable basis for action.

The Police will continue to consider criminal offences where evidence exists, including criminal damage, while recognising the distinction between civil matters such as trespass and criminal offences.

7. Social media

Stakeholders and residents were encouraged to report inappropriate online promotion of Morfa Bychan for camping and seek removal where possible.

8. Further stakeholder meeting

It was agreed that a further stakeholder/community meeting should be arranged in **September 2026** to review progress against the agreed actions.

The date will be arranged once the availability of key stakeholders has been established.

11. ANY OTHER RELEVANT MATTERS

The meeting also discussed the importance of considering Morfa Bychan as part of a wider long-term wildfire and land-management strategy.

It was recognised that prolonged periods of dry weather may become increasingly common and that future planning should therefore consider:

- wildfire prevention;
- fuel management;
- emergency access;
- public safety;
- protection of critical infrastructure;
- environmental protection;
- responsible public access;
- communication and warning systems.

The meeting also acknowledged that the Community Council is a small authority with limited staffing and financial resources and that successful implementation of preventative measures will require the continued cooperation and support of the County Council, National Trust, Welsh Water, Police, NRW, elected representatives and other stakeholders.

12. CLOSING REMARKS

The Chairman thanked residents and stakeholders for their attendance and for the constructive, albeit at times understandably emotional, discussion.

The Chairman acknowledged the strength of feeling within the community and reiterated that the purpose of the meeting had been to move beyond simply identifying problems and towards **practical and achievable preventative measures**.

The Chairman stated that the Community Council would continue to work with the relevant organisations and elected representatives to progress the agreed actions.

13. RECOGNITION AND THANKS

The Chairman and Council formally recorded their thanks to:

- **MAWW Fire Service** and all emergency-service personnel involved in responding to the wildfire;
- **local farmers**, who assisted the emergency services by providing equipment and water and helping to control the fire;
- **The National Trust**, particularly Steve Whitehead and Dan Wood, for their continued engagement, site knowledge and willingness to investigate preventative measures;
- **Cllr Jane Tremlett**, for attending and offering to assist in progressing the matter through Carmarthenshire County Council;
- **Ann Davies MP**, for attending, listening to residents and offering to take the matter forward as constituency casework;
- **Gareth Beer MS**, for attending and offering cross-party support and assistance in progressing the issues raised;
- the **residents of Pendine and surrounding areas**, for attending, sharing their experiences and bringing forward practical suggestions;
- Museum of Speed for providing a venue to facilitate the meeting.

Particular thanks were recorded to everyone who had contributed to the emergency response and to those continuing to monitor the situation.

The Chairman concluded by emphasising that **the meeting must now lead to action**, and that the agreed measures and responsibilities would be followed up and reviewed at the proposed September meeting.

The meeting was then closed.

ACTION SUMMARY

No.	Action	Lead	Timescale
1	Initiate application/process for an urgent Temporary Traffic Regulation Order and establish the correct legal mechanism for the BOAT.	Clerk – Emily Bevan-Jones	Immediately – from 20 August 2026
2	Support and help escalate the TRO request through the appropriate CCC officers/directors and decision-makers.	Cllr Jane Tremlett / Ann Davies MP / Gareth Beer MS	Immediate
3	Liaise with National Trust and relevant stakeholders regarding the TRO application and supporting evidence.	Clerk / PCC / National Trust	Immediate
4	Prepare a formal Morfa Bychan Action Plan with named responsibilities and timescales.	Clerk / Chair	As soon as practicable
5	Identify a suitable location for a trail camera and establish installation arrangements.	Chris King / PCSO 8046 Martin Dickeson	As soon as practicable
7	Investigate strengthening the existing gate and additional physical security measures.	National Trust	Urgent
8	Investigate strategic placement of boulders/physical barriers , ensuring emergency and Welsh Water access and vehicle turning areas remain available.	National Trust / Welsh Water / PCC/ relevant stakeholders	Urgent
9	Continue discussions regarding CCTV and its feasibility given the proximity of the Welsh Water pumping station and limited power supply.	National Trust / Welsh Water / Police	Urgent
10	Continue discussions regarding fire breaks, grazing and vegetation/fuel management.	National Trust / NRW / relevant stakeholders	Ongoing
11	Investigate the feasibility of any re-wetting/flooding proposal, subject to NRW,	National Trust / NRW / Welsh Water	Further investigation

No.	Action	Lead	Timescale
	Welsh Water, SSSI and other statutory requirements.		
12	Continue gathering and sharing evidence relating to fires, camping, environmental damage, criminal damage and anti-social behaviour.	PCC / National Trust / stakeholders	Ongoing
13	Consider removal/repositioning of signage identifying the access to Morfa Bychan as part of the wider TRO/security review.	CCC / National Trust / relevant authority	To be considered alongside TRO
14	Report inappropriate social-media promotion of Morfa Bychan for camping and request removal where possible.	Residents / stakeholders	Ongoing
15	Arrange a further stakeholder/community meeting to review progress.	PCC / Clerk	September 2026

Overall position

The meeting agreed that the recent wildfire had demonstrated an urgent need for preventative action at Morfa Bychan. The immediate priority is to investigate and progress a Temporary Traffic Regulation Order, while simultaneously pursuing physical security, monitoring, environmental management and longer-term preventative measures. The Community Council will work with the National Trust, Carmarthenshire County Council, Welsh Water, Dyfed-Powys Police, NRW and elected representatives to progress these matters.