

## Ymchwiliad Mewn i Lifogydd RhCT / Enquiry into RhCT Flooding

Bragdy Twt Lol ~ The Trefforest Brewery was hit badly by the flooding in February following a particularly wet Autumn and Winter culminating in the flooding after two Atlantic storms. It goes without saying that hundreds of people's homes were badly affected in our area and we hope they are fully considered in this review.

The flooding cost our business nearly £50,000, in addition to the physical, emotional and long-term implications.

We have engaged a number of insurance brokers and insurance companies directly, **and no one has been willing to even offer a price on flood insurance.**

Businesses and insurance companies need confidence that everything reasonably possible is being done to mitigate the effects, risks and likelihood of such an even happening. Trefforest Industrial Estate has been highlighted an area **of strategic importance to the Welsh Government** and local authority. **Without a full and open enquiry** how can this area be considered of strategic importance?

We can't neglect all of the **human-made, managed, or influenced** functions of our drainage basin. They can be prone to failure, systemically or mechanically. Many Government and non-Government companies and bodies have a role to play, including but not exclusively Natural Resources Wales, Dŵr Cymru, Rhondda Cynon Taf Local Authority, the Welsh & UK Governments.

We need to understand the implications of heavy rainfall in a time of changing climate and have a joined-up approach to cover these aspects. We have highlighted some areas we believe should be considered.

### Reservoir management

Were the reservoirs leading into this catchment basin managed appropriately? Could more water have been drained from the reservoirs before the event to ensure spare capacity. Including Llwynonn, Pontsticill, Llestwen & Castell Nos Reservoirs.

Dŵr Cymru carried out extensive silt treatment work at **Castell Nos reservoir**. Did this impact on the water system?

### River and river flood defence management & risks

Were flood defences adequately maintained or was underinvestment potentially an issue?

Should there be schemes in place to **flood agricultural land** and adequately reimburse their owners to relieve pressure on developed areas? Were river walls and human made embankments adequately maintained? Such as Trefforest Estate (see aerial image) where it appears the flood defence on Trefforest Estate was breached, and subsequently stopped the flood water from leaving further down the basin.

**Natural Resources Wales had allegedly changed their flood risk advice in November**, resulting in a business on Trefforest Estate being priced out of flood insurance. Did they change their advice? What was done as a result?

Is it possible the **Cardiff Bay barrage** could have affected river flow as far up as Nantgarw and Trefforest?

Understanding **existing river pumping** stations. We know of at least one which failed locally. What was the cumulative effect?

### Flood defence management (remotely for specific areas and properties)

If risks were known (see Natural Resources Wales flood risk adjustment in Nov), should more local water defence projects for properties and specific areas such as business estates been funded in advance?

### Culvert & tributary management

This has been identified as the cause of flooding in some areas. Had other culvert, tributaries been adequately cleared? Are there any more examples?

### Deforestation in the middle and upper valleys

Had the Forestry arm of Natural Resources Wales fully considered the impact of forestry management (e.g. above Pentre) on the Rhondda and Taf rivers?

Dŵr Cymru have been replacing the **entire water pipeline from Maerdy to Pontypridd**. They have **felled many trees/forests to lay pipeline**, such as a large section between Wattstown and Ynyshir (the footpath below was greatly damaged and has been closed since).

### Development on land which functions as natural rain water buffers

Not limited to lower lying land by the river bank, but also land higher up in the hills. Development has taken place for housing, businesses and even wind turbine farms which could have an effect.

At the head of the Rhondda is an area with one of the highest densities of onshore **wind turbines**. **Substantial road infrastructure** has been laid allowing the movement of heavy large industrial machinery. **Thousands of tonnes of concrete** is sunk into the ground for each turbine foundation. Much of this in areas of historic **marshland** and **former forestry**, which is an excellent natural drainage buffer.

### Sewerage

Had sewerage systems been working and maintained adequately? Understanding existing sewerage pump stations, did any fail or not meet the flow requirements. What was the cumulative effect?





## Conclusions

As we face Autumn, we need assurance every possible mitigation is in place to avoid another catastrophe. Clearly at this point in time, as we cannot obtain flood cover as the insurance industry does not have this level of confidence.

The lessons learned will be of use for Wales as a whole providing a blue print to best manage the effects of a changing climate and prevent what we believe could well have been a preventable flood.



**BRAGDY TWT. COE**  
**THE TREFFOREST BREWERY**

