

National Assembly for Wales
Environment and Sustainability Committee
NRW 2015 – 66
Natural Resources Wales – Annual Scrutiny 2015
Response from Martin Snow

Submission by Martin Snow, local resident & recent member of the NFPG.

Having recently become a member of the Newborough Forest Protection Group I readily admit I am not familiar with the technicalities. However, I regularly frequent the Forest, the Warren and adjacent coastline having been a local resident for 39 years. (Sorry English only)

My interest in the NFPG resulted from observed VANDALISM committed in Newborough Forest!

Newborough Forest is a major asset to Anglesey, it's Tourist Industry and residents.

Newborough Forest creates employment in an area of unemployment.

Areas of Newborough Forest and Warren are variously used by wildlife study groups and scientific organisations, some being **designated** areas in their own right. At various times under the control of CCW, FCW, EAW, WAG and ACC and in the latest incarnation, since April 2013, referred to as **Natural Resources Wales**. How grand is that!

The sum total of NRW effort is spectacularly mediocre (disastrous). Demonstrably NRW could not be accused of joined up thinking, in fact, it might enlighten to recall comments to the effect “NRW is in chaos” and “not organised” by those in a position to know.

My personal concern was alerted early in January 2015, on visiting a particularly familiar area of Newborough Forest and seeing VANDALISM on an **Industrial** scale! Indeed the Industrial Plant could be found hidden in the undergrowth a half mile into the Forest. Hidden – because they understood well it would cause considerable public concern. Since then I have accumulated over 200 evidential photos some with GPS positions showing a total of 14 breaches of the sea defence sand dunes protecting the Forestry and Warren, plus many showing acres of bare sand denuded of trees.

Colleagues in NFPG are aware that some miss-informational communication from NRW was promulgated earlier. But (obviously) non of this was intended to indicate the scale and extent to which the Forest was to be VANDALISED.

Approximately 3 months work by a digger, a bulldozer and 2 heavy duty lorries has left the Forest looking like an industrial ground works scheme, denuded of all trees. As I understand it, there was no prior warning, consultation or explanation given to local residents before this excavation work started and unpleasant and unattractive scars remain.

Local residents were once again deliberately misled by NRW as to their intentions for Newborough Forest.

Natural Resources Wales do not own Newborough Forest!

NRW act as agent to WAG, who hold Newborough Forest on behalf of the people of Wales.

There appears to have been about three months of work done which has cost a very great deal of money and is in no way beneficial to the Forest area and its amenity, particularly with regard to its attractiveness to tourists

While acting like a bully NRW deceived residents into the conducting of experiments without explanation or accurate description of the type and extent of work (vandalism) to be carried out. NRW should endeavour to carry the local community with it by giving honest information and facilitating adequate consultation. Present autocratic imposition of deceptive information and practice is most unacceptable.

Most people who come to Anglesey as tourists would agree Newborough Forest and Warren is a major and invaluable asset to the area, where people can come to recover from the endless stream of pressure, haste and abuse in their everyday lives. The whole area including Llanddwyn Isle is a relaxing, peaceful and natural place to 'unwind'! (regain sanity) The tourist trade, who through their own initiatives and business activities bring considerable financial gain to Anglesey and the surrounding areas simply because NF brings great pleasure to thousands of visitors.

For the above reasons this very special place, absolutely must not be butchered and bulldozed into an unpleasant enervating rural equivalent of the centre of any major War Damaged city.

It is well known locally, that the forest is under threat of total clear felling. Given the slightest opportunity NRW would clear the lot – Oh yes, and they would deny that! But when one lives locally one sees how NRW behaves! One recent proposal would have clear-felled 100m into the forest all round the periphery. Equal to 1.275sq Km of trees. Some complain about “mono cultures”. At the slightest opportunity trees are felled. However, trees that are planted are of a similar nature, as opposed to deciduous trees.

As a resident, I have watched the blunderings that happen – over many years.

I am told there are several criteria imposed upon forestry by EC & UK directive. Are these correctly exercised, I understand not!

I understand there are some hydrological tests to be carried out.

It is proposed the trees within a certain radius of the test point are to be clearfelled. So, if the trees will affect the hydrological tests it seems obvious to move the test point away from the afforested area? Maybe even to the recently denuded area ?

I am also given to understand that a certain person in an advisory capacity is 'offended' by the straightness of the south-east side of the forest he has proposed clearfelling of some of that side of the forest, in order that his eye shall not be offended !

ALLWAYS - ANY EXCUSE TO CUT TREES DOWN!

Always remember! Every time a 'new' edge is created by removal of trees, further trees will be exposed to the wind and thus some will be forced down!

After obtaining a cost figure by FoI, we all know the 3 months work has cost considerably more than £100,000. Please can you tell me, can expenditure of this magnitude be justified. Are the few bugs and species saved by this vast violation of the Newborough Forest SO valuable? What will be the beneficial outcome of such great expenditure? At a time of National Austerity.

Why was the industrial plant hired from a firm in Bala, when it could have been hired locally ... ?

And who had a slice of that?! (there's a nasty smell round here!)

I am informed by management, the Car Park (new) and the Viewing Platform and access Boardwalk (new) is expected to be under water in a few decades.

As for the -

NAW Environment and Sustainability Committee, scrutiny, of Natural Resources Wales.

I expect that will read as *another* of the WAG's cover ups.

Is there no honesty !

Sincerely. M. Snow, Rhwng y ddwydre, Brynsiencyn, Anglesey, LL61 6TZ tel: 01248 430 848