To: MEMBERS OF RHOSSILI COMMUNITY COUNCIL/CYNGOR CYMUNED RHOSILI

Members are summonsed to attend a meeting of RHOSSILI COMMUNITY COUNCIL in person at Rhossili Village Hall, or via Zoom, on Tuesday 6 October at 7:00pm.
Members of the public and press are also invited to attend in person or via Zoom.

To join the meeting via Zoom please use this link:
https://us06web.zoom.us/j/8074326675
Meeting ID: 807 432 6675 Passcode: Rhossili

Chair: Colin Everett (CE)
Members: Ian Button (IB), Maggie Kirk (MK) – Vice Chair, Lesley-Anne Nolan (LAN), Jo Scott (JS)
Clerk: Judy Chappell (JC)
RFO: Francis Morgan (FM)

Agenda

Tuesday 6 October 2026, 7:00pm
Rhossili Village Hall and via Zoom

1 Welcome and Introductions and meeting guidelines

2 Apologies for absence

3 Declarations of interests

4 Minutes

4.1 To Approve and sign the Minutes of the RCC meeting of Tuesday 11 August 2026

5 Governance – The Future of the Community Council

5.1 Transition to the new De Gwyr Community Council in 2027. Refer to notes of the most recent local planning meeting and the City and County of Swansea Advisory Note

6 Strategic Priorities

6.1 Emergency Planning

6.2 South Gower Flooding and Council Works

6.3 Road Safety and Highways

6.4 Local Tourism Investment and Projects

6.5 Special Outdoor Events and City and County of Swansea (CCS) Outdoor Events Strategy

6.6 Community Wellbeing Events

7 Current Issues

7.1 Grazing on Rhossili Cliffs and Management Plan

7.2 Illegal Hunting Activity

7.3 Controlled and Uncontrolled Burning on Open Land – update – refer to attached Senedd Briefing Report

7.4 Gower Landscape Connections Consultation – refer to attached consultation invitation

8 Biodiversity

8.1 National Emergency Briefing Event - Update on People's Emergency Briefing Event on 19 November 2026

9 Footpaths, Rights of Way and Highways

9.1 Updates and reports

10 Planning

10.1 Current Planning Applications

10.2 Retrospective Approval of Planning Comments

10.2.1 Planning Application 2026/1317/Ful - R Morgan/Rhossili Sunflowers - RCC has submitted a full commentary along with a supporting biodiversity assessment, with a neutral stance. - see comments below

11 Governance & Finance

11.1 Finance

11.1.1 Finance Report – see summary below

October 2026	Summary Statement 2026-27		
Income			
Balance Brought Forward from 2025-26			**£3,964**
		Expected Income	
		Precept	£7,200
		Magazine sponsorship	£447
		Expected Total Income 2026/27	£7,647
		Total Income to date 2026-27	**£5,288**
		Income shortfall to date	-£2,359
		Total Brought Forward + Income to date	**£9,252**
Expenditure			
		2026-27 Budgeted Expenditure	£8,738
		2026-27 Actual Expenditure	£2,773
		Underspend to date	£5,964
		VAT Spend to date	£98.95
		Total Spend to date	**£2,773**
		Confirmed Balance at date of report	**£6,479**

Analysis of Planned Expenditure			**Actual Expenditure**	
	Planned	**%**	**Spend to date**	**Remainder**
Running Costs				
Salary, Pension and Expenses	£4,006	46%	£1,867	£2,139
Training	£158	2%	£0	£158
IT	£404	5%	£168	£236
Audit	£750	9%	£0	£750
Other Running Costs	£1,164	13%	£267	£897
Running Costs Subtotal	**£6,481**	**74%**	**£2,302**	**£4,179**
Other Expenditure				
Newsletter	£800	9%	£0	£800
Donations	£396	5%	£96	£300
Projects	£500	6%	£375	£125
Rhossili Hwb	£110	1%	£0	£110
Contingency	£450	5%	£0	£450
Other Spend Total	**£2,256**	**26%**	**£471**	**£1,335**
Planned & Actual Spend Totals	**£8,737**	**100%**	**£2,773**	**£5,514**

Date: 28/09/2026

Francis Morgan, RCC - Responsible Finance Officer

11.2.2 Council asked to confirm approval for following payments:

11.2.2a Increased Clerk Salary and Backpay
Payment 28/09/2026 - gross salary from September is £311.20 and a backpay amount of £50 is due

11.2.2b Auto - Payment 21/09/2026 and for future months - increase in monthly bank charges from £4.25 To £5.09 (20% increase!)

11.2.2c1 02/09/2026 - £15 payment to RVH for People's Emergency Briefing Event booking

11.2.3 Review Budget Variances in preparation for setting Precept at December meeting. Worksheet to be distributed to Councillors prior to meeting

12 Administration

12.1 Annual Community Magazine - update

12.2 Quarterly Meeting with Police Community Support Officers

13 Local Correspondence

13.1 Verbal update

14 Updates from RCC Representatives

14.1 Gower Community Council Forum

14.2 One Voice Wales – Swansea Area Committee

14.3 Gower Forum

14.4 Swansea Local Nature Partnership

14.5 Rhossili Bunkhouse & Village Hall Trustees

14.6 Knelston School

14.7 National Trust

14.8 Gower Commoners Association

14.9 The Gower Society

CORRESPONDENCE AND DOCUMENTATION TO SUPPORT AGENDA ITEMS ABOVE

4.1 Minutes of the Last Meeting

Minutes of Meeting
Minutes of Meeting
Tuesday 11 August 2026
Rhossili Village Hall and via Zoom

1 Welcome and Introductions and meeting guidelines

Present: Colin Everett (Chair), Councillors: Maggie Kirk (Vice Chair), Lesley-Anne Nolan, Jo Scott, Francis Morgan (RFO), Judy Chappell (Clerk)

Apologies for absence: Ian Button

Other attendees: three members of the community

3 Declarations of interests: None

4 Minutes of the last meeting

4.1 The minutes of the RCC meeting of Tuesday 2 June 2026 were approved as a correct record.

5 Strategic Priorities and Current Issues

5.1 Emergency Planning: the verbal report was noted. The amended local risk register was noted, and the South Wales Resilience Forum risk register was referenced and noted as good guidance. List of leads for each theme incomplete and to be followed up. Rhossili Village Hall (RVH)Trustees to be approached to agree to recommend to City and County of Swansea (CCS) that RVH becomes the preferred local rest centre.

5.2 South Gower Flooding and Council Works:
Verbal report noted. Feedback on the outcomes of the local consultations awaited.

5.3 Road Safety and Highways: verbal report noted with engagement with CCS on possible traffic regulations to ease, and enforce, traffic management. To help manage traffic congestion and obstructive parking of vehicles in Rhossili, short term RCC signage and leaflets to be produced and distributed to encourage more considerate parking for the eclipse' event.

5.4 Rhossili Bus Shelter Project: verbal project update noted.

5.5 Special Outdoor Events and City and County of Swansea (CCS) Events Strategy. RCC response made to the CCS strategy consultation noted. Follow-up meeting to be arranged with CCS with neighbouring community councils.

5.5.2 Collaboration with South Gower Community Councils: arrangements for transition planning noted.

5.6 Community Wellbeing Events: report on completion of the series of training events with St John Ambulance training noted with a community donation to the charity of approx £200 from attendees. To explore an annual refresher event.

6 Current Issues

6.1 Grazing on Rhossili Cliffs and Management Plan: report noted.

6.2 Illegal Hunting Activity: report noted.

6.3 Controlled and Uncontrolled Burning on Open Land: report noted.

6.4 Article 4 – General Permitted Development Order: update on position of CCS noted.

6.5 Gower Landscape Connections Consultation: RCC to support the draft collective response for Gower Community Councils with the addition of some comments on the need for enforcement to protect the natural assets which the organisation oversees, nurtures and protects.

7 Biodiversity

7.1 Recording & Monitoring Nature in Gower Event (3 July 2026): report of event notes with further promotion of the LERC app via What's App required.

7.2 Biodiversity Action Plan – Marine Protection: report noted with further exploration of contributing to case making for a Marine Conservation Zone to follow.

7.3 National Trust Bioblitz Event: noted that SEWBREC/NT are organising event on the Vile 25/8/26.

7.4 National Emergency Briefing Event: support for the documentary film to be screened at a community event hosted by RCC.

7.5 Tree and Scrub Removal at Upper Pitton: update report noted.

7 Footpaths, Rights of Way and Highways

7.1 Report to be made to CCS on priority pathways in need of urgent maintenance, noting the overgrown state of a number of pathways.

8 Planning

8.1 Sunnyside: Bat survey completed.

9 Governance and Finance

9.1 Governance

9.1.1 Local Government Reorganisation – update noted.

9.1.2 Review of Charter for Joint Working with City and County of Swansea: updated version of the charter approved without further comments, noting that RCC representatives had already contributed at the earlier review stage.

9.1.3 Review and approval of revised RCC Financial Regulations (August 2026): revisions to the financial regulations adopted.

9.2 Finance

9.2.1 Finance Report
Bowen Richards Trust income (£200 - SEWBREC Training) - approved
Bowen Richards Trust income (£250 - Bus Shelter Design) - approved

10 Administration

10.1 Annual Community Magazine: updated noted with quotations for different sizeand printing specifications to be sought. The option of a pull-out supplement onthe history of RCC to be explored.

11 Local Correspondence

None to report beyond references made in agenda items.

12 Updates from RCC Representatives

12.1 Gower Community Council Forum – no report

12.2 One Voice Wales – Swansea Area Committee – no report

12.3 Gower Forum – no report

12.4 Swansea Local Nature Partnership – report noted

12.5 Rhossili Bunkhouse & Village Hall Trustees – no report

12.6 Knelston School – no report

12.7 National Trust: report noted

12.8 Gower Commoners Association: report noted

12.9 The Gower Society – no report

5.1 Transition to De Gwyr Community Council

Meeting Notes and CCS Advisory Notes

Notes of Merger Planning Meeting of 2 September 2026
Proposed Gower South Community Council
Venue: Rhossili Village Hall
Present: Judy Chappell (note taker, Clerk Rhossili CC), Maggie Kirk (VC Rhossili CC), Colin Everett (Chair Rhossili CC), Dawn Waterman (PECC), Michelle Clark (Chair Reynoldston CC), Sam Caswell (Clerk Penrice), Gavin Roberts (Chair Penrice), Huw Evans (Head of Democratic Services / Deputy Monitoring Officer, CCS), Robert Newman, Paul Sizer (Clerk Reynoldston CC)
Apologies: Robert Fisher (Chair PECC), Sheila Fisher, Charles Twitchett

NOTES & ACTIONS

	Notes	**Action**
1	The 4 affected community councils will be DISSOLVED in May 2027	
2	CTC Guidance Document referred to throughout the meeting – point 24.2 – Asset registers of each community council – each clerk to check they are up to date and forward to Paul Sizer	JC/RF/SC/ PS
3	Port Eynon has no clerk in place currently. Sam Caswell has offered to assist if PECC Chair can get in touch	RF/SC
4	TUPE – chair of each council to contact each clerk with details of upcoming redundancy. Redundancy costs - Redundancy information / terms is not in Clerks model contracts. The Order will normally set out the arrangements for the first meeting of the new council, specifically who will be responsible for convening it. Rights for workers being examined, job sharing, redundancy, plan for proper reserves to finance redundancy required. Local clerk vacancy – North Gower upcoming	All Chairs and RFOs
5	Record Protection/Transfer – Huw Evans will identify correct team member for records transfer. Hard copies of documents to go to Archive Department – Paul Sizer has email address for this department. Electronic records – decide which documents should be moved to the new one drive, along with a transfer date.	HE/PS Clerks
6	Websites: 2 URLs currently registered via IONOS, but apparent at this meeting that the name decided for the new council differs to what this group thought it would be. The new name will be Gower South Community Council. Register a 3rd URL – gowersouthcc.wales. Judy to register a 3rd URL Access details for the 2 registered sites are saved on the new One Drive. Judy to add access details for the 3rd URL here. URLs are linked to the clerk@rhossili.org.uk address Website content: current website content (x4 sites) to move location with date to be decided for the new website build – designer required No requirement for bi-lingual website.	JC ALL
7	Change of Council Name: publicity required, get basic contact info onto a new website, even if just one page. Paul has a contact that manages Reynoldston's website that could kick this off. Look at social media coverage	JC/PS
8	RFOs to meet up at next session – Elections – if any seats are contested then budget will be required to pay for these	Chairs/ RFOs

	Closing accounts and audit records will need careful attention - see Sub-section 5 – Bank accounts - transfers	
9	Council – Role – first meeting – Proper Officer – Huw Evans – to draft agenda. Speak to each council to identify what should appear on the first AGM agenda. Readopt code of conduct/policies etc – these should be selected from the best ones available from each council, and check around to see if there are any even better ones. Missing are those on: safeguarding, complaints, biodiversity, etc. The question was asked what exact support was OVW offering?	HE/Clerks
10	Elections: costs should be planned for in the 2027 Precept along with redundancy payments and factor in some possible unknowns. New candidates should be invited and notices should be posted on each of the current 4 websites along with the new one at the end of March 2027. Likely election costs to be held in reserve: Penrice £1150, Port Eynon £1170, Reynoldston £800, Rhosili £700 ~£4,500.00. The election will be same day as CCS so the costs will be shared with them.	RFO/Clerks
11	Item 31 Transition Groups. Choose a new insurer to take over the new council. The 4 councils should speak to their current insurers and roll over the existing insurance policies for a further 2 weeks to overlap after the 7 May 2027 – get this agreement in writing. Banking mandates ditto. The current signatories to accounts must remain to facilitate banking account transfers. Prepare all the mandates in advance. Choose a bank best suited to the new council.	Clerks/RFO
12	Finance/Precept – slight change to previous understanding: The combined precept must reflect what money we want based on the projects put forward from the respective areas. This draft budget will be sent through to CCS who will then submit it to Welsh Government. Precept would be 2 figures, the time from April 1st - the dissolutions and then a separate recharge for the remainder of the year. Precept timetable – very slightly earlier deadlines. The totals should be roughly similar to the current total, then add in additional for redundancy, elections, assess if a larger number of hours should be paid to clerks and account for salary increases, possible additional audit fees should be factored in. Paul Sizer has produced a rough budget based on the latest numbers from each council. The RFOs should come together to discuss the numbers.	RFO
13	The key points of the merger need to be shared with each community. Top 5 priorities to be identified in the hope that these will be honoured in the new council.	Chairs/Clerks
14	Plaid Cymru – email at weekend	
15	Community Town Council Forum – meeting 12/10/26, 7pm – attend probably via zoom	Chairs/Clerks
16	We have a master list of all the defibrillators – to ensure good maintenance cover they should be looked after by the Heartbeat Trust. Judy will contact this organisation to obtain further info on costs for this service and will bring it back for consideration	JC
17	DONM: 4/11/26 – 7.30pm – Port Eynon Village Hall – hosts and note takers PECC	DW/PECC

Guidance for Community & Town Councils following The County of Swansea (Communities) Order 2026 etc.

26 August 2026

Executive Summary

Purpose:

To provide practical guidance to Community and Town Councils within Swansea affected by The County of Swansea (Communities) Order 2026 and The County Borough of Caerphilly (Communities) and the County of Swansea (Communities) (Miscellaneous Amendments) Order 2026. The guidance is intended to assist Clerks, Chairs, Councillors and relevant Officers in preparing for the boundary, electoral, administrative and financial changes arising from the Order.

Actions

1) The guidance set out in this report be circulated to all Community and Town Council Clerks within Swansea.

2) Swansea Council facilitate a briefing session for councils directly affected by abolition, dissolution, merger, boundary change or the creation of new councils.

3) The existing councils whose areas, assets, liabilities or records will transfer to the newly created councils of Gower North, Gower South and Pennard be advised to co-ordinate preparatory work ahead of the first meetings of those new councils.

4) Clydach, Llangyfelach & Pontarddulais councils, together with Mawr community council prior to its dissolution, be advised to co-ordinate preparatory work ahead of the relevant Mawr community wards transferring to those successor areas.

5) Existing councils affected by dissolution be asked to prepare asset registers, liability schedules, staffing information, audit records and transfer documentation.

6) Swansea Council Finance / Council Tax officers continue to liaise with Welsh Government regarding Article 104 precept and tax base information.

7) Swansea Council draft first-meeting agendas for each new community council, making clear that all formal decisions rest with the new council once constituted.

8) Existing affected councils, supported where appropriate by One Voice Wales & / or Swansea Council, prepare draft template reports and supporting papers for consideration by the new community councils, making clear that all formal decisions rest with the new council once constituted.

9)	Clerks be advised that any legal, employment, property, charity, VAT, banking or audit issues specific to their council should be the subject of appropriate professional advice.

Author & Job Title:	Huw Evans, Head of Democratic Services & Deputy Monitoring Officer

1. Introduction

2. The report provides practical guidance to Community and Town Councils within Swansea affected by The County of Swansea (Communities) Order 2026 and The County Borough of Caerphilly (Communities) and the County of Swansea (Communities) (Miscellaneous Amendments) Order 2026. The guidance aims to assist Clerks, Chairs, Councillors and relevant Officers in preparing for the boundary, electoral, administrative and financial changes arising from the Order.

3. The report draws on the provisions of The County of Swansea (Communities) Order 2026, the Local Government Finance Act 1992, the Local Government Area Changes Regulations 1976, the Local Authorities (Precepts) (Wales) Regulations 1995, Welsh Government correspondence regarding the 2027-2028 precept arrangements, and the Society of Local Council Clerks (SLCC) document "Key considerations for Community or Town Councils affected by a Community or Electoral Review".

4. This report is intended as practical guidance. It is not a substitute for legal, financial, employment or audit advice where specific issues arise.

5. Background

6. The County of Swansea (Communities) Order 2026 implements the recommendations of the Democracy and Boundary Commission Cymru (DBCC) following its review of community electoral arrangements in the County of Swansea. The Order makes changes to community boundaries and consequential electoral arrangements. It also abolishes certain communities, dissolves certain Community Councils, creates new communities and establishes new Community Councils.

7. The Order includes specific provisions relating to the creation of new community councils, their first meetings, initial expenses, precept arrangements and residuary successors. Articles 104, 105 and 106 are particularly important for the purposes of this guidance.

8. The Order creates three new community councils: Gower North, Gower South and Pennard. Article 106 specifies that the new community council of Gower North is the residuary successor for the community councils of Llangennith, Llanmadoc and Cheriton, and Llanrhidian Lower; the new community council of Gower South is the residuary successor for Port Eynon, Penrice, Rhossili and Reynoldston; and the new community council of Pennard is the residuary successor for Ilston and Pennard.

Dissolved Community / Town Council	New Community Council / Residuary Successor

• Llangennith, Llanmadoc & Cheriton. • Llanrhidian Lower.	Gower North
• Port Eynon. • Penrice. • Reynoldston. • Rhossili.	Gower South
• Ilston. • Pennard.	Pennard (New Council)

9. The relevant parts of the existing Mawr community area will transfer to existing community areas, including Clydach, Llangyfelach and Pontarddulais. This should be treated separately from the Article 104 arrangements for newly created community councils. Existing councils affected by the transfer of parts of Mawr should co-ordinate preparatory work with Mawr Community Council prior to dissolution and with Swansea Council as appropriate.

Mawr Transfers	**Residuary Successor**
• Mawr. Craig-cefn-parc community.	Clydach
• Mawr. Felindre community.	Llangyfelach
• Mawr. Garnswllt community.	Pontarddulais

10. Key Legal Distinction: Abolition and Dissolution

11. It is important to distinguish between the abolition of a community and the dissolution of a community council.

12. Abolition of a community

13. A community is a geographical area. Where a community is abolished, the area itself ceases to exist as a separate community area under the terms of the Order. The land and electors within that area will then fall within another community or a newly created community, depending on the provisions of the Order. The Order expressly contains provisions headed “abolition of community” in relation to several affected areas.

14. Dissolution of a community council

15. A community council is a corporate body. Where a community council is dissolved, the legal body ceases to exist. Its councillors cease to hold office in relation to that council when the dissolution takes effect, and arrangements must be made for the transfer or conclusion of its property, contracts, liabilities, records, staffing and financial matters. The Order expressly provides for the dissolution of named community councils.

Practical explanation

Term	*Meaning*	*Practical effect*
Abolition	*The geographical community area ceases to exist.*	*The area forms part of another or newly created community.*
Dissolution	*The corporate community council ceases to exist.*	*Assets, liabilities, contracts, records and responsibilities must be transferred or otherwise dealt with.*

Residuary successor	*The body identified to inherit functions, property, liabilities or records for relevant purposes.*	*Article 106 identifies the relevant new councils as residuary successors for the dissolved councils.*

16. This distinction should be explained clearly to Clerks and Councillors, as it affects how councils should approach assets, liabilities, employment matters and records.

17. General Principles for Managing the Transition

18. The SLCC guidance states that councils affected by community or electoral reviews should consider their own circumstances, make local arrangements, and seek legal advice where appropriate. It also notes that arrangements should be reasonable and proportionate. The key principle for Swansea is that work should be divided between:

iv) **Existing councils**, which remain responsible for their current affairs until dissolution or alteration takes effect.

iv) **Swansea Council**, which has statutory and practical co-ordination responsibilities under the Order and its wider billing, electoral and democratic services functions.

iv) **Welsh Ministers**, who have a specific role in notifying the appropriate first-year amount for new community councils under Article 104(6).

iv) **The new community councils**, which must make their own formal decisions once they legally exist and have held their first meetings.

19. This distinction is essential. The new councils may not yet have Councillors in office, a Chair, Clerk, Responsible Financial Officer, bank account, insurance arrangements or adopted governance documents. Preparatory work can be undertaken before the new councils exist, but formal decisions should normally be reserved to the new councils once constituted.

20. **Responsibilities Before the New Councils Exist**

21. Role of existing affected Community Councils

22. Existing councils that are to be dissolved, altered or affected by the Order should focus on preparing their own affairs for transfer or conclusion.

23. The SLCC guidance states that where a council is to be dissolved, its property will need to be transferred to its residuary successor as specified in the relevant Order, and that the council should ensure its asset register is up to date and accurate.

24. Existing councils should therefore:

vi) Review and update asset registers, including land, buildings, allotments, play areas, office equipment, ICT equipment, furniture, vehicles, bank balances, investments and debts owed to the council.

vi) Identify all liabilities, including contracts, leases, loans, maintenance agreements, utilities, service agreements, grant conditions and unresolved legal issues. The SLCC guidance notes that the Local Government Area Changes Regulations 1976 make provision for transfer of property, liabilities, contracts, deeds, bonds, agreements, notices and pending proceedings to a residuary successor where one is identified.

vi) Prepare records for transfer, including minutes, title documents, financial records, contracts, insurance papers, audit documents, employment records and correspondence. The SLCC guidance advises that papers, records and other information should be checked and deposited with the residuary successor, another community council or the principal council as appropriate.

vi) Consider staffing implications. The SLCC guidance refers to regulations 67, 69 and 70 of the Local Government Area Changes Regulations 1976 and notes that, where a council is dissolved and its area is not transferred as a whole to one other community council, a scheme for allocation of officers may be required unless the relevant exception applies.

vi) Prepare closing accounts and audit records. The SLCC guidance states that the accounts of a dissolving council should be made up to the day the council is dissolved ready to be audited in the usual way.

vi) Notify grant providers, insurers, contractors and service providers where the Order affects the continuing legal identity of the council or the area in which services are provided. The SLCC guidance specifically highlights grants, liabilities, insurance and service agreements as matters requiring consideration.

25. Role of Swansea Council

26. Article 105 of The County of Swansea (Communities) Order 2026 provides that the proper officer of Swansea Council must convene the first meeting of each of the new community councils established by articles 31, 48 and 60.

27. Swansea Council also has a practical co-ordination role through Democratic Services, Finance, Electoral Services and Legal Services. Accordingly, Swansea Council should:

vi) Convene the first meetings of the new community councils through the proper officer, as required by Article 105.

vi) Co-ordinate communication with affected Clerks and councils through appropriate channels.

vi) Work with Finance colleagues and Welsh Government on the 2027-28 precept and tax base information required under Article 104.

vi) Support Electoral Services arrangements for the 2027 ordinary elections and the new community electoral arrangements contained in the Order.

vi) Provide advice on the timetable, first meeting arrangements, transfer issues and practical steps, while making clear that formal decisions for the new councils must be taken by those councils once established.

vi) Encourage existing councils to consider facilitating transition meetings or transition groups for each new council area, noting that such groups would be advisory and preparatory only and would not be decision-making bodies of the new councils.

28. Suggested Transition Groups

29. Existing councils are encouraged to establish Transition Groups to support an orderly transition. These groups should prepare information and identify issues for the new council's first meeting. They should not make decisions on behalf of the new council unless there is a clear legal basis to do so. Groups could prepare:

ix) Draft agenda for the first meeting. In consultation with the Head of Democratic Services.
ix) Draft standing orders / Draft financial regulations. Use Model version.
ix) Draft code of conduct adoption report.
ix) Draft banking mandate paperwork.
ix) Draft insurance enquiries.
ix) Draft asset and liability transfer schedules.
ix) Draft budget information.
ix) Draft record transfer checklists.
ix) Suggested six-month forward work programme.

30. These documents should be clearly marked as drafts for consideration by the new council. They should not be presented as decisions already taken.

31. Matters That Must Normally Wait Until the New Council Exists

32. The following should normally be decisions for the new council once it has been established and has Councillors able to act:

xi) Election or appointment of Chair and Vice-Chair, where applicable.
xi) Appointment of Clerk / Proper Officer.
xi) Appointment of Responsible Financial Officer.
xi) Adoption of standing orders.
xi) Adoption of financial regulations.
xi) Approval of bank signatories.
xi) Approval of insurance arrangements.
xi) Approval of budget arrangements within the Article 104 framework.
xi) Approval of expenditure.
xi) Adoption of policies.
xi) Decisions about assets, service delivery or discretionary arrangements not already determined by the Order.

33. This is an important governance point. Preparatory work may be undertaken before the appointed day, but corporate decisions should be taken by the properly constituted new council.

34. **Precept and Initial Expenses for Newly Created Community Councils**

35. Why the normal precept process does not apply in the usual way

36. The precept arrangements for the new community councils are not the ordinary annual precept-setting process. The new councils will not be fully constituted until after the 6 May 2027 ordinary elections, and therefore Article 104 of The County of Swansea (Communities) Order 2026 makes specific transitional provision for their initial expenses and precept arrangements.

37. Article 104 defines the “prospective billing authority” as Swansea County Council and defines the “relevant financial year” as the financial year beginning 1 April 2027.

38. Role of Welsh Ministers

39. Article 104(6) provides that the appropriate amount to be notified to each of the new community councils must be notified by the Welsh Ministers in writing to the prospective billing authority and to each of the new community councils.

40. Welsh Government correspondence confirms that, under Article 104(5), section 50 of the Local Government Finance Act 1992 will apply to the new community councils even though they will not be formally constituted until after the local government elections in May 2027, and that Article 104(6) requires the appropriate amount to be notified by Welsh Ministers.

41. The same Welsh Government correspondence requested Swansea Council’s assistance in providing information to enable the calculation of the precept for each new council, including early information relating to the 2026-2027 precept for each of the eight community councils being dissolved, including the tax base and level of precept.

42. Welsh Government also indicated that, when calculating the 2027-2028 tax base for the new community councils, figures would be needed on both a pre-change and post-change basis. The email gave Pennard as an example, requiring the tax base for Pennard and Ilston prior to the boundary changes, as well as the tax base for the newly formed Pennard community council reflecting boundary changes.

43. Duty on Swansea Council

44. Swansea Council does not appear to determine the first-year amount for each new community council. The statutory mechanism requires the appropriate amount to be notified by Welsh Ministers. Swansea Council’s role is to implement that amount through its billing authority functions.

45. Article 104(2) modifies section 32 of the Local Government Finance Act 1992 so that, for the relevant financial year, section 32 applies to the new community councils and the prospective billing authority as if the amount notified under Article 104(6) were a special item relating to the new community and as if the area of the prospective billing authority included the new community.

46. Article 104(3) modifies section 41 of the Local Government Finance Act 1992 so that, when the prospective billing authority makes its section 32 calculations, it is required to consider an amount equal to that notified to it under Article 104(6).

47. Article 104(5) modifies section 50 of the Local Government Finance Act 1992 so that each new community council must secure that the amount calculated as its budget requirement for 2027-2028 does not exceed the amount notified to that new community council under Article 104(6).

48. Instalment arrangements

49. The Local Authorities (Precepts) (Wales) Regulations 1995 normally require a billing authority to determine a schedule of instalments in relation to each financial year before 31 January in the preceding financial year.

50. Regulation 5 of those Regulations would ordinarily require the billing authority to inform each relevant precepting authority of the proposed and determined schedule of instalments, and not to determine the schedule within 21 days of informing each authority of the proposed schedule.

51. Article 104(7) of the Order applies the Local Authorities (Precepts) (Wales) Regulations 1995 to the new community councils and Swansea Council with modifications. It omits regulation 5 and modifies paragraph 8 of the Schedule so that, for the relevant local precepting authority arrangements, the reference to April is treated as a reference to May.

52. Practical explanation for Clerks

v) The first-year amount for each new community council will be notified by Welsh Ministers under Article 104(6).

v) Swansea Council must provide relevant precept and tax base information to support the calculation and notification process.

v) Swansea Council must include the Welsh Ministers' notified amount in its billing authority calculations for 2027-28.

v) The new community councils, once constituted, must ensure that their 2027-2028 budget requirement does not exceed the amount notified under Article 104(6).

v) Existing councils should ensure that accurate precept, tax base, reserve, liability and budget information is available before the transition.

53. Assets, Liabilities and Residuary Successors

54. Article 106 specifies the residuary successors for the dissolved community councils. This is important because the SLCC guidance explains that the Local Government Area Changes Regulations 1976 make provision for the transfer of property, liabilities,

contracts, notices and proceedings to the residuary successor where one is identified in the Order.

55. Existing councils should prepare a transfer schedule covering:

Area	Matters to include
Property	*Land, buildings, allotments, play areas, recreation grounds, cemeteries, furniture, vehicles and ICT equipment.*
Financial assets	*Bank balances, investments, reserves, earmarked reserves, grants and debts owed to the council.*
Liabilities	*Loans, contracts, leases, utilities, employment liabilities, service agreements and legal claims.*
Records	*Minutes, policies, contracts, audit records, asset registers, title documents and correspondence.*
Governance	*Current standing orders, financial regulations, delegations, insurance arrangements and adopted policies.*

56. The SLCC guidance states that agreements may be needed where property, income, rights, liabilities, expenses or financial relations are affected by an area change and refers to section 68 of the Local Government Act 1972 and section 44 of the Local Government (Democracy) (Wales) Act 2013 as relevant powers depending on the legislative basis of the Order.

57. Staffing Issues

58. Where an affected council employs staff, employment issues should be considered early, and advice should be sought where necessary.

59. The SLCC guidance states that the treatment of staff should be guided by the Cabinet Office Statement of Practice on Staff Transfers in the Public Sector and notes that TUPE principles may be relevant in broad terms where there is a change of employer.

60. The SLCC guidance also refers to regulations 67, 69 and 70 of the Local Government Area Changes Regulations 1976 and states that, where a council is dissolved and its area is not transferred as a whole to one other community council, a scheme for the allocation of officers must be made by the dissolving council unless the relevant exception applies.

61. Affected councils should therefore:

- v) Identify all employees and contractual arrangements.
- v) Review hours, job descriptions, salary, pension and employment terms.
- v) Consider whether any officer allocation scheme is required.
- v) Identify any redundancy, transfer or continuity issues.
- v) Take HR and legal advice where required.

62. Records, Audit and Governance

63. Existing councils should ensure that records are complete, organised and ready for transfer. This is particularly important where councils are being dissolved and records will need to be held by the residuary successor or another appropriate body.

64. The SLCC guidance states that councils should check the Order, identify the residuary successor where specified, and ensure that papers, records and information are deposited appropriately.

65. The SLCC guidance also states that the accounts of a dissolving council should be made up to the day the council is dissolved ready to be audited in the usual way.

66. Existing councils should prepare:

- x) Final minutes and decision records.
- x) Financial records and bank statements.
- x) Asset registers.
- x) Insurance documentation.
- x) Contracts and agreements.
- x) Employment records.
- x) Audit returns and working papers.
- x) Relevant correspondence.
- x) Website and publication records.
- x) Privacy notices and information governance records.

67. Opening a Bank Account for a New Council

68. A new community council may need banking arrangements as soon as possible once it comes into existence. However, practical difficulties may arise because the new council may not yet have a Clerk, Chair, signatories or formal resolutions in place before the appointed day.

69. Preparatory work can be undertaken before the new council exists, but formal approval of banking arrangements should normally be a matter for the new council once constituted.

70. Suggested preparatory steps include:

- vii) Identifying likely banking providers.
- vii) Asking banks what evidence they will require for a new community council account.
- vii) Preparing draft mandate forms.
- vii) Preparing identity verification requirements for proposed signatories once known.
- vii) Preparing a draft first-meeting report recommending banking arrangements.
- vii) Preparing draft resolutions for appointment of signatories.
- vii) Ensuring the new council has access to the information needed to operate within the Article 104 notified amount.

72. **First Meeting of the New Community Council**

73. Article 105 of The County of Swansea (Communities) Order 2026 provides that the proper officer of Swansea County Council must convene the first meeting of each new community council established by articles 31, 48 and 60.

74. The first agenda should be carefully structured to allow the new council to become operational. Suggested items include:

xvi) Election or appointment of Chair, where applicable.
xvi) Apologies and declarations of interest.
xvi) Confirmation of the legal establishment of the council.
xvi) Adoption of the Code of Conduct.
xvi) Appointment of Clerk / Proper Officer, whether interim or substantive.
xvi) Appointment of Responsible Financial Officer.
xvi) Adoption of standing orders.
xvi) Adoption of financial regulations.
xvi) Approval of banking arrangements and signatories.
xvi) Insurance arrangements.
xvi) Receipt of asset and liability transfer information.
xvi) Receipt of Article 104 precept / budget information.
xvi) Approval of initial expenditure required to operate the council.
xvi) Website, email and publication arrangements.
xvi) Future meeting dates.
xvi) Forward work programme.

75. Draft documents can be prepared in advance by existing councils or a transition group, but they should be formally considered and approved by the new council.

76. **Communication With Communities and Councillors**

77. The transition will affect residents, Clerks, Councillors and local organisations. Clear communication will therefore be important.

78. Councils are advised to inform communities of the changes prior to the Ordinary Elections on 6 May 2027.

79. Key Messages for Clerks

viii) A practical Checklist for Clerks is set out at Appendix 3 of the report.

viii) The new councils cannot be treated as if they already exist. Preparatory work can be undertaken, but formal decisions should normally be taken by the new council once constituted.

viii) Existing councils remain responsible for preparing their own affairs for transfer or conclusion. This includes assets, liabilities, contracts, records, staffing, audit and financial records.

viii) Swansea Council has specific duties under the Order. In particular, the proper officer must convene the first meetings of the new community councils.

viii) The first-year precept position is governed by Article 104. Welsh Ministers notify the appropriate amount, and Swansea Council must reflect that amount in its billing authority calculations.

viii) The new councils must operate within the amount notified under Article 104(6) for 2027-28. Article 104(5) applies section 50 of the Local Government Finance Act 1992 so that the new council's budget requirement must not exceed the notified amount.

viii) Transition groups may be useful, but they must not become shadow councils. Their role should be preparatory, advisory and administrative.

viii) Banking, insurance, governance documents and staffing arrangements should be prepared early but approved formally by the new council.

80. Conclusion

81. The County of Swansea (Communities) Order 2026 creates a significant transition for several Community Councils in Swansea. The key to a smooth transition will be early preparation, clear communication and a proper understanding of who has authority to act at each stage.

82. Existing councils should prepare their own records, assets, liabilities, staffing information and financial position for transfer. Swansea Council must discharge its statutory responsibilities under the Order, including convening the first meetings of the new councils and implementing the Article 104 precept arrangements through its billing authority functions. Welsh Ministers have the specific role of notifying the appropriate amount for each new council's first-year budget requirement. The new councils must then make their own formal decisions once legally constituted.

83. This approach will help ensure that the new councils are operational from the outset, that public money and assets are properly accounted for, and that Clerks, Councillors and residents have clarity about the transition.

84. Integrated Assessment Implications

85. The Council is subject to the Equality Act (Public Sector Equality Duty and the socio-economic duty), the Well-being of Future Generations (Wales) Act 2015 and the Welsh Language (Wales) Measure. Further information is available at www.swansea.gov.uk/IIA

86. An Integrated Impact Assessment (IIA) screening has been undertaken, and no adverse implications have been noted.

87. Financial Implications

88. There are no direct financial implications arising from the this guidance. However, the report identifies operational finance matters arising from Article 104 of the Order, including precept, tax base and billing authority arrangements, which will require liaison between Swansea Council, Welsh Government and affected councils.

89. Legal & Governance Implications

90. The legal and governance implications are set out within the report. These include abolition and dissolution of councils, residuary successor arrangements, first meeting arrangements, precept provisions and the distinction between preparatory work and decisions reserved to the newly constituted councils.

Appendices:
Appendix 1. Summary of Key Legislative References.
Appendix 2. Community / Town Councils. Local Government Elections - 6 May 2027.
Appendix 3. Practical Checklist for Clerks.

Background Papers: As documented in the report.

Huw Evans
Head of Democratic Services & Deputy Monitoring Officer
Swansea Council

6.3 Wildfires

1 Wildfires in summer 2026: In Brief

Published 10/09/2026 | Reading Time 5 minutes

Wales experienced a severe wildfire season during summer 2026, along with much of western Europe. A Welsh Government **oral statement on Tuesday 15 September** will give Members of the Senedd an opportunity to discuss these wildfires.

This In Brief provides background information about this year's historic wildfire season, policy action to address risks, and long-term options for building resilience.

For additional information, Senedd Research has also recently published articles on the **wider impacts of extreme heat** and **drought**.

1.1 Responsibility for wildfire management

Wildfire management is devolved to Wales. The **Welsh Government oversees** Wales' **three (North, Mid and West, and South) Fire and Rescue Services** (FRSs) and has responsibility for land management policy.

Wales' four **Local Resilience Forums** also play a key role in preparing for, and responding to, emergencies like wildfires.

1.2 Overview of the summer 2026 wildfires

Detailed Wales-level wildfire statistics for 2026 are not yet available, but **UK-level data** up to 1 September indicates 28,299 hectares of land has been burned, already making this year the second-highest on record.

By mid-August, Welsh and English FRSs had **responded to more wildfires than during the whole of 2025**, even though **2025 was the UK's most severe wildfire year** on record.

Welsh FRSs declared four wildfire-related **major incidents** in July and August, at:

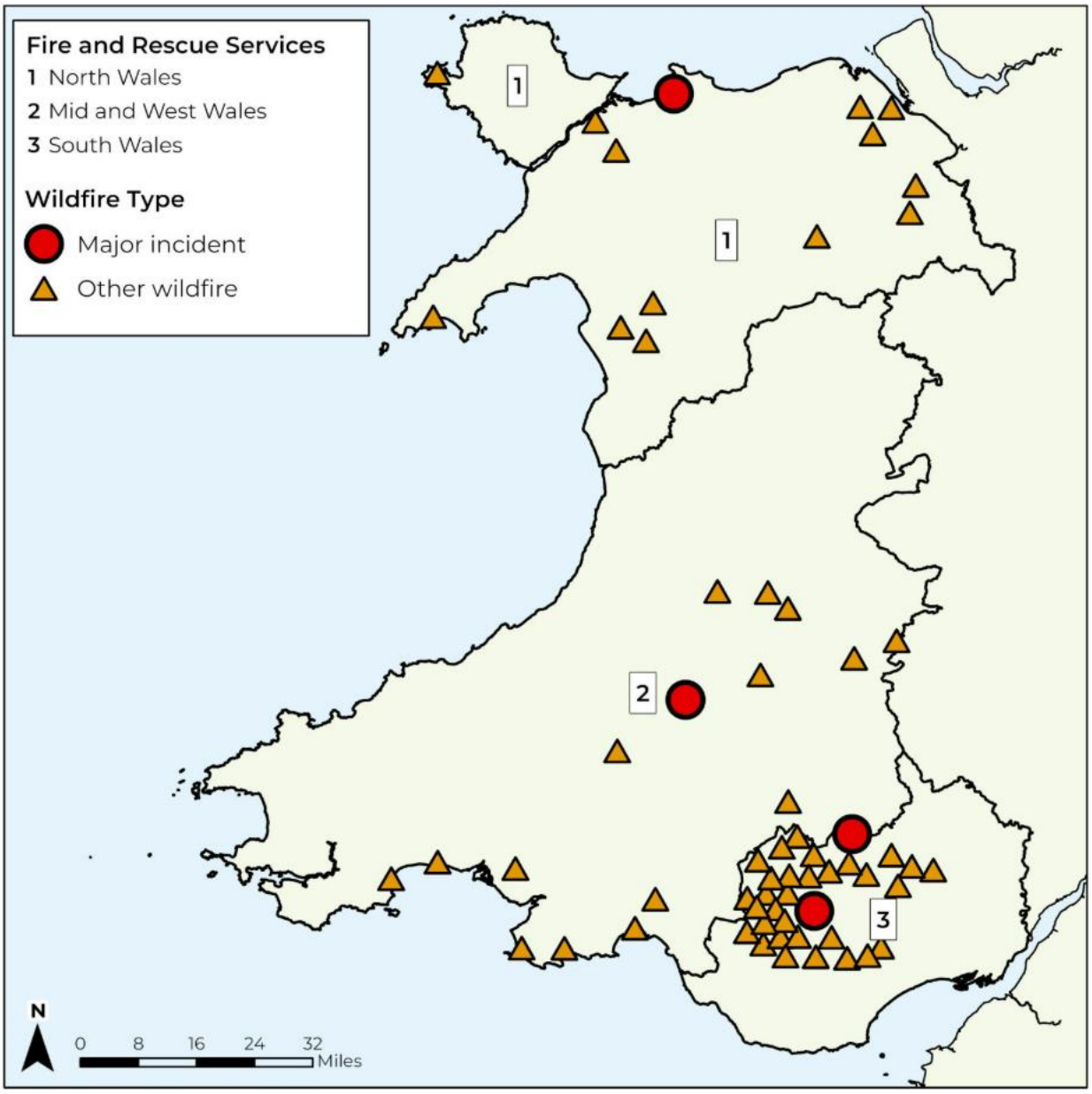
Conwy Mountain;

Llanwonno Mountain, Rhondda Cynon Taf;

Llangynidr Reservoir, near Ebbw Vale; and

Rhandirmwyn, Carmarthenshire.

Locations of Welsh wildfires in 2026, up to 31 August



*Source: Senedd Research analysis of public statements by **North**, **Mid and West**, and **South Wales** Fire and Rescue Services, and local newspapers.*

Note: Fire and Rescue Services report incidents in different ways, and may not make public statements for all wildfires attended. This map is therefore likely to underestimate the total number of wildfires. Some points have been offset to improve readability.

South Wales FRS **received military assistance to support firefighting** in August. Welsh FRSs also received **mutual aid from English FRSs** for several large wildfires.

In rural areas wildfires can destroy **agricultural** and **nature-rich landscapes**. In built-up areas they can **damage homes**, businesses, and infrastructure.

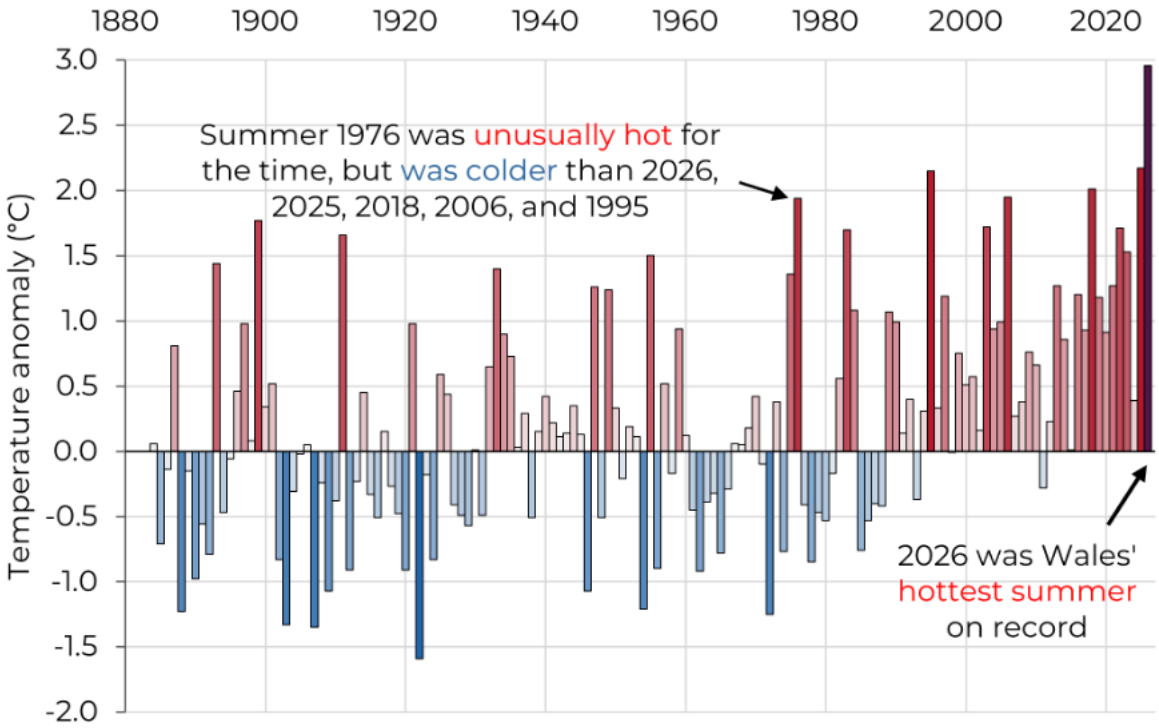
Wildfire smoke **negatively impacts** local **air quality** and ash **can contaminate water**. Burning vegetation also **releases greenhouse gases**, contributing to climate change.

1.3 What causes wildfires?

Wildfires rely on three key factors: available fuel, weather conditions, and an ignition source.

Summer 2026 was **Wales' hottest on record**, and one of its driest (including the **driest-ever July**).

Annual Welsh summer temperature from 1884-2025, compared to a 1961-1990 average



*Source: Senedd Research analysis of **Met Office data***

Climate change is **making Welsh summers hotter and drier**, more regularly creating **conditions suitable for wildfires**. Wildfires now **occur for more of the year and in more places** than they did in the past.

Most UK wildfires are started by human action. No detailed public dataset of wildfire ignition source is available for Wales, but evidence from England and Scotland suggests most wildfires start from deliberate initial ignitions.

A 2011 study found that the most deprived areas of the south Wales Valleys are disproportionately likely to experience wildfire, likely due to deliberate ignitions.

1.4 Responses to wildfires

The Welsh Government addressed its plans to reduce wildfire risks in response to a written question in August 2026, saying it:

is addressing land management practices;

is funding youth intervention programmes; and

will convene a Wildfire Summit later in 2026.

The Welsh Government has issued two statements on wildfires this summer:

On 22 July it said it would review Wales' ability to fight wildfire, following concerns about a lack of aerial firefighting supportin Gwynedd. It later said it would discuss a co-ordinated approach to aerial firefighting with the UK and other devolved governments.

On 14 August it said the First Minister had attended a UK Cabinet Office Briefing Room (COBR) meeting on wildfires and highlighted the role of public messaging in preventing them.

The UK Government temporarily banned the sale of disposable barbeques in August, and issued an Emergency Alert warning people against doing anything that might spark a fire.

The Chair of the UK-wide National Fire Chiefs Council (NFCC) has called for the creation of a long-term wildfire strategy that would include specialist wildfire teams and dedicated aerial firefighting capacity.

1.5 How could Wales become more wildfire resilient?

Due to human-induced warming, the number of days with very high wildfire danger is projected to double by 2050, compared to 1981-2010, with particular risk in moorland areas of Wales.

The previous Welsh Government's 2024 Climate Adaptation Strategy acknowledged the growing risk of wildfire. It said risks will be managed through the Wales Wildfire Board and the multi-agency taskforce Operation Dawns Glaw.

The NFCC highlights the lack of a dedicated funding pot for FRSs to fight wildfires and asks for:

sufficient resource for tackling wildfires;

better data quality on changing risks; and

improved joint-working in decision making.

Managing landscapes in certain ways can reduce the ability of wildfire to start and spread. Most Welsh land is privately owned, but the Welsh Government influences management, for example through the **Sustainable Farming Scheme** and dedicated grants.

Improving landscape-scale wildfire resilience could include:

Increasing land-based water storage (or 're-wetting') to create firebreaks, which can also **improve drought resilience and lower flood risk**.

Re-wetted peatlands in the **Tywi Forest** and **Elan Valley** were resilient to wildfire in 2025 and 2026. Both restorations were **funded by a Welsh Government programme**.

Evidence from North America suggests **wetlands created by beavers** are resistant to wildfires and offer shelter for other species.

Reducing fuel loads, like dried out vegetation, to restrict the ability of wildfire to spread.

Vegetation can be managed through **selective grazing** and **controlled burning**.

Woodlands can be **made more resilient** by integrating firebreaks and planting broadleaf trees.

Given that most UK wildfires are started by people, education and awareness-raising may reduce risks.

South Wales FRS leads the **Healthy Hillsides initiative** in the south Wales Valleys – where authorities engage communities in wildfire-prone areas.

Article by Dr Matthew Sutton**, Senedd Research, Welsh Parliament**

Subject: 21st October Workshop: Final opportunity to help shape the Gower Management Plan
Date: 2026-09-22 14:56
From: Jake Cosgrove <Jake.Cosgrove@swansea.gov.uk>
To:
Copy: "Mike Scott (Environment)" <Mike.Scott2@swansea.gov.uk>, Ursula Jones <Ursula.Jones@swansea.gov.uk>, Tawny Clark <Tawny.Clark@swansea.gov.uk>

Hello

We are reaching the final stages of developing the new **Gower Management Plan**, and we would value your input.

Following our earlier engagement, we now have a draft Management Plan ready for review. We are inviting partners, organisations and stakeholders to join us to discuss the draft and help us make any final improvements before the Plan is finalised.

Date: Wednesday 21 October, 2026
Venue: Reynoldston Village Hall
Time: 13:30-15:00
Refreshments will be provided

To get the most from the workshop, we ask that everyone attending reads the draft Management Plan beforehand – we will share this shortly. The workshop will focus on your feedback on the draft, including what you support, what you think needs strengthening or changing, and whether we have got the balance of priorities right.

This meeting is **in person** to enable us to consider different perspectives alongside one another, explore areas where priorities may align or differ, and work towards a Plan that reflects the range of interests and needs across Gower. It is unlikely we will be able to take comments via email at this stage.

This will be the final opportunity to feed into the Management Plan before it is finalised, so your views are particularly valuable.

We hope to see you at 13:30 on October 21st.

Diolch,

Jake Cosgrove

10.2.1

Rhossili Community Council - Submission on Planning Application 2026/1317/FUL Temporary Use of Agricultural Land for the Sale of Horticultural Produce (together with the Temporary Siting of a Removable Catering Unit & Reception Trailer) for a Period of 54 days in any Calendar Year, (being from 15th July to 6th September inclusive)

Mr R Morgan/Rhossili Sunflowers

Introductory Comments

This particular planning application has caused more interest and debate amongst the local community than any other in recent times. There is a range of opinion within the local community about this application, and about the very operation of Rhossili Sunflowers as a commercial operation in such a remote and sensitive location, with some vocal opposition.

The application requires careful and considered review by the Planning Authority.

Given our comments which follow, and those of others who are making submissions to the Planning Authority, it is a reasonable challenge to make that the application is insufficiently detailed/complete to be determined in this form e.g. the absence of an environmental impact assessment.

Also, the planning application states that the applicant is the sole owner of all the land. We understand that part of the land in question is leased by the operator but do not know whether the lease has seven or more years to run, and whether this statement is correct. Confirmation of the position with the freehold owner of the land in question would be helpful. We have been asked this question locally, and make no inference about the applicant in asking the Planning Authority to satisfy itself on this point.

We note that the application combines a request for permission for future years alongside a retrospective permission for an extended use, beyond permitted rights, for the summer operation in 2026 which has now ended. Given that the application is for a summer operation that would not recommence until July 2027 then the applicant and his agent have ample time, and opportunity, to withdraw and reconsider aspects of their application and consult more widely locally.

Rhossili Community Councillors have canvassed local views, and have been approached by local residents, unprompted, about this application.

We have also seen the submissions made by the National Trust and the Gower Society.

Rather than go into the depth of planning policy frameworks, as has the Gower Society with their accumulated knowledge and expertise, we have contained our comments to a number of key themes drawn directly from the application made by the applicant and their agent, and our contact with them.

The Rhossili Sunflowers business has become a well-known and well visited destination as part of the Gower offer for tourists and day visitors in its own right. There would appear to be a presumption

within the Council (as the planning authority) that the current operation - both in type and of an annual duration - is acceptable within planning law and policy frameworks, as there has been no enforcement action since the application made for a Certificate of Lawful Use back in 2020. Permitted rights are referenced by the planning agent in 3.1 of their Design and Access Statement.

We have researched the previous application made for a Certificate of Lawful Use or Development (2020/0335). The Decision Notice says: *"the temporary use of the land for the sale of sea food (together with the associated temporary siting of a removable timber catering unit) for up to 28 days in any calendar year, constitutes permitted development by virtue of Class B of Part 4 of Schedule 2 of the Town and Country Planning (General Permitted Development) Order 1995 (as amended) on this basis. This affirms the landowner's rights under Class B."*

The Delegated Report behind the above decision goes on to say:

"This application is submitted under Section 192 of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990, to confirm that planning permission is not required to allow the sale of seafood from the site for 28 days in any calendar year.

Class B of Part 4 of Schedule 2 of the Town and Country Planning (General Permitted Development) Order 1995 (as amended) allows the temporary use of the land "for not more than 28 days in total in any calendar year, of which not more than 14 days in total may be used for the purposes of holding a market and Motor car and motorcycle racing including trials of speed, and practising for these activities."

Class B also permits "the provision on the land of any moveable structure for the purposes of the permitted use."

Class B goes on to advise that development "is not permitted by Class B if -

(a) It would consist of development of a kind described in Class E of this Part (temporary use of land for film-making);

(b) The land in question is a building or is within the curtilage of a building;

(c) The use of land is for a caravan site;

(d) The land is, or is within, a site of special scientific interest and the use of the land is for

i. Motor car and motorcycle racing including trials of speed or other motor sports, and practising for these activities;

ii. Clay pigeon shooting; or

iii. Any war game; or

iv. The use of the land is for the display of an advertisement."

The proposed use is permissible by virtue of Class B and is not prohibited by the restrictions listed above. The shack is also considered to be a moveable structure (and not a building). There is no Article 4 Direction that removes Part 4 permitted development rights from the site."

Based on the above, we wish to ask the fundamental question whether a Certificate of Lawful Use is/has been required for the current operation of Rhossili Sunflowers for the annual 28 day opening period, or whether the current operation can continue under general permitted rights – which is the position of the planning agent. The current Rhossili Sunflowers operation bears no resemblance to that set out in the 2020 Certificate.

We are asking for advice on the above from the Planning Authority on this point, so that as a Community Council we fully understand the situation and are able to advise local residents when they approach us.

This application seeks planning approval for the proposed extended period of operation from 28 to 54 days per annum from 2027 onwards. If this were to be granted by the Planning Authority, strict planning conditions would be required for the period of 29 days upward which, in effect, would change and bring under control the layout and operation of the site for the whole operating period each summer.

We note with concern that the applicant has exceeded the permissible number of days of opening in 2026 without permission. The applicant is seeking retrospective approval for an extended period of opening in 2026 in addition to extended opening in future years. It is not acceptable that the operation chose to continue opening beyond its permitted dates. We are aware that other parties appealed for some enforcement action, to close the facility promptly, in August. We have intelligence that this is not the first year in which the applicant has exceeded their permitted period of opening.

We also note that the applicant had not consulted neighbours or the local community as stated in their own application. As a community council we have a published local planning protocol which encourages applicants to engage with the local community at an early stage of the development of their plans. Whilst we understand that there has been some late and limited engagement by the applicant, to an extent prompted by the community council itself, it is regrettable that the applicant did not see the need to engage at the outset in the interests of canvassing views to help develop their plans, and for good community relations.

Not directly related to the specifics of this application, it should be noted that there are live community tensions around land management on the Rhossili headland and cliffs. These tensions may well have influenced some local views of others as to how this application, and this business operation, might be viewed. The submissions of others may comment about the social media activities of the applicant and their consequences. In these circumstances, early engagement would have helped with community relations at the centre of which we find ourselves as a community council.

The applicant has at no point consulted the community council or given us notice of their application. We have, latterly, been able to engage to some extent with the applicant and their agent to understand their application more fully, and to help us make a considered and informed response.

We note that the applicant sought pre-application advice from the Council in September 2025 by email. We are not aware what advice was sought, and what was given. We cannot see any reference to a pre-planning application on the Planning Portal. The date of the declaration made for the new application is 11/08/2026.

As the applicant had sought pre-application advice a year earlier, we would have expected them to have applied for an extended period of opening hours for 2026 at an earlier date and not knowingly exceed their permitted rights in the way they have, and then seek a retrospective approval.

We require assurances that the applicant will not exceed their permitted rights and/or permitted and extended period of opening in the future and, if not, that appropriate, swift and proportionate enforcement action will be taken by the Council.

Comments on the Application

Our detailed comments follow.

As important context, we should all be reminded that the headlands and the Vile of Rhossili is a rare, sensitive and protected coastal area due to its environmental and ecological features and value.

Notwithstanding the concerns of some amongst the community over this particular application, there is a broader local concern that approval of this application could be a first step in a diminution of the protection of this special area. Approval could be seen to represent a loosening of appropriately rigorous and protective planning control, and could act as a form of precedent for the use of land for commercial purposes in the future. We share in this concern. The fact that the current Rhossili Sunflowers operation is so different to that envisaged by the applicant back in 2020, is an illustration of how operations can change and become more commercial over time.

As a community council we have also completed a detailed biodiversity assessment statement which is attached. Please give this careful review in its own right.

Whilst we note the claimed permitted rights of the landowner to operate in the way he has been, submission of the application will inevitably open up the business operation, and its appropriateness for an area of current and historical environmental and ecological importance, to public scrutiny. The applicant and their agent should expect this. Prior community engagement could have been helpful to them.

Whilst we are aware of the objections and the planning policy arguments of other consultees, our observations are limited to the following key points (noting the detailed comment in our biodiversity assessment statement):-

(1) the operation is already operational for up to 28 days a year. Whilst we understand the position of the applicant that a longer opening period would match the summer season and the growing/flowering period, we see no business case justification for making an application for an extended period beyond the end of August as the main summer holiday period draws to a close;

(2) the operation is located in a remote and sensitive rural location. Comments are made in the Design and Access Statement on the containment of the visual impact of temporary buildings and structures. The number of temporary buildings and structures should be limited and their location, appearance and aesthetical impact controlled by specific planning conditions. The type of catering van in situ has been a particular issue of concern, adding to a view amongst some residents that the operation is becoming over commercialised and that aspects of the current operation, such as this, are not in keeping with the location. Whilst the operator may wish to offer catering, both to make the

customer experience more complete and to make the business more financially sustainable, a balance has to be struck. Specific consideration should be given to the appropriateness of siting a catering outlet at this site and its type, size and precise location. Whilst the applicant might not have been obliged to follow through with the type of temporary wooden structure he proposed in his application back in 2020 – as perhaps this was cited as a proxy to enquire about his permitted rights at the time – the catering van operated at the site is far different to this original proposal and is not in keeping with this location;

(3) the operation of a food outlet at the site - which has a range of take-away food and drinks - adds to the risk of litter in the surrounding areas due to public behaviour (noting that there are no public litter bins on the headland and cliffs and the Vile). Whilst we understand that the owner has mitigations in place, such as his staff team undertaking voluntary litter picks, and we have no evidence of an increased incidence in litter in the vicinity as a result of this operation, we would expect to see both a litter management plan and a waste disposal/recycling plan as part of the application with the applicant giving a clear undertaking;

(3) the application refers to socio-impact. There is little detail on socio-benefits under applicable policy ER4, and no soci- benefits statement;

(4) the application refers to economic impact under applicable policy ER 4. We recognise that the operation generates seasonal jobs and that it does support dispersed tourist and visitor spend in the area. The three catering operations who operate from four sites in the village centre do not object to the operation or the application. They see the operation as adding to the offer of Rhossili as a destination and to attracting footfall. Neither do they see the catering outlet as direct competition. All four sites have a different offer to each other, and in their view the offer at the Sunflowers site is both different and distant from them. Also, the volume of footfall in the peak summer season is such that the three providers struggle to accommodate demand at times. One of the consultees did make the point that if the operation extended beyond the end of August, then it could infringe on their business as the footfall, and the shared number of customers, drops significantly from that time. This is further reason to limit any extension of opening days to 31 August annually;

(5) we would wish to see a commitment that any directional signage to the site is discrete in size and design, and would only be placed on pathways or adjoining land with the explicit approval of the land owner/operator;

(6) we are aware of concerns and witnessed accounts that the operator accesses the site by vehicle over open/common land at times, and does not restrict vehicle use to the access lanes/tracks. We are not aware that the National Trust as the custodian of the open land has given any specific permissions to allow the operator to lawfully use their land in this way. We would reasonably expect the operator to give an undertaking to operate within the law and for enforcement action to be taken in the case of any proven breaches in the future; and

(7) there is no environmental impact assessment with the application. We would expect to see an assessment, and for it be drawn upon by decision-makers, as tourists and day visitors attracted to Rhossili specifically to visit the Sunflowers site will add to the volumes of private vehicles and

emissions, and the numbers of walkers traversing a sensitive and protected environmental and ecological location.

Planning Checklist: Biodiversity Assessment

Planning Ref	2026-1317-FUL – Rhossili Sunflowers	
Checklist Item	Y/N/NA	Comments
1. Is the proposed development within or adjacent to any conservation areas?	Y	Within National Landscape Adjacent to Gower Coast: Rhossili to Port Eynon SSSI Adjacent to Gower Coast NNR No reference is made to the Vile's status as a landscape of national historic significance and one of the most important surviving medieval strip-field systems in Wales (Coflein NPRN 24333).
2. Has an environmental impact assessment been submitted?	N	The Planning Statement submitted with the application makes no reference to biodiversity; the only environmental impact referenced is in terms of the view of the landscape.
3. Have any protected species been identified at or close to the proposed development?	N	Not identified within the application but many protected species of bird are present and or breed in the vicinity of the fields and some, such as Whitethroat may use the adjacent hedgerow. A detailed assessment would need to be made using LERC and other available data to assess the potential impact on priority species of increased footfall in the area and we would expect that this is something that the Council's Ecologist (a mandatory consultee) would carry out prior to a final decision on the application being made.
4. What are the implications of the development for:		
a. Habitat loss/gain, including connectivity between and within ecosystems	N/A	

b. Biodiversity	Y	Increase in visitor footprint and exhaust from vehicles has potential to reduce biodiversity within the SSSI. It is also di icult to assess the potential impact on biodiversity of the limited variety of crops being cultivated without any information on crop rotation, or the use of herbicide and chemical fertilisers. On the plus side if unharvested flowers are left to set seed this would be beneficial to seed eating birds and their predators. Also on the positive side each parked vehicle raises income for the NT at Rhossili a proportion of which may go into conservation work.
c. Light pollution	Y	The application states that the opening times will be 10 a.m. to 9 p.m. from 15th July to 6th September. It will be dark before 9pm from mid to late August and lighting could be required if these times were permitted. Whilst obviously no one would be picking sunflowers in the dark if planning permission were granted then lights could be required to service the mobile catering unit. We would request that if the application is granted an appropriate condition is attached prohibiting the use of artificial lighting.
d. Ponds, water courses and run-o .	N/A	
5. Has any mitigation or compensation been proposed if an adverse impact has been identified? Can the impact be avoided and are the proposed measures commensurate with the potential loss of biodiversity?	N	
6. Are there any proposals for enhancement of biodiversity? Are these suitable for the target species or priority species in the area?	N	
7. Will any new build be well-insulated and generate as much of its own energy as possible?	N/A	
8. If the proposed development is on green field/agricultural land, does the benefit to the community outweigh the loss of such land for potential food production?	N	The land is being used for commercial visitor purposes, not agriculture and none of the main crop species grown for sale (i.e. Sunflowers, Lavendar, Dahlias) are native to the British Isles.
Overall Conclusion		

We note that the current use of the field is described as agricultural, however, it perhaps more accurately should be described as seasonal commercial use of agricultural land for a visitor attraction rather than agriculture. From a biodiversity perspective the most significant impact of this application is the increased footfall and traic that could occur from the significant extension to the number of days (from 28 to 54) that the Sunflower Fields are open and promoted to the public. It has been recognised by the National Trust that the public pressure on Rhossili and the adjacent SSSIs is already significant to the extent that the charity no longer actively promotes Rhossili as a destination to visit. The highly successful promotion of the Sunflower Fields on social media likely increases the footfall significantly above what would otherwise be the case. The Facebook 'Rhossili Sunflowers' page has 68,000 followers with posts promoting the fields several times per day in season.

Although the application states, correctly, that the relevant fields are not part of the Gower Coast NNR or Rhossili to Port Eynon SSSI they are immediately adjacent to them and to access and exit the fields visitors walk through the SSSI. We strongly recommend that if any permitted development is approved a condition is attached on the basis that there is no vehicular access to the fields over the SSSI except in an emergency or otherwise with prior permission in exceptional circumstances.

It is hard to quantify the impact that an increased number of visitors could have on the adjacent SSSI but it could clearly be a factor in reducing biodiversity. Other specific issues that could impact biodiversity are the daubing of posts and a gate with ram raddle paste, which the RSPB confirm could be a risk to small birds that alighted, and the requested permission for a mobile catering van which could potentially lead to an increase in litter given that no plans have been identified, within

the application, for the collection and storage of waste. Again, its proximity to the SSSI is of concern should food and other waste contaminate fragile ecosystems.

This year the fields were open from 13th July to 31st August – 50 days, 22 days in excess of any permitted development rights. Non-compliance with the terms of the existing permitted rights is of particular concern given the very sensitive nature of the location.
Swansea LDP Section ER 4 relating to development in the National Landscape states that development must

i. Not have a significant adverse impact on the natural assets of the AONB or the resources and ecosystem services on which the local economy and well-being of the area depends;
ii. Contribute to the social and economic well-being of the local community;
iii. Be of a scale, form, design, density and intensity of use that is compatible with the character of the AONB;
iv. Be designed to an appropriately high standard in order to integrate with the existing landscape and where feasible enhance the landscape quality; and
v. Demonstrate how it contributes to the conservation and enhancement of the natural beauty of the AONB.

The application does not consider (i. above) what the impact would be on biodiversity (i.e. the natural assets) of the National Landscape of the increased footfall that would result and the increase in pollution from traic coming to Rhossili and this should be considered by CCS' Ecology section before any permission is granted.

With regard to points iii to v. above the commercialisation associated with the Sunflower Fields might be considered to detract from the character of the National Landscape and the ancient landscape of the Vile Medieval Field System (noted in Coflein 24333 as being of national significance but not identified in the application). Whilst this is not primarily a biodiversity issue it may lead to the natural ecosystem being devalued. Re iv, the temporary structures are incongruous and detract from the landscape, rather than enhance it and although temporary are present during the hight tourist season and, re v. the application does not demonstrate a contribution to the conservation or enhancement of the National Landscape.

In conclusion, the Vile is a nationally significant medieval agricultural landscape. Temporary commercial attractions risk eroding its historic character, with temporary structures that also undermine iconic scenic views. It is considered likely that the increased footfall within the SSSI caused by the proximity of the fields is detrimental to the biodiversity of the protected area.

From a biodiversity perspective we would request that

1. the City and County of Swansea undertake an assessment of the additional footfall generated by visitors to the Sunflower Fields and the potential impact this could have on priority species within the adjacent SSSI prior to making any decision on this application.
2. If CCS is satisfied that there is no impact on biodiversity and if the application is granted, appropriate conditions are stipulated in relation to the use of motor vehicles, artificial lighting and the collection and disposal of waste.

Date	9th Sept 2026
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