



Dear

### **Closure of Cwmcarn Forest Drive**

I am writing to inform you of the difficult decision we have made to close Cwmcarn Forest Drive on Sunday 2<sup>nd</sup> November 2014 – a decision we have not taken lightly.

As I believe you have an interest in Cwmcarn Forest Drive, I realise that this may be of interest to you and would like to give you some further information about why we have to close the site.

A disease called Phytophthora Ramorum (or larch disease) has infected almost all of the larch trees at Cwmcarn which account for 78% of the trees in the forest.

Almost all of the larch trees at Cwmcarn have been infected and are at various stages of dying. As there is nothing we can do to prevent larch disease, we have to take action as soon as possible to prevent it from spreading further.

Unfortunately, this means felling all the larch trees in Cwmcarn around Forest Drive.

In the Forest Drive area, we have to fell an area covering approximately 162 hectares (about 190 rugby pitches) and remove over 50,000 tonnes of timber using specialist forestry equipment to pull trees up the steep valley sides. The sheer scale of this felling is significantly greater and more time consuming than any normal forest operation.

It would not be safe to keep Forest Drive open.

We want our work to have as little impact as possible on people who use Cwmcarn Forest and we are fully committed to keeping all footpaths and mountain bike routes open as far as is practicable. However, there may be times when we have to make diversions or close parts of the forest for safety reasons.

The Visitor Centre, run by Caerphilly County Borough Council, will be open as usual and continue to sell walking guides, maps and information on the surrounding area. There is also a play area for under 7s, a gift shop featuring a great selection of locally produced crafts and Welsh goods and the Raven's Cafe which provides a wide range of food and drinks. Its retail unit will also remain open.

I have attached a briefing note which provides further information on our decision to close Cwmcarn Forest Drive. I hope you find this helpful.

Yours sincerely

Emma Louise Felkin

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Forest Office, Resolven, Neath, SA11 4DR

Croesewir gohebiaeth yn y Gymraeg a'r Saesneg  
Correspondence welcomed in Welsh and English



**Cyfoeth  
Naturiol  
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Resources  
Wales**

# Closure of Forest Drive

## Phytophthora Ramorum (larch disease)

A disease called Phytophthora Ramorum (or larch disease) has infected almost all of the larch trees at Cwmcarn which account for 78% of the trees in the forest. As there is no treatment for larch disease, we have had to make the difficult decision to close our seven-mile Forest Drive to fell the infected trees - a decision we have not taken lightly.

We have already done a huge amount of work across Wales to try to contain the disease but it has spread much quicker than experts predicted. Almost all of the larch trees at Cwmcarn have been infected and are at various stages of dying. As there is nothing we can do to prevent larch disease, we have to take action as soon as possible to prevent it from spreading further.

Unfortunately, this means felling all the larch trees in Cwmcarn around Forest Drive. However, whilst we are saddened to have to fell so many infected larch trees, it does provide us with an opportunity to replace them with native broadleaf woodland trees.

## Why do you have to close Forest Drive?

In the Forest Drive area, we have to fell an area covering approximately 162 hectares (about 190 rugby pitches) and remove over 50,000 tonnes of timber using specialist forestry equipment to pull trees up the steep valley sides. The sheer scale of this felling is significantly greater and more time consuming than any normal forest operation.

It would not be safe to keep Forest Drive open.

## What will remain open in Cwmcarn Forest?

We want our work to have as little impact as possible on people who use Cwmcarn Forest and we are fully committed to keeping all footpaths and mountain bike routes open as far as is practicable. However, there may be times when we have to make diversions or close parts of the forest for safety reasons.

The Visitor Centre, run by Caerphilly County Borough Council, will be open as usual and continue to sell walking guides, maps and information on the surrounding area. There is also a play area for under 7s, a gift shop featuring a great selection of locally produced crafts and Welsh goods and the Raven's Cafe which provides a wide range of food and drinks. Its retail unit will also remain open.

Only Forest Drive itself, the seven mile drive through the forest, will be closing.

## How can I find out when parts of the forest have closed?

We will always try our best to plan our work so there are always some parts of the forest open for you to use. We will keep you informed of any planned trail closures or diversions as early as possible via our website, customer contact care, newsletters, social media channels and the visitor centre.

## When will Forest Drive be closing?

Forest Drive will be open until Sunday 2<sup>nd</sup> November 2014 (weather permitting). We hope you will continue to enjoy the drive as much as possible until then. Season ticket holders will be able to use their season tickets until the last day.

## Will you be reopening Forest Drive?

No decision has been made about the future of Forest Drive yet as it will require considerable investment to repair following our felling and haulage operations. However, we are keen to reopen it if feasible and we'll be exploring all possible funding options to do this.

## Will you be replanting the trees?

Yes. Whilst we are saddened to have to fell so many infected larch trees, it does provide us with an opportunity to replace them with native broadleaf woodland trees, such as oak, birch, hazel and rowan.

## How can I help?

Larch disease is a highly infectious disease. However, you can help us to reduce the risk of spreading the disease further by observing a few simple precautions. After visiting Cwmcam Forest, please make sure you wash your boots and any equipment you may use before you visit woodland again. Leave any sticks or foliage in the woods and brush any fallen needles from your car.

## Further information

Natural Resources Wales	Caerphilly County Borough Council
<a href="http://www.naturalresourceswales.gov.uk">www.naturalresourceswales.gov.uk</a>	<a href="http://www.caerphilly.gov.uk">www.caerphilly.gov.uk</a>
<a href="mailto:enquiries@naturalresourceswales.gov.uk">enquiries@naturalresourceswales.gov.uk</a>	<a href="mailto:cwmcam-vc@caerphilly.gov.uk">cwmcam-vc@caerphilly.gov.uk</a>
0300 065 3000 (Mon-Fri, 8am - 6pm)	Forest Drive visitor centre - 01495 272001
<a href="https://twitter.com/NatResWales">Twitter.com/NatResWales</a>	<a href="https://twitter.com/CaerphillyCBC">Twitter.com/CaerphillyCBC</a>
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