



Janet Finch-Saunders MS|AS

Aelod Senedd Cymru dros Aberconwy
Member of the Welsh Parliament for Aberconwy



Sian Williams,
Head of Operations North West,
Natural Resources Wales,
Maes y Ffynnon,
LL57 2DW.
Via email

09/02/2021

Re: NRW & the dredging of River Conwy

Dear Sian,

Office of Janet Finch-Saunders MS,
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Welsh Parliament,
Cardiff Bay,
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Janet.Finch-Saunders@Senedd.Wales

I hope this letter finds you and your staff well during these challenging winter months.

I am writing to highlight concerns of local residents that relate to NRW's role to manage water levels and reduce flood risk through the maintenance of drainage channels and watercourses. Whilst I do recognise that you have previously underlined your belief that dredging the Afon Conwy would not be the best long term or economic solution compared with other flood risk measures such as providing storage upstream, I am writing to ask whether you will undertake a review of this advice following local concern about the further buildup of gravel over the past twelve months. Given the important natural flood management work that you are doing locally (including the Uwch Conwy project in partnership with the National Trust, which I praised in an [article found here](#)), the removal of gravel could be a further natural method that increases flow capacity.

I do understand that you assess all flood risk management activities using the risk-based approach that the Welsh Government outlines in its FCERM. I also recognise that you consequently use this level of flood risk to determine the type of risk management intervention required and the scale of investment. Therefore, I would be most grateful if you could write in reply to this letter with clarification as to the scientific and engineering evidence that was considered by NRW in arriving to this decision (not to dredge the river). I would be very grateful to receive this information, given your previous suggestion that decisions on the best way to tackle the risk were taken on an individual and case-by-case basis.

I also note that, in previous correspondence on a related matter before the Christmas recess, you disclosed that the Conwy Valley Advisory Group had not met since 5 December 2019. As you are well aware, last year, Storm Ciara saw around 70 properties flooded in the Conwy Valley, businesses ceased trading, livestock killed, and the railway line damaged. I am, therefore, disappointed to hear that this group did not meet during its aftermath. This group ensures that decisions by NRW remain fully transparent and the local community engaged. Such a meeting would also allow all interested parties to further discuss the issue of dredging. With this in mind, I would also welcome if your reply could outline your plans for this group meeting in the near future, albeit virtually due to restrictions. I look forward to receiving your reply, which I hope will offer reassurance to concerned residents throughout the Conwy Valley.

Yours sincerely,

Janet Finch-Saunders MS/AS

