



Janet Finch-Saunders MS|AS
Aelod Senedd Cymru dros Aberconwy
Member of the Welsh Parliament for Aberconwy



Ms Gwenan Davies,
North Wales Community Manager,
Welsh Water,
By Email

15 February 2021
Re: Dolgarrog Bridge

Office of Janet Finch-Saunders MS
29 Madoc Street,
Llandudno,
LL30 2TL.
01492 871 198
The Welsh Parliament,
Cardiff Bay,
CF99 1NA.

Janet.Finch-Saunders@senedd.wales

Dear Gwenan,

I hope that this letter finds you and all at Welsh Water well.

I am writing to express my astonishment at your organisation's decision to close Dolgarrog bridge permanently 'to protect public safety'.

It is my understanding that Welsh Water has carried out a number of surveys and assessments on all aspects of the bridge, including detailed examinations of suspension supports, pillars, wooden walkway and pipes as well as public safety assessments. I would be grateful for copies of all assessments and surveys, and for complete clarity as to the recommendations, the cost of their implementation, and whether Welsh Water will be doing so.

Importantly, I am aware that the organisation will continue to carry out essential works on the bridge to maintain its safety to protect your water mains. As such, I am at a loss as to how Welsh Water have reached a decision to close the bridge to the public permanently.

In fact, the situation really highlights that Welsh Water, which has already acknowledged that the situation will be disappointing to local residents and walkers, is possibly unappreciative of the strategic importance of the crossing to both local residents and the economy.

Firstly, the bridge provides the only access route to Dolgarrog Railway Station from Dolgarrog. There is no other alternative – Welsh Water will be cutting a whole community off from their railway station, which has just been subject to extensive repairs by Network Rail.

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Secondly, I ask that you kindly consider planning application 0/45515, Conwy County Borough Council. You will see that this was for the erection of a new activity building and on-site accommodation through the development of a 106-bedroom hotel, at Surf Snowdonia. It was approved with conditions on 15 January 2019. Importantly, condition 18 states: 'The hotel, activity building, and the pump track/MTB/adventure playground hereby approved shall not be used until an Active Travel Wales Act route has been provided through the site (with signage) to provide sustainable access from the development and Dolgarrog to the railway station, in accordance with a detailed scheme that has first been submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority...'

As already noted, Dolgarrog bridge is the only route across the Conwy River which residents and tourists can use to go to and from the railway station. By pursuing a permanent closure, Welsh Water is undermining planning application 0/45515, active travel, and potentially rendering the fulfilment of a vitally important condition unachievable.

In fact, the bridge closure undermines a global tourist attraction: Surf Snowdonia. Should your permanent closure be pursued, no longer will tourists be able to travel to the destination by rail. At a time of climate crisis, there is an urgent need to support individuals to use public transport. As things stand, it is reasonable to foresee that there will be an increase in the use of private vehicles to access the West of the Conwy Valley and Surf Snowdonia, which is frustrating when considering the fantastic potential Dolgarrog Railway Station and the route across the bridge has.

You may be aware that local dissatisfaction with Welsh Water's decision is increasing. As such, I would be grateful if you could arrange for the decision to be urgently reviewed, a public consultation to be carried out, and a virtual meeting to be undertaken with myself and interested constituents. Undoubtedly, Welsh Water need to work with the community and all relevant authorities to resolve the crisis caused.

Yours sincerely,

Janet Finch-Saunders MS/AS