

NEWSLETTER

About

The Fairbourne Partnership is a group of organisations working together to deal with important local issues raised by the community. Its aim is to keep people informed about plans to prepare for climate change, while also making sure the community has a stronger voice and – where possible – a say in how some parts of the work are carried out.

The Partnership brings together knowledge and experience from a range of organisations, including Arthog Community Council, various departments of Cyngor Gwynedd, Natural Resources Wales, Public Health Wales, the Welsh Government, North Wales Regional Emergency Planning Group, the emergency services, and Welsh Water.

Members meet bi-annually to discuss progress and share updates. You can find more information about the Partnership and its work at www.fairbourne.info, including local weather and tide information, as well as notes from meetings. The website is managed by YGC (part of the Highways and Engineering department) and funded by the Welsh Government.

If you would like to get in touch, you can email: ygc@gwynedd.llyw.cymru

What this means

Many coastal communities are concerned about future changes to the coastline. Fairbourne is covered by the West of Wales Shoreline Management Plan (SMP2), which was developed by organisations responsible for managing the coast, including Natural Resources Wales, Cyngor Gwynedd, Anglesey County Council, Conwy County Council, and Ceredigion County Council.

These plans help guide long-term decisions about how to manage the coastline. They take into account laws, current policies, and expected future changes.

The plan shows that, like many coastal areas, Fairbourne is likely to face a higher risk of flooding in the future due to climate change and rising sea levels. There are also questions about how long current sea defences will last, how effective they will be, and how much they will cost to maintain.

Although it is not possible to predict exactly when changes will happen, the plan helps show the general direction things are heading. It is important to understand that these plans are not fixed – they can change over time as new information becomes available and as understanding improves.

COMMENTS:

Cyngor Gwynedd comment:

“As a member of the group, Cyngor Gwynedd’s responsibility is to work with its partners to sustainably plan ahead to ensure the safety of people living in all coastal communities at serious risk of flooding due to climate change. In this regard, all decisions about the future of Fairbourne are taken in full consultation with the Fairbourne Partnership”

NWC REPS comment:

“The North Wales Councils – Regional Emergency Planning Service (NWC REPS) is working closely with Cyngor Gwynedd and other partner organisations to support emergency preparedness and strengthen community resilience in Fairbourne.

NWC REPS provides emergency planning support for all six North Wales Local Authorities. This includes assessing risks, developing contingency plans, coordinating between agencies, and organising training and exercises. Working in this joined-up way helps ensure a consistent and effective response across the region.

As part of its work with Cyngor Gwynedd, NWC REPS has coordinated the development of an evacuation plan for Fairbourne. This plan is based on recognised civil contingencies processes and has been created with input from a range of agencies to make sure it aligns with national guidance and existing multi-agency arrangements.

In September 2025, partners took part in a multi-agency exercise to explore how an evacuation might be managed, including roles, responsibilities, communication, and practical considerations. A second exercise, held in February 2026, focused specifically on how information is shared between agencies and with the community during an emergency. Both exercises helped improve coordination, decision-making, and the delivery of clear public information.

Learning from these exercises continues to shape ongoing preparedness work for Fairbourne. Plans are reviewed regularly to ensure the right organisations are involved, responsibilities are clear, and arrangements remain appropriate for the type and scale of any incident.

Although evacuation plans exist, specific details—such as routes, assembly points, or timings—are not fixed in advance. These decisions would be made at the time of an incident, based on real-time information and conditions. If an emergency were to occur, residents would receive clear and timely instructions from the emergency services and the Local Authority. The most important thing is that people follow the advice given at the time.”

Fairbourne Resilience Warden comment:

“Fairbourne has had a flood scheme for some time. It’s been decided to review and update the system to expand to cover all eventualities. The Flood Wardens will be re-branded as Reliance Volunteers, as there are many aspects in addition to potential flooding. Volunteers will be spread over the community to focus on any concerns for residents and to get meaningful responses from the relevant authority.

One area of focus is the network of ditches and waterways around the network. As Lead Flood Warden when an alert is received, I look at the water levels around the village, on the foreshore and in the Mawddach estuary. If any villagers have concerns regarding excess water in the village, please let me know.” Ernie Puddick, 07500717945 epuddickwork@icloud.com

ACC comment:

“The Arthog Community Council, recognised as the first tier of government, and supported by its two Community Ambassadors, have been working tirelessly with Cyngor Gwynedd, NRW and other stakeholders, with particular focus on keeping Fairbourne safe. Great progress has been made over the past 14 years, especially the last 4 years when the board transitioned from the Fairbourne Project Board to the Fairbourne Partnership. The Village now enjoys an open and healthy relationship with the stakeholder members of the Partnership, meeting on a quarterly basis and discussing all subjects.

A recent breakthrough is the completion of a Fairbourne specific evacuation plan, should the issue ever arise (see NWC-REPS section of the newsletter). Also, the start of a second project of re-sculpting the shingle shelf which commenced the first week of February. This is due to last approximately 6 weeks. This exercise was also successfully carried out in 2020. Thank you to the NRW and all those concerned!

With the threat of decommissioning taken away, as per the Julie James, Member of the Senedd, press statement, also a statement made by Berwyn Parry-Jones, Cyngor Gwynedd Cabinet Member, Fairbourne has settled into a more peaceful and resilient period. Fairbourne is now treated in the same way as any other coastal community in Wales. The science will dictate what happens next and of course funding being available should the need arise. Fairbourne still faces some issues regarding obtaining a mortgage and in some cases home insurance, however, these are not insurmountable. Wellbeing has in many cases been restored and safeguarding is uppermost in stakeholders’ minds.

Fairbourne is still in a period of change, rightly directing the thinking and strategy away from decommissioning to resilience and positivity. Following the storms of 2013 and 2014, the inaccurate, lazy and over dramatized reporting by all media outlets re the truth of what was really happening, caused serious mental and financial stress for some.

The ACC and Cyngor Gwynedd now try to manage the press, media and academic requests for comment within a logically agreed strategy. However, we are still subjected to some inaccurate and false reporting, but it is improving.”

FAIRBOURNE MAINTENANCE PROGRAMME

Land in Fairbourne forms part of the Mawddach & Wnion Internal Drainage District (IDD). The maintenance programme is therefore prioritised and based around the available funding from this IDD. Our routine maintenance consists of in channel weed cutting and work to reduce the risk of channel blockages.

We are working with Network Rail to produce the programme for 2026/27. We are reliant of Network Rail carrying out maintenance on ditches and culverts on their land due to restrictions and so Network Rail programming maintenance on their ditches should help reduce any restrictions to flow.

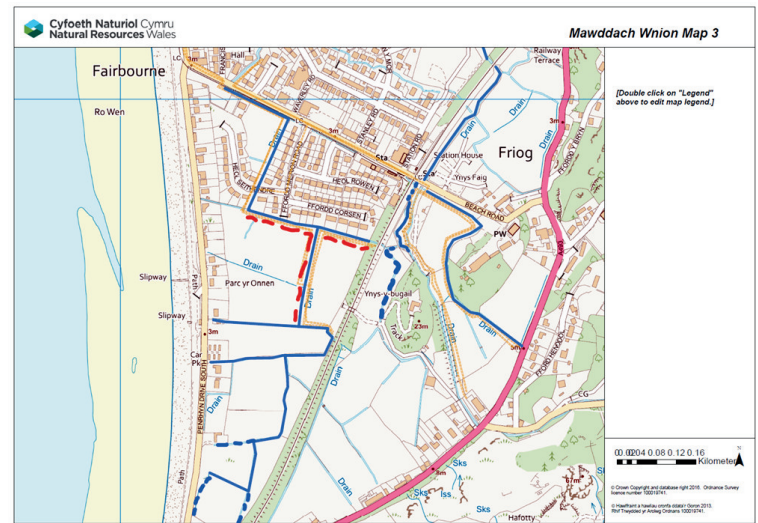


 Photo of Mawddach Wnion Map

The map below highlights the watercourses that are considered as part of the programme. Whether they are all included in the programme will depend on available funding. The solid blue lines indicate watercourse that are currently part of the programme and NRW contractors will carry out work in these areas. The red dashed lines are included in the yearly work programme however, on occasion, the landowner prefers to carry out the work using their own contractor due to their preference for timing.

Sections of watercourse marked with dashed blue lines are to be included in the 2026/27 draft work programme. This programme is still being developed and will depend on available funds.

NRW INVESTMENTS

NRW regularly invests in the management maintenance of flood risk management in Fairbourne whether through our regular maintenance or through the investment in improving existing defences of the construction of new ones.

Since 2015 NRW has invested over £9million of capital funding, including the new defence north of Fairbourne along the Mawddach estuary, a significant repair to the defence at Friog Corner and beach single management works in 2020 and 2026. We also spend annually approximately £4,500 on regular flood risk maintenance and £9,000 on watercourse weed management within the Internal Drainage District.

Capital Funding	
2015 Mawddach Defence	£6.8million
2019/20 Friog Corner Defence Repair	£2million
2020/21 Beach Management	£100,000
2026 Beach Management	£180,000
Annual Revenue Funding	
Flood risk maintenance	£4,665
IDD watercourse weed cutting	£9,000

CHECK YOUR FLOOD RISK

Flood risk is the likelihood of a flood occurring. We calculate this as the chance that a location will flood in any one year.

- The risk levels are high, medium, low or very low.
- If a location has a 1% chance of flooding each year, there is a 1 in 100 chance of flooding in any year. This doesn't mean that if a location floods one year, it will not flood for the next 99 years. It also doesn't mean if it hasn't flooded for 99 years, it will flood this year. The risk level in your area take into account the effect of any flood defences.
- Flood defences reduce, but do not completely stop the chance of flooding as they can be overtopped or fail.

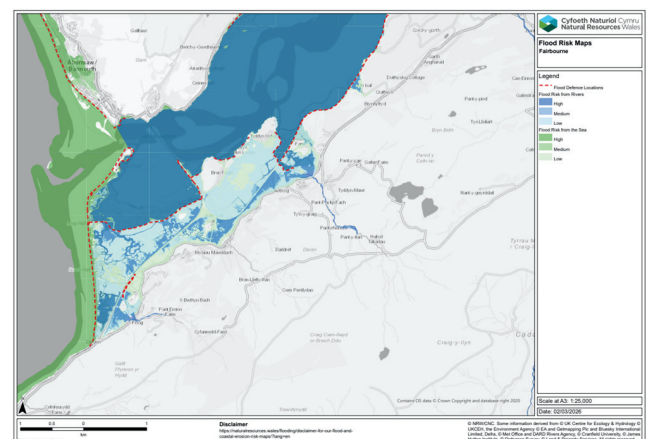


Photo of Flood Risk Map

We calculate the risk of flooding to land, not individual properties. This is because we don't hold information about individual property construction that might affect whether flooding of a certain depth could enter and cause damage.

Check your flood risk – this service will tell you the flood risk for an area.

NRW provides 24/7 flood forecasting and a free Flood Warning Service to many areas at risk of flooding from main rivers and the sea in Wales. Check our [Live Flood Warnings](#) for the current situation. We have monitoring stations across Wales that measure river levels. This data is analysed along with weather, storm surge and wave forecasts from the Met Office to help us forecast when flooding might happen.

We use our flood forecasts alongside local knowledge, to make decisions about issuing warnings to those at risk.

Flood code	What could be happening	Actions to take	Your area
 Flood Alert Flooding is possible, be prepared.	• Flooding of fields, recreation land and car parks • Flooding of minor roads • Flooding of farmland • Spray or wave overtopping on the coast • Low lying land and roads will be affected first	• Prepare your home, business or farm for a flood • Monitor local river levels online and the 5 day flood risk • Farmers should consider moving livestock and equipment away from areas likely to flood	Llyn Peninsula and Cardigan Bay coastline Quickdial: 501035
 Flood Warning Flooding is expected, immediate action is required.	• Flooding of homes and businesses • Flooding of rail infrastructure and roads • Significant waves and spray on coast • Extensive flood plain inundation (including caravan parks and campsites)	• Move family, pets and valuables to a safe place • Turn off gas, electricity and water supplies if it is safe to do so • Put flood protection equipment in place	Fairbourne Seafront Quickdial: 192403 Fairbourne and Arthog Quickdial: 601012
 Severe Flood Warning Danger to life.	• Deep and fast flowing floodwater • Debris in the water causing danger • Potential or observed collapse of buildings and structures • Communities isolated by floodwaters • Critical infrastructure for communities disabled • Communities evacuated • Military support	• Stay in a safe place with a means of escape • Be ready to leave your home • Cooperate with the emergency services • Call 999 if you are in immediate danger	Fairbourne Seafront Quickdial: 192403 Fairbourne and Arthog Quickdial: 601012

SIGN UP TO FLOOD WARNINGS AND ALERTS

Check if you can sign up for free flood warnings and alerts for flooding from rivers or the sea online at naturalresources.wales/flooding or contact Floodline 0345 988 1188 or Type talk: 0345 602 6340.

USEFUL CONTACT NUMBERS

In an emergency

- Call the emergency services 999
- Call the RSPCA emergency line 0300 1234 999 for animal rescues. Do not put your life or someone else's life in danger to attempt an animal rescue
- To report or to get information about power cuts call 105
- To report a gas or carbon monoxide emergency call 0800 111 999
- To find out about road closures call [Traffic.wales](https://www.traffic.wales) 0300 123 1213
- To find out about impacts on public transport call [Traveline.cymru](https://www.traveline.cymru) 0800 464 00 00

REPORT A FLOOD OR RISK OF FLOODING

Source of flooding	Organisation and contact details
• Main rivers¹ • Sea • Internal Drainage Districts	Natural Resources Wales Call 24/7 incident line 0300 065 3000 or report a flood online naturalresources.wales/reportit
¹ Main Rivers DataMapWales	
• Surface water • Ordinary watercourses • Roads (like gullies, the drain inlet by kerb)	Cyngor Gwynedd Call: 01766 771 000
• Burst water main • Sewers	Dŵr Cymru/Welsh Water
• Motorways and trunk roads	Traffic Wales Call 0300 123 1213

When reporting it is useful to identify the location either with a grid reference or www.what3words.com

For more information about what to do to prepare for flooding, check online at naturalresources.wales/flooding or contact Floodline 0345 988 1188 or Type talk: 0345 602 6340.

SEASONAL SHORELINE PATH

Residents and visitors alike may have been aware that a seasonal shoreline path was not made available this summer (2025); as it had been for the two previous years. Allowing better access to the lower shore these access points were from the Penrhyn Road South promenade car park, where the old slipway was.

The primary reason for no access being made this summer was due to upcoming work by Natural Resources Wales to replenish and strengthen (the southern end of) the shingle bank by shifting shingle from the northern end of the beach to Friog Corner, maintaining the bank's sustainability and its ability to defend.

The Partnership were also made aware that to continue with this annual work programme of shoreline access a Flood Risk Management Plan (FRAP) would be required. This is due to a concern that the development of these paths would provide an easier route for water to flow landward should there be a storm event.

In 2025 the costs to prepare the FRAP and construction would be approximately £6000.



Photo of Fairbourne beach



Photo of Fairbourne beach

Since the path reaches a point that is submerged by the mean high-water spring a Marine Licence would also be required, adding further costs and time. A marine licence is required when:

- Any deposit or removal of material or substance, using a vehicle or vessel. Deposits or removals by hand are not marine licensable activities
- Construction, alteration or improvement works (including works hanging/suspended over the marine licensable area and works beneath the sea bed eg tunnels, bridges and piers)
- Scuttling vessels or floating containers
- Dredging
- Incineration of objects
- Deposit and use of explosives
- Harvesting or growing aquaculture (seaweed or shellfish)

Albeit a non-permanent structure the solution offered a temporary grading of the shingle bank to allow an easier descent and ascent to and from the shore at a time of year with less storm action which often rework the profile of the shingle bank to the steeper and uneven profiles.

The sum above is small in comparison to having a permanent structure in Fairbourne. A feasibility study for a permanent structure was undertaken by YGC in 2020/2021 and the options investigated were as follows.

1. A reinforced concrete slipway that would be similar to that existed before.
2. A wooden slipway similar to that used at the RNLI station in Borth, Ceredigion.
3. Timber boards such as those seen at Newgale, Pembrokeshire.

For any of these to work however it needs to be considered that:

- A new ramp is designed with no or minimal effect on the long shore drift process.
- Structurally sound ramp considering the dynamic forces of the beach.
- Climate change resilience – consideration of stronger storm events.

The permanent option (1) was then estimated to cost over £300k to build, excluding any associated costs. Its construction would likely have a significant effect on the long shore drift processes. Like the issues of the previous slipway, this ramp would act like a substantial groyne on the shingle embankment impacting the natural movement of shingle up the beach. This was evident on the old slipway, as shingle built up on the southern side and depleted on the northern side, eventually causing the collapse of the old slipway. This was removed in 2019 as it posed significant danger to beach users.

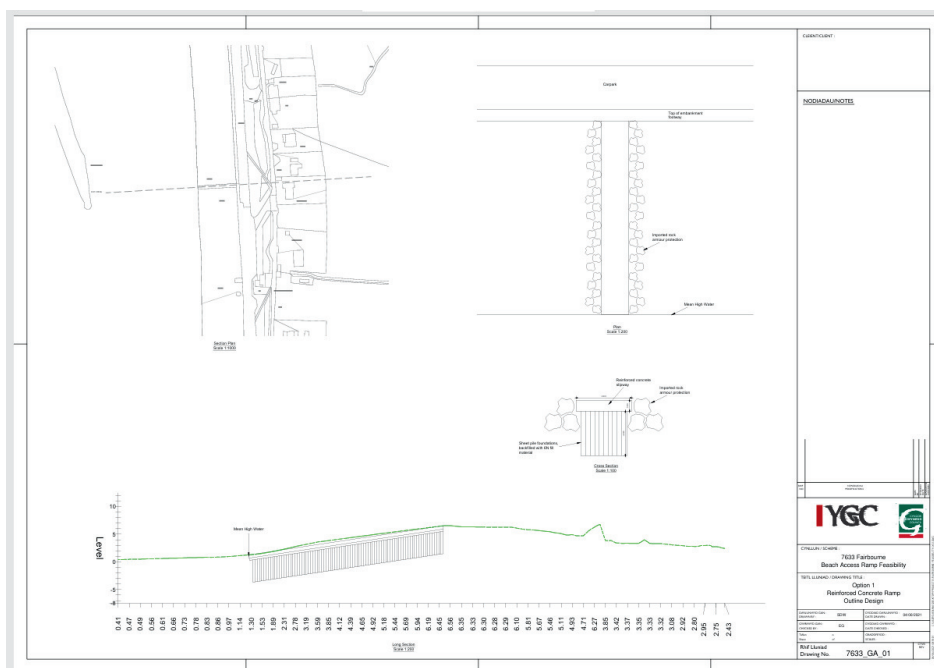


Photo of the Outline Design of the Ramp

It is likely that it would be possible to construct a structurally more stable ramp that could deal better with the processes than the previous slipway, however it is highly likely that it would still require periodical removal and replenishment of shingle on both sides to ensure the structure is not compromised.

The second option was estimated to cost in the region of £170k excluding associated costs and would allow for the movement of shingle beneath the surface of the slipway by the long shore drift process. However, referring to the Active Travel Guidance provided by Welsh Government which states that the absolute maximum gradient for ease of use should be 1:12 and that gradients steeper than 1:40 is impossible for many wheelchair users.

A gradient of 1:12 at Fairbourne would require a ~75m length slipway and would place the end of the slipway ~35m beyond the mean high-water level. The key difference between the slipway constructed at Borth and proposed here for Fairbourne is the intended use. As a beach access ramp only, the realistic gradient of 1:8 not only falls outside of the guidance parameter set by Welsh Government but also considering the demography of Fairbourne as a village of older residents and the mobility issues that occur with age, it is an unsuitable gradient given the circumstances.

Furthermore, placing a timber structure in a marine environment requires a more involved maintenance schedule compared to a concrete structure. Marine and environmental restrictions don't allow for heavy timber treatment in marine environments therefore the choice of timber for construction is key to the longevity of the structure and prevent bio-deterioration of the timber.

The third option would have timber boards sitting un-fixed on top of the shingle. However, the steepness of the shingle at Fairbourne beach is not suited for the use of these timber boards.

They would also be extremely vulnerable to winter storm events when the waves crash onto the shingle above the mean high-water mark. The forces of the waves during winter would likely destroy the boards and could potentially cause dangerous debris to be left on the beach after the storm event. In addition, the natural profile of the shingle embankment at the old slipway location in Fairbourne is 1:5. This gradient is much steeper than the maximum 1:12 stated as suitable for pedestrians in the Active Travel Guidance provided by Welsh Government.

To summarise; all the factors above mean a new structure being constructed at Fairbourne is unlikely in the foreseeable future. Costs for any of the options described are now likely to be over the previous estimates and all are unlikely to withstand the natural processes along the shore. Notwithstanding every effort will be made by the Partnership to seek alternative solutions with its members at NRW and the Maritime department at Cynor Gwynedd.

For more information, visit the Fairbourne website www.fairbourne.info



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Consultancy



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