

## REPORT OF ACCESS & RIGHTS OF WAY MANAGER

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**SUBJECT:**  
**STORM DAMAGE TO PUBLIC RIGHTS OF WAY AND NATIONAL PARK  
AUTHORITY PROPERTIES, JANUARY 2014**

Purpose of Report

To bring Members' attention to the extent of the storm damage experienced in early January 2014; the response of the National Park Authority and its implications for the work of the Authority.

Introduction

Between the 3<sup>rd</sup> and 6<sup>th</sup> January 2014 a succession of particularly high tides, heavy rainfall and gale force winds combined to result in tidal surges and flooding causing a great deal of erosion and damage to the coast of Pembrokeshire.

Staff had been monitoring the weather forecasts and following the first high tides on the morning of 3<sup>rd</sup> January, officers and wardens of the Delivery Team were diverted from their programmed work and began systematic inspections of their operational areas to assess the storm damage and where necessary, make the damaged areas safe with temporary signage and barriers. This work continued by necessity through the weekend as the storm conditions and high tides prevailed over a series of days, with additional damage being experienced to routes and structures that were already weakened or rendered out of repair.

Initially the more vulnerable and heavily used coastal areas such as beach heads and sea fronts were identified as being at the most risk and were inspected as a priority and continued to be monitored for the duration of the storm. It took longer to inspect the more remote sections of the Coast Path to determine if there has been any erosion and those areas with a known geological weakness were prioritised for inspection.

In all a total of 35 locations experienced significant damage ranging from the accumulation of debris on car parks and paths; damage to footbridges and path surfaces including hard surfaces such as concrete and tarmac; destabilisation of coastal slopes; destruction of steps and structures and loss of coastal land and dunes. Inland, flooding and high winds resulted in severe gully erosion to some bridleways and trees down across paths.

Those sites and paths considered to be dangerous or out of repair for their intended use such as wheelchair suitable paths are for the time being not being promoted on the Authority website until they can be repaired. In each case an explanation is provided for this interruption. The Communications Team ensured that messages about the need to take care when visiting the coast and walking the Coast Path were

prominent on the National Park Authority website and social media. The public were also invited to report any problems caused as a result of the storm.

A schedule of the most significant storm damage forms an appendix to this report which gives an indication of the extent of the storm damage and a brief presentation of photographs will be displayed at the meeting to illustrate the scale and nature of the storm damage.

### Comparisons

In the past isolated incidents of storm damage have occurred, however, this event is significant in that the extremely adverse weather conditions were sustained over a period of four days and severely affected the entire coastline, with a significant degree of damage and erosion being caused around the National Park.

### Way Forward

It is considered that the most appropriate and responsible option regarding the response to the storm was adopted. The repair of the storm damage has now become the main priority of the Delivery Team in order to make the sites and paths as far as practicable safe and accessible in time for the main visitor season. Some repairs will be temporary measures with more permanent repair work taking place after the late February high tides.

The redeployment of wardens to undertake these repairs will result in a significant degree of routine maintenance work that was programmed to take place on the inland network of public rights of way in January and February being postponed until the following winter.

National Park Rangers are working with Keep Wales Tidy, the National Trust and Pembrokeshire County Council to coordinate a series of volunteer clean ups of beaches and public land on beach heads. Residents of local communities and voluntary wardens have been turning out to help with this task.

### Financial considerations

While much of the work will entail the redeployment of warden time, significant additional costs will be incurred in the procurement of materials and contractors with plant and equipment to clear debris and repair path surfaces. A number of more challenging problems will require the engagement of consultants for advice on long term solutions and repairs. The storm occurred at a time of year when many budgets are either spent or committed to programmed work, which includes a significant degree of funding for access work being required to match NRW grant aid. While the full extent of the cost of repairs was not available at the time of writing it is evident that additional funding will have to be found to undertake the necessary repairs in time for the main visitor season.

A funding bid of £24,000.00 was made to the Welsh Government on 16<sup>th</sup> January for costs incurred in the repair of storm damage in this financial year. The Welsh Government are making the Wales Coast Path underspend of £263,000 available to repair storm damage across Wales. Any funds secured from this bid, however, will only be eligible to be spent on the route of the Wales Coast Path and a proportion of work relating to beach access paths in particular will not be eligible for such grant aid.

The bid for National Trail and Wales Coast Path funding in 2014/15 will hopefully be able to address any longer term, major repairs on the Coast Path.

#### Risk considerations

Public safety has been our primary concern. The emphasis on repair work on car parks, beach access paths and the Coast Path in readiness for the main visitor season is in the interests of all users, local communities and not least, the local economy.

A proportion of maintenance work on public rights of way that was programmed for January and February will be postponed to make way for repairs and will result in the target not being met with regard to the overall condition of the network being signposted and easy to use. Maintenance work that relates to matters of public safety will, however, be prioritised.

Programmed surveys of public rights of way will also be disrupted. The annual target is to survey a third of the inland public rights of way network and it is likely that this will not be met due to staff resources being diverted to storm damage repairs.

Grant funded access and public rights of way improvements work will continue to be implemented so that no external funding will be lost.

#### Compliance

The provision and promotion of access opportunities to the coast complies with several Corporate Strategy Objectives notably Outcomes 1, 2, & 3.

#### Human Rights/Equality issues

At least seven routes that are maintained and promoted for use by people with mobility problems were rendered out of use together with a number of beach access paths that are required to be maintained to high standards for visitors and family groups with a range of abilities.

#### Biodiversity implications/Sustainability appraisal

Where significant repair work is needed in protected habitats the relevant consents will be required. Repairs will also be undertaken in order to better withstand future storms and in some case be altered where it is no longer considered sustainable to maintain coastal apparatus and structures. Officers have also been monitoring the effect that these storms are having on wildlife and biodiversity

#### Welsh Language statement

No issues.

#### Conclusion

The challenge in terms of staff resources and other costs in repairing such widespread damage should not be underestimated, however, the Authority has responded promptly and prioritised repairs to paths and property damaged by the January storms. This will result in additional costs being incurred and a proportion of programmed work being postponed but this work was necessary to ensure that the coastline of the National Park remains safe and accessible.

Recommendation

That Members note the report.

*(For further information, please contact Anthony Richards, Access & Rights of Way Manager extn 4849)*

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**Storm damage to National Park Authority sites, property and public rights of way 3<sup>rd</sup> - 7<sup>th</sup> January 2014**

	<b>Location</b>	<b>Issue</b>
1	Public footpath, Carew Causeway	Surface damage; compacted stone and gravel surface washed away and pot holed.
2	Carew mill	Mill ground floor flooded.
3	Coast Path, Tenby South Beach	Viewing platform and beach access steps half demolished by storm and remainder stranded on beach due to dune erosion; 3 metres of Coast Path lost due to dune erosion.
4	Bridleway and Coast Path, Manorbier	The base of the sandstone bedrock that incorporates the bridleway and Coast Path has broken away by wave action leaving a 1 m drop into beach. Footbridge damaged and storm debris obstructing Coast Path.
5	Beach access and slip way, Freshwater East	Approx. 60 tons of seaborne debris over beach access road; slipway foundations exposed; sleeper revetment and hawsers collapsed.
6	Car park and Coast Path, West Angle	Debris covering car park; erosion of wheelchair path surface with large pot holes.
7	Coast Path, Point House Road, Angle Bay	Tidal surge removed top layer of fines and dust and created new potholes.
8	Dungeon Wood, Saundersfoot	2 fallen trees over footpath
9	Coast Path from Lydstep to Freshwater East	Fallen trees across Coast Path
10	Coast Path, Gann Crossing, St Ishmaels-Dale	Stepping stones dislodged and unstable
11	Coast Path, Castle Beach, Dale	footbridge washed away
12	Beach access path, Lindsway Bay	bottom platform of steps undermined and unstable
13	Public footpath, Matthews Slade, Marloes Beach	Bottom of beach access steps demolished.
14	Coast Path and picnic site, St Brides Haven	Coast Path, footbridge, wall, picnic tables swept away
15	Slipway, Broad Haven	Interpretation panel washed away by tidal surge
16	Car park, Newgale	Car park entrance blocked by debris & benches destroyed; stream blocked and flowing into car park could damage tarmac.
17	Coast Path, picnic site and car park, Solva	Large holes appeared in picnic site; debris covering car park; erosion of wheelchair path surface to Sand quay with large pot holes.
18	Beach access path, Caerfai Bay	Landslide has undermined beach access footpath midway down slope.
19	Coast Path, Aberpwll, St Davids	Footbridge washed away.
20	Beach access path, Traeth Llyfn Beach	Railings damaged and missing at bottom of steel staircase
21	Porthgain Harbour	Debris on harbourside

	<b>Location</b>	<b>Issue</b>
22	Coast Path, Abercastle	Two concrete footbridges on south side of harbour lifted and dumped by storm surge and now unstable
23	Coast Path, Aber Mawr	Erosion of cliff resulting in 100 metres of Coast Path being lost to sea.
24	Beach access path, Sandy Haven	Beach access steps undermined by erosion.
25	Coast Path, Monk Haven, St Ishmaels	Footbridge abutments badly scoured out by wave action.
26	Coast Path and beach access, Druidston Beach	Significant gulley erosion to path surface.
27	Coast Path, Aberbach, Dinas	Footbridge damaged with decking missing; significant gulley erosion to beach access path.
28	Coast Path, Newport Parrog disabled path	Wheelchair suitable section damaged in three places: causeway dislodged and culvert part collapsed; retaining walls and debris blocking one part, concrete surface torn off footpath for 13 metres.
29	Coast Path, Newport Estuary	Erosion of surface at junction with Lower St Marys Street.
30	Newport Parrog Car Park	Debris on car park
31	Car park, Newport Sands	Debris on slipways; dune erosion and exposure of old fence posts; part of rip-rap sea defence wall damaged.
32	Cilrhedyn Drying Shed	Barge boards missing on one end and roof sheets have become dislodged.
33	Coast Path, Ceibwr	Boulders and stone steps dislodged and unstable.
34	Bridleway, Dancoed, Gwaun	Gulley erosion of path surface
35	Bridleway, Nevern	2 large trees fallen over path, one close to power lines.