



An Open Letter in advance of the August Bank Holiday weekend.

We recognise that the coronavirus pandemic has been a difficult and challenging time for all of us.

And as restrictions across Wales continue to ease, we fully understand that people want to return outdoors to enjoy the fresh air, re-connect with nature and improve their physical and mental wellbeing.

Camping in Wales is a great way to do just that and Wales' many official campsites provide the perfect base to enjoy the beautiful scenery our country has to offer.

However, as we head towards another Bank Holiday weekend, Natural Resources Wales, National Park Authorities in Wales, National Trust Wales and RSPB Cymru are urging anyone planning a camping trip in Wales this Bank Holiday to act responsibly by only booking and camping at official campsites.

Wales has seen a significant and worrying increase in 'fly-camping' incidents (overnight stays by tent or vehicle on land without the landowner's permission) this summer, especially in our National Parks, forests and National Nature Reserves. As an unauthorised activity, fly camping is a civil offence. It may also be a criminal offence depending on where the camping takes place.

The recent increase in incidents is harming our environment, our wildlife, the tourism sector and our local communities which are all respectively recovering from the effects of the pandemic.

Coronavirus has not gone away, so everyone still needs to be vigilant and Keep Wales Safe by following government guidelines on handwashing and social distancing. Fly-camping can make following these guidelines difficult.

Why fly-camping is problematic:

- **It is an offence.** Camping without the landowner's permission in Wales is a civil offence and may also be a criminal offence. Police forces and local authorities are taking a vigilant approach to those who break the law by fly-camping.
- **It is a public health concern.** The reduction in toilet facilities for personal waste or handwashing is dangerous for both the fly-campers and those that pass through the area afterwards. Fly-camping can lead to an area becoming overcrowded, making it difficult to maintain social distancing. If you are considering fly-camping because there is no other local accommodation available, be aware the area is already at capacity and make plans to visit at a quieter time.

- **It harms the environment.** Fly-camping has led to increased amounts of litter being left in sensitive rural locations that are not set up to deal with overnight stays. Not only is this harmful to the wildlife that makes its home there, it is thoroughly unpleasant for other visitors and for the people who are taken away from their day-to-day jobs to clear it away. Fly-camping also increases the risk of devastating wildfires where BBQs and fires are lit in unsuitable places.

We ask everyone planning a camping trip in Wales this weekend, and over the remaining summer period, to book with an accommodation provider ahead of visiting to avoid disappointment. Campsites have all the facilities you need for overnight stays and have put measures in place to ensure your stay with them is a safe and welcoming one. You can find a campsite on [VisitWales.com](https://www.visitwales.com).

By enjoying our special places responsibly, and by following [the Countryside Code](#), we can all help the great Welsh outdoors make a green recovery from the Covid-19 pandemic. Our wildlife and natural environment have had the space to thrive during lockdown, and we must do all we can to protect it.

Your continued and ongoing support means we can all play a part in protecting each other, and the communities we live and work in, during this incredibly challenging time.

We look forward to welcoming you to our National Parks, forests and National Nature Reserves over the August Bank Holiday weekend. We only ask that you do so safely, and by respecting the beautiful surroundings you've come to enjoy.



Clare Pillman
Chief Executive
Natural Resources Wales



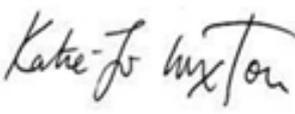
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