

**From:** [REDACTED]@coalaction.org.uk>

**Sent:** Monday, December 4, 2023 2:40 PM

**To:** Climate Change, Environment, and Infrastructure Committee | Pwyllgor Newid Hinsawdd, yr Amgylchedd a Seilwaith <SeneddClimate@senedd.wales>

**Subject:** Ffos-y-fran: request for a Committee Inquiry

Dear Andrea,

Me were in contact in May this year over the sprawling and then-illegal Ffos-y-fran opencast coal mining.

On the 30th November, it does appear to be the case that active coal mining has ceased at Ffos-y-fran, 15 months after it legally should have. Now it seems the restoration promised to the population of Merthyr Tydfil is being reneged on. Merthyr Tydfil County Borough Council is engaging with a consultant that Merthyr (South Wales) Ltd has put forward to propose an alternative that'll do the bare necessities on around 10% of the budget estimated necessary for the original restoration plan. This is Merthyr (South Wales) Ltd attempt at getting back the £15m locked out of its reach in an Escrow account after it has evading funding the other ~90% of the cost it's contractually obliged to by siphoning millions in revenues off into linked companies. We've started a petition to deliver the restoration originally promised to the population of Merthyr Tydfil after they've paid the price with 16 years of coal dust and noise pollution.

In the Climate Change, Environment, and Infrastructure Committee meeting of 08th June, Jenny Rathbone suggested a short Committee inquiry into Ffos-y-fran at 331 which you seconded at 333.

**I'm following up to find out whether that happened/is happening?**

We fear that attention will move on now that active coaling has ceased at Ffos-y-fran, without accountability for the **500,000 tonnes of coal and 1.6 million tonnes of CO2e** that never should have been produced from Ffos-y-fran over the past 15 months - and now a £105 million black hole in the restoration budget, a final betrayal of the Merthyr Tydfil population. The CO2 alone is responsible for **362 additional deaths** from climate change impacts. This points to a mismanagement and apathy on the part of public institutions of epic proportions. **We would respectfully suggest Merthyr Tydfil County Borough Council and the Welsh Government be scrutinised in a full Committee Inquiry across a scope of action and inaction** that includes:

1. failing to take decisive action to prevent the flagrant breach of planning control and subsequent profiteering from illegal activities (and the concerning precedent this sets)
2. breaking contractual obligations exceeding £100 million (restoration estimated between £120 and £175 in the attached ministerial advice)
3. violating the Welsh Government's own anti-coal policies (as expressed in the MTCBC Planning Hearing resulting in the unanimous rejection of the extension application)
4. not preparing adequately for what amounts to the abandonment of the Ffos-y-fran site announced by the mining company (see attached letter from the Coal Authority to the Welsh Government)
5. the Welsh Government failing to take adequate preventative action in response to its own report warning of risk to restoration in 2014, and our report shared in December 2022

6. the transport of illegally gotten coal along railway owned by the Welsh Government (sub-contracted out to Amey Infrastructure Ltd), accounting for revenues gained from this, directly or indirectly.

As we've been in contact on the topic, I felt I should suggest to you first that the Climate Change, Environment, and Infrastructure Committee launches a Committee Inquiry into this matter - but I'm happy to contact the Committee instead if you believe that would be more appropriate?

It is also worth noting that Merthyr (South Wales) Ltd has withdrawn its appeal against the enforcement notice (demonstrating it was indeed a delay tactic), which means that **Minister Julie James is now free to respond to specific questions on Ffos-y-fran from the CCEIC.**

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Regards,

**Coal Action Network**

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