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Gweinidog yr Amgylchedd, Ynni a Materion Gwledig
Minister for Environment, Energy and Rural Affairs



Llywodraeth Cymru
Welsh Government

Andrew RT Davies AM

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27

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Dear Andrew

Further to your question to the Minister for Finance and Trefnydd during Plenary on 12 November regarding the implications of ash dieback in Wales, I am responding as my portfolio covers forestry in Wales.

I fully recognise the potential threat ash dieback poses to the resilience of our natural environment, as well as the possible financial implications and disruption to everyday business. As you are aware, the challenges landowners and land managers face from the impacts of ash dieback has led Welsh Government Officials to work closely with Natural Resources Wales (NRW) to convene a Wales Strategic Ash Dieback Group.

The group met for the first time on 12 July and its purpose is to provide a shared platform where key stakeholders can discuss and disseminate the latest research findings and collaborate to inform the national strategic direction regarding the management of ash dieback in Wales. We believe this will help mitigate its impact on landowners, including Local Authorities.

As the disease is not specifically a woodland issue, with ash trees present in high numbers in hedges, along roadways and farmland environments, the group requires multiple representatives from a range of different sectors including farming unions, utility companies, trunk roads, Local Authorities, industry, community woodlands and scientific bodies. The Welsh Local Government Association (WLGA) accepted our invitation to the group and will represent the interests of Local Authorities in Wales.

With regards to your question on liability, good forest practice and management, including the felling of dead/dying trees, is the responsibility of the landowner. It is not for the Welsh Government to dictate how this management should take place as each site will be different and have specific challenges.

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Rydym yn croesawu derbyn gohebiaeth yn Gymraeg. Byddwn yn ateb gohebiaeth a dderbynnir yn Gymraeg yn Gymraeg ac ni fydd gohebu yn Gymraeg yn arwain at oedi.

We welcome receiving correspondence in Welsh. Any correspondence received in Welsh will be answered in Welsh and corresponding in Welsh will not lead to a delay in responding.

However, earlier this year, the Welsh Government supported the launch of an Ash Dieback Toolkit by the Tree Council. The Toolkit is aimed at Local Authorities and large scale land owners and land managers and is focussed on the preparedness and appropriate management of ash dieback. A link to the toolkit can be found [here](#).

By working collaboratively and utilising the knowledge of experts the aim is to minimise the negative impact of ash dieback in the long-term, ensuring we do not ultimately reduce our woodland cover and that we take all necessary steps to enhance the resilience of our woodland ecosystems to further disturbances.

Regards
Lesley

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