# Concerns over environmental risks halt Llanerch Bridge rebuild, frustrating North Wales communities



Residents of Trefnant and Tremeirchion in North Wales are grappling with significant disruptions following the recent suspension of a bridge reconstruction project. The Llanerch Bridge, which served as a vital link between these communities for over 200 years, was swept away by Storm Christoph in January 2021. This natural disaster left residents contending with a seven-mile detour, prompting frustration and scepticism towards local authorities and their management of the situation.

The decision by Denbighshire County Council to halt plans for a new bridge stemmed from grave concerns surrounding environmental impacts, particularly the risk of polluting a crucial freshwater aquifer utilised by Welsh Water. The former bridge's location implicated drilling into sensitive sandstone layers, as cautioned by council officials. Paul Jackson, head of highways and environmental services, highlighted the complexities involved in finding a design solution that would not compromise the water supply for 85,000 households. This caution has led some residents to wonder whether safety concerns are being weaponised to justify a lack of action and funding complications.

The delay has not only created practical inconveniences but has also sparked a wave of criticism from the community. Local activist and commentator Avanice expressed disbelief at the inability of modern engineering to replicate a structure that lasted for centuries without similar precautions. Others voiced their frustrations, suggesting alternative solutions, such as a simpler footbridge that would be less resource-intensive and easier to construct.

Gareth Davies, the Member of the Senedd for the Vale of Clwyd, has formally urged Denbighshire County Council for a clear update regarding the bridge's replacement, reflecting the sentiments of many frustrated citizens. Despite previously secured funding from the Welsh Government, no definitive timetable for construction has been given. The absence of clear communication on this critical project has left many residents feeling abandoned by their local governance.

Added to this, the financial implications of the bridge’s closure have also been significant; local businesses have seen a decline in trade, while residents have endured increased fuel costs associated with the lengthy detours. Estimates for replacement costs have risen substantially, with figures now hovering around £10 million, reflecting the complexities and potential technical challenges in the proposed designs.

Furthermore, councillors have expressed their concerns about the protracted timeline, with estimates suggesting that work may not commence until 2026. Such delays have led to growing frustrations within the community, particularly as historical bridges have successfully withstood the test of time, prompting some residents to question the rationale behind perceived inaction.

The situation remains delicate as Denbighshire County Council grapples with environmental, financial, and community pressures, all while the absence of Llanerch Bridge continues to affect the daily lives of the residents it once served so faithfully. As discussions surrounding future plans and potential designs continue, the hope among residents remains steadfast: to see their bridge rebuilt and their community fully restored.

## Reference Map:

* Paragraph 1 – [[1]](https://www.dailypost.co.uk/news/news-opinion/not-replacing-200-year-old-31745713), [[4]](https://www.itv.com/news/wales/2022-10-16/protest-over-failure-to-replace-historic-bridge-washed-away-by-storm-christoph)
* Paragraph 2 – [[1]](https://www.dailypost.co.uk/news/news-opinion/not-replacing-200-year-old-31745713), [[2]](https://www.garethdavies.wales/news/gareth-davies-ms-requests-urgent-update-on-llanerch-bridge-replacement), [[5]](https://www.herald.wales/north-wales/denbighshire/denbighshire-and-welsh-government-criticised-for-delay-in-replacing-llanerch-bridge/)
* Paragraph 3 – [[2]](https://www.garethdavies.wales/news/gareth-davies-ms-requests-urgent-update-on-llanerch-bridge-replacement), [[3]](https://www.herald.wales/north-wales/denbighshire/llanerch-bridge-could-be-delayed-until-2026/), [[6]](https://www.bbc.com/news/articles/c3g3jvvz28zo)
* Paragraph 4 – [[5]](https://www.herald.wales/north-wales/denbighshire/denbighshire-and-welsh-government-criticised-for-delay-in-replacing-llanerch-bridge/), [[7]](https://www.bbc.com/news/uk-wales-68098614)
* Paragraph 5 – [[3]](https://www.herald.wales/north-wales/denbighshire/llanerch-bridge-could-be-delayed-until-2026/), [[6]](https://www.bbc.com/news/articles/c3g3jvvz28zo)

Source: [Noah Wire Services](https://www.noahwire.com)

## Bibliography

1. <https://www.dailypost.co.uk/news/news-opinion/not-replacing-200-year-old-31745713> - Please view link - unable to able to access data
2. <https://www.garethdavies.wales/news/gareth-davies-ms-requests-urgent-update-on-llanerch-bridge-replacement> - Gareth Davies MS, the Senedd member for the Vale of Clwyd, has formally requested an urgent update from Denbighshire County Council regarding the replacement of Llanerch Bridge, which collapsed over four years ago during Storm Christoph in January 2021. Residents and businesses in Trefnant and Tremeirchion have faced significant disruptions due to the bridge's absence, including lengthy detours and increased costs. Despite previous assurances and funding from the Welsh Government, a clear timetable for the bridge's reconstruction has yet to be provided. Davies has sought clarity on when the replacement bridge will be completed and has urged the council and Welsh Government to provide a clear timescale for the project to restore connectivity for the affected communities.
3. <https://www.herald.wales/north-wales/denbighshire/llanerch-bridge-could-be-delayed-until-2026/> - Councillors in Denbighshire have expressed concerns that the replacement of Llanerch Bridge, destroyed during Storm Christoph in January 2021, could be delayed until 2026. The bridge, which connected Trefnant and Tremeirchion, has yet to be replaced, leading to a seven-mile diversion for residents. Councillor Chris Evans fears that work on the new bridge may not commence for at least another year, with the cost potentially exceeding £9 million. Residents have been enduring increased fuel bills, delivery charges, and inconvenience due to the lack of a direct crossing. The council has secured funding for the bridge's design work but has not provided a definitive timeline for reconstruction.
4. <https://www.itv.com/news/wales/2022-10-16/protest-over-failure-to-replace-historic-bridge-washed-away-by-storm-christoph> - Residents in Denbighshire have protested over the failure to replace Llanerch Bridge, a historic structure destroyed during Storm Christoph in January 2021. The bridge, which connected the villages of Trefnant and Tremeirchion, has yet to be rebuilt, causing a seven-mile diversion for residents and impacting local businesses. Protesters highlighted the separation of communities and the economic challenges faced due to the absence of the bridge. Denbighshire County Council has been accused of prevaricating over the issue, with plans in place to replace the Grade II-listed bridge but no clear timeline provided.
5. <https://www.herald.wales/north-wales/denbighshire/denbighshire-and-welsh-government-criticised-for-delay-in-replacing-llanerch-bridge/> - Residents in Denbighshire have criticised both Denbighshire County Council and the Welsh Government for the delay in replacing Llanerch Bridge, which collapsed into the River Clwyd during Storm Christoph in January 2021. The Grade II-listed bridge, linking Trefnant and Tremeirchion, has yet to be replaced, leading to a seven-mile diversion for residents and impacting local businesses. Councillors have expressed frustration over the lack of progress and the absence of a clear timeline for reconstruction. The Welsh Government has provided £380,000 for the project, but a final business case to secure full funding is still being drawn up.
6. <https://www.bbc.com/news/articles/c3g3jvvz28zo> - The 200-year-old Llanerch Bridge in Denbighshire was destroyed during Storm Christoph in January 2021, leaving the villages of Trefnant and Tremeirchion separated. Residents have faced significant disruptions due to the absence of the bridge, including a seven-mile detour and increased travel times. Denbighshire County Council has pledged to replace the bridge, with the project now estimated to cost up to £10 million. However, the council describes the project as 'complex,' and work is continuing on a suitable design. A business case for the bridge has yet to be finalised, leaving residents uncertain about when the replacement will be completed.
7. <https://www.bbc.com/news/uk-wales-68098614> - Councillors in Denbighshire fear that the replacement of Llanerch Bridge, destroyed during Storm Christoph in January 2021, could be years away from completion. The bridge, which connected Trefnant and Tremeirchion, has yet to be replaced, leading to a seven-mile diversion for residents. Councillor Chris Evans expressed concerns that work on the new bridge may not start for at least another year, with the cost previously estimated at £10 million. Residents have been enduring increased fuel bills and businesses have reported a decline in trade due to the lack of a direct crossing. The council has not yet provided designs for a new structure.