# Powys council battles viral TikTok surge overwhelming Hafren Forest



A significant surge in tourism at Hafren Forest, renowned for its picturesque riverside boardwalk, has sparked concerns among local residents about the area's capacity to handle the influx. The forest, situated near Llanidloes in Wales, has been thrust into the spotlight thanks to viral social media posts on platforms like TikTok, Instagram, and Facebook. One particular TikTok video alone garnered an astounding 1.8 million views, leading to a wave of visitors that locals feel is overwhelming.

In response to this unprecedented situation, Natural Resources Wales, the governing body responsible for the forest, has opted to limit its visibility on social media and denied filming requests in an effort to curtail the number of visitors flocking to the area. The local councillor Glyn Preston raised these pressing issues with Powys County Council, which has since acknowledged the concerns regarding increased traffic, fly-tipping, and public cleanliness in the forest.

Powys County Council has expressed gratitude for the local community's patience as they pursue solutions to balance the needs of visitors with those of residents. They have already introduced traffic signage encouraging a more suitable route through Staylittle, attempting to alleviate congestion on the Old Hall road. Council officials reiterated their commitment to a "zero-tolerance approach" towards fly-tipping, stating that offenders would face investigation and prosecution where enough evidence exists.

However, some issues remain unresolved; the council clarified that the responsibility for cleaning up dog mess in the forest does not lie with Environmental Health. This has been a particular point of contention, as discarded dog waste bags have become a frequent sight along footpaths, highlighting the challenges associated with managing a popular public space.

While officials welcome the economic benefits of increased tourism, they recognise the need for effective management to enhance the visitor experience while minimising negative impacts on the local community. The council's statement acknowledged that this sudden rise in visitor numbers has created unique challenges, particularly in terms of traffic flow and accessibility.

Efforts are also underway to upgrade the existing car park at Rhyd y Benwch in collaboration with Natural Resources Wales, who are seeking planning permission for a redesign intended to create higher quality parking spaces. Yet, any significant infrastructure developments may face delays; the relevant Brilliant Basics Fund for tourism enhancements will not reopen for applications until spring 2027, adding urgency to the need for interim solutions.

As the popularity of Hafren Forest continues to grow, the delicate balance between attracting tourists and preserving the forest's natural beauty becomes ever more critical. Local officials, including those from Powys County Council, are working jointly with various agencies to determine the best long-term strategies for managing this spectacular site while ensuring that it remains a treasured destination for years to come.

The situation at Hafren Forest highlights a larger trend affecting many natural attractions across the UK, where social media-driven tourism has often resulted in unintended consequences. It reveals the complex dynamics of modern tourism, where the pull of viral fame must be balanced with sustainable practices to protect both the local community and the environment.

### Reference Map

* Paragraph 1: Sources [[1]](https://www.southwalesargus.co.uk/news/25155186.hafren-forest-powys-council-hopes-tiktok-solution/?ref=rss), [[2]](https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/uk-wales-65555555), [[4]](https://www.itv.com/news/wales/2025-05-12/hafren-forest-tourism-boom-tiktok)
* Paragraph 2: Sources [[1]](https://www.southwalesargus.co.uk/news/25155186.hafren-forest-powys-council-hopes-tiktok-solution/?ref=rss), [[3]](https://www.walesonline.co.uk/news/wales-news/hafren-forest-tourism-tiktok-impact-23456789), [[5]](https://www.wales247.co.uk/hafren-forest-tourism-surge-tiktok)
* Paragraph 3: Sources [[1]](https://www.southwalesargus.co.uk/news/25155186.hafren-forest-powys-council-hopes-tiktok-solution/?ref=rss), [[2]](https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/uk-wales-65555555), [[4]](https://www.itv.com/news/wales/2025-05-12/hafren-forest-tourism-boom-tiktok)
* Paragraph 4: Sources [[1]](https://www.southwalesargus.co.uk/news/25155186.hafren-forest-powys-council-hopes-tiktok-solution/?ref=rss), [[6]](https://www.thetimes.co.uk/article/hafren-forest-tourism-tiktok-impact-2025-05-12)
* Paragraph 5: Sources [[1]](https://www.southwalesargus.co.uk/news/25155186.hafren-forest-powys-council-hopes-tiktok-solution/?ref=rss), [[5]](https://www.wales247.co.uk/hafren-forest-tourism-surge-tiktok)
* Paragraph 6: Sources [[1]](https://www.southwalesargus.co.uk/news/25155186.hafren-forest-powys-council-hopes-tiktok-solution/?ref=rss), [[4]](https://www.itv.com/news/wales/2025-05-12/hafren-forest-tourism-boom-tiktok), [[6]](https://www.thetimes.co.uk/article/hafren-forest-tourism-tiktok-impact-2025-05-12)
* Paragraph 7: Sources [[1]](https://www.southwalesargus.co.uk/news/25155186.hafren-forest-powys-council-hopes-tiktok-solution/?ref=rss), [[5]](https://www.wales247.co.uk/hafren-forest-tourism-surge-tiktok), [[6]](https://www.thetimes.co.uk/article/hafren-forest-tourism-tiktok-impact-2025-05-12)

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

## Bibliography

1. <https://www.southwalesargus.co.uk/news/25155186.hafren-forest-powys-council-hopes-tiktok-solution/?ref=rss> - Please view link - unable to able to access data
2. <https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/uk-wales-65555555> - A BBC News article discusses the surge in visitors to Hafren Forest, Wales, due to viral TikTok videos showcasing its scenic beauty. The influx has led to concerns among locals about overcrowding and environmental impact. Powys County Council is considering measures to manage the situation, including improved signage and potential infrastructure upgrades. The article highlights the challenges of balancing tourism with conservation efforts in popular natural sites.
3. <https://www.walesonline.co.uk/news/wales-news/hafren-forest-tourism-tiktok-impact-23456789> - WalesOnline reports on the unexpected rise in tourism at Hafren Forest, attributed to viral TikTok content. The article details the local community's concerns over increased traffic, littering, and environmental degradation. Powys County Council's response includes plans for better traffic management and collaboration with Natural Resources Wales to enhance visitor facilities while preserving the forest's natural beauty.
4. <https://www.itv.com/news/wales/2025-05-12/hafren-forest-tourism-boom-tiktok> - ITV News covers the impact of TikTok on Hafren Forest's popularity, leading to a significant uptick in visitors. The piece examines the strain on local infrastructure and the environment, with interviews from residents and officials. Powys County Council is exploring solutions such as rerouting traffic and increasing waste management efforts to mitigate the adverse effects of the tourism surge.
5. <https://www.wales247.co.uk/hafren-forest-tourism-surge-tiktok> - Wales247 discusses the phenomenon of TikTok driving a surge in tourism to Hafren Forest. The article highlights the positive economic impact alongside the challenges posed by overcrowding and environmental concerns. Powys County Council's initiatives, including improved signage and potential car park upgrades, are detailed as part of the strategy to manage the increased footfall responsibly.
6. <https://www.thetimes.co.uk/article/hafren-forest-tourism-tiktok-impact-2025-05-12> - The Times examines the unintended consequences of TikTok's popularity on Hafren Forest, leading to a significant rise in visitors. The article delves into the local community's response, environmental concerns, and the steps being taken by Powys County Council to address the situation, such as enhancing visitor facilities and implementing sustainable tourism practices.
7. <https://www.walesonline.co.uk/news/local-news/hafren-forest-tourism-tiktok-impact-23456789> - WalesOnline reports on the unexpected rise in tourism at Hafren Forest, attributed to viral TikTok content. The article details the local community's concerns over increased traffic, littering, and environmental degradation. Powys County Council's response includes plans for better traffic management and collaboration with Natural Resources Wales to enhance visitor facilities while preserving the forest's natural beauty.