



Cyngor Castell-nedd Port Talbot
Neath Port Talbot Council

Dyddiad/ Date

30th January 2023

His Majesty's Senior Coroner
South Wales Central Coroner Area
Coroner's Office
The Old Courthouse
Courthouse Street
Pontypridd

Dear Sirs

Re: Regulation 28 Report (Akeem Rhoden (Deceased))

Neath Port Talbot Council wish to thank the Coroner for writing to our Chief Executive and bringing to our attention the various matters of concern that were prompted by her investigation into the tragic death of Mr. Rhoden. Neath Port Talbot Council express their deep regret and sorrow at the death of Mr Rhoden.

It should be noted that this response is based entirely on the Regulation 28 Report that was received.

We acknowledge the Coroner's concerns and will accordingly consider signage at the land we own and manage at the site in question. The Brecon Beacons National Park is an area which is designated for its special qualities

www.npt.gov.uk

Pennaeth Gwasanaethau Cyfreithiol
Y Ganolfan Ddinesig, Port Talbot SA13 1PJ
DX 135226 Port Talbot 2

Head of Legal Services
Civic Centre, Port Talbot, SA13 1PJ
DX 135226 Port Talbot 2

Croesewir gohebiaeth yn y Gymraeg a byddwn yn ymdrin â gohebiaeth Gymraeg a Saesneg i'r un safonau ac amserlenni.
We welcome correspondence in Welsh and will deal with Welsh and English correspondence to the same standards and timescales.

consequently, signage is something we must consider very carefully in the context of a natural landscape. We will seek to respond to the key point of signage that has been raised by the Coroner's concerns, and to identify any changes to signage to mitigate the risk of any future death by accident by someone visiting the site by undertaking a signage review and implementing any necessary actions.

In autumn 2022, as a result of the concerns that the Coroner raised in a report concerning a different fatality, Brecon Beacons National Park Authority and Neath Port Talbot Council jointly commissioned an independent review of signage at the Site and this work continues. Neath Port Talbot Council is committed to working collaboratively with the other public body landowners and colleagues to improve our joint management of matters that affect visitors to the site. We hope that we can continue the dialogue to create a unified approach to health and safety matters within the National Park. In the interim, Neath Port Talbot Council have commissioned a review of all signs within its high-volume visitor areas to ensure they are fit for purpose and are uniform in their design, content and application. It is anticipated that this work will be concluded in by the end of March 2023.

It is important that we offer factual response to the Coroner's findings, both to acknowledge and to identify any issues and to correct any misperceptions which may be barriers to full learning.

The Coroner's key points are summarised here, and the full table can be found in her Regulation 28 Report:

Coroner's Matters of Concern	Response	Action already completed	Action proposed
The signage at all waterfalls in Waterfall Country must be addressed	We agree with using signs that are clear to all users regardless of language. It should be noted that each authority must also comply with Welsh Language Standards which does require additional information to be present.	We have instructed an independent reviewer to advise on the formation and content of new signs and temporary signs are being put in place to warn of concerns.	To review signage and implement a uniform form of signage.
There were no adequate signs to	We agree with using signs that	We have instructed an	To review signage and implement a

warn of potential dangers	are clear to all users regardless of language. It should be noted that each authority must also comply with Welsh Language Standards.	independent reviewer to advise on the formation and content of new signs	uniform form of signage.
Any sign(s) Signage erected ought in plain English and spell out the risk of the danger of the power of the water.	We agree with using signs that are clear to all users regardless of language. It should be noted that each authority must also comply with Welsh Language Standards.	We have instructed an independent reviewer to advise on the formation and content of new signs	To review signage and implement a uniform form of signage.
Existing signage in 'Waterfall Country' is overloaded with a	We accept additional signage can explicitly address safety	We have instructed an independent reviewer to	To review signage and implement a uniform form of signage.

<p>variety of information, is not explicit in warning of the real danger of death from entering the water.</p>	<p>concerns</p>	<p>advise on best practice signs</p>	
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In the interim, a number of additional steps have been taken:

- The Neath Port Talbot website has been updated to advise individuals of the potential risks involved.
- Signs will be erected to advise individuals of **unpredictable water flow**. **Advice has suggested to date** the Council should refrain from using any words such as *Danger, Caution or Warning* as it indicates a problem, and indeed *Deep Water* as someone will no doubt dive in when it is shallow.

We trust that such information will demonstrate the Neath Port Talbot Council's commitment to working to prevent future incidents in this area.

Yours faithfully

[Redacted Signature]

[Redacted Name]

Head of Legal and Democratic Services