

Fylingdales Moor FAQ

Date: 17.10.25

Is the fire service still on site?

This remains an on-going incident with fire crews carrying out regular checks of the site.

Deep-seated heat remains within the peat in some small areas, which may result in visible smoke from time to time. If people spot any flare ups, they should dial 999 and ask for the fire service.

What is the cause of the fire?

North Yorkshire Fire and Rescue Service's investigation team are progressing with the investigation into the cause of the incident. This includes data analysis and interviews with relevant individuals. We will share the outcomes of the investigation once it is complete. This is complex work, and we are grateful for everyone's patience.

Why is the fire site still closed?

The majority of the North York Moors National Park can be enjoyed safely, with businesses open as usual. However the landscape in the area of Fylingdales Moor remains both hazardous and extremely fragile to further damage and erosion.

Open Access to Fylingdales Moor remains suspended and Public Rights of Way across Fylingdales Moor are still closed.

The closures are due to the risk posed by unexploded ordnance, to allow careful assessments of the landscape to take place, and to ensure that footfall does not contribute to further erosion before emergency restoration work can be completed. **People must continue to respect these closures and not walk or cycle in areas damaged by fire.**

It is anticipated that some Rights of Way will reopen before wider Open Access can be reinstated. As things stand, the restrictions to Open Access are set to lift on 4 December.

The latest information on closures and diversions is available on the [North York Moors National Park's website](#)..

Are there still unexploded ordnance on site?

Yes. Parts of Fylingdales Moor are a former WWII training ground and during the fire there have been a number of unexpected explosions from ordnance. This is one of the reasons we are carrying out a full assessment – with the MoD – before Open Access is granted again.

Ordnance has been on this ground for decades, but we need the risk to be back where it was prior to the fire event before wider access is allowed.

How do people get help if they have incurred loss, costs or damage as a result of the fire, or from helping to respond to it?

Significant progress is being made on identifying impacts and costs to the community, businesses and the environment. This is important to ensure that every opportunity to recover costs for those impacted by the wildfire is pursued.

This is broad work covering everything from direct impacts on a small number of businesses from the smoke and flames, to much wider impacts due to the extensive smoke plume and wildfire spreading beyond the immediate vicinity.

Businesses: If you are a business in the area and would like to understand what support is available, please visit:

- [Visit North Yorkshire \(Business and Industry\)](#)
- [York & North Yorkshire Growth Hub business support](#)
- [Contact North Yorkshire Council](#)

Farmers and landowners: Farmers and landowners may already have received some information from the North York Moors National Park and the National Farmers Union. Further information is available on the [North York Moors National Park blog](#).

Local residents: On Monday 20 October 2025 from 2pm – 7pm a community drop-in event will be held at Whitby Pavilion to help those affected by the moorland fire. This will provide an opportunity to ask questions, share feedback and find out more about the community support available.

Organisations involved in the fire recovery work will be there to help provide information and advice. This includes North Yorkshire Fire and Rescue Service, North Yorkshire Council, North York Moors National Park, North Yorkshire Police, National Farmers' Union, and other local support agencies.

Whitby Pavilion is accessible by public transport, and free parking will be available at Pavilion Drive and Pavilion Top car parks (YO21 3EN). Transport assistance may be available from Whitby, Scarborough and Ryedale Disability Action Group - contact 01947 511118 for further details.

If you are unable to attend this event but would like to share your views or find out more about the support available, contact 0300 131 21 31 or email community.recovery@northyorks.gov.uk

This is the first community support event but there will be more soon. If you have any queries about future community engagement opportunities, contact 0300 131 21 31 or email stronger.communities@northyorks.gov.uk

Please be reassured that agencies are continuing to work together to ensure we have the best possible picture of the impacts of this fire on people and communities, as well as businesses.

We are actively pursuing all opportunities for grants, funds, and other routes to financial support on your behalf. It's important we know what your problems are, please talk to us at the drop in or contact us via the [York & North Yorkshire Growth Hub website](#).

What is the environmental impact?

The full extent of the environmental impact is not known at this time, but the North York Moors National Park Authority is working with partners to carry out a number of assessments. Priority areas include an increased risk of erosion, damage to habitats, impacts on the historic environment and the release of stored carbon from peat. These effects are interconnected and may continue to evolve over time.

Historic environment

There are around 21 monuments within the area of the fire, ranging from the well-known Lilla Cross to prehistoric barrows and WWII sites. Some of the affected areas are named after their historic significance, such as Jugger Howe ('howe' meaning a burial mound). The North York Moors National Park Authority is working with Historic England to conduct drone surveys of the site, and these will be followed by walkover surveys when it is safe to do so. Unfortunately, it is apparent that a small number of the monuments have been damaged, either through heat of the fire or as a result of the construction of firebreaks.

Habitats and wildlife

Some areas are already showing signs of regrowth, but this doesn't always mean the habitat is recovering as it was before. Fast-growing, opportunistic plants often dominate after fire and will help stabilise the soil in the short term, but they don't reflect the rich mix of species that once characterised the landscape.

Severe wildfires can permanently change the makeup of peatland habitats, destroying the conditions needed for specialist species like sphagnum moss, which is essential for peat formation. There are areas of Fylingdales Moor that will likely make a good recovery within ten years. However, for areas worst affected by the fire, including those that are still smouldering, full ecological recovery may take much, much longer.

Fylingdales Moor and the surrounding area also supported an abundance of upland wildlife and specialist habitats, including a breeding ground for merlin, a site for rare butterflies and areas supporting reptiles, small mammals, and a rare white orchid. The impact of the fire on these species may not be understood for some time.

Erosion and water systems

One of the immediate environmental concerns is erosion. Around 20 km² of vegetation has been lost, leaving bare peat soils that will easily wash away during the wet winter months. This would further damage the moorland habitats and potentially reduce the water quality in local

rivers and streams. Emergency restoration work is planned, with a focus on slowing water run-off, protecting water quality, and preventing further degradation of the exposed peat and historic landscape features.

Carbon release

Peat is a significant source of carbon, so when it is burned, this carbon is released into the atmosphere. It takes thousands of years and specific conditions for peat to form, so this loss represents a long-term setback. Exposed peat can continue to break down after the fire, releasing more carbon over time. Restoring damaged peatlands is difficult and slow, but essential for preventing further emissions and protecting this critical carbon store.

Is the air quality OK?

Yes. For several weeks we have not detected any air quality issues from the wildfire, as part of our ongoing monitoring. People should be able to carry out their usual activities as normal.

Earlier in the incident, on days with significant burning, we did see intermittent poorer air quality as the smoke plume moved across local areas. During these times the advice to those experiencing smoke was to limit outdoor activity, close doors and windows, and seek medical advice if any respiratory symptoms worsened.

We are looking into any potential longer-term health impacts from this and other aspects of the fire, but no longer-term concerns have been identified so far.

What is the Local Resilience Forum and who is part of it?

A Local Resilience Forum (also known as an LRF) exists across police force areas and responds to and recovers from large-scale emergencies when a combined multi-agency response is required.

In North Yorkshire, the North Yorkshire Local Resilience Forum (NYLRF) covers the county and the City of York. The forum is made up of a range of agencies including the emergency services, local authorities, health, government departments and agencies, utilities and communication providers, transport companies and voluntary service as examples.

Each agency within the forum is legally required to deliver their own duties as stated in the Civil Contingencies Act 2004. You can find out more about the Act on the government website.

Further information can be found on the [NYLRF website](#).

Further information

- [North Yorkshire Council wildfire updates](#)
- [York and North Yorkshire Combined Authority news](#)
- [North York Moors National Park](#)
- [North Yorkshire Fire and Rescue Service](#)