

# #RALLY4 WALES

You may be aware that the MSA and Natural Resources Wales are currently unable to agree on new forestry charges (rate per mile) for the provision of special stage rallies in Wales.

Currently, the existing deal expires early in June 2016 following a brief extension period. After this point, there is no agreement in place – which means that the future of forest rallying in Wales is currently unknown.

## ***What does Natural Resources Wales want?***

In short, they have told the MSA that they want to **double the cost** to use forest roads for rallying in Wales from June. They have taken this stance as they believe that they have been massively undercharging for road repairs for ‘many years’. This new claim has been met with scepticism by the rallying community in Wales who have seen the standard of road repairs diminish in the last couple of years. Yet according to Natural Resources Wales, there is a £300,000 difference between fees received from rallying use in 2015 and what it has allegedly cost them to prepare and repair the roads for rallying in that period. Could they *really* have spent over £650,000 on road repairs in one year?

## ***Isn't this just an issue for Wales?***

**No.** The Forestry Commission in England and Scotland have renewed their contracts with the MSA for gravel rallying use for another year and increased their charges from 2015 rates by 0.7%. This is totally at odds with what NRW are claiming in Wales. Can it be the case that the FC in England and Scotland have also been hugely undercharging for repair work – and are still prepared to do so for another year? Surely not.

The great concern is that if Natural Resources Wales do not change their position – it spells the end for forest rallying in Wales with near immediate effect. Crucially, if they ‘get away’ with that cost increase – then it sets a dangerous precedent for the FC in England and Scotland to follow suit should they wish to do so. Rallying is worth £15 million to the Welsh economy based on MSA research.

## **What is #Rally4Wales?**

#Rally4Wales is a campaign group led by experienced Welsh co-driver Jamie Edwards and a small team. The aim is to apply political pressure and question the stance taken by Natural Resources Wales – who as yet have not provided any breakdown on how they justify their cost claims. Currently, #Rally4Wales is set to petition the Welsh Assembly Government to query why NRW’s cost calculations are so wildly different to their counterparts in England and Scotland.

## ***What you can do to help?***

It’s difficult for the MSA to lobby the Welsh Government on this issue whilst they remain in negotiation with NRW. However, #Rally4Wales has been set up independently from the MSA to voice the concern of the wider rally community. Wales has a range of Assembly Members and MP’s operating within the country. We’re asking our friends in the rally community to raise awareness of the campaign by emailing, tweeting, Facebooking and generally making people aware of how important rallying is to the Welsh economy. Not sure what to write? Visit our Facebook page for ideas. The address for it is:

[www.facebook.com/rallyingmeansbusiness](http://www.facebook.com/rallyingmeansbusiness)

**Thank you** for your support. We must act now. The threat to our sport has never been greater.