

Warning for people digging up ground on Iron Age hillfort

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CADW have warned against illegal excavations on Pen Dinas after a group of people were seen "metal detecting and digging" on the ancient Iron Age hillfort.

Dylan Lewis, Director of Penparcau Community Forum and former Mayor of Aberystwyth, said he witnessed three people engaged in the activity on Pen Dinas on Sunday, 8 January, after seeing evidence of human digging on the hill the day before.

Pen Dinas, which is described by the St Fagans National History Museum as "one of the largest and most important hillforts in west Wales", is designated a 'scheduled ancient monument' by CADW, the Welsh Government's historic environment service.

Mr Lewis said he has now reported the incident to CADW, which he claims will inform the police as part of its investigations.

"I witnessed both the use of a metal detector and digging, although those responsible soon left after I arrived," Mr Lewis told the *Cambrian News*.

"I had already suspected that digging was taking place when I was up there the previous day (Saturday), when I saw areas of freshly dug earth where the grass had been disturbed near and around the base of the monument, and it was obvious that it had not been caused by an animal.

"CADW are informing the police as part of their investigative procedure. Hopefully they will provide suitable signage that will help deter this activity in future."

And Mr Lewis said he has received a commitment from Mid and West Wales regional AM Simon Thomas, who used to live in Penparcau, that he will raise the matter with the Cabinet Secretary for Economy and Infrastructure Ken Skates AM.

He added: "It would be useful to draw the attention of the wider public to the fact that Pen Dinas, as an iron age hill fort, is a protected area and as such metal detecting and digging on the site is illegal.

"Penparcau Community Forum are currently undertaking an archaeology project based on Pen Dinas and anyone interested in the history of the site are more than welcome to take part.

"The next session will take place at the Community Education Centre, next to Ysgol Llwyn yr Eos, Penparcau, on Thursday, 26 January, at 6.30pm."

CADW said they were aware of the incident, which is being referred to the police.

A spokesperson for CADW said: "We can confirm that we have received reports of metal detecting at historic site Pen Dinas, near Aberystwyth, that damage to the grounds has been inflicted and that the incident is being referred to the police.

"As the monument is privately owned we have also contacted the owner to alert them to the damage.

"Unfortunately this is not the first time this scheduled monument has been targeted and we would urge anyone who notices any suspicious activity or behaviour to report it to us or, if out-of-office-hours, the police immediately.

"It can be difficult to control activities on publicly accessible and popular sites such as Pen



Dylan Lewis of Penparcau, witnessed people metal detecting and digging around Pen Dinas monument last Sunday

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Dinas and we recognise the majority of people enjoying this area do so in a responsible and respectful manner.

"However, for the few who choose to break the law our message is simple, we take instances of damage, particularly deliberate or criminal damage, to scheduled monuments and listed sites very seriously and appropriate action will be initiated against those found to be responsible."

