Tenby Mobile Signal Evidence Report

Evidence gathered from public Facebook comments about poor mobile connectivity and its economic impact

Prepared for Around Tenby / Tenby Chamber of Trade & Tourism
30 April 2026

Central finding: poor mobile signal in Tenby is now being reported as an economic issue, not simply a convenience issue. Comments point to lost trade, failed payments, reduced visitor spend, interrupted bookings, difficulty contacting customers, remote-working limits and safety concerns.

Headline evidence

Evidence point	Result	Why it matters	Caveat
Facebook comments analysed	454 public comments	Strong local and visitor response in under three days	Includes some tags/replies and light-hearted comments
Comment window	27–29 April 2026	Evidence is recent and aligned to the start of the visitor season	This is a snapshot, not a formal survey
Network groups mentioned	O2/Tesco/Giffgaff/Sky: 126; Vodafone group: 111; EE/BT/Plusnet: 108; Three/iD/Smarty: 88	Problem appears multi-network, affecting residents, visitors and businesses	Mentions are keyword counts; some comments mention more than one network
Parking/payment issue mentions	66 parking-related comments; 13 card/payment terminal comments	Digital-only parking and payment systems become unreliable when mobile data fails	Counts are conservative keyword groupings
Business/economic mentions	15 direct lost trade/business comments; 12 remote-working/reduced-visit comments	Connectivity is affecting sales, bookings, job enquiries, taxi work, hospitality and work-from-holiday locations	Many economic impacts are described indirectly through payments, calls and bookings
Safety/critical communication mentions	20 emergency, vulnerable-person or safety-related comments	Weak signal also affects emergency contact, family contact and public confidence	Not a clinical or emergency-services audit

Note: totals are based on automated keyword grouping of exported Facebook comments, with manual review of representative evidence. A single comment may appear in more than one theme.

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Executive summary

On 27 April 2026, Around Tenby asked residents, businesses and visitors to comment with their network, where the signal is worst and how it affects them. The exported Facebook data shows 454 public comments between 27 April and 29 April 2026, giving a rapid, current evidence base for escalating the issue to mobile network operators, local authorities and relevant public bodies.

The comments show that poor mobile signal is widespread across Tenby and surrounding locations, with repeated references to the town centre, areas within the town walls, the multi-storey/Sainsbury's car park area, Kiln Park, Lydstep, Penally, New Hedges, harbour/beach areas, and wider Pembrokeshire coastal locations.

The main concern is economic. Commenters describe lost taxi calls, missed job enquiries, card-payment failures, inability to use mobile payment terminals, direct booking losses, problems taking customer calls, reduced remote-working ability, difficulty booking restaurants or taxis, and visitors struggling to use maps, parking apps and EV charging apps. These are all barriers to spend in a visitor economy that increasingly relies on mobile connectivity.

The evidence also raises a safety and resilience issue. Comments refer to ambulance operations, difficulty calling for an ambulance on the beach, missed family medical emergencies, inability to contact children or elderly relatives, and people relying on Wi-Fi or satellite services for basic contact.

The recommended position is that Tenby should be treated as a priority coastal visitor-economy connectivity issue. The immediate ask should be for network operators to confirm the current mast/capacity position, provide a clear remediation plan, consider temporary visitor-season capacity support, and work with local stakeholders on practical mitigations for parking, EV charging, payment systems and emergency communications.

Why this matters beyond inconvenience

Ofcom states that mobile network operators have coverage obligations for good quality data and voice coverage, including commitments across UK landmass. Ofcom also maintains mobile coverage and signal-strength tools to test whether predicted coverage reflects real-world experience. The Shared Rural Network programme describes improved rural mobile coverage as a way to support residents, tourists and businesses. Tenby's evidence fits directly into that public-policy context: the town is a nationally recognised visitor destination where unreliable mobile connectivity is limiting economic activity and weakening confidence.

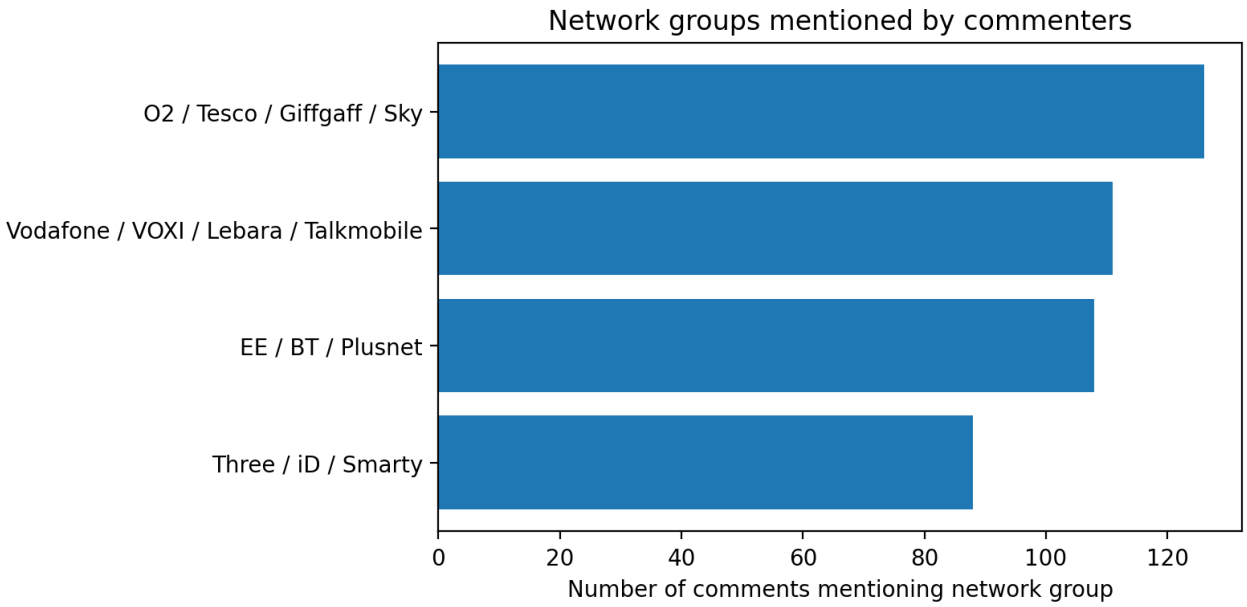
External context source	Relevance
Ofcom: Mobile coverage obligations	Sets out operator commitments for good quality data and voice coverage across the UK.
Ofcom: Map Your Mobile / mobile coverage checker	A route for comparing predicted signal availability with lived experience.
Ofcom: Mobile signal-strength measurement data	Ofcom carries out drive testing to improve understanding of mobile coverage and operator predictions.
Shared Rural Network	Frames rural mobile connectivity as essential infrastructure for residents, tourists and businesses.

What the comments show

Network groups mentioned

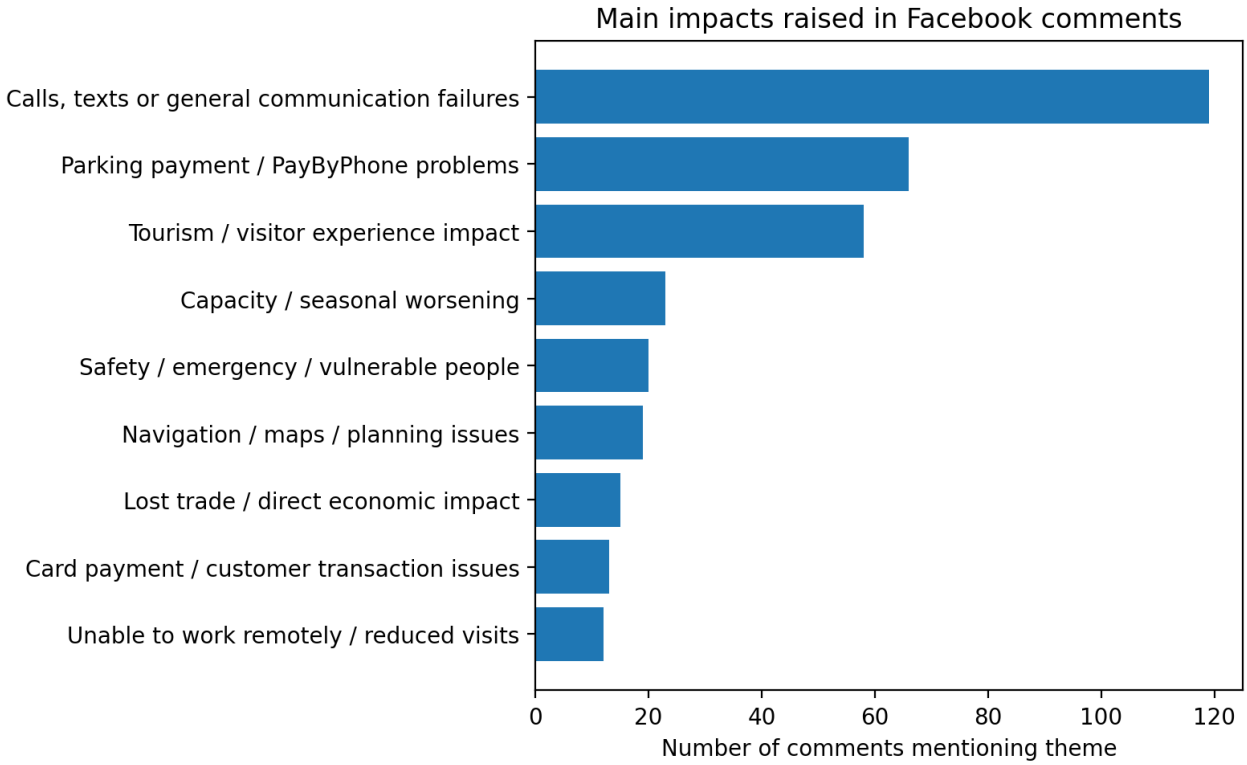
The issue is not confined to one provider. The four main network groups and their MVNOs are all mentioned repeatedly.

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Main impact themes

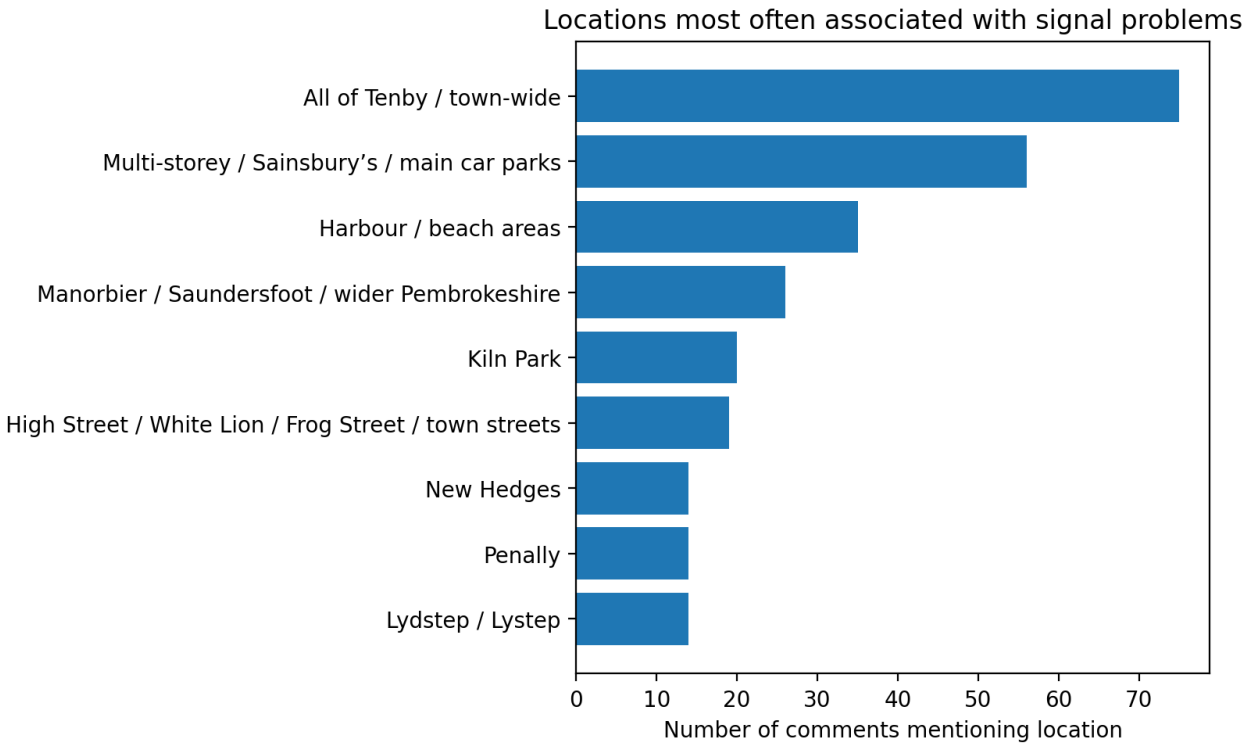
The largest theme is basic communication failure, but the most important evidence for escalation is the concentration of payment, business, visitor, safety and work-related impacts.



Locations most often associated with issues

A town-wide pattern appears in the comments, with particular hotspots around the town centre, car parks, Kiln Park, Lydstep, Penally, New Hedges, harbour/beach areas and main streets.

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Economic impact evidence

Lost calls, bookings and enquiries: Commenters describe missed taxi calls, missed job enquiries, missed customer calls, lost direct bookings and businesses being unable to receive basic contact from customers.

Failed or delayed payments: Many comments mention PayByPhone and app-only parking issues. Others refer to card payments, payment terminals, EV charging apps and customers being asked to pay cash when they only have cards.

Reduced visitor spend: Visitors report being unable to use maps, find information, book taxis, check bus/train details, research local attractions, make restaurant plans or use apps needed to spend locally.

Reduced length/frequency of visits: Caravan owners, holiday-home users and remote workers say poor connectivity limits how often or how long they can stay because they cannot work reliably from Tenby, Penally, Lydstep or nearby sites.

Reputational damage to the visitor economy: Several comments compare Tenby unfavourably with other areas or abroad, describing the situation as outdated and inconsistent with a modern tourist destination.

Economic impact should be presented to networks and public bodies as cumulative rather than isolated. Even where a single failed payment or missed call is small, the comments suggest these failures are recurring across hundreds of residents and visitors during peak trading periods.

Representative anonymised evidence excerpts

Theme	Evidence excerpt
Taxi / lost income	"I'm a taxi driver and the money, calls I've missed and money I've lost I don't want to think about."
Retail / sales	"Really bad for business, if a customer needed to call someone regarding a sale and can't get signal we lose a sale."
Bookings	"Losing lots of direct bookings because no one can get hold of

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	us.”
Business calls and payments	“Can’t run a business to take calls for job enquiries or take payments.”
Hospitality spend	“Could not get a beer or food in any pub as all card payments were down due to WiFi and 4G issues.”
Restaurant lost footfall	“They had lots of potential customers turn around due to it.”
Parking / app payment	“Unable to pay for parking unless machines take cards or cash.”
Parking / fines risk	“No signal to pay for online parking… tricky as you could get a fine before you can get on WiFi.”
EV charging	“Couldn’t charge my electric car… either downstairs or on the roof.”
Visitor navigation	“Couldn’t get any signal within the centre at all for GPS, Google Maps, send texts etc.”
Visitor attraction spend	“Was hoping to go to brewery on outskirts but couldn’t access information to get there so didn’t go.”
Remote working	“I’m self-employed and use applications like Teams daily but the signal is nowhere near strong enough to work.”
Reduced visits	“No chance of being able to work from there which limits the amount of time we spend there.”
Accommodation / B&B	“It affects me with the running of our B&B… something as simple as our Ring doorbell doesn’t even work.”
Emergency services	“This outage is now affecting some elements of ambulance operations.”
Emergency call	“Needed to call for an ambulance and it was awful trying to get through and then hearing the instructions.”
Family safety	“If there was an emergency with family or our child we wouldn’t know.”
Capacity	“The signal is there but not the bandwidth… more visitors coming, it’s going to be useless.”
Seasonality	“Works in the winter but appears network can’t cope in the summer.”
Reliance on Wi-Fi	“Have to log into WiFi if I need to use my phone’s internet eg to pay for parking.”

Stakeholder impact

Stakeholder group	Impact described in comments
Local businesses	Loss of calls, orders, bookings and payments; reliance on Wi-Fi; inability to use mobile payment terminals; reputational risk when customers cannot contact or pay.
Visitors and tourists	Difficulty using parking apps, EV chargers, maps, messaging, attraction research, restaurant bookings and taxi booking. This directly affects spend and experience.
Residents	Poor home signal, dropped calls, delayed messages, inability to contact family members, reliance on Wi-Fi calling, and lower confidence in basic services.
Seasonal/holiday-home users	Reduced ability to work remotely, limiting the number and length of stays. This can reduce local spend across food, retail and leisure.
Public services and safety	Emergency calls, ambulance operations, vulnerable people, children and elderly relatives are mentioned as areas of concern.

Recommended escalation and asks

1. Request an urgent joint response from the four network operators

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Ask EE, Vodafone, VMO2/O2 and Three to confirm current coverage, mast status, capacity constraints, known faults and planned remediation for Tenby, Penally, Lydstep, Kiln Park, New Hedges and the wider visitor corridor.

2. Ask for a visitor-season resilience plan

Request temporary capacity or mobile infrastructure ahead of peak season if permanent works cannot be completed quickly.

3. Challenge coverage checker accuracy

Submit evidence to Ofcom and operators where real-world comments contradict predicted coverage or service availability.

4. Create practical local mitigations

Work with Pembrokeshire County Council, car park operators and EV charging providers to ensure payment alternatives exist where mobile signal is unreliable. Do not make app-only systems the only practical route to payment.

5. Prioritise business continuity

Gather additional evidence from businesses on missed calls, failed card payments, booking losses and payment terminal outages, then quantify the weekly/seasonal impact.

6. Maintain a public evidence log

Continue collecting structured reports by network, location, time/date and impact type. Include screenshots where payment apps fail or where devices show service but data/calls do not work.

7. Request a technical site meeting

Invite operators, Ofcom/Shared Rural Network representatives where appropriate, the Chamber, local authority representatives and affected businesses to review hotspots and agree next steps.

Suggested covering argument for networks and public bodies

Tenby is a major West Wales visitor destination with a compact historic town centre, high seasonal footfall, parking and EV charging systems that increasingly depend on apps, and many small businesses that rely on mobile calls, messages, bookings and card payments. The evidence gathered from residents, businesses and visitors shows that current mobile connectivity is failing to support the town's day-to-day economy. This is causing lost trade, lost confidence, avoidable friction for visitors, reduced ability to work from holiday accommodation, and safety concerns. We are asking the networks and relevant public bodies to treat this as an urgent visitor-economy infrastructure issue and provide a clear, time-bound plan to restore reliable voice and data coverage.

Method and limitations

- The data is an export of Facebook comments and is therefore self-selecting: it reflects people motivated to comment, not a statistically balanced survey.
- Counts are based on keyword grouping and manual review, so they should be read as conservative evidence themes, not precise market research.
- Some comments mention more than one network or location; therefore network and location counts should not be added together as unique respondents.

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- Several comments reference a mast removal or capacity issues. These claims should be treated as community evidence requiring technical confirmation from operators.
- The value of the evidence is the volume, consistency and immediacy of the lived experience, particularly around business impact, payment failure and visitor-season pressure.

Appendix A: keyword grouping results

Theme	Comment mentions
Calls, texts or general communication failures	119
Parking payment / PayByPhone problems	66
Tourism / visitor experience impact	58
Capacity / seasonal worsening	23
Safety / emergency / vulnerable people	20
Navigation / maps / planning issues	19
Lost trade / direct economic impact	15
Card payment / customer transaction issues	13
Unable to work remotely / reduced visits	12

Appendix B: source notes

Source file: fb-comments_1605738488221601_9bb1b3a9.xlsx

Source URL in export: https://www.facebook.com/photo?fbid=1605738488221601&set=a.651410003654459

External context reviewed: Ofcom mobile coverage obligations, Ofcom Map Your Mobile / coverage checker, Ofcom mobile signal-strength measurement data, and the Shared Rural Network programme.

Useful links for follow-up:

- https://www.ofcom.org.uk/phones-and-broadband/coverage-and-speeds/cellular-coverage
- https://www.ofcom.org.uk/mobile-coverage-checker
- https://www.ofcom.org.uk/phones-and-broadband/coverage-and-speeds/mobile-signal-strength-measurement-data
- https://srn.org.uk/

Internal