

Voluntary Access Agreement Workshop

Corwen, 26th February 2011

Workshop Report

Opening Plenary Session Discussion (notes taken by facilitator)

- Comments on background – legal rights, ownership
- Examples of agreements worked on by those present – Canoe Wales pulled out
- Most canoeists comply with agreements – example of working well with universities
- Complaints re irresponsible canoeists
- Canoeist present gave examples of training, licensing of canoe instructors
- Need to work together – identify all stakeholders, e.g. scouts, guides, wild swimmers
- Commercial organisations use anglers water for their gain, used to going wherever they want – some farmers put in facilities for them
- Anglers look after ecology
- Canoe Wales should represent canoeists, but their website effectively encourages trespass & they refuse to remove misinformation
- Example of an agreement that worked well, but have to be wary of rogues - ones we couldn't identify. Numbers on canoes helps
- People in Bala made it work because they were prepared to have a go
- It worked well when [canoeists] paid White Water.. for licence – there have been problems since
- Web info generally causes problems – inexperienced users don't know what's right, or legal
- Canoe Wales problems caused by one person, CEO salary 50% paid by Sport Wales (from WAG) – we object - they should be here
- EA & CCW must be involved in any agreement
- EA & WAG don't accept [appreciate?] that angling is licensed & canoeing isn't
- Angling is subject to byelaws, canoeing isn't
- WAG commitment to a definitive map – anglers must be involved
- WAG is reviewing access maps, functionality allows for recording – there will be check on accuracy with the owners of information (via CCW)
- Real power & influence is in this room
- CCW asked for code of conduct, now going towards permit – but licensing is paramount

Session 1 - What do the participants want to see happen at an all-Wales level?

Group 1

1. Identification of craft/paddles
2. Permits/licenses for all water users – fee payable
3. All water users to respect spawning season and other environmental issues (linked with river levels, height restrictions, web cams etc).
4. More effort into control/police – use of bylaws
5. Make trespass a criminal offence (illegal)
6. Use of local access officers
7. Canoe Access Wales website as used by Usk/Wye Federation
8. Other parties are required to be present at meetings in order to facilitate agreements (noted absence of Canoe Wales, CCW, EAW)
9. Unlawful activities of commercial interests/user groups to be brought under control. This currently exists in South Wales (includes Local Authorities etc).

10. Code of conduct should be 'fine tuned' at local level
11. If WAG legislate for "free and open access" for water users will this include anglers?
12. More enforcement of SAFFA laws

Group 2

1. Clear identification:
 - a. Licensing – craft/individual identification)
 - b. Permits (wrist band identification)
2. No commercialisation – during angling season
3. No play boating – downstream only
4. Third party indemnity – insurance
5. Environmental issues during spawning season (Nov – Feb)
6. Restricted numbers/period of access
7. CCW/EAW not in attendance
8. Clear definition of the parties to the agreement and redress routes for non compliance via identification
9. Quantify numbers i.e. kayaks/open canoes, exactly how many are there? (recreational only)
10. Clear information on where access agreements exist and understanding that no access without agreement

Group 3

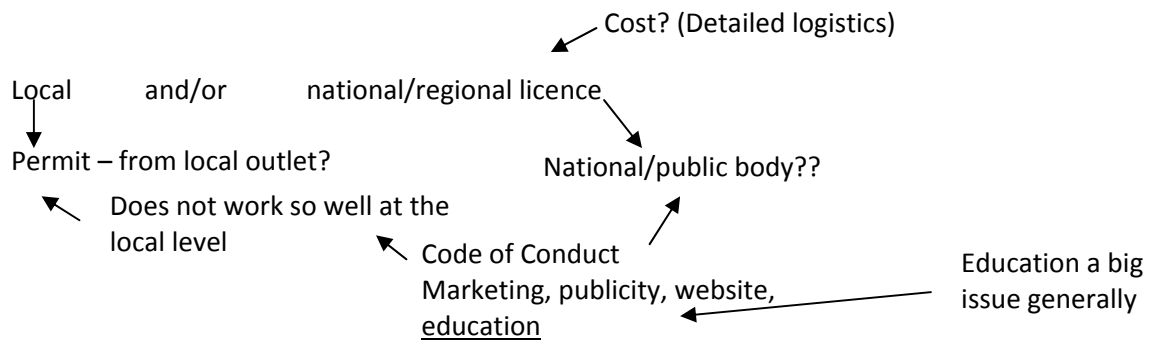
The following should be included nationally	Local access agreements - Provisions
<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Licensing of craft on rivers 2. Payment for the above 3. National code of conduct 4. Canoe Wales – relationship to Sports Council must be clarified 5. Conservation issues have a high priority 6. All parties should respect and abide by the law 7. Any agreed use to be non-motorised <p>As much publicity as possible – website</p> <p>CCW: Web based map should not be published before full agreement</p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Local solutions to local problems 2. All stakeholders or riparian owners & tenants must agree 3. Agreement should be a signed legal document 4. Water levels must be suitable 5. Clear identification for users 6. Formalise egress & access points 7. Explore public liability issues 8. SAFFA 1975 should be included 9. Consideration re land management 10. Code of conduct 11. Responsible use of the resource 12. Possible payment for use of the resource by users - not unanimous 13. Marker points showing limit of agreement – encouragement for whole river agreements

Group 4

Why is public money funding Canoe Wales? (With their difficult position, poor communications (not at meeting), misinformation and encouraging people to break the law).

Local agreement – Who to negotiate with? Where are the canoeists today?

Local constraints – need local solutions – cost?



Identifier – Bib/ticket/number

Insurance cover – is it valid during an illegal activity?

Stakeholders – Who are they? How do we communicate with them? –groups, -events

Commercial operators – making money out of rivers (a living)

The law being disseminated from above – relating to all users

Tourists/locals

Access officer – local to areas

Group 5

Paddling

- National byelaws
- Insurance – liability: All canoeists to be insured
- No paddling during angling season unless locally agreed
- Cleaning craft & equipment - Disease risk
- Protection of spawning areas
- Identification

Session 2: Stakeholder Mapping & Analysis

Group 1:

Stakeholder Group	Interest/Need	Engagement Approach
Gorge walkers (Commercial/£)	Upper reaches/smaller tributaries Fun activity/exercise?	Car parks, outdoor centres, LA centres
Wild swimmers/scuba divers	Exercise No need – too much disturbance Poaching a real risk	None
Canoeists/Paddlesports	White water – high risk (1 fatality per week?) Canoe tours Training for slaloms Rodeo (canoe not horse!)	Canoe clubs, University Canoe Unions, LA centres, websites, trade publications, Commercial interests, car parks, laybys
Anglers/riparian owners	Peaceful enjoyment Fee paying legitimate use of the river Code of conduct Conservation/fish rearing (RO's)	Associations/clubs/syndicates etc.
Gold panners	Localised activity – small streams	Website, car parks

Group 2

Stakeholder Group	Interest/Need	Engagement Approach
Kayakers <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ad hoc users • University clubs • Youth organisations • Training organisations • CCF 	White water /access/egress Water height – good levels	River access signage EA website Canoe Wales website Outdoor activity mags
Anglers	Nuisance free enjoyment of their rights	Get buy-in into agreements for other others. Clubs /Associations
Riparian owners (Clubs & Individuals)	Protection of asset Value and rental income	Easy to locate & contact Strong vested interest

Open canoes	Calm water/access/egress	Outdoor activity mags Song of the Paddle website
Rafters: Corporate & team building groups	White water/access/egress	
Wild swimmers	Safe water – large pools (summer activity)	Signage

Group 3

Stakeholder Group	Interest/Need	Engagement Approach
Riparian owners, landowners and tenants Farming unions	Abiding by the law Income generation Responsible use Legal framework Access/Egress Liability & risk considerations	Dialogue – local and national Consensus Access agreements
Local Authorities and Community Councils Local Access Forums Conservation bodies	Clarity “ “ Controlled activities	Successful local agreements Consistency
Recreational users Lead bodies representing these groups	Liability Confirm rights and also responsibility Location management	Codes of Conduct Provisions of use Wide publicity
Outdoor centres/Educational Tourism	Clarity Access to the resource without conflict Income generation	Adventure licensing authority Uniform approach
Commercial enterprises (e.g. rafting)	Profit generation Guaranteed resource Representation	Adventure licensing authority Uniform approach
Events	Organisation	Support and control from governing bodies

Group 4

Stakeholder Group	Interest/Need	Engagement Approach
Anglers	Coarse or Game fishing: water quality/access	Local clubs/closed seasons
Land owners	Protection of crops/livestock & assets; Returns/guard against liability	CLA – Lease/rent agreements
Public (tourists)	General recreation	Signage/websites/highway code for rivers/Codes of Conduct
Paddle sports	Still water/white water: Access, parking, facilities (toilets/changing)	National governing body/access points canoe festivals/outdoor events/trade fairs
Swimmers (wild)	Access, good weather, warm water, quality, facilities	National body – Guidebook authors/tv producers
Sailing	Access, parking, calm water	Launch points
Birdwatchers (RSPB)	Diverse habitat	National bodies
Wild Fowlers	Seasonal, Estuary	Club membership/closed season
Gold Panning	Gold very specific locations	National association/specific areas
Gorge walkers/climbers	Technical interest/plunge pools	
Organised parties – Scouts/Guides	Parking	National Groups
Commercial groups	Financial return – parking/access etc	Specific local contacts
Water authority Abstraction CCW EA WAG	Partnerships Water { Statutory responsibility Water quality/Fisheries/Recreation WFD	
Local residents Wildlife Trusts River Trust Biodiversity groups Local Councils	Enjoyment of local amenities/parking { Organisational objectives	

Group 5

Stakeholder Group	Interest/Need	Engagement Approach
Riparian Owners	Angling Clubs – Shops income	Sec/Committee/N Trust
Walkers	Footpath access/Right Of Way	
Farmers – Livestock/Health	Payment for use of access/Welfare of stock	Individual approach
Hotels B&B's Shops	Attractions for guests Walkers/Fishermen Tourism	Walking/Fishing information Available Info/Code of practice Fishing tackle
Youth Hostels	Groups	Secretary – email/phone
Body Boarding	Travelling with river current/fast water	
Picnickers	Daytime/Nice weather	
Duke of Edinburgh	Award/walking	
National Trust	Tourism/protecting land	
Police	Emergency/poaching etc.,	
Environment Agency CCW	Employed bailiffs - Water quality Environment/welfare of wild animals Protect landscape	G.A.A Secretary – emails/phone

Session 3: Possible management options

Group 1

1. All Stakeholders need to be present at negotiating table in order to negotiate!
2. Protection of the river environment
3. WAG to put pressure on **ALL** stakeholders to come to the negotiating table
4. An agreement needs more than one party to be an agreement
5. A more rational/responsible approach by BCU and Canoe Wales is essential to progress and WAG should use its influence to ensure this. Complete absence at this meeting was noted
6. Construction of special fish passes at gorges etc., so that downstream kayakers do not obstruct migratory fish trying to get to their spawning grounds
7. More Tryweryn-type specific kayaking stretches.

Group 2

Solutions

- Dee Tours reinstated (agreement template available via Llangollen A/C). Large attendance would give forum for further progress.
- Local permit as per day tickets for anglers
- Open access out of fishing/spawning season i.e. Jan-May white water rivers
- On the Dee – When level at Manley is above 1 metre and river unfishable, river could be canoed anywhere providing access/egress was available. NB water level is checkable by phone.

Group 3

Possible successful solutions

1. Agreement use determined by water levels – gauges & EA website (Glaslyn)
2. Re-visit successful access agreements between riparian owners and paddlesport bodies and explore potential for new ones (Usk, Tawe (?), Dee)
3. Clarification of lead bodies and sufficient funding provided
4. Agency required to police/monitor agreements (EA)
5. Joint membership of angling & canoeing clubs (SPLASH funding required)
6. Most angling takes place May-Nov, so canoeing possible Dec-April
7. Code of conduct agreed between lead bodies
8. Local arrangements must be well publicised.

Group 4

Meet with Canoe bodies/other stakeholders

Specific to the issue for the area

- a. Catchment
- b. Stretch of river

River Level access to all – specific rules for set heights

- a. Suitable for canoes etc.
- b. Not suitable for fishing etc.

Fund access officer for key river catchments

- a. Set out the rights
- b. Responsibilities
- c. Police use

Plenary Discussion (notes taken by facilitator)

- Richard Hughes can circulate info to canoeists
- A further meeting after WAG election, to move forward – generally agreed as a good idea if progress is realistic

List of attendees

Name	Organisation	Position
John Watkins	Welsh Assembly Government	Head of Access and National Parks Policy
Dave Liddy	Forestry Commission Wales	Visitor Management Advisor
Max Coventry	Welsh Rivers Preservation Trust	
Huw Evans	Llangollen Angling Ltd	Chairman
Ken Bathers	Llangollen Angling Ltd	
Eifon Evans-Mylor	Llangollen Angling Ltd	
Mark Pierce	Rossett & Gresford Flyfishers	Committee member
Geoff Noakes	Rossett & Gresford Flyfishers	Committee member
Karl Hughes	Rossett & Gresford Flyfishers	Committee member
Moc & Julia Morgan	WSTAA	Secretary
John Rose	Dee Fisheries Association	Chairman
Damon Roe	Dee Fisheries Association	Riparian owner
Chris White	Conwy Valley Fisheries and Conservation Ass	Secretary
Roger Latham	Conwy Valley Fisheries and Conservation Ass	Chairman
Keith Allanson	Wirral Game Fishing	Rep
Tony Godbert	Betys-coed Anglers Club	
Bob Wilson	Gwydyr Hotel Fisheries	
Ifor & Enid Edwards	Glaslyn Angling Association	
Ifor Gordon & Gronwy Hughes	Glaslyn Angling Association	
Simon Jackson		
Robin Parry	Seiont Gwyrfai Anglers	Chairman
Andy Strickland	Prince Albert Angling Society	Secretary
John Eardley	Prince Albert Angling Society	

Name	Organisation	Position
John Gittins	former Director of Recreation and Amenity with the Welsh Water Authority and now sits on the Northwest fishing conservation and recreation committee of the EA.	
Sue Gittins	member of the Wrexham Local Access Forum and a member of the Forestry Committee Wales Strategy and Advisory Panel	
Trevor Edwards	Bala & District Angling Association	secretary
Eifion Evans & Barry Evans	Bala & District Angling Association	
Michael Stirk	Midland Flyfishers	
Peter Rutherford	Snowdonia NPA	Access Officer
Richard Hughes	Conwy Borough Council	Outdoor Activities Development Officer
Sue Smith	unattached	
Stan Winstanley	Arfon & Dwyfor Access Forum	Deputy Chair
Chris Charters	British Outdoor Professional Association	