

John Griffiths AC /AM

Gweinidog yr Amgylchedd a Datblygu Cynaliadwy
Minister for Environment and Sustainable Development



Llywodraeth Cymru
Welsh Government

Eich cyf/Your ref MTR/01040473
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5 January 2013

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Thank you for your letter of 14 January 2013 concerning access to inland water issues, this in relation to our meeting with officers from Merthyr Tydfil Angling Association on 26 September 2012.

You refer to correspondence I received from the Angling Association. The briefing note received in advance from the Merthyr Tydfil Angling Association was incorporated into my formal briefing note and the issues were subsequently addressed during the course of the meeting.

I am happy nevertheless to reaffirm my views on access to water issues and to address concerns raised by Merthyr Tydfil Angler Association.

I am aware that negotiations to create new Voluntary Access Agreements (VAA's) can be challenging and often not straightforward to complete. My officials are reviewing the approaches to the creation of VAA's that have taken place to date, to draw out lessons learned and ensure that appropriate support is available for individuals and organisations that are working towards the creation of new or improved access. It isn't appropriate for me to comment directly on the work of National Governing Bodies for sports, such as Canoe Wales.

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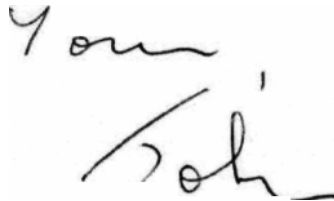
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I believe that responsible access to our inland water should be available to everyone and as a consequence would not advocate an arrangement where users would incur a charge for access. However, I appreciate that there are occasions and situations where it is necessary to raise a charge to secure appropriate and responsible access to inland water on a sustainable basis. The involvement of commercial outdoor providers can be constructive in terms of establishing agreements for access, but should not imply that a charge for access to our waterways should always be assumed.

I welcome the setting up of a canoe club within Tawe Angling Association and hope that this may inspire other associations to do the same. The relatively low initial membership number might be a reflection that they are at an early stage of such a venture.

In conclusion, I am pleased to have had the opportunity to meet with officials from the Merthyr Tydfil Angling Association and hope that through our dialogue and correspondence that concerns are being addressed.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'John Griffiths', with a stylized flourish at the end.

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