

John Griffiths AC /AM
Y Gweinidog Diwylliant a Chwaraeon
Minister for Culture and Sport



Llywodraeth Cymru
Welsh Government

Eich cyf/Your ref 192-33584
Ein cyf/Our ref JG/01303/13
Peter Black AM
AM South Wales West
110 Walter Road,
Swansea
SA1 5QQ

Peter.black@wales.gov.uk

Dear Peter,

22 October 2013

Thank you for your letter of 25 September highlighting the concerns of some of your constituents regarding the review of legislation and guidance relating to access and outdoor recreation, which includes consideration of the current arrangements on inland waters.

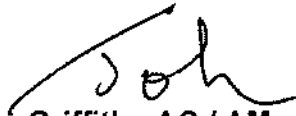
The review of legislation encompasses allotments/community gardening, urban green spaces, public rights of way and wider access to the countryside, including access to water. During this pre-consultation stage three workshops have been held across Wales to gather and discuss views from across the interests involved. One of these workshops was specifically focussed on access to inland waters due to the emotive nature of the subject. A green paper is due to be issued for formal public consultation in December. This will provide an opportunity to comment on proposals relating to whether or not legislation is needed in the areas identified, and if so, to what end.

Voluntary access agreements have been encouraged for a number of years by Welsh Government; including making funding available via the Splash Water Recreation Fund should it be required. The report of the National Assembly for Wales' Sustainability Committee on their Inquiry into Access to Inland Waters in Wales (2010) endorsed this approach, but also concluded that should the Assembly secure legislative competence in this area that introducing legislation to address areas where conflict persists would also be desirable.

There continues to be friction between different user groups, and voluntary access agreements do not appear to be working Wales wide. I believe that it is necessary for the review that is underway to explore ways of seeking to bring clarity and certainty for all on this matter, whilst ensuring proper safeguards for both nature conservation and the interests of owners.

I would be grateful if you could encourage your constituents with an interest in the matter to respond to the consultation that will be published later this year

Best wishes,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'John', with a long, sweeping underline that extends to the left and then curves upwards.

John Griffiths AC / AM
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Minister for Culture and Sport