

**Round Table Meeting With Water Relation Recreation Interests.
Ty Hywel (Crickhowell House)
Tuesday, 13th July 2010 9:00am**

Attendees:

Jane Davidson AM – Minister for Environment, Sustainability and Housing
Gerry Quarrell – Head of Nature Access and Marine Unit, WAG
Ieuan Jones – Access and National Policy Branch, WAG
Ashley Charlwood – Canoe Wales
Graeme Harris – Chair of Fisheries, Ecology and Recreation Advisory Committee
Andy Schofield – Environment Agency
Matt Strickland – Environment Agency
Rob Owen – Countryside Council for Wales
Craig Mitchell – WLGA – Policy Officer
Peter Garson – Forestry Commission
Julian Atkins – National Parks Authority
Gerald Richards – Splash Officer
David Morgan – British Waterways
Jim Embrey – Visit Wales
Dr Stephen Marsh-Smith – Association of Rivers Trust
Tony Rees – Federation of Welsh Anglers
Julia Morgan – Welsh Salmon and Trout Angling Association
Ray Lockyear - Welsh Salmon and Trout Angling Association
Roberts Aspey – Outdoor Swimming Society
Rachel Hughes – Sports Council for Wales
Andrew Stumpf – Dwr Cymru / Welsh Water

Apologies

Paul Henderson – Dwr Cymru / Welsh Water

1. Welcome plus opening remarks by the Minister for Environment Sustainability and Housing.

The Minister welcomed everyone to the meeting.

The Minister stated that she wanted these meeting to continue with the good work they had been doing and informed the group that the Table would meet again later in the year.

AP – Officials to arrange next meeting, to be chaired by the Minister, for November/December

2. Update of latest developments by members – Round Table Discussion.

Ashley Charlwood – Canoe Wales

Stated that CW was working together with other stakeholders as advisors for access to water in Wales. He noted that CW did not only represent paddle sport enthusiasts but other groups who did not fall under their own governing bodies. CW was looking into

opportunities for water sport tourism in Wales. CW representatives attended the opening of new slalom centre in Cardiff Bay.

Andy Schofield – Environment Wales

EA had been represented on the Access to Water sub-group and steering group. The Splash Scheme was nearly fully committed for 2010/11 and the uptake had been very positive. EA attended the British Waterways conference at the Cardiff international White Water Centre. Wild Fishing Wales has been progressing strongly through community led nature projects.

Robert Owen – Countryside Council for Wales

The Wales Outdoor Recreation survey had provided some interesting findings especially with regards to outdoor swimming and the number of new users over the last year. Caerphilly County Council were conducting a feasibility study in providing access to water facilities and a number of applications have been received for Communities and nature funding (two near Rhyl).

Craig Mitchell – WLGA

Was aware that Newport had some access to water projects in development but was unable to give an overview of what other Local Authorities were doing to address the access to water issue in Wales.

AP: GQ asked CM if the WLGA could provide an update for the group before the next meeting.

Julian Atkins – Brecon Beacons National Park Authority.

BBNPA was focused on engaging with stakeholders and is in the process of producing a strategic framework for reservoirs within the NPAs on access to water opportunities.

GQ noted that most of BBNPAs progress was strategic and would like to see more action at ground level.

Gerald Richards – Splash Officer, BBNPA

GR mentioned that his main focus was for a Brecon water recreation hub and working towards developing a Brecon water trail. It would run from the Usk reservoir to the Monmouthshire and Brecon Canal. There was all ready year round access on the River Usk, however dialogue with Welsh Water on the opening of their reservoirs had been slow.

GR is due to hold a best practice meeting with South West Lakes to see what progress has been made in Devon and Cornwall.

Andrew Stumpf – British Waterways

The Annual British Waterways Conference was successfully held in the Cardiff International White Water Centre. British Waterways is still actively engaged in the development of Canoe trails.

Jim Embrey – Visit Wales

Visit Wales has been actively engaged in the development of Lonydd Dwr / Canoe Trails

Steven Marsh-Smith – Wye and Usk Foundation

The Foundation was continuing to manage the voluntary agreements on the Wye and Usk. Extended access had been provided on the upper Wye. Access was being provided on the Afon Llwyd and extra water was available due to the removal of two weirs.

Tony Rees – Federation of Welsh Anglers

Pleased to see the Sustainability Committee report and believed there is a way forward in the current situation. Working with South Wales Rivers Trust on a feasibility study for the river Taff. However TR emphasised that not all access agreements will be 24/7

Julia Morgan – Welsh Salmon and Trout Angling Association

Welcomed the Sustainability Committees report and welcomed its clear statements on access. Members of WSTAA have consistently shown willingness for voluntary actions and members will now be ready to discuss them.

Ray Lockear - Welsh Salmon and Trout Angling Association

WTSA is in the process of re-negotiating access on the River Tawe where their own club will be taking a different approach and developing a canoe section to the club. Would be happy to circulate a copy of the proposal.

Peter Garson – Forestry Commission

FC has been concentrating on taking forward the Water Related Action Plan. An unexpected development in the sale of Lake Vyrnwy and the sale of the lease may open up access opportunities.

Joe Smith – Outdoor Swimming Society

JS stated that the OSS main aim was to simplify water access to users. Unlike other water sports wild swimmers tended to be individuals or small groups who swam separate from a club or organisation.

OSS is also responsible for promotion of wild swimming. OSS is currently in the process of providing a travel guide for wild swimming.

3. A Round Table discussion on recommendations made in the Report of the Sustainability Committee's Inquiry into Access to Inland Waters.

This agenda item was moved up the agenda as the Minister had limited time.

Minister gave an update on what the next steps following the Sustainability Committee report.

The three Ministers will respond to the Committee on their recommendations after taking official and legal advice on the recommendations.

SMS felt that now the report had been published there could be a push forward with negotiations and felt there were other areas to look at that needed to be considered.

AC believed that the Sustainability Committee had missed that 27% of water users were not from the kayaking or angling folds e.g. free swimmers and had failed to take their needs into consideration.

JM stated that angling clubs were keen to take forward the ideas that canoeing clubs could be formed within current angling clubs. With the angling clubs responsible for monitoring and dealing with transgressions.

GR believed there was a lack of slack water facilities available but voluntary agreements did have the potential to cater for a range of users.

The Minister then had to leave the meeting but thanked those present for contributing to a useful discussion reiterating that she would like the group to meet again in November/December.

4. Update on the work of the sub-group on voluntary access agreements – Gerry Quarrell.

Gerry Quarrell gave an update on the work of the sub-group. He highlighted that the sub-groups purpose was to work as a catalyst for a number of agreements on 14 targeted rivers and then on to more in the future.

AP: Officials to circulate the minutes of the sub-group and steering group meetings.

5. Update on Splash Funding – Andy Schofield.

Andy Schofield gave an update on the first two years of the Splash fund and noted it was in the final year of its current three year programme. There would be a Splash birthday party at the Royal Welsh Show to celebrate two years of the Splash Fund. All were welcome to attend.

AP: Officials to circulate two year report on the Splash Fund

GQ stated that the Minister had previously made it clear that she would try to make funding available for the Splash fund in future but due to the current financial climate this could not be guaranteed.

6. Update on the Water Related Recreation Action Plan.

GQ gave an update on the Action Plan. He stated progress was being made in a number of areas – for example in gathering of information, the provision of a Water Access Map and towards a code of conduct.

AP: Officials to circulate updated Water Related Recreation Action Plan.

7. Natural Environment Framework – Gerry Quarrell.

GQ then gave a brief update on the Natural Environment Framework.

GQ then closed the meeting and agreed that another would be arranged towards the end of November/ beginning of December.