

Eich cyf/Your ref
Ein cyf/Our ref TO/JG/01265/13



Llywodraeth Cymru
Welsh Government

16th October 2013

Dear ...,

Thank you for your interest in this issue, we appreciate the effort you have made to communicate with us.

During the summer the Minister for Culture and Sport announced a review of existing legislation and guidance relating to access and outdoor recreation, which includes consideration of the current arrangements on inland waters.

The Minister for Sport and Culture, John Griffiths AM intends to consult on whether changes in legislation are needed in this area in a green paper later this year. To help inform those proposals both the Minister and officials are meeting with representatives of organisations from across the relevant interests, including landowner and user groups. Officials have also held three workshops across Wales to gather and discuss views, again from across the interests involved. One of these workshops was specifically focussed on access to inland waters because we appreciate the emotive nature of the subject.

The report of the National Assembly for Wales' Sustainability Committee on their Inquiry into Access to Inland Waters in Wales (2010) advocated that in the short term effort should focus on establishing voluntary agreements, but should the Assembly secure legislative competence in this area that introducing legislation to address areas where conflict persists would also be desirable. Three years on there continues to be conflict between different user groups and voluntary access agreements do not appear to be working Wales wide. The Minister now believes that it is necessary to explore ways of seeking to bring clarity and certainty for all on where they can go and what activities they can do, whilst ensuring proper safeguards for both nature conservation and the interests of owners. The Committee's findings are informing this current review.

With regard to the ecological effect these proposals may have, we understand that this needs to be properly researched and I assure you that this will be done before any decisions on whether to legislate are made.

It would be useful if you could respond to the consultation, in particular if you have any evidence yourself regarding the impact that any type of users have on inland waters and their fish stocks.

Yours sincerely,

Robert Taylor
Sport, Outdoor Recreation and Landscape Division.

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