

Draft questions for the access to inland waterways inquiry

What is your interest in the issue of access to inland waterways

Land owner

Recreational user:

Fishing

User for waterborne recreation (e.g. canoeing, rowing etc) ✓

Other (please specify) I also manage an outdoor centre which relies on access to waterways for paddlesport.
Are you a member of an organisation related to your use of water?

If yes, which organisation/s? Welsh Canoeing Association.

Also, Association of Heads of Outdoor Education Centres.

Which stretch/es of water do you own/use/manage?

We aim to use all waterways in Wales. Reservoirs, canals, R. Wye, R. Ush, r. Severn, R. Honddu, Teifi, Mounnow etc.

Legal rights

Are you happy that your legal rights are clear and well defined? No.

Can you briefly outline your understanding of your legal rights over the stretch of water/s that you own/use/manage. For all rivers in Wales I assume that there is a right to paddle down the water but not always for access.

Would you like to see any changes to your legal rights?

Yes - clearly established rights of access year round with multiple access points.

If yes, what changes would you like to see? The rights of general public + canoeists protected.

Are you aware of any legislation that exists in other countries that could be used in Wales? France seems to be much more modern + even in Scotland there is calm generally.

Voluntary agreements

Do you have any experience of voluntary agreements for access to the stretch of water/s you own/use/manage R. Ush - but in name only as not enforceable. No one wants the bureaucracy of a booking system.

If yes, please briefly outline the agreements that exist and your experience of how they operate. - Administered through lawyers - achieve nothing.

Would you like to see any changes to the voluntary agreements?

Yes - replace them with clear rights of access.

If yes, what changes would you like to see?

A set of understandings or codes not one off agreements.

Are you aware of any voluntary arrangements in other countries that could be used in Wales?

I don't but know that in Wales we have evolved into the most restricted and anti-canoeing country in the world.

Please can you briefly outline what you think are the key issues for recreational access to inland water in Wales and how you would like to see them addressed.

The fundamental problem is that fishing and shooting interests have dominated to the extent that access to the natural river courses of Wales aren't seen as a right for anyone. Outside the fishing season when canoeists would have very little effect on anyone or thing these interests again stop access. Its a selfish stance. "I have possession - you go elsewhere". The 'right to roam' bill established rights in open country where it had little effect on others. The right to use waterways is the way forward where it has no major effect. Also multiple access points on rivers.

Please note:

It is normal practice for the National Assembly to publish evidence provided to a committee. Consequently your response may appear in a report or in supplementary evidence to a report. The National Assembly will not publish information which it considers to be personal data.

In the event of a request for information submitted under UK legislation, it may be necessary to disclose the information that you provide. This may include information which has previously been removed by the National Assembly for publication purposes.

If you are providing any information, other than personal data, which you feel is not suitable for public disclosure, it is up to you to stipulate which parts should not be published, and to provide a reasoned argument to support this. The National Assembly will take this into account when publishing information or responding to requests for information.