



LLANGOLLEN

angling limited

www.llangollenangling.net

11th August 2009

Mr Mick Bates AM
Chairman of the Sustainability Committee
National Assembly for Wales

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Dear Mr Bates,

RE: Access to Inland Waterways in Wales

The Llangollen Angling club was founded in 1940 with the sole objective of acquiring fishing rights on the River Dee to make fishing available to local residents at low costs. Since 1940 we have acquired some six miles of the river at considerable financial cost. The money for these acquisitions has been raised only by local anglers and permit sales.

Since 1967 the club have allowed canoe events to take place on our waters. These events have been allowed outside the salmon and trout fishing season. The events which included international competitions were organised and run by the Welsh Canoe Association (WCA) the agreements were renewed annually with the WCA representatives. In 2004 following a change of leadership within the WCA all agreements ceased. It may be of interest to your committee that even though the WCA ceased to run the events the events were taken over and run by the British Canoe Union. The slalom and white water events have continued each year since 2004 and will take place again in 2009.


This club are not opposed to negotiated access for canoeing. We are completely opposed however to the 365 day access demanded by the WCA (now Canoe Wales). In Llangollen we have a large number of canoeists travelling from the North West of England and to allow unrestricted access would be an ecological disaster. There is a potential to reach agreement but the governing bodies of canoeing must stop pretending that they are being confronted by a blanket refusal of access.

Your committee should also consider the policy statements of the Environment Agency and the Countryside Council for Wales in relation to the River Dee. Both bodies have stated that they are only happy for canoeing to take place at agreed times with clearly defined access and egress points and only on high water levels. This policy clearly reflects the sensitive habitat issues on the Dee which is a Site of Special Scientific Interest and a Special Area of Conservation.

It would appear that many of the representations to your Committee have referred to the Scottish Model. My own experience of fishing Scottish rivers and that of others in this club is that the Scottish Model is not working. It will not work and would not work in Wales as long as canoeists continue to show a lack of respect to land owners and other river users.

In Llangollen we are prepared to negotiate local agreements which allow us to safeguard our assets. Local agreements coupled with an education programme of canoeists about the agreements in place and the ecological factors behind them will result in greater access to the river. We as a club cannot accept unrestricted access and should the Assembly consider such a move we would be seeking substantial compensation for the devaluation of our fishery.

Yours sincerely



G. Huw Evans
(Vice-Chairman)

Cc Mrs Karen Sinclair AM