

The Federation of Clwyd Angling Clubs

Hon. Secretary:

**David Jones
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Dear M/S Hawkins Clerk to the Sustainability Committee.

I have been charged by the Federation of Clwyd Angling Clubs to add our disquiet to the campaign to grant free and unfettered access to canoeists on Welsh Rivers.

The Federation represents some 600+ Anglers who actively manage, maintain and fish waters within the Vale of Clwyd.

As an Angling community we are very aware of the cost in both our time and finances (licence and club fees) in pursuing our legal activity.

As an organisation we give freely of our time to improve the aquatic and bank-side infrastructure for all wildlife, and welcome through our association with the Rivers Trust ecological and educational parties to visit and work alongside us.

Clubs via their membership have often raised considerable sums of money to purchase and then improve waters. Compare and contrast this with the more anarchic approach of the canoeists who believe that by constant trespass they will be rewarded by having the law changed in their favour.

Working closely as we do with the Environment Agency we are well aware of the lengths we have to go to protect the Salmon - an endangered species. Salmon and Sea Trout are as you will be aware are protected under Freshwater Fisheries Act 1975 – disturbance of spawning fish and Redds being a specific offence. Try informing canoeist of this as they ingress at the heads of rivers the very spawning grounds of protected fish.

Canoeist are often quick to mention the arrangement in Scotland. The arguments over the amount of rivers in Scotland compared to Wales and

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the easier access from major conurbations of Welsh Rivers, I will leave to others. Having for many years visited Scotland for Fishing trips, on a personal note, I am well aware of the deteriorating conditions of one of the Jewels in Scotland's Crown its Salmon Rivers. If you need proof speak to the Scottish River Authorities and see how many new restrictions are being imposed on Anglers to counter the deteriorating fish stocks. Speak with the Tay Authorities and ask them how the Land Reform Act is working, rather than listen to propaganda from WCA, I am sure you will hear a different perspective.

It is estimated that Angling brings in over £100m to the Welsh Economy. Research from a couple of years ago estimates that £23m in Gwynedd alone. I have no knowledge of what canoeists bring in to the economy, but from my observations and that of my colleagues we do not see many paying for their sport, staying in the guest houses/hotels and utilising other establishments and amenities of Wales.

Finally, the reduction in enjoyment and the reduction in value to privately owned and club owned stretches of rivers will have a major negative impact on that resource. We feel that allowing unrestricted access to Welsh Rivers is akin to allowing right to roam on other such Private Commercial Enterprises such as Golf Courses, a move we strongly believe is an affront to natural justice.

From my association with the Rivers Trust and Local Fisheries Advisory Groups, I am aware of the lengths clubs and Riparian owners have gone to agree voluntary agreements with canoeists. These have been torn up in an attempt to demonstrate how hard done by canoeist are. Fishing Clubs/Owners are more than willing to sit down and to try and work out voluntary agreements that will give access to this wonderful resource to as many people as possible.

Yours sincerely,



David Jones
Hon Secretary Federation of Clwyd Angling Clubs

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