

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)

Are you a member of an organisation related to your use of water?

If yes, which organisation/s? DOUGELLAU ANGLING ASSOCIATION

Which stretch/s of water do you own/use/manage? RIVERS - MAWDDACH AND WNION AND LLYN CYRUCH

Legal rights WE HAVE CLEARLY DEFINED LEGAL TITLE DEEDS DETAILING EXTENT AND RIGHTS OF FISHING AND ACCESS

Are you happy that your legal rights are clear and well defined?

Can you briefly outline your understanding of your legal rights over the stretch of water/s that you own/use/manage

Would you like to see any changes to your legal rights? NO

If yes, what changes would you like to see?

Are you aware of any legislation that exists in other countries that could be used in Wales? NO

Voluntary agreements

Do you have any experience of voluntary agreements for access to the stretch of water/s you own/use/manage? NO

If yes, please briefly outline the agreements that exist and your experience of how they operate.

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

If yes, what changes would you like to see?

Are you aware of any voluntary arrangements in other countries that could be used in Wales? NO

KEY ISSUES.

Our Angling Association has clearly defined legal title deeds to all our waters. These detail the extent and rights of fishing and access to the waters we own or lease.

No recreational activity should have adverse effects on the environment, wildlife or an amenity important to other users.

Tourism is the biggest contributor to the economy of our area. Walking, cycling and climbing are significant attractors to our area but one of the biggest attractions is the fishing in our rivers, lakes and in the sea. These are the mainstay of income for hotels, guesthouses and caravan sites. Locally there are at least two caravan sites where many of the static caravans are owned by anglers, who have season fishing permits and licences and spend much of the season here with friends and families.

Anglers actively contribute to the maintenance of rivers bank-side vegetation and habitat, fencing, bridges and stiles, sometimes bearing the costs or sharing them with the Environment Agency. It is important to anglers that they also have good relationships with farmers and other landowners who often have agreements to allow access over their land.

It must be seen that to have two activities, which are as incompatible as angling and canoeing, competing for the same water, can only lead to confrontation, as past experiences have shown. Anglers will "vote with their feet" and will find somewhere else to practice their hobby in peace.

Sometimes angling (particularly game angling) is regarded as an elitist sport for the wealthy but this is far from the truth. Game anglers come from all walks of life but even those on very modest incomes are prepared to spend considerable amounts of money on the permits and rod licences, which they must have, to enjoy their sport.

It is doubtful whether canoeists would be happy to buy licences and permits but even if they were the conflict would still arise. The biggest loser would be the local economy and the loss would not be made up by the relatively small numbers of canoeists who tend to turn up with a canoe on a roof rack and disappear at tea-time.

