



8/12/2008

Huw Lewis AM

Ref: Canoe petition

Dear Huw

I have forwarded to you the copy of a petition submitted to the Petitions Committee of the Welsh Assembly Government. Once again it is patently obvious that the writer has taken the liberty of highlighting only those parts of different reports and facts and figures that place his case in bright lights. He is also claiming that no agreements have been forthcoming, this from a body that proclaims they were wrong to have even contemplated agreements in the past. They also appear to be to be saying to the Welsh Assembly Government that agreements even those that Wag has supported are not workable.

Whilst I will not try to compete with the paid representative of the Welsh Canoe Union in arguments about Magna Carta etc or to make issue of the number of paddlers using Welsh rivers illegally I will point out that there are a number of agreements already in being which have been helped into place by WAG. The Wye & Usk Foundation have made agreement with WCU to use those rivers under their "jurisdiction".

I will make note of the numbers of anglers using a small stretch of the river Usk (some 3 miles single bank) which my Association has purchased at some considerable expense. This past season 1700 visits were made and considering that we only allow on this stretch 30 anglers per day I think we operate in a good manner on behalf of the bio diversity of the river . This is apart from the Taff and tributaries and lakes which we control by ownership or lease.

I notice that the union (canoe) have magnanimously taken off all charges to individuals on the Tryweryn Water Centre. This is puzzling as they have to pay a substantial sum to the water company to release water for their activities, so, the question asked is "who is picking up this bill" As you know the angling world pays its own way. Of course we know that this facility is used for team building by Middle Eastern gentlemen so perhaps they are paying the bill. This would help the canoeists to carry on with their free access ideas on all rivers in Wales. Of course if the idea of FREE access is condoned / favoured by WAG the issue of the rod licence would need

to be considered for the public who peacefully go fishing at some expense to the family purse.

We also note on the WCA web site for their site at Tryweryn that they recommend no canoeing below a certain level. This is a controlled site continually manned. How will they ensure that all canoeists will comply with such rules as well as others if open access were to come.

The question of game licences (migratory) @ £70 per licence is a quite considerable part of revenue to the Environment Agency deriving from the Welsh community (public) of course it does not take into account the number of our English cousins who visit Welsh fisheries every day of the week throughout the season.

I would draw your attention to the Salmon & Fresh Water Fisheries act of 1975 which states that any person disturbing any river bed which could hold fish spawn will be liable to prosecution between the months of November through to March of the year following. (I have not written act per se)

I believe that a minister (WAG) has mooted that there would be a request indeed instruction to local councils to open up their waters to the paddlers. What will be the situation when half the river width is owned by a fishing club like ourselves. **Please refer to our portfolio of assets, land and fishing rights attached.**

We would like to expand and point out that in prior submissions the Angling fraternity has been depicted as feudal. This is far from the truth as the purchase of fishing rights by local Associations has in fact allowed people from all sections of society and backgrounds as well as from diverse ethnic backgrounds to take up angling. If we go back further Fishing and water rights were jealously guarded by the Crown and the Lords of the Manor and you encroached on their rights at your peril.

In fact Angling has been a forerunner in opening up the countryside **(by way of purchase)** as many fishing rights necessitate a walk in the country to reach. Angling and its concern for the environment has also been a major factor in making the rivers in Wales cleaner, and by default, more desirable for people who now wish to disregard the legal ownership of rights that have cost in total across Wales millions of pounds.

I am sure that rights which have been purchased and upheld by the Land Registry Wales outweigh any fairy tale written some 1000 years ago, not decrying Magna Carta circa 1080 AD but today's date is 2008 AD

I Remain,

Yours Faithfully,

W G Davies (Gary)
Chairman MTAA