

Waters of Wales' Charter for Sustainable Recreational Enjoyment of Water and Waterside

This is our charter for sustainable public enjoyment of the countryside, land and water, not involving extractive activities, the use of motorised equipment or built facilities, under comprehensive legislation.

- 1. Sustainable, responsible, recreational enjoyment of the countryside, land and water on land or water to be available to all on an equal basis, and not depend on ability to pay.**
 - The public will have the right to enjoy our countryside, and open spaces in urban areas, without charge.
 - Our waters, mountains, lowlands, parks, coast, public paths and parks, will be enshrined in perpetuity as public spaces which are free to traverse for all.

- 2. People will be empowered to take responsibility for their own actions.**
 - The legislation will be underpinned by the principle '*volenti non fit injuria*'. Fear of litigation need not be a reason to deny public rights, and may not be used as such.
 - Landowners and public will be given clear information about their rights and responsibilities.
 - Signage will be minimal, factual and informative, to allow people to make informed decisions.

- 3. Presumption will be in favour of public access.**
 - Access will be allowed anywhere, for any sustainable purpose, unless a case has been made, and accepted, for exclusion.
 - Exclusion, whether temporary or permanent, should be considered as an exceptional case and applications should be subject to scrutiny. Reasons for exclusion will be publicly available.
 - Exclusion must be fact-based and equitable, not favouring or disadvantaging one activity or user-group over another.

- 4. Recognition that everyone's needs are different.**
 - The legislation should not attempt to pre-determine what people will want to do, where they will want to go, at what times and seasons, or how far they will want to travel.
 - Provision of facilities such as launching and parking used to create a honeypot and/or steer activity towards or away from certain points, should not *per se* be used to preclude access/egress elsewhere.
 - On water, the presumption will be that access and egress may occur in all places along linear waterways and on large bodies of water, save where there is genuine need for exclusion.

- 5. Everyone is equal and should respect other's enjoyment.**
 - Where equal rights are exercised responsibly, there will be few occasions where activities are genuinely incompatible.
 - Management arrangements should be viewed as exceptions, needed only in circumstances where activities genuinely conflict.
 - On the rare occasions where management arrangements are needed, they will be reached voluntarily on the basis that all parties to the arrangement have equal rights and responsibilities.
 - Management arrangements will be subject to need on a case-by-case basis as outlined above, and should not be seen as a precedent at other times and in other places.

- 6. An outdoor code will clearly define rights and responsibilities for all.**
 - An outdoor code will set out the responsibilities that go along with public rights, promote co-operation and define unacceptable behaviour.
 - The outdoor code will be publicised widely and integrated into the curriculum.
 - Should sanctions become necessary these will be applied on the basis of individual accountability, not public or user-group exclusion.

This document, along with further information about the Waters of Wales - WoW Charter, will shortly be published on our website www.watersofwales.org.uk