

Blue spaces: Access & environmental protection

Paddle Cymru policy statement.

At Paddle Cymru, we are passionate about ensuring that everyone has the opportunity to enjoy paddlesports and connect with the natural beauty of Wales's blue spaces. We believe that our rivers, lakes, canals, and coastal waters are not only vital ecological assets but also shared spaces that should be accessible, respected, and protected for future generations.

Our Beliefs

- **Inclusive Access:** We believe that paddlesports should be open to all, enabling people to experience and appreciate our natural environments in a way that fosters connection and care.
- **Environmental Stewardship:** We recognise that Welsh waters are precious. All recreational activity must be carried out sustainably and responsibly to safeguard sensitive habitats, species, and communities—both rural and urban.
- **Clean Waters:** We believe that the inland and coastal waters of Wales need to be clean – free of sewage, agricultural and any other pollutants
- **Right to Explore:** While paddlers have a clear public right of navigation on tidal waters and statutory navigations, we believe that all inland waters should be open for people to explore, enjoy, and protect.
- **Collaboration and Respect:** We respect differing views on public rights of access and believe that through constructive dialogue and collaboration with all stakeholders, we can find shared solutions that benefit people and nature.
- **Responsible Paddling:** We believe that paddlers can minimise their impact on the environment and other water users by following and promoting the principles of the Paddler's Code.

Our Commitments

Paddle Cymru is committed to:

- **Championing Access:** Advocating for expanded access rights to inland waters across Wales.
- **Building Consensus:** Working with landowners, environmental groups, government bodies, and other stakeholders to make our blue spaces more accessible and inclusive.
- **Promoting Best Practice:** Widely sharing the Paddlers' Code to encourage responsible and respectful paddling.
- **Protecting Blue Spaces:** Supporting and facilitating environmental initiatives through our paddling community to care for and enhance the health of our waterways.
- **Calling for Clean Waters:** Actively campaigning for pollution-free rivers, lakes, canals, and coastal waters to ensure safe and healthy environments for wildlife and people.
- **Monitoring and Reporting:** Encouraging paddlers to report pollution incidents and water quality concerns, helping authorities take timely action.
- **Advocating for Policy Change:** Working with government and regulators to strengthen legislation that improves access and water quality.