

Chris White  
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Dear Mr White

### **NRW fisheries byelaw proposals**

Thank you for your letter of 30 July on the above subject. Firstly, I'm sorry it's taken us a while to respond to you, but key people have been on annual leave over the past few weeks.

Just to confirm we work with a range of stakeholders with interests in our fisheries in Wales and including groups representing anglers. These working arrangements have been primarily through the local fisheries group arrangements but shortly will be supplemented through a Wales-wide fisheries stakeholder group under the auspices of our new Water Management Forum. I wanted to let you know that we are happy to work with your group representing Anglers in Wales your organisation is an important stakeholder for us.

I note your concern about the way in which the January board meeting was managed and, speaking to other directors who were present on the day, I'm advised we don't agree with your view that the Chair stated "she would have the final say", our Chair was very clear that she was seeking a way forward that could be supported by the whole board. The board had a very robust discussion of the issues before any conclusions were reached and decisions made. I'm sure you will recall that discussion resulted in the board asking the executive to consider putting in place additional stakeholder liaison arrangements to enable us to work together on those aspects of the outcome 'to improve Welsh fisheries' that we could all agree on. For example, the measures we can take together to improve rivers so that our stocks have the best opportunity to thrive.

It appears we have a different view to you on how events unfolded but hope you are reassured that the board took very seriously their scrutiny and decision-making role that day.

With regard to our press release issued following the discussion and decision at that meeting I suggest you consider the press release in its entirety. We try to ensure our press releases give an

accurate, yet concise account of the decisions taken by our board for those unable to attend the meeting. This is an important part of the governance around reporting our decisions.

Additionally, the press release regarding our decision to defer the implementation of any affirmation decision by the Welsh Government to 2019 was intended as a pragmatic and helpful position for those anglers and clubs considering their positions for the 2018 fishing season. We wanted to be really clear that we were not reconsidering the case submitted to WG but that we were listening to the concerns of angling groups regarding the uncertainty whilst we awaited the decision of the Cabinet Secretary.

I attach [here](#) and [here](#) both press releases for you to use in ongoing discussions with your members.

In terms of our engagement with stakeholders NRW engaged, through its 9 Local Fisheries Groups, for at least 3 years prior to the launch of the statutory consultation. We have continued with this engagement since the proposal was made to Welsh Ministers. We recognise that you do not agree with the decision we reached and the proposal we subsequently submitted to Welsh Government.

We agree with you about the decline in migratory fish stocks across most of the rivers of Wales, but not with your statement that little or no effective action has been undertaken. NRW and its predecessor bodies has worked continually to find funding, against a back drop of public sector austerity, to carry out river habitat improvements. The best example is the "Salmon for Tomorrow" EU funded project that saw 62 new fish passage solutions opening more than 700km of spawning and nursery habitat. The same funding source was used by Afonydd Cymru and saw 63 similar projects that provided, or improved access to over 340km of stream and improved habitats in 40km of stream length.

The decline in fishing club membership is concerning and NRW is keen to explore ways to help promote angling so long as this does not put further pressures on very fragile fish stocks. Brown trout and grayling fishing across much of Wales remains in good condition, and we are offering clubs the opportunity to promote this.

My aspiration remains for engaging with all. You may be aware that the first meeting of the new Wales Fisheries Group (as mentions above) will take place in October and I am anxious that I can be there to help to launch this important new engagement event and to listen to stakeholders.

Best Wishes



Clare Pillman  
**Prif Weithredwr, Cyfoeth Naturiol Cymru**  
**Chief Executive, Natural Resources Wales**