

**Welsh Liberal  
Democrats**

**Democratiaid  
Rhyddfrydol Cymru**



**MOTION PROPOSED TO SPRING CONFERENCE 2018**

## **ACCESS TO WATERWAYS**

**Proposed by: Welsh Young Liberals**

Conference notes that:

1. Considerable benefit in terms of health, wellbeing and education can be derived from recreation and exercise in the outdoors.
2. Access to the countryside is not available on an equitable basis to all, due to lack of clarity in the law relating to public access.
3. The Countryside Rights of Way (CRoW) Act 2000 was drafted to address this issue across the UK, but was complicated, expensive and stripped of many of its intended public benefits, including access to inland water - as a result CRoW has failed to deliver the access needed by the public.
4. This issue was successfully addressed by the Land Reform (Scotland) Act 2003 at a fraction of the cost to the public purse of unproductive process to date by Welsh Government.
5. The National Assembly for Wales has legislative powers to pass similar legislation for Wales.
6. A petition was delivered to the National Assembly for Wales in November 2016 calling on the National Assembly for Wales to "urge the Welsh Government to implement a Bill to establish statutory public rights of access to land and water for recreational and other purposes."

Conference believes that:

1. Access to inland water is a matter of equity and social justice.
2. The system of access to inland water should not one founded on wealth, influence and privilege but be based on fair, shared access for all, regardless of the ability to pay.
3. Restrictions to inland water should only be for environmental reasons.

Conference calls for new legislation to be introduced in Wales to:

1. Enshrine access rights and responsibilities for the public in the same way that the 2003 Land Reform (Scotland) Act encourages co-operative use of the outdoors for healthy, low impact recreation.

2. Enshrine public rights of navigation for inland water, and permit access to and along water.
3. Remove the lack of legal clarity and restrictions which act as a barrier to sport and recreation and the promotion of Wales as a welcoming place for healthy recreation, tourism and adventurous activity at all levels of participation and enjoyment.

Conference calls on Welsh Liberal Democrat elected representatives to support this petition.