

SUBJECT:	RIVER USK, CASTLE MEADOWS
DIRECTORATE:	Enterprise
MEETING:	Bryn y Cwm Area Committee
DATE:	20 April 2016

1. PURPOSE:

- 1.1 To present the area committee with the outcome of further discussions regarding the use of the River Usk at Castle Meadows.

2. RECOMMENDATIONS:

- 2.1 That members reach a view on the potential for wider use of the River Usk.

3. KEY ISSUES:

- 3.1 There was one outstanding issue from the Area Committee's previous consideration of the Castle Meadows Management Plan - requests for wider access to the River Usk and for a change of policy to allow canoeing and wild swimming in that section of the river adjoining the meadows where the Council has riparian rights.

- 3.2 The task and finish group took the view that further discussions between the canoeing and fishing interest would be necessary to explore if there could be agreement on wider use of the river and it was resolved that officers facilitate further discussion and bring a further report back to the Area Committee, as required.

- 3.3 This process has unfortunately been rather extended but a meeting has taken place between Abergavenny Canoe Club (<http://abergavennycanoeclub.co.uk/>) and the fishing club and an agreed note of the meeting prepared (attached to this report).

- 3.4 As will be seen for the note the discussions have not reached agreement on a way forward. Member's views are therefore sought. Options include maintaining the current policy; or investigating further whether a specific agreement with the canoe club could be achieved to overcome the fishermen's concerns.

4. REASONS:

- 4.1 To ensure the most appropriate management of the River Usk at Castle Meadows.

5. RESOURCE IMPLICATIONS:

- 5.1 No direct resource implications.

6. SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT AND EQUALITY IMPLICATIONS:

6.1 A full equality impact assessment had not been prepared at this stage, but wider use of the river would extend the diversity of users of the river. If the view is that wider use should be further investigated a detailed assessment of the potential impacts on the River Usk SAC and any required management controls will be required.

7. AUTHOR:

Matthew Lewis
Countryside Manager

CONTACT DETAILS:

E-mail: matthewlewis@monmouthshire.gov.uk Telephone: 01633 644855

8. BACKGROUND PAPERS:

Notes from meeting between Fishermen and Canoeist regarding use of the river Usk at Castle Meadows 17th November 2015

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People attending the meeting:

Mark Langley Head Warden, Monmouthshire County Council

Julia Aldous Abergavenny Canoe Club

Jason Stone Abergavenny Canoe Club

Mike Kelly Abergavenny Canoe Club

Craig Armiger Abergavenny Canoe Club

John Paxton Fisherman

Philip Starmore Fisherman

Martin Watts Fisherman

Martin Smith (Ricky) Fisherman

Main points from meeting:

Canoe Club

40 to 50 members, although only a few come out at one time

At present winters in swimming pool and summers places like Mon and Brecon Canal and Keeper's Pond

Want to share the river and work with the fishermen

They would like access throughout the year

They would access the river near the 3 benches by the rapids

They would like access on length of river where the banks are owned by Monmouthshire County Council

They would carry or use trollies to get to the river from the Byefield car park

They are affiliated to Canoe Wales and have to abide by their codes of conduct

They would monitor behaviour from outside canoeists

Report shows that canoeing does not affect the fish stock on a river

In France there are timed sessions on rivers so that canoeists have less impact on fishing

Large diversity of age and abilities within the group. Fits in with core values of County Council

The river was used for swimming and boating in the past

Fishermen

Cost of fishing £148.00 plus £72.00 per year. Numbers may drop if there was interference from canoeists and fishing experience would not be as good. Less money going to Council

Worries about health and safety. Danger to canoeists

Worries that more canoeists who are not members of the canoe club would start to use the river at Castle Meadows. These people would not be under the control of the club and may not be as responsible

Need to preserve spawning salmon and allis shad on river, which is a site of special scientific interest

Because the canoeists will only be using the short stretch of water there is more likelihood that they will interfere with the fishing as they go up and down

How will canoeists deal with low levels of water in the summer?

How could we monitor dinghies and tell them they cannot use the river if people are canoeing on the river?