

From: National Access Forum <National.Access.Forum@cyfoethnaturiolcymru.gov.uk>
Sent: 02 December 2020 10:11

To: Subject: Natural England Countryside Code Review - deadline 15 December.

Apologies for English only.

To: NAFW members,

Views sought by Natural England - review of the Countryside Code Deadline 15 December 2020

You may be aware that Natural England (NE) have just entered into a process of consulting on the English version Countryside Code, this month, whereby they are looking to review and refresh the Code before next Easter. Attached is a NE letter inviting their stakeholders to have a say on the current Code, its wording and look. Although this is an NE led review, NRW have liaised with our NE colleagues to ensure there is the opportunity for our Welsh partners to input in to this review. Your feedback will contribute to development of both versions of the Code and help maintain the valuable shared nature of the Code between England and Wales.

As you'll be aware the Welsh Countryside Code aligns very closely with the English version. Because the Codes are so similar, any comments made on the English Code, through the NE review, will contribute to our planned work and reviews of wider responsible recreation messaging, post Covid, during 2021. If there are any fundamental changes coming out of the English review we will take the opportunity to look at these carefully and make amendments to the Welsh Code before Easter 2021, as England may do so.

NRW recognise the importance of the Countryside Code and how we currently share and promote the messages within it, and both NE and NRW have worked closely to ensure our duty to produce and promote a Code is fulfilled. A key consideration is the recognition of the increase in visits to the countryside and other open space areas during lockdown and since restrictions were lifted to visit areas further afield. Whilst there have been many benefits of this trend there has also been concerns and impacts felt relating to some negative instances of behaviours. It is also agreed that a Code should reach as wider audience as possible.

During 2020 NRW and NE collaborated to develop the revised short version of the Countryside Code in response to Covid-19 and as part of this, NRW further produced a number of resources including an editable Countryside Code poster for use on our sites and by our partners. NRW also recently updated its [Countryside Code Webpages](#) to ensure it is user friendly, compatible with different types of reader device and compliant with new Web Accessibility Guidelines.

NRW with our partners, in recent years, also developed the wider Family of Codes to compliment the Countryside Code which includes: The Dog Walking Code, Trail Users Code, Waterside Code, Canoeing Code, Angling Code and Wild Swimming Code. These Codes added strength and detail to support the Countryside Code, and in 2019 a suite of [animated films](#) were also commissioned and developed for use internally and by our partners to support the Countryside Code.

How to respond:

NRW are proposing to respond to this review consultation with advice taken from our lead advisors and land managers and we would encourage our Welsh stakeholders to consider responding, directly to NE, in order to provide as wide a range of views as possible from across Wales.

Natural England invites you to read the attached letter which asks respondents to review the existing Countryside Code material and consider areas of it that may require change or review. The ask is to review the English Code website: [Countryside Code full version](#) / [Short Version](#)

Views will need to be submitted to Natural England by **15th December** to: countryside.code@naturalengland.org.uk .

It would be much appreciated if you could forward a copy of your response to alison.roberts@cyfoethnaturiolcymru.gov.uk here at NRW so that when we attend NE's virtual workshop early in the new year, we will be better able to discuss and represent Welsh views.

Regards,

Alison Roberts

Ymgynghorydd Arbenigol: Hamdden Gyfrifol
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