

Number: WG30856.



Llywodraeth Cymru
Welsh Government

Welsh Government
Consultation – summary of responses

Bathing Water Review in Wales 2017

Consultation on the identification of Traeth Glan Don Beach,
Gwynedd as a bathing water

Date of issue: 22 March 2017

Mae'r ddogfen yma hefyd ar gael yn Gymraeg.
This document is also available in Welsh.

Water Branch
Welsh Government
Cathays Park
Cardiff
CF10 3NQ
Email: water@wales.gsi.gov.uk
www.wales.gov.uk/consultation

Introduction

Overview

Bathing waters are of value both for the recreational opportunities they provide to the people of Wales and for tourism. They also provide a strong indicator of the overall health of Wales' coastal zones and inland water bodies.

The Bathing Water Directive (2006/7/EC) requires Member States identify bathing waters each year and monitor water quality at these sites throughout the bathing season. In Wales the bathing season runs from mid May to the end of September. There are currently 103 identified bathing waters in Wales.

The Directive aims to protect human health by requiring Member States to:

- identify popular bathing waters
- monitor their water quality
- inform bathers about water quality
- and to achieve good water quality at all identified sites over time

Purpose of the Consultation

The aim of the consultation exercise was to seek views about the proposal to identify Traeth Glan Don Beach in Wales as a bathing water. The request was received from Gwynedd Council.

Consultation period and distribution

The consultation ran for a period of 8 weeks from 20 December 2016 and closed on 15 February 2017. The consultation was published on the Welsh Government website and sent to a broad range of stakeholders.

Responses received

The Welsh Government received six responses to the consultation and the respondents are listed at Annex A of this document. Information was also requested and provided by Natural Resources Wales and Dŵr Cymru Welsh Water as part of the consultation process.

All responses received supported the proposal to identify Traeth Glan Don Beach as a bathing water for the 2017 bathing season.

Respondents stated that Traeth Glan Don Beach is used for a variety of activities, including bathing and other water sports. Support for identification of this beach as a bathing water highlighted the importance of good bathing water quality for protecting public health and the contribution this can make to tourism and the economy in Wales. Keep Wales Tidy advised that this popular beach has been in receipt of a Seaside Award since 2012 and gained a Green Coast Award for the first time in 2016.

The proposed identification of Traeth Glan Don Beach as a bathing water was seen as contributing positively to the marine environment. One respondent advised that they regularly swim at the beach and its identification as a bathing water would provide peace of mind to those who make use of this site.

It was recognised that the identification of this area as a bathing water would provide a Regulatory framework for monitoring of the water's quality, for ensuring that information on potential sources of pollution is made available to the public and for making any improvements necessary.

One respondent called for all coastal areas used for bathing in Wales to be identified as bathing waters and questioned the "usage" criteria for determining identification as being too vague. Concerns were raised about non-identified bathing waters being subject to reduced monitoring which could lead to health risks for bathers as they are not covered by the Bathing Water Directive. They also suggested that poor water quality at these sites could have long term negative impacts on neighbouring identified bathing waters. They argued that whilst this would result in more monitoring for Natural Resources Wales it would improve water quality around the coast of Wales.

Response to comments received about the identification of Traeth Glan Don Beach as a bathing water

Following full consideration of all responses received and information and evidence provided, the Welsh Ministers are satisfied that Traeth Glan Don Beach has met the criteria as set out in regulation 3(2) of the Bathing Water Regulations 2013. Therefore, the Welsh Ministers have taken the decision to identify the beach as a bathing water from the 2017 bathing season and will notify the European Commission of the decision.

When reaching a decision on identifying a bathing water the main consideration is numbers of bathers as set out in the Bathing Water Regulations 2013. However, we have not set a formal numerical figure, as all bathing waters are different and one figure may not be suitable for all sites. We look for evidence of numbers of swimmers, people paddling at the water's edge and people on the beach. We also look at past trends, any infrastructure or facilities provided or measures taken to promote bathing as set out in the Bathing Water Regulations 2013.

Natural Resources Wales only has responsibility for monitoring bathing water quality at identified bathing water sites. Anyone can recommend a surface water area used for bathing for identification as a bathing water. In the first instance, we recommend approaching the local authority as they will often hold helpful information about a beach in their area and will be responsible for meeting various requirements under the Bathing Water Regulations 2013 in the event of the water being identified as a bathing water.

Monitoring of identified bathing waters

Where a surface water is identified as a bathing water, Natural Resources Wales is required to produce a detailed profile and monitoring programme, as it does for each identified bathing water in Wales. Bathing water profiles include a description of the bathing water and surrounding area, any rivers and streams feeding into each site and details about how they will manage pollution at the site. These profiles also set out bathing water quality compliance results and explain the work they are undertaking with other partners to identify where water quality improvements are needed. This includes working with water companies and local authorities to identify problems that could affect bathing water quality.

In addition, every local authority which controls an identified bathing water must ensure that detailed information about the bathing water is available in an easily accessible place in the near vicinity of the bathing water during the bathing season (15 May to 30 September).

Since the start of the 2016 bathing season, local authorities are also required to display further information in the form of water quality classification symbols.

De- identification of bathing waters

No requests were received for removal of identified bathing waters in Wales for the 2017 bathing season.

Next Steps

We will advise Natural Resources Wales of the Welsh Ministers' decision to identify Traeth Glan Don Beach as a bathing water, ask them to prepare a bathing water profile and to keep the profile under review.

We will amend the Bathing Water Regulations 2013, to reflect these changes.

The Welsh Government would like to thank those who responded to the consultation on the 'Review of Bathing Waters in Wales 2017'.

Annex A

List of respondents

Cyngor Sir Ceredigion

David Hughes

Keep Wales Tidy

The Marine Conservation Society

Royal Yachting Association Cymru Wales

Swansea Council