

Clear Access, Clear Waters

# British Canoeing's **Access and Environment Charter**



**Clear Access  
Clear Waters**





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# Executive Summary

**The British Canoeing Access and Environment Charter – Clear Access, Clear Waters – sets out a vision to increase access to the rivers and waterways in England and to protect the environment.**

The Charter is the result of collaboration and discussions between British Canoeing and Members of Parliament as well as key stakeholders such as the Department for Digital, Culture, Media & Sport, Wildlife and Countryside Link, Inland Waterways Association, National Trust, Natural England and other organisations.

British Canoeing is calling on the Government and political parties to consider landmark action to not only give greater public access to our waterways, but also to commit to protecting and enhancing the natural environment.

Nationally, around 1.9 million people go canoeing each year. The health and well-being benefits of being in, on or around water are well known. Inactivity is causing all sorts of problems for young people – diabetes, obesity and other health issues – many of which can be solved by being active outdoors.

Few of us live near the coast; however, the majority of the population live near a river, canal or lake. **It is simply not**

**right that these spaces are often ‘off limits’ or closed off from the public.** More must be done to enable greater access to waterways, following the example set in Scotland.

The situation regarding access to water is getting worse. If future generations are to respect the natural environment and be engaged in its protection, then there must be clarity over rights of access.

Our environment is facing greater threats than ever before. Declining biodiversity and plastic pollution in our rivers and waterways are just some of the issues that canoeists can, and do, play an active part in helping to address. Access to the environment, specifically our waterways, has the potential to create a deep and lasting connection with nature, encouraging pro-environmental behaviours.

With the advent of Brexit, new Agriculture and Environment bills and the Department for Farming

and Rural Affairs’ (Defra) 25-year plan for the environment<sup>1</sup>, there is fresh opportunity to seize the moment and take a positive step forward.

Enabling fair, shared, sustainable open access to the outdoors will empower future generations to be actively engaged in protecting our environment.

English waterways are a fantastic resource that should be available **for everyone** to enjoy responsibly, without prejudice or exclusion.

Through the pledges this Charter sets out we are committing to leading the paddling community towards a clearer position on access and a brighter future for the environment.

**Professor John Coyne CBE**  
Chair of British Canoeing

<sup>1</sup> DEFRA (2018), ‘A Green Future: Our 25 Year Plan to Improve the Environment’

# A campaign for fair, **shared, sustainable open access**

British Canoeing **will pledge to do** the following:

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1

Champion the case for fair, shared, sustainable open access on and along inland waters to be confirmed in law.



3

Commit to inspire more people to be active outdoors; connecting people with their environment and promoting the benefits on mental and physical well-being.

2

Continue to act to protect and improve the health of our rivers; working to protect, preserve and enhance the natural environment.



# Section One

## Introduction

**The purpose of British Canoeing is to inspire people to pursue a passion for paddling for health, enjoyment, friendship, challenge and achievement.**

British Canoeing is the national governing body for paddlesports in the UK.

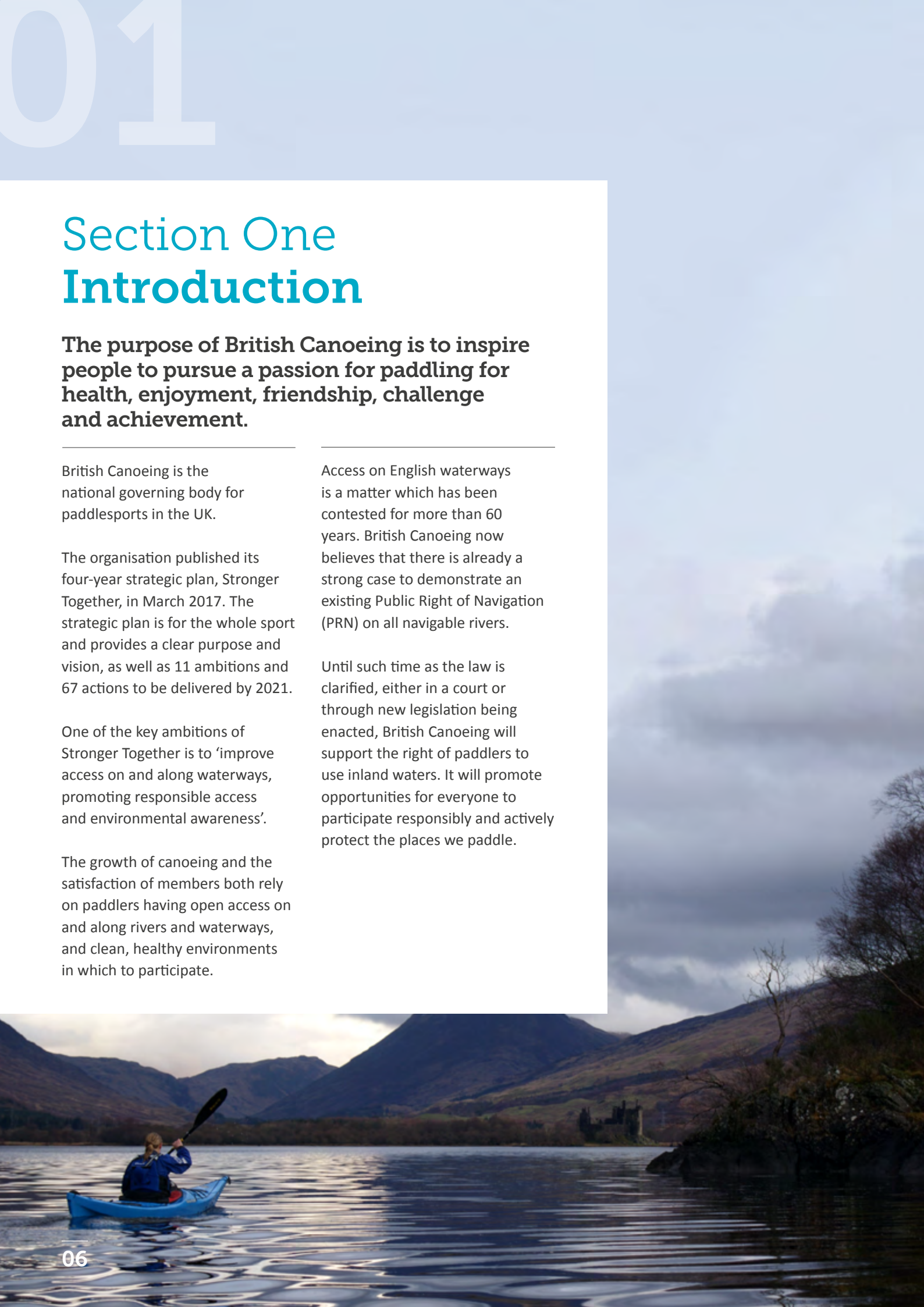
The organisation published its four-year strategic plan, Stronger Together, in March 2017. The strategic plan is for the whole sport and provides a clear purpose and vision, as well as 11 ambitions and 67 actions to be delivered by 2021.

One of the key ambitions of Stronger Together is to 'improve access on and along waterways, promoting responsible access and environmental awareness'.

The growth of canoeing and the satisfaction of members both rely on paddlers having open access on and along rivers and waterways, and clean, healthy environments in which to participate.

Access on English waterways is a matter which has been contested for more than 60 years. British Canoeing now believes that there is already a strong case to demonstrate an existing Public Right of Navigation (PRN) on all navigable rivers.

Until such time as the law is clarified, either in a court or through new legislation being enacted, British Canoeing will support the right of paddlers to use inland waters. It will promote opportunities for everyone to participate responsibly and actively protect the places we paddle.







## Why do we need this Charter?

At a time when waterways face greater threats than ever before – from pollution, invasive non-native species and climatic pressure – the public must be fully engaged in protecting them. We can only achieve clear waters if there is clear access for all.

British Canoeing is asking the Government to introduce or change legislation for open access on waterways, confirming the right of everyone to enjoy fair, shared and sustainable access on and along inland waters. It wants to see public rights of navigation confirmed by law, along with a clear code of conduct for all users, ensuring responsible behaviour on and off the water.

British Canoeing believes the outdoors should be open to sustainable, unpowered pursuits for enjoyment, learning, health and exploration, enabling the public to enjoy the health and well-being

benefits of recreation on and along waterways. Clear access will maximise the potential for recreation to drive public engagement in the protection and preservation of our natural environment.

Of the 42,700 miles of inland waterways in England, only 1,400 miles can be paddled uncontested, **that's less than 4% of our rivers in England**<sup>2</sup>. Paddlers are increasingly subject to challenge or dispute over their right to be on the water.

Repeated attempts to negotiate voluntary access arrangements up and down the country have not succeeded in improving the situation. It is getting worse, not better. British Canoeing is seeking to draw on the successful laws and principles adopted in Scotland, and more recently proposed in Wales, to extend rights of 'open

access' on land to also include inland water in England.

Action must be taken to clarify and secure access on waterways for future generations. The presumption that canoeists have no legitimate claim to a right of access, and to enjoy our 'blue' environments responsibly, must be addressed now if young people are to inherit a natural environment to which they feel a deep and lasting connection.



Of the 42,700 miles of inland waterways in England, only 1,400 miles can be paddled uncontested.

<sup>2</sup> Brighton University (2001), 'Water-Based Sport and Recreation - the facts', table 1.1 and section 4



## What is 'open access for all'?

Open access to waterways means securing existing rights and creating additional rights where needed. This would be to ensure that everyone has a right of access on and along all waterways in England, for any reasonable purpose. The right of open access should be complemented by a statutory code of conduct, ensuring respect and consideration for others and the environment.

Any right of access would not affect inland waterways under the ownership or control of a statutory navigation authority, where water users already comply with statutory licensing requirements.

Open access for all would enable more people to have access to England's network of waterways without the threat of challenge; for health and well-being, for enjoyment and, critically, to play an active part in protecting the environment.

The majority of the canoeing community are very environmentally aware. For many, enjoyment of the environment and wildlife is the primary reason for taking to the water, and as such they are keen to protect it. Where there is evidence that damage or disturbance would occur to our native wildlife, for example spawning fish and nesting birds, British Canoeing would

endorse temporary measures on specific waters.

Any measures to protect wildlife must be guided by the principle of taking the least restrictive option. They should be determined through consultation and overseen by an appropriate, independent authority. Measures could range from increased communication or resources for local paddlers through to voluntary restrictions on specific waters. Any such restriction must be as limited as possible and will carry a greater chance of success where it is negotiated in co-operation with recreational users, rather than imposed upon them.

## Open access and the rights of other legitimate interests

In Scotland, the right of open access for all is extended only to those who exercise the rights responsibly; through respect and consideration for others and the environment.

The situation in Scotland clearly demonstrates that the sharing of all waterways can be achieved without significant impacts to differing interests.

The Land Reform (Scotland) Act 2003 and associated Scottish Outdoor Access Code provides the public

with statutory access rights to land and inland water in Scotland:

- there is a right to be on land and to cross land;
- there is a right to exercise access rights for recreational, educational and commercial reasons; and
- there are rights of access to land including inland foreshores, canals and foreshores.

All three points above are underpinned by the phrase

**'responsible use'** by both the public and landowners.

The Scottish Canoe Association (SCA) has been proactive in working with the organisations responsible for delivering the Land Reform Act, which include Scottish Natural Heritage, local authorities, landowners and fisheries.

The access provisions in part 1 of the Land Reform Act form an extremely important milestone in Scottish history.



## Section Two

# The Right Time For Change

**As the UK prepares to leave the EU and the Common Agricultural Policy, new legislation will offer a rare opportunity to help shape how land and water are managed in the future.**

This is an opportune time to suggest positive change for the good of the environment through shared access on and along waterways for all users, with post-Brexit agricultural policy and payments, alongside pledges made in Defra's 25-year plan for the environment.

A new agricultural policy should reward farmers and landowners through public payments for increased and better public access.

As custodians of the countryside, it is important that public money supports farmers and landowners in delivering this critical public good and helps ensure the countryside is an even more welcoming place for people to visit and enjoy. The Government needs to convince more farmers and landowners that members of the public should be welcomed and encouraged to exercise their access rights, **which must include access to waterways.**

It is critical that post-Brexit subsidies to landowners should recognise the need for public money to bring improved public benefits, such as enhanced public access to waterways.

The success of Defra's 25-year plan for the environment fundamentally depends on the creation of a movement of people, energised and motivated to protect and enhance the environment. The plan discusses reconnecting people with the environment and creating resilient landscapes and seas. This can only be achieved by allowing people access to the outdoors, to engage with the natural world and draw from it the significant health and well-being benefits that come from activity outdoors.

A number of issues affecting paddling are identified in the 25-year plan for the environment.

Paddlers and open-water swimmers alike have a vested

interest in caring for our environment. They can help to implement and action relevant pledges made in the plan, putting them into practice on waterways within their daily routines. If more people have better access and are able to paddle for health benefits, engaging with nature, we can all play a part in actively helping to improve the environment.

**At a time when we need to encourage easily accessible forms of exercise to improve mental and physical health and well-being, fair, shared, sustainable, open access for all water users will be a historic breakthrough.**



## Section Three

# The Issues And Why We Need To Change

### Current access arrangements and the requirement for change

Canoeing is an inclusive and growing activity in England, increasingly enjoyed by people of all ages, abilities and backgrounds. In the UK, over 1.9 million adults and children take part in the sport each year<sup>3</sup>. There are more than 35,000 members engaged directly with British Canoeing. Despite this, access to many waterways is an issue for paddlers.

Lack of clarity over where people are able to use their boat or craft is the single biggest barrier to participation in all paddlesports.

Paddlers, along with other water users, are being challenged, threatened and denied access to many rivers in England.

There are increasing numbers of reports where individuals have encountered conflict on the water, and have been faced with litigation for trespass. In a 2018 survey by British Canoeing, 56% of respondents said they had experienced conflict on the water in the last five years, 84% of those being on rivers.







## Current access legislation in England

British Canoeing believes, based on a wealth of historical evidence, that there is, under common law, a public right of navigation on all rivers which are physically capable of being navigated. It is acknowledged that this position is firmly rejected by others.

Several items of legislation have been introduced, which could have provided an opportunity for access or greater use of the routes on and along inland waterways and coastal waters.

The introduction of the Countryside and Rights of Way Act (2000) and the Marine and Coastal Access Act (2009) brought welcome and significant changes for recreational use of the countryside.

Open-access land can be used for walking, climbing and running and is enjoyed by millions of people each year in England. However, access to inland waterways (in England) and the use of boats on open access land (under the Countryside and Rights of Way Act) were excluded from the legislation. British Canoeing feels that this was a missed opportunity.

It is in everyone's interest to address the conflict on our waters, and British Canoeing believes it is for the Government to introduce modern, comprehensive legislation, as has been shown to work in Scotland (Land Reform (Scotland) Act 2003).

Differing interpretations of the existing law create a climate for conflict, which is not conducive to co-operative working. They present a fundamental barrier to the growth of canoeing, and also impact the potential to get more people active outdoors in the natural environment.



**By acknowledging and addressing this issue, the Government will ensure a bright future for fair, shared, sustainable enjoyment of our waters and the benefits this will bring in terms of environmental protection and enhancement, public health and well-being. There is enormous potential within outdoor recreation, which could help address the major challenges that England currently faces.**

<sup>3</sup> Arkenford (2017), 'Watersport Participation Survey 2017'





## Access Arrangements

Current Defra policy states that access to waterways must be determined either through local arrangements or settled by the courts. Having made significant attempts to negotiate public access, it is clear that this process pre-legislation is fundamentally flawed.

Local negotiations regarding access on waterways are predicated on an assumption that one party has an automatic right to present the terms and a right of veto.

**“ Ultimately, therefore, the very strength of voluntary access agreements – the general goodwill of most landowners – is also their greatest weakness – that individual landowners who decide otherwise have a power to disrupt canoe activity in a way that is rarely experienced in other sports and recreational activities <sup>4</sup>. ”**

Agreements that have been attempted in the past have been inconsistent and often unnecessarily restrictive. In order for access agreements to work and be respected, water users and landowners need to be committed to working together on an equal basis that helps to protect the environment and ensures our waters are enjoyed and shared by everyone. There is a place for voluntary access arrangements – following



legislation – to recognise the equal rights and responsibilities of all. The way will then be open, when need arises, for genuine, meaningful and equitable local agreements.

British Canoeing has always maintained an open-door policy to working with partners to improve relationships on our rivers. Our position statement on shared use has defined our vision of a fair and inclusive process for shared use of our rivers. We encourage paddlers to continue to foster good relations with other water users and, in the rare cases where activities are genuinely incompatible, to find fair and sustainable ways to share the space locally. British Canoeing believes that all water should be shared. However, in

cases where activities are genuinely in conflict, there is a place for voluntary access arrangements to recognise and confirm the equal rights and responsibilities of all. The way will then be open, when need arises, for genuine, meaningful and equitable local agreements.

British Canoeing will no longer enter into or renew restrictive agreements based on an assumption of the need for permission to navigate. However, British Canoeing will remain open to genuine agreements and environmental measures to protect wildlife, guided by the principle of taking the least restrictive option.

<sup>4</sup> University of Brighton (2006), ‘Putting Pilot Voluntary Canoe Access Agreements in Place: Final Report’

## Section Four

# The British Canoeing Pledges And Our Ask From The Government

- ① British Canoeing will champion the case for fair, shared, sustainable open access on and along inland waters to be confirmed in law. **It will do the following.**

- Call for the introduction of new modern legislation in England, drawing from the principles set out in Scotland, to confirm a right of open access on and along all navigable water.
- Seek to engage partners at all levels to work towards the shared use of water. British Canoeing will remain open to genuine agreements and environmental measures to protect wildlife which are guided by the principle of taking the least restrictive option.
- Work hard to promote practical ways of sharing the space with all water users. British Canoeing will strongly advocate a code of conduct for all stakeholders, as per the Scottish Access Code.
- British Canoeing will dedicate itself to raising awareness of access issues faced by paddlers and other like-minded water activities.

British Canoeing calls on the Government to do the following:



**Undertake** a review of the current situation in England, to ascertain the facts and take a new stance on the way forward.



**Draw on** the considerable body of evidence obtained from previous studies and consultations across the UK, and the outcomes from open-access legislation in Scotland, to inform and determine a new way forward for England.



**Visit areas** where there is active disagreement, and also areas in Scotland where open access has provided the solution, to understand the issues and to see what a positive difference canoeists can make to our environment.



## 2 British Canoeing will continue to act to protect and improve the health of our rivers, and will work to protect, preserve and enhance the natural environment. **It will do the following.**

- Commit fully to working with the Government towards the 25-year plan for the environment; tackling non-native species, addressing plastic in waterways and promoting opportunities to engage with the natural environment.
- Lead the way on paddler clean-ups, organising dedicated events, co-ordinating national campaigns and supporting the work of clubs, volunteers and the wider paddling community.
- Use resources and co-ordinate efforts with other stakeholders to campaign for cleaner, unpolluted waters to ensure we can enjoy a high standard of water quality both inland and on our coasts.
- Seek to engage with landowners, farmers and their representative bodies, to understand their concerns and to secure safe, sustainable access on and along waterways. We wish to work with them to increase biodiversity through the long-term programme of habitat improvements currently being progressed throughout Europe.
- Continue to lead the way in user engagement, promoting measures to prevent and tackle invasive non-native species. We will embed a strong culture within our sport of responsible, respectful environmental behaviour.



British Canoeing calls on the Government to do the following:



**Recognise** the positive impact the canoeing community can have on protecting and enhancing the environment. With clarity on access to waterways, paddlers have the potential to contribute to environmental protection.



**Take effective** action to safeguard the biodiversity of the water environment. We suggest appropriate regulations and enforcement to eradicate invasive non-native species, and allocate adequate resources to the relevant organisations.



**Take decisive** action to tackle the amount of plastic and pollutants entering our rivers.



### 3 British Canoeing will commit to inspiring more people to be active outdoors; connecting people with their environment and promoting the benefits on mental and physical well-being. **It will do the following.**

- Strive to inspire people to pursue a passion for canoeing, which is uniquely placed to create a deep and lasting connection between people and the water environment.
- Through our participation programmes, talent pathways, clubs and centres, continue to offer exciting and inclusive ways to access all forms of the sport.
- Strive to provide clear and accurate information on places to paddle.
- Support our network of members, clubs and dedicated volunteers to continue to bring enormous value to young people, communities and minority groups across England.

British Canoeing calls on the Government to do the following:

**Recognise** the positive effect that being outdoors in the natural environment has on mental and physical well-being. A long-term strategy for outdoor recreation would be a step towards tackling the epidemic of inactivity.



British Canoeing and its members, stakeholders and partners are committed to working together alongside the Government and political parties to ensure the future of our environment and the sport.

## Section Five

# The Case For Change

Through extensive consultation with the paddling community, the core principles upon which we make our case to improve inland water access are:

- canoeing contributes towards improving mental and physical well-being;
- open, sustainable access on and along waterways can have a beneficial impact on the environment; and
- canoeing positively benefits communities and supports the local economy.

“We know that time spent out of doors, appreciating the beauty of nature and the wonder of creation, is vital for our well-being. It improves both mental and physical health and re-connects us with the other species with whom we share this planet<sup>5</sup>.”

<sup>5</sup> Rt Hon Michael Gove (2018), ‘Britain has wonderful areas of beauty, which are also working countryside. Our plan is to enhance them’, Sunday Times, 27 May 2018







## Canoeing contributes towards improving mental and physical well-being

**Poor mental health costs to the UK economy between £74 billion and £99 billion.**

“Around 20 million adults in the UK are insufficiently active and the impact of physical inactivity and sedentary lifestyles weighs heavily on UK healthcare, estimated to cost as much as £1.2 billion a year<sup>6</sup>. ”

Canoeing offers low-impact physical exercise. It has the ability to create a deep and lasting connection with the natural

environment, but can also offer the exhilaration and adventure that many people seek to escape their busy lives. Natural England research has shown that the highest levels of happiness occur in people visiting the outdoors more than once per week<sup>7</sup>.

The combination of exercise and engagement with nature is greater than the benefits of either

alone<sup>8</sup>. Evidence indicates that exercise in the presence of nature leads to positive short and long-term health outcomes. Exposure to nature and being active is proven to substantially benefit mental and physical health. 92% of people take part in outdoor activities to relax and de-stress<sup>9</sup>.

<sup>6</sup> British Heart Foundation (2017), physical inactivity report, London

<sup>7</sup> Natural England Annual Report: Monitor Engagement with the Natural Environment (MENE) 2013

<sup>8</sup> Pretty, Peacock, Sellans and Griffin (2005) International Journal of Environmental Health Research October 2005; 15(5): 319 – 337: The mental and physical health outcomes of green exercise

<sup>9</sup> Getting Active Outdoors, Sport England Report June 2015





## Open access on and along waterways will have beneficial impact on our environment

**Pollution, plastic and invasive non-native species are causing irreparable environmental issues, adversely affecting biodiversity and water quality.**

The canoe by its nature is a silent, environmentally benign craft, and has been used for centuries for journeying, exploring and procuring food.

Each year, thousands of volunteers remove tonnes of rubbish from waterways. Canoes, kayaks and stand-up paddleboards are uniquely placed to access difficult places many others just cannot reach on and around

waterways. Furthermore, the canoeing community provides a valuable role for the waterway authorities, notifying them of pollution and flood risks that otherwise may go unreported.

Invasive non-native species (INNS) cost the UK economy £1.7 billion<sup>10</sup>. Updated for inflation, this cost increases to over £2 billion in 2018<sup>11</sup>.

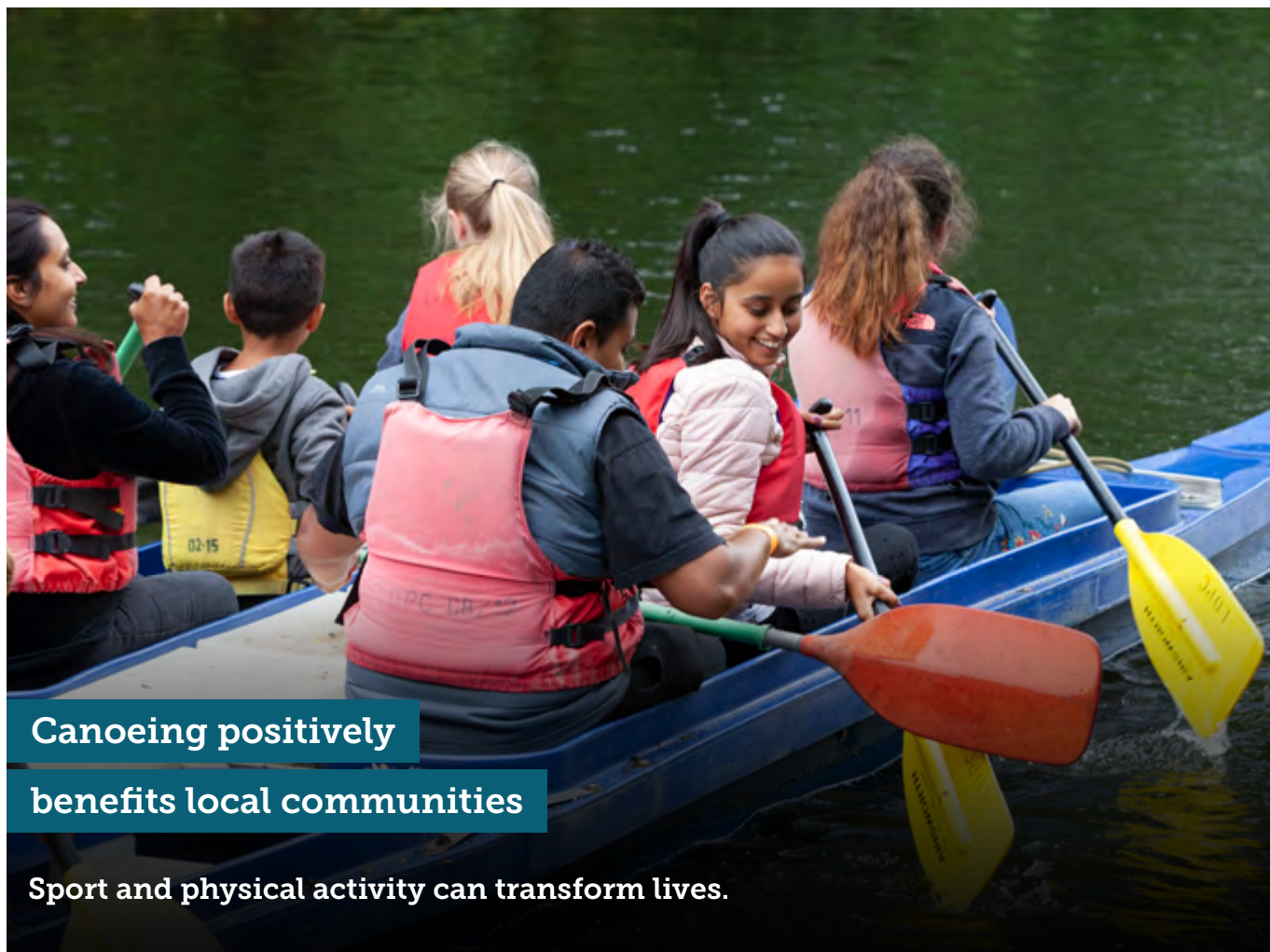
British Canoeing is one of the leading advocates in the battle to control INNS through promotion of the '**Check, Clean, Dry**' campaign.

Through continued education of the paddling community, people taking part in paddlesports have the opportunity to make a huge difference, saving the Government millions of pounds each year.

<sup>10</sup> Centre for Agriculture and Bioscience International (2010) 'The Economic Cost of Invasive Non-Native Species to Great Britain'

<sup>11</sup> Wildlife & Countryside Link (27 Mar, 2018) 'Multi billion pound bill from nature invaders set to soar post Brexit'

[www.wcl.org.uk/multi-billion-pound-bill-from-nature-invaders-set-to-soar-post-brexit.asp](http://www.wcl.org.uk/multi-billion-pound-bill-from-nature-invaders-set-to-soar-post-brexit.asp) <sup>15</sup> Secretary of State, Michael Gove, Oxford Farming Conference, 4 January 2018



## Canoeing positively

## benefits local communities

### Sport and physical activity can transform lives.

A 2017 study showed that canoeing was the most popular watersport activity in the UK and more than 6.1 million canoeing trips were estimated to have been taken by 1.9 million people in 2012<sup>12</sup>.

Removing the uncertainty of access will help paddlesports to continue to grow, and increase the support of rural community services every year.

The extent of the contribution outdoor recreation makes to the visitor economy is closely linked to the level of ease which individuals can engage with the natural environment.

Removing the uncertainty of access will help paddlesports to continue to grow, and benefit rural community services.

The work done by dedicated volunteers in hundreds of clubs, getting people active and supporting local communities, is fundamental in creating a prosperous and healthy society.

<sup>12</sup> Arkenford (2017), 'Watersport Participation Survey'



# Conclusion

## The case for fair, shared, sustainable open access is clear.

There is enormous potential within outdoor recreation, specifically paddlesports, which could help address the major challenges that our nation currently faces.

Shared access for everyone has the potential to be a historic breakthrough. In a time when we need to encourage easily accessible, alternative forms of exercise to improve mental and physical health, open access to the 'blue environment' can be part of the solution.

For watersports, the Countryside and Rights of Way Act in 2001 was a missed opportunity to allow responsible open access to the outdoors. With Brexit and Defra's 25-year plan for the environment, we now have a fresh opportunity to look again at the lack of undisputed access to our rivers and take a positive step for generations to come.

**Now is the time for positive change.**



This charter, is not only for canoeing. This is a vision of how we can all enjoy **'clear waters'**, sharing the space in harmony and co-operation.





# ” Supporters

“The Canal & Rivers Trust is happy to support the Clear Access, Clear Waters Charter as a sustainable way to encourage paddlers to fully access our wonderful inland waterways.”

**Richard Parry**

CEO, The Canal & Rivers Trust

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“In 2008 the Scottish Canoe Association and the Spey Fishery Board developed Guidance for Paddlers and Anglers using the River Spey. This established a code of conduct which has enabled both interests to enjoy their respective sports with the minimum of disruption. The Spey Users Group, meanwhile, meets annually and has provided a forum for effective communication through which any issues can be addressed. Together, they have gone a long way to developing mutual understanding and a greater level of harmony on the river.”

**Roger Knight**

Director of the Spey Fishery Board

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“The Outdoor Industries Association supports everyone getting active outdoors, in any manner that’s safe, legal and enjoyable. Responsible and sustainable access to the outdoors is a vital part of our work and we support the British Canoeing initiative to promote ‘fair, shared, sustainable open access on water’. There is absolutely no doubt that the mental, physical and social health of the nation can be improved, with huge benefits to everyone, by promoting outdoor recreation in all its many forms - we wish British Canoeing every support as they navigate the challenging waters of open access on water.”

**Andrew Denton**

CEO, Outdoor Industries Association

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“The Outdoor Swimming Society supports the new British Canoeing Access and Environment Charter which we believe will champion the case for fair, shared, sustainable open access on and along inland waters, protect the environment, and encourage more people to be active outdoors increasing their mental and physical wellbeing. We believe we all have a right to swim under an open sky with open access to lakes and rivers.”

**Kate Rew**

Founder, Outdoor Swimming Society

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“Paddlers in Scotland have benefitted enormously since the Land Reform (Scotland) Act was passed. The public can now use non-powered water craft, of any type, on virtually every piece of inland and coastal water, without fear or favour.

Paddlers are part of the community discussing how to resolve any problems or issues (for example overcrowding in popular holiday spots), and not being left out of the conversation.

Shared responsibility helps greatly to take forward the thinking about use of facilities, in this case river banks, landing places and vehicle parking.”

**Eddie Palmer**

Chair, Environment and Access Policy Committee, Scottish Canoe Association

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# “ Supporters

“Our vision is that everyone, regardless of their age, background or level of ability, feels able to engage in sport and physical activity. Sports and activities on rivers and waterways can be particularly appealing and are a great way for people to have fun and enjoy the benefits of activity in the outdoors. ”

Sport England

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“The Inland Waterways Association believes that canoes and other small unpowered craft are a great and affordable way to get afloat, and offer excellent opportunities to introduce more people, including children and young people, to inland waterways and the great outdoors. We welcome the charter published by British Canoeing and believe that if Government would introduce modern, comprehensive, legislation for England, as has been done in Scotland and is currently being considered in Wales, then that would bring welcome clarity to the law. ”

**Neil Edwards**

Chief Executive, Inland Waterways Association

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“The Government’s sport strategy document, **Sporting Future** makes clear that DCMS encourages and promotes outdoor recreation and a variety of physical activities as well as established sports. Use of our outdoor waterways can be a creative and fun way to get people active. ”

DCMS

“Wildlife and Countryside Link’s 49 members, which include British Canoeing, recognise that responsible public access to the outdoors can create deep and lasting connections between people and their surroundings, and help strengthen a desire to protect the natural environment. We therefore welcome British Canoeing’s Clear Access, Clear Waters Charter as a significant and timely contribution to policy discussion on this important issue. ”

**Elaine King**

CEO, Wildlife & Countryside Link

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“The natural environment provides crucial opportunities for everyone to be active, so it’s great to see British Canoeing promoting responsible, shared access through their Access and Environment Charter. We must all work together to preserve natural environment, inspiring more people to get active outdoors and enabling future generations to do the same for many years to come. ”

**James Allen**

Director of Policy, Governance and External Affairs, Sport and Recreation Alliance









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