

BATHING WATER DESIGNATION CONSULTATION

ADVISORY DOCUMENT – WELSH GOVERNMENT

Date: February 2024

INTRODUCTION & BACKGROUND

Designated bathing waters are the only stretches of waterways where there is a statutory requirement to monitor water quality for bacteria harmful to human health. It is essential that more inland bathing waters are designated to ensure water users who use rivers are provided with water quality information which is currently not openly available. With this information water users are then able to assess the health risk of using a specific bathing water. The discharge of sewage into the environment puts water users at risk of harmful illness such as ear nose and throat infections, gastroenteritis and exposure to E. coli amongst other harmful pathogens.

We have seen the designation of bathing waters result in marked improvements in coastal water quality with 98% of designated bathing waters in 2023 meeting minimum standards, up from just 42% in the 1990's. Inland waterways need to be recognised as recreational hotspots as coastal waters are. It's vital they are designated to ensure regulators take the appropriate measures to improve water quality under the Bathing Water Regulations 2013.

Without data provided by the designated bathing water status routine water quality testing, very little information is available to water users regarding the state and quality of waterways. The transparency of water quality data at bathing sites is crucial to water users to provide the information they need in assessing the risk of using the stretch of waterway and the effects it may have on their health. This water quality monitoring is also the vital mechanism to improve water quality at our well-loved rivers, lakes and beaches as directed by [The Bathing Water Regulations 2013](#).

HOW YOU CAN SUPPORT BATHING WATER DESIGNATION APPLICATIONS

Two applications that were made to the Welsh Government in 2023 have made it through to the consultation phase of the process. Respond to the bathing water consultation [Bathing water review Wales 2024 | GOV.WALES](#) by **19th February 2024**.

When responding to the consultation you might want to think about:

- Have you surfed, swam, kayaked or paddle boarded at the proposed bathing sites?
- Your personal experiences of the proposed bathing sites.
- How important is it to you knowing the water quality at well-loved stretches of waterway?
- Your thoughts on increasing the number of designated bathing sites at rivers, lakes and reservoirs.
- Only swimmers are considered when designating a bathing site.

TEMPLATE ANSWERS TO THE CONSULTATION

You can answer as many or as few questions as you wish. Below we have drafted some template responses to the key questions you may wish to respond to. **Please edit** and add to these as much as you wish and make it as personal to you as you would like.

Question 1

Do you agree or disagree with our proposal to designate The Warren, Hay-on Wye as a bathing water for the 2024 bathing season? What is your view on the proposal and your reason/evidence to support your view?

I agree with the proposal to designated The Warren, Hay-on Way as a bathing water for the 2024 bathing season.

I agree with the proposal as Bathing Water Designation provides a legal obligation to improve water quality, which has significant benefits to both human health and the health of ecosystems.

I also support the proposal as designated bathing waters are the only stretches of waterways where there is a statutory requirement to monitor water quality for bacteria harmful to human health. This monitoring would allow me to better understand the risks I face when entering this waterway.

Question 2

Do you agree or disagree with our proposal to designate Nefyn Beach as a bathing water for the 2024 bathing season? What is your view on the proposal and your reason/evidence to support your view?

I agree with the proposal to designate Nefyn Beach as a bathing water for the 2024 bathing season.

I agree with the proposal as Bathing Water Designation provides a legal obligation to improve water quality, which has significant benefits to both human health and the health of ecosystems.

I also support the proposal as designated bathing waters are the only stretches of waterways where there is a statutory requirement to monitor water quality for bacteria harmful to human health. This monitoring would allow me to better understand the risks I face when entering this waterway.

Question 5

We have asked a number of specific questions. If you have any related issues which we have not specifically addressed, please use this space to report them: Please enter here: Responses to consultations are likely to be made public, on the internet or in a report. If you would prefer your response to remain anonymous, please tick here:

In addition to the bathing waters proposed in this consultation, I support an increase in designated bathing waters across Wales. History has shown the ability of bathing water designation to improve water quality at designated sites and as a water-user, and lover, this is something I strongly support.