

Stan Witherden, Montgomeryshire & Glyndwr, Lab, Mar 28th

Ellie Chown, N Herefords, Green, Apr 3rd

Satvir Kaur, Southampton E, Lab, Apr 3rd

Blake Stephenson, Mid Beds, Con, Apr 4th and 10th

Olly Glover, Didcot & Wantage, LD, Apr 8th

Jenny Riddell-Carpenter, Suffolk Coastal, Lab, Apr 25th

Phil Brickhill, Bolton N, Lab, Apr 28th

Azal Khan, Manchester Rusholme, Lab, May 8th

Edward Morello, W Dorset, LD, May 13th, 15th x 3

Ian Roome, N Devon, LD, May 15th

The final sentence in the reply to Brickhill's question is interesting. If the EA/Defra admit that they know of no legal basis for their claim that there is no right of navigation on our rivers, unlike the case with Magna Carta, as in Defra's Freedom of Information response to us (Nov 2021, p13), there should be no need to ask permission of riparian owners.

Caroline Voaden (S Devon, LD) is presenting the Green Spaces Bill, presently adjourned but due to be resumed on Jun 28th. Why only green spaces and not blue?

## The impossible wait

When the waiting list for permits to run America's Grand Canyon reached 20 years it was obvious that the system had failed. To run this part of the Colorado as a student you would need to apply at birth or before. The permit system is also totally inadequate for the rivers with available permits hardly increased in number while applicants have increased by many times over the years. Your chance of success on the San Juan is about 3.5%, 3.4% for the Green, 1.6% for the Yampa, 1.8% for the Middle Fork of the Salmon and a mere 0.6% for the Selway. Even if successful, what chance is there that conditions will be suitable when you are allowed to go, or that you will still be friends with the same people

## High speed pollution detector

The EA are using the Surfbee, an inflatable boat with camera and monitoring equipment, to search for chemical or biological pollution in rivers at up to 14km/h. If it finds anything it phones its users to investigate further.

## Welsh tourist turnoff

A £1,000,000 Year of Croeso Weather-Proofing Fund has been set up to help businesses protect against the weather. Grants of £5,000 to £20,000 are on offer to help companies try to attract visitors, who currently put £3,800,000,000 per year into the Welsh economy. Visit Wales data claimed 55% of businesses recorded fewer visitors last year because of poor weather, despite the anti motorist policy for anyone going to or through Wales. Cabinet Secretary for Tourism Rebecca Evans said 'our visitors can always be guaranteed a warm welcome' although river users might be inclined to note that Wales has the least warm welcome of any country in the world.

## Welsh bathing water standards

Of 110 Welsh bathing water tested venues, only Rhyl was recorded as Poor and Llandudno North, New Quay Harbour and Wiseman's Bridge were Sufficient. The rest were at least Good, an increase of 2023, with 75 Excellent.

## Thames flooding

The EA and Royal Borough of Windsor & Maidenhead Council are investigating persistent flooding at Cookham and Hurley over the last two years. The EA's Jubilee River was intended to be a flood relief channel for Maidenhead and won numerous awards before a series of design faults were revealed, including being under capacity. When there is floodwater about, the EA have to decide where to put it and they would not want to have flooding around their recent flood relief channel.

## Question



Dr Roz Savage

Liberal Democrat

South Cotswolds

Commons

To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, if he will bring forward legislative proposals to improve (a) public access, (b) environmental protections and (c) biodiversity enhancement for (i) rivers, (ii) lakes and (iii) other inland waterways.

## Answer



Emma Hardy

Labour

Kingston upon Hull West and Haltemprice

Commons

## Answered on

29 April 2025

The government recognises the importance of providing access to the outdoors including blue spaces for people's health and wellbeing and is working to ensure this is safe and appropriate. We are currently developing policy working closely with key stakeholders to improve access to nature, in line with our ambitious manifesto commitments to create nine new national river walks and three new national forests in England. This includes access onto unregulated inland waterways, taking account of environmental protection and biodiversity enhancement.

## Question



Phil Brickell

Labour

Bolton West

Commons

To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, whether his Department plans to extend rights of responsible access to include more inland waters for recreational use.

## Answer



Emma Hardy

Labour

Kingston upon Hull West and Haltemprice

Commons

## Answered on

25 April 2025

The Government recognises the importance of providing access to the outdoors, including blue spaces, for people's health and wellbeing and is working to ensure this is safe and appropriate. This is why we have set out our ambitious manifesto commitments to create nine new national river walks and three new national forests in England, expanding access to the great outdoors. We are currently developing policy to improve access to nature, including onto unregulated inland waterways, working closely with key stakeholders to reduce barriers preventing people from accessing green and blue spaces.

## Sinking pennywort

Floating pennywort is an invasive South American aquatic weed that grows up to 200mm per day, choking waterways. Trying to keep it in check is costing over £25,000,000 per year. A weevil which feeds only on this plant has been released on the Cam Washes by CABI to address the problem. The work is being funded by the EA.

*A selection of questions put by Savage. She also put others of broader scope. Notice the final sentence of the answer to Brickhill.*