

National Assembly for Wales

Environment and Sustainability Committee

NRW 2015 16

Natural Resources Wales – Annual Scrutiny 2015

Response from Fil Wills, The British Horse Society Cymru National Committee Chair

Natural Resources Wales (NRW) has been in existence for 2 years and I have found our relationship with the ex FCW staff on the ground and their direct managers to be as cordial and professional as ever. However there are various points of concern from our side:

- The lack of an adequate website to gain the necessary information is unacceptable.
- The continual changes in staff structure makes it impossible for us to retain our staff contacts.
- Older staff are taking early retirement and a whole level of knowledge is being lost and wheels are being re-invented, this is not a good use of resource.
- Unless you have direct dial numbers for staff you have no chance of getting to them through the switchboard which is next to useless.
- There is no evidence to us of a new single culture and the 3 merged units still seem to operate as before. After 2 years it is disturbing that this is the case.
- The senior managers seem to be unaware/do not seem to accept that there is a problem with the 3 different cultures continuing and with the general perception that the Environment Agency rules everything. This is unacceptable after a 2 year period.
- What we are being told at public events and in general publicity about NRW does not tie in with what we see on the ground – this is again a disturbing scenario.

I am sorry that this seems negative, and I am sure that, given time, the situation will improve, the large financial savings which were promised will happen and there will be one cohesive unit. It must be extremely difficult for senior staff who have come from separate strands of environmental work, each with their own individual expertise in distinct areas, to take on different elements of work which are entirely new to them.

As previously mentioned, I have absolutely no problems with the individual staff on the ground and their direct managers, who continue to provide excellent service, despite what appears from the outside, to be a very difficult environment in which to work.

I hope you find my comments useful.

Fil Wills

31 March 2015

