



# Environmental Charter

Version 5  
24.06.2021  
Compiled by:  
Paul Donovan  
on behalf of VAAN

A commitment to the sustainable use of the Vale of Glamorgan's natural environment.

## What is the VAAN Environmental Charter?

The VAAN Environmental Charter is a commitment from VAAN members for the sustainable use of the Vale of Glamorgan's natural environment. In signing up to the VAAN Environmental Charter, all members of VAAN are making a commitment to work with landowners, land managers and environmental organisations to keep the Charter relevant and effective in conserving all of the natural environment activity sites they use.

Most of the areas used by VAAN members are privately owned, and the VAAN Environmental Charter encourages groups to show respect and consideration for local residents and other users, as well as citizenship, to the activity sites that are visited.

As VAAN members we follow three basic principles that apply to everything we do and the activities we carry out:

1. We **protect the natural environment** and in doing so we recognise that use of the natural environment carries with it a responsibility to encourage those in our care to learn something of the countryside's special qualities and the ways in which it can be looked after.
2. We **enjoy the outdoors & stay safe** and in doing so make a commitment to good practice for the sustainable use of the natural environment.
3. We **respect other people** and in doing so always undertake activities in a manner which maintains good relations

Where deemed appropriate (and/or necessary), **good practice guidelines** will be created and/or adopted for all relevant outdoor recreational activities with good environmental practices, safety considerations and behaviours that reduce impacts on local communities.

The VAAN **works with outdoor adventure businesses and partners** in the Vale of Glamorgan and surrounding area to nurture sustainable opportunities to make outdoor adventure activities in the Vale truly inclusive.

## The VAAN Environmental Charter

Secretariat: C/o Atlantic Experience, Atlantic College, St Donats Castle, Llantwit Major, Vale of Glamorgan, CF61 1WF



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## Conservation

- We recognise the great potential to foster a commitment to conservation in our clients. The intense and memorable nature of the outdoor experience makes it a powerful tool for the appreciation of the special qualities of the Environmental Charter and the Vale of Glamorgan's natural environment.
- We will avoid damage to sites and minimise any disturbance to wildlife, in accordance with codes of conduct and wildlife legislation.
- We will encourage our colleagues, clients and students to enjoy and respect the wildlife, landscape and cultural heritage of the Vale of Glamorgan's natural environment.
- We know that many sites, plants and animals are protected by law and are fragile or vulnerable to disturbance. We will manage our groups to minimise disturbance.
- We will avoid, wherever possible, leaving any new features that have significant impact on the countryside, for example cairns and signs. Where this is necessary for safety reasons we will take into account the current thinking of all interested organisations, including the landowner. Where there is sufficient doubt we will consult with the relevant parties.
- We will place any temporary marks or fixings so as to avoid damage or interference with others.
- We will observe accepted good practice for the collection of geological and biological specimens.
- We will abide with Countryside Access Legislation and local Countryside / Marine Codes.
- We will show consideration for the local community and other users of the area.

## Access

- We understand that all land is owned by someone and if using a site we will follow existing access guidelines and/or relevant legislation, as laid down by Welsh Government.
- We will secure the agreement of landowners and land managers whenever we wish to extend activities into new sites or areas where existing permissions do not exist.
- We will respect any relevant VAAN guidance for vulnerable and/or sensitive sites where there are specific issues or problems.
- We will show consideration to landowners, residents and others when driving, parking and setting up equipment, for example keeping lanes, paths and gateways clear.
- We will ensure that our activities do not spoil other people's enjoyment, in particular avoiding unreasonable noise and overcrowding.

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- We will encourage our colleagues, students and clients to understand and respect the needs of the resident community. In particular people's safety, property, work and livelihoods.

### Development

- We are committed to this Charter and will actively encourage our colleagues and other groups to follow these standards.
- We will aim to develop resources, tools and information that instructors can take with them to use as aids in the field.
- We will aim to deliver a range of environmental training events each year, facilitated by experts in specific areas such as those below, for example:

Wildflower and Bumblebee identification	Folklore	Rock Pooling and Seashore Exploration
Bush Craft and Foraging	Geology	Access, and Conservation
Understanding wildlife behaviour	Archaeology	Best practice for viewing Marine Wildlife
Activity specific workshops for Leaders etc. e.g. Coasteering, Paddlesport, Rock Climbing		

- We will learn from working in partnership with landowners. land managers and other relevant organisations.

This document is available in Welsh/Mae'r ddogfen hon ar gael yn Gymraeg