

Petitions Committee

Meeting Venue:

Committee Room 1 – Senedd

Meeting date:

25 November 2014

Meeting time:

09.00

Cynulliad
Cenedlaethol
Cymru

National
Assembly for
Wales



For further information please contact:

Steve George

Committee Clerk

029 2089 8421

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029 2089 8421

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Draft Agenda

- 1 Introduction, apologies and substitutions** (Pages 1 – 28)
- 2 Discussion of evidence session on 11 November 2014 – P-04-597**
Protect the future of Funky Dragon, the Children and Young
People’s Assembly for Wales (Pages 29 – 30)
- 3 New petitions**
 - 3.1 P-04-602 Personalisation of Graves** (Pages 31 – 33)
 - 3.2 P-04-603 Helping Babies Born at 22 Weeks to Survive** (Pages 34 – 38)
 - 3.3 P-04-604 Regarding the closure of Diabetes Patient Reference Groups and the cancellation of meetings of the Diabetic Planning and Delivery Group in Powys.** (Pages 39 – 42)
 - 3.4 P-04-605 Save the Cwmcarn Forest Drive from Indefinite or Permanent Closure** (Pages 43 – 45)

4 Updates to previous petitions

Economy, Science and Transport

- 4.1** P-04-319 Newtown traffic petition (Pages 46 – 47)
- 4.2** P-04-393 Llanymynech and Pant Bypass Action Group (Pages 48 – 50)
- 4.3** P-04-416 North-South Rail Services (Pages 51 – 53)
- 4.4** P-04-468 Road Safety Concerns A48 Chepstow (Pages 54 – 57)

The following three items will be considered together

- 4.5** P-04-475 Wanted – Buses for Meirionnydd (Pages 58 – 59)
- 4.6** P-04-513 Save the Wrexham/Barmouth X94 bus service (Page 60)
- 4.7** P-04-515 Increase Funding for Welsh Bus Services (Pages 61 – 71)

Culture and Sport

- 4.8** P-04-562 Caernarfon Heritage Centre (Pages 72 – 76)
- 4.9** P-04-561 Promotion of Grassroots Rugby in Wales to Encourage Take-Up of the Sport (Pages 77 – 81)

Public Services

- 4.10** P-04-397 Living Wage (Pages 82 – 85)

Education

- 4.11** P-04-485 Abuse of casual contracts in Further Education (Pages 86 – 87)
- 4.12** P-04-518 Universal Free School Lunches (Pages 88 – 90)
- 4.13** P-04-593 Advise schools on visits to Noah's Ark Zoo Farm (Pages 91 – 100)

Communities and Tackling Poverty

4.14 P-04-529 A Letting Agents Ombudsman for Wales (Pages 101 – 106)

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Health

4.16 P-04-532 Improving specialised neuromuscular services in Wales (Pages 119 – 123)

4.17 P-04-582 Much Needed Change to the Rules in our Schools with Regards to Head Lice and Nits (Pages 124 – 136)

4.18 P-04-601 Proposed Ban on the Use of e-cigarettes in Public Places (Pages 137 – 139)

Natural Resources

4.19 P-04-544 Ban the Shooting of Greenland White-fronted Geese (Pages 140 – 141)

Finance and Government Business

4.20 P-04-577 Reinstate Funding to the Real Opportunities Project (Pages 142 – 147)

Document is Restricted

P-04-597 Protect the future of Funky Dragon, the Children and Young People's Assembly for Wales

Petition wording:

We, the undersigned, call on the National Assembly for Wales to urge the Welsh Government to protect the future of Funky Dragon, the Children and Young People's Assembly for Wales by restoring core funding. Wales must have an independent, youth led, publically funded, national platform for children and young people, democratically elected at a local level, to give voice to their views and opinions and to hold the Welsh Government to account. The national platform must be empowered to work with all elected members to further children and young people's issues and to report directly to the United Nations Committee on the Rights of the Child as Funky Dragon did so successfully in 2008.

Funky Dragon still believes that:

1. Young people, democratically elected at a local level, should have a National Platform to voice their views and opinions.
2. That platform should be called The Youth Assembly for Wales.
3. It should be able to work with all Elected Members including Assembly Members and Members of Parliament to further young peoples issues.
4. It should be supported to allow Welsh young people to report directly to the United Nations Committee on the Rights of the Child.

The UN Committee on the Rights of the Child, in commenting on the last UK State report stated: Concluding observation 33. That governments' 'Support forums for children's participation, such as the United Kingdom Youth Parliament, Funky Dragon in Wales and Youth Parliament in Scotland should be implemented.

Petitioner : Catherine Patricia Jones

First considered by the Committee: 23 September 2014

Number of Signatures: 1,212 electronic signatures and 429 paper signatures. Total 1,641

P-04-602 Personalisation of Graves

Petition wording

We the undersigned, call upon Welsh Government to review the central policy with a view to bringing in new legislation/regulations so that there is consistency across local authority areas in Wales on the personalisation of Graves, particularly the graves of babies and children

Petitioner: Elizabeth Haynes & Catherine Board

First considered by the Committee:

Number of Signatures: 120 electronic signatures and 1,486 paper signatures collected. Total: 1,606

Leighton Andrews AC / AM
Y Gweinidog Gwasanaethau Cyhoeddus
Minister for Public Services



Llywodraeth Cymru
Welsh Government

Ein cyf/Our ref LA -/05123/14

William Powell AM
Chair Petitions Committee
Ty Hywel
Cardiff Bay
Cardiff
CF99 1NA

committeebusiness@Wales.gsi.gov.uk

4 November 2014

Dear Bill,

Thank you for your letter of 15 October about a petition your Committee has received from Elizabeth Haynes and Catherine Board. This calls on the Welsh Government to amend legislation to provide a more consistent approach to be adopted across Local Authorities' cemeteries in respect of the personalisation of graves, particularly the graves of babies and young children.

I am sympathetic in principle to this request, however, it is not clear from the correspondence received exactly what the petitioners require. Therefore, while I do have some powers to regulate Local Authority burial grounds, it is not completely clear whether this falls within them.

I have therefore asked my officials to explore this matter further and I will then consider whether there is a case for a change.

Your sincerely
Leighton Andrews

Leighton Andrews AC / AM
Y Gweinidog Gwasanaethau Cyhoeddus
Minister for Public Services

P-04-602 Personalisation of Graves – Correspondence from the Petitioner to the Committee, 17.11.14

SENT ON BEHALF OF TORFAEN GRAVES ACTION GROUP

Dear Sir,

Thank you for your email & the attached letter from the Minister. For clarity, we have listed below background information and have been more specific, as requested.

For background, this issue came forward after Torfaen Council decided to enforce a policy that had been in existence for many years that had not been enforced previously. Grave personalisation had been allowed and some parents were given verbal agreements to site items. In May 2014 this changed. Based on verbal conversations with a very small number of grave visitors (no formal complaints received), the Officer decided to enforce the policy by posting notices on graveyard entrances, giving a short period of time for family to remove items. Many people are angry at this decision and believe that the Council have been heartless because many of these graves have been personalised without interference for over 22 yrs. Can you imagine how hurt so many people were? Torfaen Council then attended graves, stripped graves and sent items straight to landfill, in doing so, breaching their own 28 day storage policy. These issues are being addressed separately with TCBC and the Ombudsman, but we thought it would give some background to the reason for the petition.

We have discovered that councils in Wales have their own individual policies and levels of intervention and enforcement. So what is acceptable in 1 graveyard could be breaching rules just a couple of miles down the road. This isn't fair and equitable and should be regularised throughout Wales. So for clarity, the aim of the petition is :-

1. A "Cemetery Policy" be written and adopted by WG for all of Wales and that each Council in Wales adhere to the WG policy, to remove the inconsistencies and unfairness in the current multiple policies.
2. That Welsh Government are mindful of the delicate nature of personalisation of Graves, particularly Baby Graves.
3. To make the new policy up to date and current (solar lights, etc were not available when many of these council policies were written).

Agenda Item 3.2

P-04-603 Helping Babies Born at 22 Weeks to Survive.

Petition wording

We call upon the National Assembly for Wales to urge the Welsh Government to:

- change the guidelines so that babies born after 22 weeks and who show signs of life are given appropriate medical care; and
- In changing these guidelines ensure that they include a guarantee that a Paediatrician will review and weigh every baby born after 22 weeks who shows signs of life immediately after their birth so that parents and clinicians can make informed decisions based on the individual baby's chance of survival.

Petitioner : Emma Jones

First considered by the Committee:

Number of Signatures: 2,543 electronic signatures and 216 paper signatures collected. Total: 2,759

Mark Drakeford AC / AM
Y Gweinidog Iechyd a Gwasanaethau Cymdeithasol
Minister for Health and Social Services



Llywodraeth Cymru
Welsh Government

Ein cyf/Our ref: MD/05424/14

William Powell AM
Assembly Member for Mid & West Wales
Chair Petitions Committee

Petitions@Wales.gov.uk

31 October 2014

Dear William,

Thank you for your letter of 15 October informing me of Emma Jones's petition in relation to the care of babies born after 22 weeks gestation.

As I am sure you are aware, the care of extremely preterm babies is extremely challenging and reviewed regularly as medical advances are made.

Health boards follow guidance from both the Royal College of Paediatrics and the British Association of Perinatal Medicine. Whilst the care of the mother and her baby will always need to be individualised, current guidance suggests that it would be considered in the best interests of the baby, and standard practice, for resuscitation not to be carried out. If the parents wish, they should have the opportunity to discuss outcomes with a second senior member of the perinatal team.

*Best wishes,
Mark*

Mark Drakeford AC / AM
Y Gweinidog Iechyd a Gwasanaethau Cymdeithasol
Minister for Health and Social Services

P-04-603 Helping Babies Born Under 22 Weeks to Survive – Correspondence from the Petitioner to the Committee, 18.11.14

Hello,

I sent you an email which is my response. I would like its seen as important and taken into the committee meeting. I also write a response to the health ministers letter which is underlined. Please take this as important also as i need resuscitation to be clearly understood, as the health minister havent looked into my petition properly as he has an opinion on something im not even asking for it the petition.

Thanks Emma jones

Emma Jones's statement for her petition being considered on Tuesday 25th November.

I will start by noting all the evidence and proof i have gained since starting my petition.

- babies born early should be given a chance to live, i am fighting for change so that babies born with any signs of life are given appropriate care and medical assistance if needed. I am not asking for resuscitation to be carried out, i am asking for assistance to a breathing living baby.
- Resuscitation is not what i am asking, a baby born with signs of life are alive not dead meaning resuscitation is not needing to be carried out.
- A baby is entitled to rights, there right to live. Any baby born and breathing must have help, not be left to die because he/she has been born early.
- There is enough medical help and treatment available to babies born so premature, every baby has the right to be given the chance.
- I know babies been premature can die, but i also know babies can survive. I have proof and success stories from parents who have been able to take their baby home after being born so early.
- It is LAW that each human has rights, when born and living in this world that individual has rights. A baby should never be left to die down to a guideline.
- Babies born before 24 weeks have been seen to do very well in the last 5 years, research and numbers have shown babies can survive and life normal lives when born so early.

- Some babies before 23 weeks have survived with no disabilities at all, other have survived but with minor/ severe difficulties. Unless the baby is given the chance no one will know that babies fate.

Personal experience

After suffering the loss of my first child at 22 weeks gestation, i learnt to cope and deal with my loss. My first son was still born and passed away during labour. Not once and would i ever had asked for resuscitation after my son had died. He was at rest and i would never had know what harm it would have done bringing him back. But, back in December 2012 i gave birth to my second son at the heath hospital wales. Not only was my son born breathing and alive, no one helped! he was said to be incompatible with life. As he was born just before 23 weeks. My son was alive and no assistance was offered even after begging and hoping for help. He was left to die because he was early, he live for 93 minutes with no help, breathed all on his own.

- Can anyone say if my son was helped he would not have survived for sure?
NO
- Can any medical professional tell me that my sons death was uncontrollable?
NO
- Could my son have lived? YES
- Will we ever know if he would be here today? NO

Many babies have died down to these guidelines being 24 weeks, at 22 weeks gestation a baby can near enough weigh the same or even more than a baby at 24 weeks. At 22 weeks a baby is strong enough to breath on its own for an amount of time, at 22 weeks babies have survived when been given the chance to live.

I am in contact with many parents who elsewhere have been lucky. There babies were chosen to be given the chance, their babies were lucky to have the medical staff that couldn't turn away this helpless little baby.

Lately, a number of stories have been coming out to the public on premature babies. Many families who have suffered a loss down to the guidelines have been speaking out, stories on a baby being helped before 23 weeks has been printed and shared. The numbers of babies surviving at such a low age have been rising and Wales are behind in the success of this.

Because they are not given the chance, i have documents and stories all available to share with you.

Documentaries have also been aired on premature babies, such as "miracle babies" a program behind small babies and how they get on. The number of babies in this series alone has struck the news and social media. In this one series alone 5 babies in total have survived and gone home to family. This is one of the best examples i can give you. This is proof smaller babies are surviving.

I am fighting for guidelines to change from 24 weeks gestation to 22 weeks gestation. I am fighting to change this knowing babies can survive at this age, but must be given the chance.

In response to the Health minister's letter

I am not sure you have looked into my petition properly, as stated on it title i am asking for help and assistance to be given to a baby born at or after 22 weeks if born with any signs of life. If a baby is born breathing it should not be left to die, as you stated resuscitation should not be carried out in the best interests of the baby. I fully agree with you that a baby who is dead should not be resuscitated. What i am asking is nothing to do with resuscitation and its guideline. I am asking for a living human being to have appropriate care and as much fight as possible to be kept alive.

This is as clear as i can be.

Please consider what i am asking in respect of parents and the babies being born into this world before their time.

We can be saving so many more, babies are dying for no reason.

Please look at what the people want, the parents and families who have to deal with losses that would have been prevented.

Thank you

Emma I jones

P-04-604 Regarding the closure of Diabetes Patient Reference Groups and the cancellation of meetings of the Diabetic Planning and Delivery Group in Powys.

Petition wording

We the undersigned call upon the Minister for Health and Social Services to require Powys LHB to immediately re-establish the Diabetes Planning and Delivery Group and the local Diabetes Patient Reference Groups.

The closure of diabetes Patient Reference Groups in April 2011 and the cancellation of the statutory Diabetes Planning and Delivery Group (DPDG) in June 2013 denies the patient input defined in the 'National Service Framework for Diabetes in Wales'(NSF) and the 'Guidance on Involving Adult NHS Service Users and Carers'.

The closure of the DPDG is in direct contravention of instructions set out in correspondence from the Minister for Health and Social Services to Chairs of all Local Health Boards and from the Chief Executive NHS Wales to the Chief Executives of the Local Health Boards in June 2010. The correspondence states:-

."Each DPDG should take responsibility for leading, managing and reporting to the LHB Board and to the Chief Executive of NHS on progress with the delivery of the NSF."and....."The DPDG will need to ensure effective engagement with service users and is an integral part of the LHB structures underpinning the implementation of the CCM (Chronic Conditions Management) policy agenda." (There are patient representatives on all the Diabetes Planning and Delivery Groups)

Additional Information

In June 2013 the Welsh Assembly Health and Social Care Committee reported on the outcome of their 'Inquiry into the implementation of the National

Service Framework in Wales and its future direction'. They concluded at Recommendation 5:-

"We recommend that the forthcoming diabetes delivery plan should ensure that local Diabetes Planning and Delivery Groups' relationships with health boards are formalised. Health Boards should demonstrate how they take account of DPDG recommendations and fully engage with their work. Arrangements should be put in place to adopt a national approach for DPDG's, to include national terms of reference for their operation and a requirement to meet with each other to share best practice."

In October 2013 – 'Together for Health – A Diabetes Delivery Plan' was launched by the Welsh Government. At Chapter 10. "LOCAL PLANS – LOCAL ACTION" it states:-

....."LHB's need to achieve full compliance with the Diabetes NSF, and this Diabetes Delivery Delivery Plan. LHBs will support their Diabetes Planning and Delivery Groups (DPDG) to review, update and publish detailed local diabetes delivery plans. The LHBs will support and enable the DPDGs to deliver the Diabetes plan, report progress, publish six monthly updates on their websites and contribute to the annual all Wales report to be published by the Welsh Government."

Simply stated there is now no possibility of diabetes patients in Powys to input or obtain basic information about service planning or delivery. We have been disenfranchised and denied the stated aim of the Welsh Assembly Government:-

....."to ensure that people who use NHS services.....are genuinely and constructively involved in all aspects of the service."

Petitioner : Robert V Wright

First considered by the Committee:

Number of Signatures: 40 electronic signatures

Mark Drakeford AC / AM
Y Gweinidog Iechyd a Gwasanaethau Cymdeithasol
Minister for Health and Social Services



Llywodraeth Cymru
Welsh Government

Ein cyf/Our ref: MD/05423/14

William Powell AM
Assembly Member for Mid & West Wales
Chair Petitions Committee
Ty Hywel
Cardiff Bay
Cardiff
CF99 1NA

committeebusiness@Wales.gsi.gov.uk

8 November 2014

Dear William,

Thank you for your letter of 15 October on behalf of the Petitions Committee regarding Mr Wright's petition about re-establishing the Diabetes Planning and Delivery Group and the Diabetes Patient Reference Groups in the Powys Teaching Health Board area.

I recognise the importance of patient engagement to the success of our Diabetes Delivery Plan and I had written to Mel Evans, then chair of the health board, previously regarding this matter.

The health board have now met with Mr Wright and Russell George AM to discuss re-establishing these groups and I am pleased to inform you that the Diabetes Planning and Delivery Group will be meeting on 11 December and will be discussing patient engagement.

Best wishes,

Mark.

Mark Drakeford AC / AM
Y Gweinidog Iechyd a Gwasanaethau Cymdeithasol
Minister for Health and Social Services

P-04-605 Save the Cwmcarn Forest Drive from Indefinite or Permanent Closure

Petition wording

We call upon the National Assembly for Wales to urge the Welsh Government to reverse the decision of Natural Resources Wales to close the Cwmcarn Forest Drive indefinitely on 2nd November 2014.

Additional Information

NRW have stated that the Cwmcarn Forest Drive will be closed indefinitely in November and that this is necessary because of the infection of the Japanese larches in the forest. I am not convinced as there are inconsistencies with NRW approach. There are ample harvest roads which can be used to facilitate removal of the trees. What needs to be removed via the drive could be done during its annual winter closure; however NRW say that removing the trees will not be completed until 2018 and after this the drive may not reopen due to funding issues. Other forest parks are only facing minimal disruption to their facilities as a result of tree removal. To single out users of the drive is unfair and unnecessary when other users will face only temporary disruption. We should save the drive for its users, many of whom are elderly, disabled and from our ethnic minority and immigrant communities. This deprives those people who are our most deprived of their main facility for health and well being.

Petitioner : Robert Jeffrey Southall

First considered by the Committee:

Number of Signatures: 2,392 electronic signatures and 602 paper signatures. Total 2,994

Carl Sargeant AC / AM
Y Gweinidog Cyfoeth Naturiol
Minister for Natural Resources



Llywodraeth Cymru
Welsh Government

Eich cyf/Your ref
Ein cyf/Our ref CS/05273/14

William Powell AM
Chair Petitions Committee
Ty Hywel
Cardiff Bay
Cardiff
CF99 1NA

44 November 2014

Dear Bill

Thank you for your letter of 15th October with regard to the petition against the decision by Natural Resources Wales (NRW) to close Cwmcarn Drive.

I am of the view that the closure of Cwmcarn Drive is an unfortunate but necessary step as part of the nationwide strategy to reduce the risk of the further spread of *Phytophthora ramorum* (Larch disease). Cwmcarn forest is predominantly larch (50%) with a concentration of 74% along the Drive itself. This is a much higher proportion of Larch than in other woodland areas in Wales.

Health and safety concerns, difficult terrain and the use of specialised heavy machinery were some of the key factors behind the decision by NRW to close the route. The removal of around 50,000 tonnes of larch from the area using the Drive (which is not a public highway but rather a forest road covered in a thin layer of tarmac) will have a significant impact on its condition.

I am informed that it will take approximately £2.5 million to re-instate the route. NRW officers are of the view that this would be the most expensive and least creative option for re-opening the route. They, in partnership with local residents, Welsh Government and Caerphilly County Council will be working to find a better, more appropriate alternative. I understand that Mr Southall has been invited to participate in this process.

Welsh Government officials have made it clear to NRW that least restrictive access to this site should be a priority once the felling operation has been completed.

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in black ink, consisting of a large, stylized 'C' followed by a vertical line.

Carl Sargeant AC / AM
Y Gweinidog Cyfoeth Naturiol
Minister for Natural Resources

Agenda Item 4.1

P-04-319 Newtown Traffic Petition

Petition wording

We call upon the National Assembly for Wales to urge the Welsh Government to:

1. Install a roundabout at the Kerry road junction and, if flow improves, reinstate a permanent roundabout.
2. Issue an early start date for construction of a Newtown Bypass and for works to be fast-tracked through to completion.

Petition raised by: Paul Pavia

Petition first considered by Committee: June 2011

Number of signatures: 10 (an additional petition collected approximately 5,000 signatures)

Edwina Hart MBE CStJ AC / AM
Gweinidog yr Economi, Gwyddoniaeth a Thrafnidiaeth
Minister for Economy, Science and Transport



Llywodraeth Cymru
Welsh Government

Eich cyf/Your ref P-04-319
Ein cyf/Our ref EH/05530/14

William Powell AM
Chair, Petitions Committee

Petition@wales.gsi.gov.uk

28 October 2014

Dear William,

Thank you for your letter of October on behalf of the Petitions Committee, regarding the Newtown traffic petition.

Negotiations over the land needed to complete the scheme have been protracted. However a way forward has now been agreed in principle.

I will advise further when an update is available.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Edwina Hart'.

Agenda Item 4.2

P-04-393 Llanymynech and Pant Bypass Action Group

Petition wording:

We call upon the Welsh Government to reinstate plans for the bypass of the villages of Pant and Llanymynech which straddle the English/Welsh border. 15,000 cars and lorries a day pass through these two villages, and it will only increase once the plans for the wind farms get the go-ahead. We call upon the government now to proceed with their plans, or at least open up talks on the bypass and have a full debate, listening to our needs and the voices from our community on how this road is affecting us and our quality of life. We hope, by doing this, that the English government will then take note and proceed with plans on their side. We would like a full and open debate on the need for a bypass for the villages of Pant and Llanymynech, which then, will develop into the actual construction of the bypass once funds are available.

We are fed up of the noise, the pollution, the fact that we cannot walk our children to school, walk to the shops, or walk our dogs along the road. Road improvements such as widening, will not work here. The road was initially designed as a single track lane for horses and carts. The houses on both sides of the road often touch the edge of the road, and there are many lanes which feed onto the A483, which will again make it unsuitable for improvements. A bypass is the only option we feel, taking the road from Llyncllys (which is absolutely deadly) around the villages of Pant and Llanymynech and joining the new bypass by the edge of Llandysilio. This is the main trunk road between Manchester and Swansea, and it is not fit for purpose. We have many MPs and AMs on our side and we are determined to get this done, and have a full debate in the Assembly on the subject.

Petition raised by: Duncan Borthwick

Date petition first considered by Committee: 29 May 2012

Number of signatures 84



Eich cyf/Your ref P-04-393
Ein cyf/Our ref EH/00016/14

William Powell AM
Chair
Petitions Committee

committeebusiness@wales.gsi.gov.uk

October 2014

Dear William

Further to my letter of 7 January regarding proposals for a Pant to Llanymynech bypass, I am writing to provide you with an update.

The traffic figures do not show any significant increase in traffic or congestion for the past couple of years.

However, following last week's budget announcement I intend to write to the Secretary of State for Transport to raise the issue of the bypass with him.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Edwina Hart', written over a faint, light-colored background.

Agenda Item 4.3

P-04-416: North-South Rail Services

Petition wording:

We call on the National Assembly for Wales to urge the Welsh Government to work with Arriva Trains to increase the number of direct express rail services between Holyhead and Cardiff.

Petition raised by: Neil Taylor

Date petition first considered by Committee: 2 October 2012

Number of signatures: 19

Edwina Hart MBE CStJ AC / AM
Gweinidog yr Economi, Gwyddoniaeth a Thrafnidiaeth
Minister for Economy, Science and Transport



Llywodraeth Cymru
Welsh Government

Eich cyf/Your ref P-04-416
Ein cyf/Our ref EH/05708/14

William Powell AM
Chair Petitions Committee

committeebusiness@Wales.gsi.gov.uk

10 November 2014

Dear William,

Thank you for your letter regarding the North-South Rail Services petition which I received on 29 October.

My officials continue to work with the Department for Transport, Network Rail and Merseytravel on the reinstatement of the Halton Curve and detailed proposals are expected to be available early next year. Subject to agreement of the detail, the UK Government has indicated that the scheme will be delivered in 2016/17 and operational in December 2017.

Under the current arrangement, the Secretary of State for Transport is the responsible franchising authority for the Wales and Borders Franchise. Discussions between the Welsh Government and the Department for Transport to explore the potential for transferring responsibility of the franchise are ongoing. Irrespective of our role in awarding the next franchise, we want to ensure that it delivers improved services and value for money. In terms of service levels, under the timetable for procurement of the franchise, the Department for Transport will determine these between Autumn 2015 and Spring 2017. Thereafter, the procurement process is scheduled to start. It is expected that the franchise will be awarded the following Spring so that the new franchise can start in October 2018.

The current North-South Premier Service is schedule for renewal in May 2015. I am currently considering options regarding the North South Express and will make an announcement in due course.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to be 'L. M.', located below the main text.

Agenda Item 4.4

P-04-468 Road Safety Concerns A48 Chepstow

Petition wording:

We call upon the National Assembly for Wales to urge the Welsh Government to reduce the speed limit on the A48 Bridge at Chepstow from 50mph to 30mph.

Petition raised by: Chepstow Town Council

Date petition first considered by Committee: 19 March 2013

Number of signatures : An associated petition collected 1,000 signatures

Edwina Hart MBE CStJ AC / AM
Gweinidog yr Economi, Gwyddoniaeth a Thrafnidiaeth
Minister for Economy, Science and Transport



Llywodraeth Cymru
Welsh Government

Eich cyf/Your ref P-04-468
Ein cyf/Our ref EH/05710/14

William Powell AM

petition@wales.gov.uk

10 November 2014

Dear William,

Thank you for your letter of 29 October regarding P-04-468 Road Safety Concerns A48 Chepstow.

The feasibility study has now been reviewed and detailed design of a pedestrian guard railing for the footway across the Wye bridge will take place this financial year. The construction of the railing will take place in 2015/16.

My officials are currently reviewing the speed limits on all trunk roads in Wales and your petitioners' comments will be considered as part of this ongoing work. I will be making further information available as soon as I have considered the findings of the review.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Edwina Hart', written in a cursive style.

CHEPSTOW

Town Council

Historic Chepstow: *The Way to Wales and the Wye Valley*
See The Chepstow Web Site at www.chepstow.co.uk
e-mail clerk1@chepstow.co.uk



My Ref: SB/19112014 TRS1
Your Ref:

19th November 2014

Mr W Powell
Chairman of Petitions Committee
Welsh Government
Cardiff Bay, Cardiff
CF99 1NA

Petitions Committee

Chepstow A48 Bridge - Petition from school pupils and Town Council for 30mph speed limit.

Petitions Committee Tuesday 25 November 2014

Thank you for the opportunity to comment on the Minister's letter of 10 November 2014.

We are very pleased that some action is now being taken on erecting guard railing across Chepstow's A48 bridge over the River Wye to protect schoolchildren and pedestrians and we look forward to the completion of the railings.

It will still be necessary to bring in the 30mph speed limit as requested by the Petition as well as the railings - both are essential.

We are concerned that the issue of the extension of the Chepstow Urban Speed Limit of 30mph by just 350 yards to cross the Wye Bridge is taking so long and will become part of a wider review for the whole of Wales.

We are not asking for a new speed limit zone but a small extension of an existing 30mph zone. It should take less than 3 months to implement an Order for 30mph on the bridge (as demonstrated by the Government when the 50mph limit was introduced) but it is now 16 months since the pupils raised the petition and we are worried that becoming part of a wider review could delay this even more.

We are grateful for the progress made so far with design work on railings but we would like the 30mph limit brought in during the next 3 months. There could be delays on railings work so the 30mph limit which is needed anyway is urgently needed now.

Yours sincerely

Sandra Bushell
Town Clerk

The Gatehouse, High Street, Chepstow NP16 5LH
Tel 01291 626370 Fax 01291 628102
Town Clerk Sandra Bushell



Agenda Item 4.5

P-04-475 Wanted – Buses for Meirionnydd

Petition wording:

We call upon the National Assembly for Wales to urge the Welsh Government to:

- Review the funding for rural bus services to ensure adequate levels of service for the whole of Gwynedd but particularly south Meirionnydd.
- Consider funding to be ensured for additional services to improve access to health services, education, and employment, and thus support the economy and tourism of the area.

Petition raised by: Barbara Snowball

Date petition first considered by Committee: 30 April 2013

Number of signatures : 174

P-04-475 Wanted – Buses for Meirionnydd – Correspondence from the Petitioner to the Committee, 12.11.14

Dear Kayleigh,

Thank you for your continuing to consider the Petition for buses in Meirionnydd. I have one new item to add (3) below.

- 1) Thank you for the 20% increase in buses on the T3 Barmouth to Wrexham and an increased service on the T2 to Bangor.
- 2) We are still in a difficult situation here on the Dolgellau to Tywyn route. The buses do not connect properly and there is a real need for a later bus when people have to travel home from Wrexham or Bangor. They simply cannot get home.
- 3) The Lloyds buses (No. 28) on the Dolgellau to Tywyn route are "user unfriendly". People with disabilities, wheelchairs, pushchairs, shopping trolleys, find it difficult/impossible to board these buses. They are not low floor buses but they usually have 3 steps up, which are steep. They are old buses. If someone in a wheelchair needed to go to Wrexham or Bangor hospital, they could not get there.

I, therefore, implore the Petition Committee that this matter is brought up with Lloyds Coaches, for the provision of low floor buses.

Thank you.

Barbara Snowball

12/11/2014

Agenda Item 4.6

P-04-513 Save the Wrexham/Barmouth X94 bus service

Petition wording:

Arriva Buses has announced that they will cut the X94 service which links the towns of Barmouth, Dolgellau, Bala, Corwen, Llangollen and Wrexham and 5 other bus services on December 21st this year. All of these bus services connect communities across Wales from north to south and east to west. We call on the Welsh Government to investigate how cutting these bus services might be avoided and what is the best way of securing and promoting national bus services that link the regions of Wales, especially where there is no equivalent railway service.

Petition raised by: Karen Dunford

Date petition first considered by Committee: 11 November 2013

Number of signatures: 494

Agenda Item 4.7

P-04-515 Increase Funding for Welsh Bus Services

Petition wording:

We call upon the National Assembly for Wales to urge the Welsh Government to provide increased funding to bus services so that it adheres to its own policy aims of reducing poverty and exclusion, ensuring that people across Wales are not socially or economically disadvantaged by their location.

Additional information: This petition aims to increase the level of funding given to hard to reach, and disadvantaged areas of Wales. A number of local authority areas have had to reduce the frequency and range of bus routes since the Regional Transport Services Grant was introduced. This has left some residents isolated, especially on weekends and bank holidays.

Petition raised by: Daniel Thomas

Date petition first considered by Committee: 26 November 2013

Number of signatures: 246

Edwina Hart MBE CStJ AC / AM
Gweinidog yr Economi, Gwyddoniaeth a Thrafnidiaeth
Minister for Economy, Science and Transport



Llywodraeth Cymru
Welsh Government

Eich cyf/Your ref P-04-475/513/515
Ein cyf/Our ref EH/03468/14

William Powell AM
Chair Petitions Committee

committeebusiness@Wales.gsi.gov.uk

11

November 2014

Dear William,

Thank you for your letter regarding the Petitions Committee Inquiry into Bus and Community Transport Services.

A wide range of detailed issues are outlined in your letter and so I thought it might be helpful, in the first instance, to provide relevant extracts from recent information we have provided to the Enterprise and Business Committee which relates to bus and community transport services.

Once the Petitions Committee has had a chance to review this information, I would be happy to consider any more specific or detailed information requests you may have in order to assist with your inquiry.

TRANSPORT

Transport has a critical role to play in improving Wales' economic competitiveness and providing enhanced access to jobs and services. The current transport investment programme ensures that it is focused on improving Wales' economic competitiveness. It is without question that an affordable, effective and efficient transport system is important in tackling poverty and is integral to delivering interventions and policies for growth and jobs.

Therefore we continue to provide substantial investment in major transport infrastructure improvements, such as road improvements on the M4 Corridor around Newport, A465 Brynmawr to Tredegar A487 Caernarfon – Bontnewydd and Cardiff Eastern Bay Link. In recognising the role that rail plays in promoting economic growth and enabling greater access to jobs and services, we have chosen to invest to bring forward improvements in network capacity and the accessibility and quality of stations.

We also continue to invest very substantial resources in transport services including the rail franchise, the concessionary fares scheme and grants to support bus service provision.

A key focus of the work of the Department is the development of a new National Transport Plan, which will be published for consultation before the end of the 2014.

It will provide the context and evidence to inform decisions on all transport investment and will present information such as the level of accessibility different communities have to employment sites and key public services. Using that information, it will identify the type of interventions needed to improve accessibility.

It will also set out our priorities for future investment by others. For example, the priority locations for new railway stations which would need to draw down UK Government funding to progress.

Investment in rail, bus and community transport

On rail, our programme of investment continues across Wales. In 2014-15 we are delivering the following:

- National Station Improvement Programme schemes at Aberystwyth, Rhyl, Pontypridd and Ystrad Mynach.
- National Station Improvement Programme Plus scheme access humps at numerous stations across Wales.
- Access for All improvement projects at Chirk and Ystrad Mynach.
- Cardiff Area Signal Renewal scheme projects at Pontypridd, Barry and Tir Phil.
- Completion of the North-south journey times/capacity improvement project.
- The completion of a new station at Pye Corner on the Ebbw Vale Line.

In 2015-16 we will deliver the following:

- Mid Tier Access improvement programme schemes at Radyr, Llandaf, Chirk, Machynlleth and Ystrad Mynach.
- National Station Improvement Programme scheme at Port Talbot.
- Work will also commence on further access upgrades for Barry, Cathays, Flint, Llanelli, Taffs Well, Treforest, and Treherbert.

An update on the South Wales Metro was published in August 2014 and can be found on the Welsh Government's website:

<http://wales.gov.uk/docs/det/report/140826-cardiff-metro-update-report-august-2014-en.pdf>

In 2014-15 under the Metro Phase 1 package of schemes we will deliver the following:

- Completion of Newport Bus Station.
- Extension of the Ebbw Vale Line and construction of a new station at Ebbw Vale Town.
- Completion of a package of several active travel routes.

In 2015-16 we will deliver the following:

- Improvements to the Ebbw Vale Line to enable frequency enhancements.
- A package of bus priority schemes across South East Wales.
- Station improvements at a number of stations between Cardiff and Merthyr Tydfil.

The introduction of improved TrawsCymru longer distance bus services in north Wales on the T3 Barmouth to Wrexham and the T2 Bangor to Aberystwyth routes commence in November. These improvements will include:-

- More frequent services throughout the day (the frequency of the T3 is to be increased by 20%).
- The introduction of cycle carriage facilities on the T3 service are enabling people to access popular sections of the Sustrans National Cycle Network in north Wales at Dolgellau - Mawddach Trail and the Llangollen Canal.
- More affordable tickets will be introduced on both routes aimed at encouraging young people to use the services such as the Bwmerrang Ticket which will offer discounted weekend travel.

Work is underway to better coordinate bus and rail services in the Conwy Valley through the introduction of joint ticketing, improved bus services for rural communities allowing them to more easily access rail stations and key centres in the Valley. This will be complemented by the provision of improved information for passengers.

With regard to the North Wales Coastal Quality Bus Partnership Scheme, we are working with local authorities and bus operators to introduce a package of improved bus services linking key centres along the north Wales coast stretching from Holywell to Llandudno. The objectives of the Scheme are to improve the frequency and hours of operation of services, provide better links to key health care facilities and provide better integration with the rail network.

Community Transport Improvements in Meirionnydd includes funding provided for Gwynedd Council to improve the availability of accessible community transport services in the Dolgellau area.

TRANSPORT FUNDING OF SPENDING PROGRAMME AREAS

Compared to 2014/15, there is a £35.271m increase in the total Transport budget for 2015/16, comprising a revenue decrease of £6.529m and a capital increase of £41.8m.

	2014/15 Supplementary Budget £'000	2015/16 Change £'000	2015/16 Proposed Budget £'000
Revenue	306,970	(6,529)	300,441
Non Cash	108,691	-	108,691
Capital	296,349	41,800	338,149
Total	712,010	35,271	747,281

Sustainable Travel

Action	Expenditure Category	2014/15 Supplementary Budget £'000	Change £'000	2015/16 Proposed Budget £'000
Sustainable Travel	Revenue	77,304	(25,095)	52,209
	Capital	52,566	19,881	72,447
	TOTAL	129,870	(5,214)	124,656

This budget supports investment in integrated transport, active travel, concessionary fares, smartcards and bus, rail and local roads.

Concessionary Fares: Following a detailed negotiation, a new three-year concessionary fares agreement was reached with the bus industry. The budget shows funding for the concessionary fares scheme of £60.5m in 2015/16. This amount is supplemented by the local authorities and an administration fee.

A new Bus Services Support Grant (BSSG) (replaced Regional Transport Services Grant (RTSG)) was introduced 1 April 2014. The BSSG maintained our previous level of funding granted under RTSG of £25m and the commitment for a minimum set percentage to be allocated to community transport. This grant is provided to local authorities to help them subsidise socially-necessary bus and community transport services. Each authority determines which services to support, based on its assessment of local circumstances and priorities using this grant and their own resources.

Overall there is a revenue budget reduction of £25.095m. The funding requirements of the bus operators in delivering the concessionary fares scheme in 2015/16 requires a reclassification of a proportion of revenue to capital to reflect the associated capital expenditure they incur, for example the acquisition of additional vehicles. Consequently there is a reduction in revenue of £29m. This is offset by a net reallocation of funds of £4m for the BSSG to support other bus services.

The increase in the capital budget of £19.881m is due to the increased capital requirements for concessionary fares of £29m offset by a net reduction of £10m between financial years for additional capital allocations from central reserves and for re-prioritisation of capital schemes in line with delivery.

PROGRAMME FOR GOVERNMENT SIX MONTHLY UPDATE AS AT SEPTEMBER 2014

	Commitment	September Update
1/023	Prioritise the objectives of the National Transport Plan to ensure that the existing transport funding is used effectively, the level of resources enhanced and that future investment decisions are made against these overarching strategic priorities.	No update to published version
1/024	Consider using the provisions of the Transport Wales Act 2006 to establish one or more Joint Transport Authorities.	Professor Kevin Morgan's report was published on the Welsh Government website http://wales.gov.uk/docs/det/publications/140522-governing-metro.pdf
1/030	Work with partners to enhance the quality, reliability and safety of local bus service provision.	No update to published version
1/031	Continue to improve services such as the Trawscambria network and the popular on-demand Bwcabus scheme.	A new TrawsCymru T1 service, funded by WG, was introduced linking Aberystwyth – Lampeter – Carmarthen in August 2014 designed to connect with Bwcabus at key hubs and through fares are offered. Preparations are being made to introduce further TrawsCymru services later in 2014/15 on key routes linking Aberystwyth to Bangor, Wrexham to Barmouth and Aberystwyth – Cardigan – Haverfordwest.
1/032	Retain free bus travel for pensioners and disabled people and their carers.	A new three year reimbursement arrangements has been announced, following negotiations with the bus industry, covering 2014-17 for a reimbursement total of £189m. The funding available to local authorities to enable them to reimburse bus operators in 2014-15 will be £67.75m.
EST Contributes to:		
5/040	Extended eligibility for the concessionary travel scheme to seriously injured war veterans & armed forces personnel living in Wales.	No further update to published version
9/026	Prioritise the National Transport Plan by improving access in deprived communities and retain free bus travel for pensioners, disabled people and their carers, and extend eligibility to seriously injured war veterans and armed forces personnel living in Wales.	No further update to published version
9/027	Prioritisation of the National Transport Plan to improve access to key sites and settlements, particularly in rural areas, with an emphasis on improving the quality and provision of healthy and more sustainable travel choices .	Analysing accessibility to key services and employment sites is a key focus of the evidence based being developed for the new National Transport Plan. The results will be published as part of the consultation on the new draft Plan.
10/005	Continue to encourage and support the development of community transport schemes that meet the needs of those living in rural areas.	No update to published version
10/006	Examine the best options for providing local bus services to ensure that rural communities have services which are reliable and which	Analysing accessibility to key services and employment sites is a key focus of the evidence based being developed for the new National Transport

	Commitment	September Update
	provide access to local services and a means to travel to work.	Plan. The results will be published as part of the consultation on the new draft Plan.



Y Pwyllgor Deisebau
Petitions Committee

Mrs Edwina Hart MBE CStJ AM
Minister For Economy, Science and
Transport
Welsh Government
Tŷ Hywel
Cardiff Bay
CF99 1NA

Bae Caerdydd / Cardiff Bay
Caerdydd / Cardiff
CF99 1NA

Our ref: P-04-475/513/515

September 2014

Dear *Edwina*

Petitions on Funding for Bus and Community Transport Services

As you will be aware, the Petitions Committee has received a number of petitions about Bus Services in different parts of Wales. The Committee, therefore, agreed to carry out a focused inquiry looking at funding for bus and community transport services. The Committee has received evidence from a number of petitioners and stakeholders and would now be grateful for your input as the responsible Minister.

I understand that you have indicated that you are not available to give oral evidence to the Committee so I would be grateful if you could provide a written response to the following questions, which are based on the terms of reference for our inquiry. These are:

- Whether current levels of public financial support for bus and community transport services are sufficient to secure an effective network.
- The effect of recent changes, and proposed future changes, in public funding levels and mechanisms on bus and community transport services.
- The social and economic impact of recent and proposed future changes in public funding levels and mechanisms for the bus and community transport sectors.
- The steps the Welsh Government should take to support bus and community transport services, given the overall reductions in Welsh Government budget since 2009-10.

Bae Caerdydd / Cardiff Bay
Caerdydd / Cardiff
CF99 1NA

Ffôn / Tel: 029 2089 8242
E-bost / Email: Stephen.George@wales.gov.uk

Recent trends in bus and community transport in Wales

In relation to recent trends in bus and community transport in Wales we would be grateful if you could provide:

- Your assessment of the reasons why there has been a decline in bus passenger journeys in Wales since 2011-12, as indicated by both the relevant Programme for Government indicator and Department for Transport quarterly bus statistics;
- Your assessment of wider trends in the bus and community transport sectors, including any changes in the number and quality of services, fare levels and passenger satisfaction levels;
- Details of any work undertaken or planned by the Welsh Government to understand these trends in the bus and community transport sector.

Potential impact of changes in levels of funding available

In relation to the potential impact of changes in levels of funding available from **both** Welsh Government **and** Local Authorities own budget allocations we would be grateful if you could provide:

- Your response to the suggestion from Bus Users Cymru that as a result of changes in concessionary fares funding “across Wales it is estimated that 10% of all buses on the road could be taken out of service and many rural lifelines could be lost altogether”;
- Details of any work being undertaken by the Welsh Government to assess the impact of changes in public funding levels since 2010-11 from **both** Welsh Government bus funding streams **and** Local Authority Revenue Support Grant on service levels, fares and quality;
- Your response to the suggestion that the bus industry is the “Cinderella of public transport” given evidence we have received suggesting that while Wales and Borders Rail Franchise subsidy equates to £9 per passenger journey, total public funding for the bus industry equates to “rather less than one pound per journey”;
- Your assessment of how changes in Welsh Government funding levels have impacted on the achievement on **each** of the Welsh Government Programme for Government objectives which relate to bus and community transport policy.

Development of Welsh Government bus and community transport policy

In relation to the development of Welsh Government bus and community transport policy we would be grateful if you could provide:

- Details of the Welsh Government’s strategy for the bus and community transport sectors including:
 - The steps being taken to support and develop the bus sector including an update on the work of the Bus Advisory Group, particularly the

approach being taken by the group, its terms of reference, likely outputs, the timeframe for delivery of recommendations and how delivery will be monitored **and** evaluated;

- Details of how the Welsh Government engages with the Community Transport sector, its vision for the future development of this sector and the steps being taken to implement this;
- The steps the Welsh Government is taking to enhance public transport integration, including the bus and community transport sectors.

I would be grateful for an early response to allow the Committee to move forward with its work in this area.

Yours sincerely



William Powell AC / AM
Cadeirydd / Chair

(Please respond to the Committee Clerk at: Stephen.George@wales.gov.uk)

Agenda Item 4.8

P-04-562 Caernarfon Heritage Centre

Petition wording:

We the undersigned call on the Welsh Government to fund a Heritage Centre in Caernarfon. The town deserves a centre to display its history and the history of its people, its industries, its language and its arts in an engaging building purpose-built in Caernarfon as a home for the treasures taken from it.

Close to 1,000 people – residents of Caernarfon and district and visitors to the area are calling for a resource of this nature in what is one of Wales' most ancient and significant towns. Visitors who take one of my tours around Caernarfon www.drodre.co ask, Where is the Town Museum?, to which the answer is that the town no longer possesses such a thing! This news is met with universal astonishment, given that history surrounds one at every turn.

Petition raised by: Caernarfon Civic Society

Date Petition first considered by Committee: 17 June 2014

P-04-562 Caernarfon Heritage Centre – Correspondence from the Petitioner to the Committee, 19.11.14

Dear Committee

I would like to offer a few words to add to the request for a Heritage Centre in Caernarfon.

This town deserves a centre to showcase our history, the history of the people, the industry, the language and the arts in a purpose built and attractive building in Caernarfon, which would be a home to the treasures that have been taken from our town.

Such a centre could be home to the relics from Segontium Roman Fort that are currently in Cardiff.

It could also be home to relics offered to the town by Lord Newborough that are now at the Maritime Museum in Liverpool.

Relics from the Maritime Museum in Caernarfon which is now closed and has been turned into toilets!

A **Gallery** for painters, photographers and other artists of the town. In the Institute Building (home of Caernarfon Town Council) there are several canvases that should be shown to the world e.g.

The picture titled '*The Awakening of Wales*' by Christopher Williams is recognised as the most iconic in Wales and portrays Gwenllian, daughter of Owain Glyndŵr, rising to liberty from a fierce dragon. Christopher Williams was born in Maesteg. His father, Evan Williams, was determined that Christopher would be a doctor but when visiting the Walker Gallery in Liverpool, he spent hours staring at a picture of "Perseus and Andromeda" by Fredrick Leighton.

After leaving the gallery, the son knew that he wanted to be an artist. *The Awakening of Wales* is an allegory of national value and personal value to the artist.

At the request of Alun Ffred Jones (Arfon): 'How many people visited Caernarfon Castle in the years 2010–11, 2011–12 and what are the figures for this year (WAQ65542)

John Griffiths: From the beginning of April 2010 to the end of August 2013, 679,889 visitors visited Caernarfon Castle.

The total is as follows:

01 April 2010 to 31 March 2011 192,543 visits

01 April 2011 to 31 March 2012 195,543 visits

01 April 2012 to 31 March 2013 177,275 visits

01 April 2013 to 31 March 2014 114,528 visits

I do not yet have figures for 01 April 2014 to 31 March 2014 but in talking with members of the castle staff, it's clear that there have been a greater number of visits to Caernarfon Castle than the above figures (I'll try to get the figures for this year in the next few days).

A high proportion of visitors stay in the town and always ask 'Where's the museum?' It is quite difficult and embarrassing to have to say that there's no museum in the town itself.

As a tour guide around the old town I'm well aware of the history and heritage of Caernarfon and it pains me that I can't refer visitors to a purpose built building that gives a full description and introduction to the town.

Segontium Roman Fort – a mile from the centre of the town

The unique Medieval Town with many treasures that I showcase on my tours. The town walls and the need to open more of the walls to the public.

Chapels and churches

Religion could be an element covered at the centre e.g.

The growth of Methodism, several churches were pioneers in the growth of Methodism and there's evidence to show that John Wesley stayed in town.

Engedi Chapel and its connection with the Welsh people that went to Patagonia.

St Mary – 14th century

Llanbeblig – 12th century

Llanfaglan – a site from the 6th century – 2 miles from the centre of town

History:

The slate industry, Victoria Dock, the history of Ellen Edwards – a native of Anglesey and daughter of Captain William Francis from Amlwch, a professor of mathematics and navigation in Amlwch. She followed in her father's footsteps as a maritime teacher for 60 years until her death aged 80 in November 1889. Her young pupils had to travel to Liverpool or Dublin to take their exams and Ellen Edwards thought this was very unfair. Therefore, she insisted that the men be allowed to take the exams locally. The chances are she trained over 1,000 young sailors over the years.

Printing (Caernarfon was the Ink Capital of Wales in the 19th century),

The Welsh Language Over 80% of the people of Caernarfon speak the language and the language is alive in every part of cultural, commercial and social life in the town. The 'Cofis' are famous for their wit and it would be worth having a corner to talk about the unique vocabulary.

Llety Arall There are plans to open **Llety Arall** (named after Gŵyl Arall, or 'Another Festival' in English), a cultural festival which has been taking place each July in Caernarfon for some years now. It is hoped that Llety Arall will be located on Stryd y Plas as a unique way of showcasing our town that will build our confidence and passion, as well as the confidence and passion of visitors, for the Welsh language

As Secretary of Caernarfon's Civic Society I have had access to cellars around the old town and there are treasures that could be part of a visit to the Heritage Centre. e.g.

In the Market Hall cellars on *Stryd Twll yn y Wal* and *Stryd y Plas* there are traces of a 'Bonded Warehouse' with rooms to keep drink before moving it through tunnels under the town. And in Castle House on Castle Street and the High Street there are cellars dating to the 16th century, making them

Medieval. There's a fountain under the floor in an empty office on *Stryd Twll yn y Wal*.

I realise there's a small Heritage Exhibition at the Pendeitsh Gallery where the Tourist Information Centre is located, but there is a need for a much larger centre in Caernarfon.

The point of all this is to show just how much there is to share with the public, whether they are local people, school children or visitors. Having a heritage centre in Caernarfon town centre would be of value to the local community; it would offer volunteering opportunities and restore confidence and respect for this amazing old town.

Yours sincerely

Emrys Llewelyn

Town guide

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www.drodre.co

Agenda Item 4.9

P-04-561 Promotion of Grassroots Rugby in Wales to Encourage Take-Up of the Sport

Petition wording:

We call upon the National Assembly for Wales to urge the Welsh Government to collaborate with the Welsh Rugby Union to encourage growth in the participation of the sport in Wales across all genders and age grades; to encourage partnerships with other relevant organisations to ensure maximum exposure to the sport at grassroots level and to demonstrate that the sport is not elitist but open to all.

Additional Information: There is virtually no coverage of rugby games below regional level in Wales. We know that clubs are struggling for players and funding and better coverage in all areas will encourage take-up of the game by people of all ages and across all genders, both prospective players and supporters. It will also give better coverage to sponsors and therefore make it easier for clubs to attract this kind of funding.

Petition raised by: Inside Welsh Rugby TV

Date Petition first considered by Committee: 17 June 2014

Number of signatures : 334

Ken Skates AC / AM
Y Dirprwy Weinidog Diwylliant, Chwaraeon a Thwristiaeth
Deputy Minister for Culture, Sport and Tourism



Llywodraeth Cymru
Welsh Government

Ein cyf/Our ref KS/05252/14

William Powell AM
Chair – Petitions committee
National Assembly for Wales
Ty Hywel
Cardiff Bay
Cardiff
CF99 1NA

11 November 2014

Dear William,

In July this year you wrote to my predecessor, the former Minister for Natural Resources, Culture and Sport, John Griffiths AM, about the Petition (P-04-561) from Inside Welsh Rugby TV regarding grassroots rugby in Wales.

The Welsh Rugby Union (WRU) receives funding via the Welsh Government's delivery agent for sport in Wales, Sport Wales. Sport Wales has agreed with the WRU investment of £979,167 for 2014-15 (for a ten month period). This investment is based on individual sport specific targets and agreed outcomes which the WRU will be expected to deliver/meet as a condition of the investment. These outcomes should accord with the key priorities set out in Welsh Government's annual remit letter to Sport Wales.

The former Minister for Natural Resources, Culture and Sport asked, in his remit letter to Sport Wales dated 5 March 2014, to see a particular effort to broaden the base of participation with a focus on developing programmes that attract children and young people who do not currently participate in sport. Further, one of the priorities is to narrow the participation gap between those living in deprived areas (i.e Communities First areas) and the national average and increase levels of regular physical activity amongst women and girls, disabled people and BME communities.

I met with Roger Lewis, Chief Executive, WRU, this week. We spoke about the WRU's new strategy, launched on 2 October 2014, which aims to strengthen the game at community and elite level. The strategy includes plans to increase participation across all levels of rugby, to unify the pathway for players and coaches and reinforce the cultural values of rugby. It will provide a seasonal structure that supports club, school and representative rugby simultaneously and is based on the appropriate development of players according to their age.

The WRU has been working with secondary schools to create school-club hubs across Wales. In total, 43 schools including 3 FE colleges are currently employing full time rugby officers to increase participation within schools across Wales and help strengthen links with clubs, improving the sustainability of club rugby and long term player involvement. The initiative will aim to develop good role models within the school, providing playing opportunities for boys and girls of all abilities and creating leadership development through coaching and refereeing qualifications via the Welsh Baccalaureate.

Outside the school environment, the WRU is working to encourage more women and girls to take part in rugby. They have been successful in securing funding from the International Rugby Board (IRB) towards a programme to increase women and girls participation and there is greater involvement in the international women's game as Roger Lewis continues as the appointed chair of the Women's' Six Nations Committee.

With regards to the coverage of rugby, although the Welsh Government is actively involved in discussions in relation to broadcasting issues that affect Wales, broadcasting is not devolved to the Welsh Government. We therefore do not have any direct control or influence over what is broadcast by commercial or public service broadcasters. Likewise, the issue of televising rugby matches below regional level is not within our control and is a matter for the event organisers and the broadcasters.

I hope this substantive response with the very latest information about rugby activity is helpful.

Yours ever,



Ken Skates AC / AM

Y Dirprwy Weinidog Diwylliant, Chwaraeon a Thwristiaeth
Deputy Minister for Culture, Sport and Tourism

P-04-561 Promotion of Grassroots Rugby in Wales to Encourage Take-Up of the Sport- Correspondence from the Petitioner to the Clerking Team, 17.11.14

Dear Kayleigh

Thank you for your email of 12th November, which we have had the chance to read and consider.

Whilst we feel from experience that the Welsh Rugby Union is not doing nearly enough to help the grassroots of Welsh rugby and to support Welsh Rugby Clubs (as evidenced by sides failing to fulfil fixtures or disbanding), we appreciate the position the Petitions Committee will find itself in, in having to accept the Minister's letter at face value. The "new strategy" mentioned in the letter has only been in place since 2nd October and sadly therefore we cannot assess its impact at this stage. However it is clear to us that such a strategy has been implemented at an extremely late juncture and notably after our original petition was submitted. We would like to question why this has only now been introduced despite the protracted problems in the lower echelons of Welsh rugby, as well as women's and junior rugby (often highlighted in our own programme, IWRTV and not covered by the BBC) and why the Welsh Government had not sought to expedite the process.

There is however a great omission from this letter and that is any absence of a resolution relating to the broadcast of games below professional rugby in Wales. Whilst we appreciate the Minister's explanation that broadcasting in general and in terms of the specific events in question are not within the direct power of the Welsh Government, we are clear in stating that more could be done to facilitate such a development, particularly given the fact that a substantial subsidy has been accorded with the specific remit of widening the appeal of sport and narrowing the participation gap. Broadcast of matches at this level would substantially support that aim and it is certainly surprising to hear the Government is not pressing this issue to the forefront of broadcasters minds at this time.

Anecdotally, since our original submission we have noted an attempt to broadcast a lower level match such as those we had included in our own programme, however rather than being a positive experience for those concerned, it was managed in a manner which alienated the participants. If required, further evidence could be

provided regarding this issue which should be used to understand how broadcast in the correct manner will enhance the sport.

I trust this response will assist your deliberations and hopefully enable you to decide upon a solution which will enable us all to shore up the foundations of the National sport of Wales.

Yours sincerely

Paul Turner, Stewart Spencer and Gareth Spencer

Agenda Item 4.10

P-04-397 Living Wage

Petition wording:

We call on the Welsh Government to stand by their promise to work towards a living wage for every worker in Wales and tell us when and how they will make it happen.

No matter how hard they try the minimum wage simply is not enough for some parents to make ends meet and give children like us the best chance in life. The living wage means that parents who work would earn at least £7.20 an hour.

We are young campaigners working with Save the Children across the UK for change. We are campaigning for a living wage, representing the views of young people, families and communities in Wales.

Petition raised by: Save the Children

Date petition first considered by Committee: 19 June 2012

Number of signatures: 483

Leighton Andrews AC / AM
Y Gweinidog Gwasanaethau Cyhoeddus
Minister for Public Services



Llywodraeth Cymru
Welsh Government

Eich cyf/Your ref P-04-397
Ein cyf/Our ref LA -/05180/14

William Powell AM
Chair Petitions Committee
Ty Hywel
Cardiff Bay
Cardiff
CF99 1NA

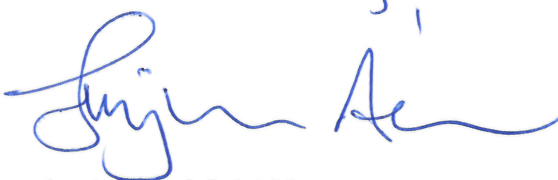
committeebusiness@Wales.gsi.gov.uk

6 November 2014

Dear Bill,

Thank you for your recent letter to Jane Hutt AM, Minister for Finance and Government Business, regarding Petition P-04-397 on the Living Wage. I am responding as this matter falls within my portfolio.

I can reassure you that the December Workforce Partnership Council meeting will take place. Potential agenda items, including the Living Wage in the public sector, will be considered and decided in discussion between the Welsh Government and social partners.

Yours sincerely,


Leighton Andrews AC / AM
Y Gweinidog Gwasanaethau Cyhoeddus
Minister for Public Services



Save the Children

Achub y Plant

William Powell AM
Chair of the Petitions Committee
National Assembly for Wales
Cardiff Bay
Cardiff
CF99 1NA

18th November 2014

Dear Bill,

Re: Petition P-04-397 Living Wage

Thank you for your correspondence regarding our petition on the living wage, which the committee will be considering at the next meeting of the committee on Tuesday 25 November 2014.

As you will be aware, Save the Children's Young Ambassadors in Wales were a group of children and young people committed to campaigning on the issue of how a living wage could help support families and children living on a low income in Wales and they submitted the original petition to the Petitions Committee in 2012. The Young Ambassadors are no longer meeting as a structured group but are still in contact with Save the Children and we will be updating them on the consideration and progress of their petition.

Save the Children is an accredited living wage employer and a principle partner of the Living Wage Foundation. Earlier this year we published a Wales briefing of our UK report 'A Fair Start for Every Child', both attached. 'A Fair Start' contains further evidence of the rise of in work poverty and the impact it has on children's lives. We note that the Chartered Business Institute has

**Achub y Plant
Rhaglen Cymru**

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Caerdydd CF11 9LJ

Ffôn 029 2039 6838
Ffacs 029 2022 7797

www.savethechildren.org.uk

**Save the Children
Wales Programme**

3rd Floor, Phoenix House
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Telephone 029 2039 6838
Fax 029 2022 7797

www.savethechildren.org.uk

The Save the Children Fund, a company limited by guarantee, registered in England (number 178159). Registered charity number 213890. Registered office: 1 St. John's Lane, London EC1M 4AR. Patron: Her Majesty the Queen; President: Her Royal Highness The Princess Royal; Chief Executive: Jasmine Whitbread. Save the Children UK is a member of the International Save the Children Alliance.



Save the Children

Achub y Plant

recently stated that employers who can afford to pay the living wage should do so whenever possible.

We are pleased that a meeting of the Workforce Partnership Council will go ahead in December and hope that there will be a full discussion on the importance of paying workers in Wales a living wage including recognition of how paying a living wage can have a positive impact on the lives of children and young people in working families living in poverty.

Yours sincerely

Mary Powell Chandler, Head of Save the Children in Wales

The attachment mentioned above is accessible via the following link:

[Wales briefing of our UK report 'A Fair Start for Every Child'](#)

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Agenda Item 4.11

P-04-485 Abuse of casual contracts in Further Education

Petition wording:

We call upon the National Assembly for Wales to urge the Welsh Government to use its influence to ensure that the use of hourly paid (zero hour) and fixed term contracts are not abused in the Further Education sector and only used when there is a genuine objective justification for a short term contract with flexibility.

Petition raised by: Briony Knibbs

Date petition first considered by Committee: 4 June 2013

Number of signatures: TBC

Huw Lewis AC / AM
Y Gweinidog Addysg a Sgiliau
Minister for Education and Skills



Llywodraeth Cymru
Welsh Government

Eich cyf/Your ref P-04-485
Ein cyf/Our ref HL/05358/14

William Powell AM
Chair Petitions Committee

committeebusiness@Wales.gsi.gov.uk

11 November 2014

Dear William

Thank you for your letter of 14th October on behalf of the Petitions Committee requesting an update on the use of hourly based and fixed term contracts.

I also note with interest the research brief which you have provided, which sets out an informal review of the use of casual contracts in further education in Wales.

As set out in my letter to the Committee in July 2013, the Welsh Ministers do not have specific statutory powers on the use of hourly based and fixed term contracts.

However, following a consultation exercise by the UK Government, provisions to ban exclusivity clauses in Zero Hours Contracts (ZHCs) have been included in the Small Business, Enterprise and Employment Bill introduced in to Parliament on 25 June 2014.

The Welsh Government is aware of the wide-spread concerns which have been raised about the use of ZHCs and is engaging in discussions with social partners about their impact in Wales.

Yours sincerely

Huw Lewis AC / AM
Y Gweinidog Addysg a Sgiliau
Minister for Education and Skills

Bae Caerdydd • Cardiff Bay
Caerdydd • Cardiff

Page 87

Wedi'i argraffu ar bapur wedi'i ailgylchu (100%)

English Enquiry Line 0845 010 3300
Llinell Ymholiadau Cymraeg 0845 010 4400
Correspondence.Huw.Lewis@wales.gsi.gov.uk
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Agenda Item 4.12

P-04-518 Universal Free School Lunches

Petition wording:

We the undersigned call on the Welsh Government to introduce a free hot lunch scheme for all children in reception, year 1 and year 2.

Additional Information:

A number of studies have shown that hunger affects concentration, and that children who are well nourished perform better at school. Extending free school meals will also help families meet the cost of living as it has been estimated that the average school meal costs parents £437 per year for each child. The UK Government has announced that all five-to-seven year-old pupils in English state schools will receive free school meals. We believe the Welsh Government should do likewise.

Petition raised by: Jane Dodds

Date petition first considered by Committee: 26 November 2013

Number of signatures: 14



Eich cyf/Your ref P-04-518
Ein cyf/Our ref HL/05357/14

William Powell AM
Chair Petitions Committee

committeebusiness@Wales.gsi.gov.uk

11 November 2014

Dear William

Thank you for your recent letter, received 30 October, regarding Free School Meals (FSM).

Ms Dodds is correct that the Welsh Government received funding as a consequence of England's decision to introduce FSM for children in Reception, Year 1 and Year 2. However, Wales is a devolved government, and as such is not bound by the education policy decisions of England. Furthermore, the funding sent to the Welsh Government was not sufficient to put in place the same FSM scheme as that being introduced in England - UK Government departments submitted an additional 'top-slice' which provided supplementary funding for the scheme in England, but this was not replicated in Wales.

We used some of the funding consequential to launch Schools Challenge Cymru. This innovative and exciting initiative will inject resources, alongside proven expertise, to deliver a package of tailored support to meet the needs of 40 of our most challenged secondary schools and their cluster primaries. Schools Challenge Cymru is about recognising that some schools face unique challenges and that these require more intensive, additional support, above and beyond that which is provided as a matter of course.

The programme's concentration of efforts on a fifth of Welsh secondary schools in particularly challenging circumstances has the potential to encourage wider change. Alongside the 40 Pathways to Success Schools, many other schools in Wales will also benefit. This includes each school's cluster primaries and some of Wales' finest practitioners and highest performing schools, who will play a key role as they share expertise and leadership.

This collaborative approach will generate important learning with the potential to stimulate system-wide improvements.

We continue to be committed to ensuring that FSM are provided to those learners who need them most. In addition, it is important to remember that Wales led the way by introducing universal free breakfasts in maintained primary schools in 2004. Now, under the School Standards and Organisation (Wales) Act 2013, local authorities have a duty to ensure that the provision of primary school free breakfasts continues in schools in Wales. According to the 2014 Pupil Level Annual School Census (PLASC), 82.6% of all maintained primary schools in Wales operate a free breakfast club.

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in cursive script, appearing to read 'Huw Lewis'.

Huw Lewis AC / AM

Y Gweinidog Addysg a Sgiliau
Minister for Education and Skills

P-04-593 Advise schools on visits to Noah's Ark Zoo Farm

Petition wording:

We request the Minister for Education and Skills in the Welsh Government reviews the suitability of Noah's Ark Zoo Farm for visits from Welsh schools. We consider the zoo unsuitable because: 1. It undermines the understanding of science and contradicts the national curriculum. 2. The zoo was expelled from the zoo industry body, BIAZA, in 2009.

Going on school trips is a vital part of our children's learning, helping them to get hands on experience of the world around them. Teachers and parents value this, and put in a lot of time and effort to making sure that the trips they run support children's learning and are safe. In order to do this, they rely on guidance and information. We ask that you investigate Noah's Ark Zoo Farm immediately and make sure that all schools are made aware of the findings of the investigation.

Additional information:

1 The Department for Education 2011 – Free Schools FAQs – Curriculum:

“We would expect to see evolution and its foundation topics fully included in any science curriculum. We do not expect creationism, intelligent design and similar ideas to be taught as valid scientific theories in any state funded school” <http://www.education.gov.uk/a0075656/free-schools-faqs-curriculum#faq5>;

<https://humanism.org.uk/2014/02/04/alice-roberts-bha-complain-michael-gove-noahs-ark-zoo-farms-quality-badge-breaching-creationism-policy/>; <http://www.theguardian.com/world/2013/dec/08/wont-go-back-to-creationist-zoo-bristol>

2 BIAZA (2009):

'Council believes that the behaviour of NAZF has brought the association into disrepute'

TM<http://news.bbc.co.uk/1/hi/england/somerset/8391779.stm>

Petitioner : Jane Henderson

First considered by the Committee: 23 September 2014

Number of Signatures: 221



Eich cyf/Your ref
Ein cyf/Our ref HL/05154/14

William Powell AM
Assembly Member for Mid & West Wales
Chair Petitions Committee
Ty Hywel
Cardiff Bay
Cardiff
CF99 1NA

12 November 2014

committeebusiness@Wales.gsi.gov.uk

Dear William

Thank you for your letter of 30th September on behalf of the Petitions Committee seeking my views on the information provided in relation to the suitability of Noah's Ark Zoo Farm for visits from Welsh schools.

I do not condone the teaching of Creationism and the Curriculum should not be used as a vehicle or seen as a route for its promotion.

Whilst it falls within the remit of Local Authorities and Consortia, working in partnership with schools, to determine appropriate venues for educational visits and to ensure they are investigated and assessed appropriately, the selection and use of such venues is a responsibility I expect them to take very seriously.

Once a venue has been determined, headteachers and members of staff must ensure that a comprehensive Health and Safety risk assessment is carried out for each school visit. The Outdoor Education Adviser Panel has produced revised national guidance for schools and governing bodies on school trips which can be found at the following link.

<http://wales.gov.uk/topics/educationandskills/allsectorpolicies/healthandsafety/educationalvisits/?skip=1&lang=en>

The National Curriculum in Wales is broad and balanced the programmes of study that have been developed for each statutory national curriculum subject, from Key Stage 2 to Key Stage 4, identify and map the subject contexts that are most appropriate for development.

This is to ensure that we aim to reduce prescription in the curriculum and give control and responsibility to schools and learners. Schools in planning their curriculum have a clear responsibility to organise and deliver the curriculum in the way that best suits their circumstances and needs. They can choose to retain their existing approach to curriculum organisation whilst adopting a new approach to delivery or develop more imaginative and innovative ways of delivering the statutory curriculum. Such changes in approach might include using a series of whole days – in or out of school – to focus on a particular topic.

However I do not endorse the teaching of creationism as a factual or scientific explanation of the origin of life. The curriculum is designed to be 'broad and balanced' to give learners the opportunity to interface with the world around them through the processes of gathering and analysing evidence, robust debate and critical thinking.



Huw Lewis AC / AM
Y Gweinidog Addysg a Sgiliau
Minister for Education and Skills

The Minsters comments

We welcome the statement from the minister that 'I do not condone the teaching of creationism and the Curriculum should not be used as a vehicle or seen as a route for its promotion' and that 'I do not endorse the teaching of creationism as a factual or scientific explanation of the origin of life' and his encouragement to schools to teach students through 'evidence, robust debate and critical thinking.'

It is clear that Noah's Ark Zoo Farm is in direct contradiction to the Curriculum, as shown in its mission statement: 'To build a place where people of all ages, faiths and backgrounds can come and learn the wonders of Creation through fun, adventure and scientific discovery....'

https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/279090/NAZF_Business_Plan_2014.pdf (accessed 18/11/2014). There is a great deal of other information available from the Farm's website and other sources that show that NAZF presents Creationism as opposed to valid scientific theory throughout we refer to some below.

We recognise, as the minister says, that schools have the freedom 'to organise and deliver the curriculum in the way that best suits their circumstances and needs', and we are sure that schools understand their responsibility to carry out risk assessments and have confidence in our own children's school and others to undertake this. However, it is clear from our experience, and from the experience of parents with children in other primary schools in Wales gained from the process of developing this petition, that busy teachers, giving in many cases their own free time to research venues for school trips, can be unaware of the implications on the curriculum of visiting NAZF. We are aware of many parents at other schools who only found out about the issues of the zoo when discussing with their children after a visit, and others who, while unhappy with their school's proposed trip were not given the time, or the opportunity to complain.

The Minister for Education and Skills has made it clear in his statement that the selection of venues for education visits is in the remit of Local

Authorities and consortia but also that there is an expectation from the Welsh Government that this process is conducted rigorously and in line with the curriculum, making explicit that teaching creationism should not be part of that curriculum. Our concern is that information is not sufficiently available to schools to make informed decisions. It is clear from our experience, and from the number of different schools represented on this petition, that teachers are unaware of the issues around this zoo.

We ask that an appropriate department issues a briefing note restating the need to teach evidence based scientific curriculum appropriate to all ages, to draw attention to the underlying dispute between NAFZ and our current scientific understanding of creationism and evolution and to encourage schools to consider this during any planning phase and prior to confirming a booking.

Background

The petition submitted followed a particular experience in a Cardiff primary school where confusion and upset was caused by the booking of a school trip to the site to continue the learning on the curriculum on the theme of animals. Following parents raising concerns about the nature of the zoo the school opted to look elsewhere.

Information about the Zoo

This zoo is created on a basis of a young earth theory commonly known as creationism. Their mission is reproduced in the literature and signage of the park and is in contradiction to education policy.

Information on the website

The Zoo's website presents on first glance like any bright child friendly educational destination. It is no surprise then that at first people may not identify the mission of the zoo. By following the *about us* link from the main page the mission, or theme, of the zoo is set out. This section encourages a discussion on evolution and creationism and offers what they describe as a 'new approach to looking at the natural world.' The zoo offers a view that the date of the earth is 'much younger than 4.5 billion years'. Following the

pages it is made clear that the zoo is arguing that the ark story is evidenced in the geological record and offer statements such as:

'Through ongoing research, a current estimate proposes that all mammals, living and extinct, can be grouped into fewer than 50 original kinds. As we are still getting to grips with the amazing capacity of species to change form as they diversify and evolve, the actual number is likely to have been even smaller. Similarly there may have been fewer than 20 original kinds of bird and 20 kinds of reptile.'

<http://www.noahsarkzooofarm.co.uk/pages/about-us/earth-history/constructing-the-ark.php>

The site makes it clear that their views contest received scientific understanding noting that 'The [Darwinian](#) view offers a different framework.'

<http://www.noahsarkzooofarm.co.uk/pages/about-us/earth-history/evolution.php>

Readers are encouraged to follow this up to linked sites with a more detailed critique of evolution. The culmination of this set of pages leads to text including the following:

If, after honest inquiry, you find that you cannot explain such things as made by the world itself, it may then be reasonable to ask whether there is a Creator. <http://www.noahsarkzooofarm.co.uk/pages/about-us/earth-history/what-really-happened.php>

In an interview in 2006 the owner is reported to have said:

From the outside, our farm is not overtly Christian. But, from the inside, we are very strongly Christian. I am a Creationist, and we see the farm as a mission station to give people scientific permission to believe in God.

<http://www.churchtimes.co.uk/articles/2006/5-may/features/interview-anthony-bush-co-founder-of->

Noah's Ark Farm Zoo Petition

[noah%E2%80%99s-ark-zoo-farm-and-former-general-synod-member](#)
accessed 18/11/2014

Public information boards on the site

It is evident that the Zoo aims to challenge evolution. Their mission is reflected within the communication boards and signage at the zoo. Images of the signs with and explanation of how they are distributed throughout the site can be found on the humanist website:

<http://blog.newhumanist.org.uk/2010/08/noahs-ark-redux-counter-educational.html>. To quote the signs include

'Eating meat was allowed after the Flood" but "Before this most people might have been veggies', and that "All the people in the world come from Noah's sons Shem, Ham and Japheth. Caucasian from Japheth, Semitic from Shem, and Negroid/Mongoloid/Redskin from Ham.'

The public information boards are discussed in a review of the zoo by Dr Alice Roberts Professor of Public Engagement in Science at the University of Birmingham who observed posters in 2013 that stated :

All in all, bacteria do not look as if they were the products of chance. They look as if they have been designed... Why has science closed its mind to the possibility that life was created?" asked one.

Another one presented "30 reasons why apes are not related to man'. She notes that these posters are ' clustered by the picnic tables in the indoor play park - somewhere all the children are almost guaranteed to visit.' <http://www.theguardian.com/world/2013/dec/08/wont-go-back-to-creationist-zoo-bristol> accessed 18/11/2014

Christianity and scientific evidence

We would like to note clearly here that our views on this zoo are not related to Christianity in any way. We feel it is important to note that the views given at NAZF are completely misrepresentative of mainstream Christianity in that the Anglican and Catholic faiths agree with evolutionary theory, as well as being misrepresentative of more minority established Christian faiths who

have rather different versions of creationism. This raises more issues for faith schools in terms of visits to NAZF. The views presented on the Church of England website on this point can be found on this link:

<https://www.churchofengland.org/our-views/medical-ethics-health-social-care-policy/darwin/malcolmbrown.aspx>

Animal Welfare

Another issue raised in the petition is animal welfare. The Daily Mail raised a series of concerns in their expose piece of

<http://www.dailymail.co.uk/news/article-1221493/Zoo-skinned-dead-tiger-Tira-stored-head-freezer.html>. Whilst we are not in a position to

comment on the voracity of this article many of the claims are reinforced by this BBC investigation

<http://news.bbc.co.uk/1/hi/england/somerset/8391779.stmn> which relate

to inappropriate relationships with circuses and animal welfare issues

including the disposal of dead animals. The British and Irish Association of Zoos and Aquariums (BIAZA) is the professional organization representing

the zoo and aquarium community in Britain and Ireland. In 2009 the zoo was expelled from the body due to a breakdown of trust. "

"The reasons for termination are due to a refusal to provide BIAZA with information when requested and entering into an arrangement with the Great British Circus, which contravenes the Animal Transaction Policy, despite having been warned of possible consequences.

"Council believes that the behaviour of NAZF has brought the association into disrepute and that there has been a breakdown of trust between BIAZA and NAZF, and this has unfortunately resulted in a parting of the ways." <http://www.bristolpost.co.uk/Noah-s-Ark-Zoo-Farm-stripped-BIAZA-membership/story-11285228-detail/story.html#ixzz3JSm5FLZa>

Whilst we would not necessarily suggest that schools should only visit sites registered by lead bodies, a lack of membership would add an additional risk assessment burden as those aspects that the lead body audits as part of

Noah's Ark Farm Zoo Petition

their professional membership cannot be externally validated, in the case of BIAZA who ensure that:

Member collections must undertake significant work in the field of animal welfare, conservation, education and research. Members must follow and comply with the [Memorandum and Articles of Association](#) (pdf) and Codes of Practice of the Association. All members must adhere to the [Animal Transaction Policy](#) (pdf), which ensures that all animal movements conform to the highest ethical and welfare standards. <http://www.biaza.org.uk/biaza-membership/>

To conclude we hope that the Petitions committee are able to recommend that the Welsh Government pass on this information and advice.

Your sincerely,

Jane Henderson and Ashley Harris on behalf a large group of concerned parents

P-04-529 A Letting Agents Ombudsman for Wales

Petition wording:

We call upon the National Assembly for Wales to urge the Welsh Government to give the people of Wales a 'Letting Agents Ombudsman' by including it within their Housing Bill.

An ombudsman will give people guidance, issued by the Welsh Government, of what their rights are as a tenant. It will tell them how to complain directly through the agents' complaints procedure and when all avenues are have been exhausted, they can ask the Ombudsman to step in and take action.

Additional Information:

We very much welcome the regulation of letting agents and landlords set out in the Bill – this has been urgently needed for years. Students and young professionals are being robbed time and time again with invented letting agent fees and even invented letting agents and these need to be held to account now. There is not enough being done to help tenants against landlords – regulation will help, but there will always be bad landlords and letting agents that slip through the cracks and their tenants need someone on their side.

We need a Letting Agents Ombudsman. Letting agents and landlords are exempt from many of the regulations that estate agents have to follow. And many young people renting are straight from home or university and are vulnerable to their methods. They end up paying fees because they had no idea they had an option not to.

England has the 'Housing Ombudsman Service' that has worked effectively and provides a defence and a right to complaint for tenants all over the country. Wales needs one too.

Petition raised by: Let Down in Cardiff

Date Petition first considered by Committee: 21 January 2014

Number of signatures: TBC

Lesley Griffiths AC / AM
Y Gweinidog Cymunedau a Threchu Tlodi
Minister for Communities and Tackling Poverty



Llywodraeth Cymru
Welsh Government

Eich cyf/Your ref P-04-529
Ein cyf/Our ref LG/05325/14

William Powell AM
Chair Petitions Committee
Ty Hywel
Cardiff Bay
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CF99 1NA

committeebusiness@Wales.gsi.gov.uk

5

November 2014

Dear Bill

You wrote on 14 October in relation to petition P-04-529, *A Letting Agents Ombudsman for Wales*. The petitioner had been in correspondence with my officials. You asked specifically for my views on the petitioner's latest email and for me to address each point raised by the petitioner.

The petitioner had actually received a response from my official prior to my receipt of your letter. I enclose a copy of the response which I believe fully addresses the petitioner's concerns.

In short, whilst I entirely agree with the petitioner's intentions, I simply do not see what value a Letting Agents Ombudsman would add to what is being delivered as a result of Part 1 of the Housing (Wales) Act 2014.

Regards

Lesley

Lesley Griffiths AC / AM
Y Gweinidog Cymunedau a Threchu Tlodi
Minister for Communities and Tackling Poverty

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Wedi'i argraffu ar bapur wedi'i ailcychwyn

Page 1 of 2

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Liz

I will answer your questions in the order in which they were posed:

1. The Codes of Practice are being worked by our stakeholder groups on as we speak. Whilst we do not have a set-in-stone date for bringing the Codes in, the scheme is due to begin next year. The Codes will need to be in place before then, and have to be publicly consulted on, so it will be sooner rather than later that you will be able to have your input.
2. The penalty for non-compliance with the Codes is the removal of a person's licence to manage a property in Wales.
3. We do not intend to be prescriptive in terms of the Ombudsman scheme which letting agents choose to become a member of.
4. We don't envisage there being any issues as, all being well, the scheme will be delivered by one authority on behalf of the other twenty-one. Whatever is agreed upon, this situation should not change.
5. Where the landlord lives is inconsequential, it is where the property that they own and let is situated.
6. To be confirmed after consulting with our stakeholder groups. The current thinking is that landlords / agents will be encouraged to disseminate this information alongside the rental agreements, but there will be scope to promote and distribute via tenant representative organisations such as NUS Wales and Shelter Cymru, as well as through the central scheme.
7. Alongside the existing avenues for such information (Shelter, Citizens Advice, NUS, local authorities), the designated licensing authority will be the place for tenants to go for information / advice and to report problems. Information will be available through all of the usual means, including online.
8. Yes, information will be collected and published.

Ombudsman: The Letting Agent Ombudsman you requested in your petition does not go as far as this scheme. For a start, a Letting Agent Ombudsman would not cover a very sizeable chunk of the private rental market, as in properties let directly by a landlord to a tenant. Secondly, there was no suggestion that this Ombudsman would be mandatory for letting agents. This scheme is mandatory, and covers all landlords and letting / management agents who own or are involved in the letting or management of properties in Wales. Compliance is not optional.

Letting Agent Fees: There are no plans at present to limit the amount of fees that a letting agent can charge, but the plan is to ensure that fees are up-front through the Codes of Practice being developed as part of the implementation of Part 1 of the Housing (Wales) Act. The UK Government's Consumer Rights Bill (<http://services.parliament.uk/bills/2014-15/consumerrights.html>) has been subject to a Government amendment which, if agreed, enters a duty upon all letting agents in England and Wales to be up-front about their fees. This means that tenants will have an informed choice when entering into an agreement with a letting agent, and will not be stung by hidden charges or "surprise" fees.

Regards

Gareth Baglow
Llywodraeth Cymru / Welsh Government
Adran Polisi Tai / Housing Policy Division
Tîm Tai Sector Preifat / Private Sector Housing Team
Llinell Union / Direct Line: 03000 628 155 (GTN 2843 8155)

Let Down in Wales

*Campaigning for
Private Rented Sector
reform*

Tuesday 18th November 2014

To the Petitions Committee,

Whilst the Housing Bill has passed, much of the effects on what private tenants can expect from their landlords/letting agents will depend on the Code of Practice, which is yet to be complete.

We maintain that much of housing legislation, both at a UK and Wales level, is too focused on buyers rather than renters. It is an unfortunate political reality that we cannot build enough houses – affordable ones in particular – that are needed and people are far less likely than ever to be able to save for a house deposit.

The Housing Bill focused mostly on social housing, rather than how to improve rental conditions that increasing amounts of vulnerable people are finding themselves in. Correspondence with the Housing Department has not reassured us that the information will be properly promoted; the rogue landlords and bad letting agents may be ‘encouraged’ to disseminate information, but it would not be in their interests to point tenants towards the Licensing Authority that could take their license away. It’s vital that tenants not only know about the Code of Practice, but are also made aware of their right to complain without fear of ‘revenge evictions’ or the simpler mechanisms that landlords/agents can use against them, such as increasing rent or not offering to renew contracts at short notice.

There is also not much confidence in local authorities being able to govern their responsibilities, due to dwindling resources. Housing Officers will only inspect a property if there is a complaint so whether it complies with the standards will be up to the tenants to decide, and then to decide whether to complain about it or ask the landlord/agent to improve it. Again, tenants’ knowledge of their rights is integral and tenants’ fears of evictions are only rising.

The Renting Homes Bill is a clear opportunity where this can be rectified. We very much welcome that contracts will be made simpler in plain language, making it easier for tenants to understand the terms. However we are very concerned about the proposal to end the 6-month moratorium. Very few tenants would want to rent a property for less than 6 months and this could lead to a severe increase in a lack of security from landlords who are not sure how long they want to rent the property out for and would

offer much shorter or rolling contracts as standard. The rental market is not one of choice for tenants, their options are very limited and they are often forced to accept any contract that is offered to them.

We still believe that a redress scheme, either in the form of Ombudsmen or a Housing Tribunal is a key factor in ultimately ensuring fairness in the private rented sector. This would help to create a much-needed culture change as well, where landlords and agents know that they **have** to abide by Codes or they could incur costs. We also do not think the removal of a license is enough incentive to change rogue landlords' or letting agents' behaviour. Having an Ombudsman or Tribunal would also ensure better information and resources are there for landlords too, who equally need as much information and support to run their businesses appropriately, and for stronger penalties to be enforced when they have treated tenants badly.

Following the Housing Bill, we were very disappointed to see the removal of a Minister for Housing and Regeneration. Whilst the Communities and Tackling Poverty portfolio certainly relates to housing, it is concerning to see it appear to be less of a priority now it's been combined. This raises questions over how much priority the Welsh Government are giving to the Renting Homes Bill, which is an opportunity to fix so many problems for tenants.

We would also be interested to know of any Welsh Government and AMs' views on the Tenancies (Reform) Bill, a Private Member's Bill (<https://www.gov.uk/government/news/stephen-williams-vows-to-outlaw-revenge-evictions>) sponsored by Stephen Williams MP and Sarah Teather MP, reaching its second reading debate on Friday 28th November 2014. It has government backing in principle, but it is yet unclear as to whether it will progress.

Has the Welsh Government considered introducing similar legislation? And does it have the necessary powers to do so? If it doesn't, it also raises questions as to how effective housing legislation can be in Wales if there are not enough levers to regulate it.

And, if the Tenancies (Reform) Bill were to be passed, would the Welsh Government consider passing the legislation through a Legislative Consent Memorandum, and does it believe LCMs to be an effective way of delivering housing policy in Wales?

We'd appreciate any views on the above matters.

Many thanks,

Liz Smith
Co-ordinator
Let Down in Wales

P-04-573 – Call on the Welsh Government to Investigate the Residential Leasehold System in Wales.

Petition Wording

We the undersigned call on the National Assembly for Wales to urge the Welsh Government to instigate an investigation into the way in which the residential leasehold system is operating in Wales despite the changes made by the Leasehold Reform Act and to consider whether there should be a cap on increases to leasehold agreements in Wales.

Additional Information:

This petition has been submitted in light of the fear that residents on the Elba estate in Gowerton are currently experiencing, due to the demands of up to 5000% increases in annual ground rent that Swansea Council are demanding of these leaseholders.

Petition raised by: Residents of Elba Estate

Date Petition first considered by Committee: 15 July 2014

Number of signatures: 583

Lesley Griffiths AC / AM
Y Gweinidog Cymunedau a Threchgu Tlodi
Minister for Communities and Tackling Poverty



Llywodraeth Cymru
Welsh Government

Eich cyf/Your ref P-04-573
Ein cyf/Our ref LG/05328/14

William Powell AM
Chair Petitions Committee

committeebusiness@Wales.gsi.gov.uk

8

November 2014

Dear Bill

I refer to your letter of 30 October regarding Petition P-04-573 *Call on the Welsh Government to Investigate the Residential Leasehold System in Wales*. The petitioner has written in response to the previous Minister for Housing and Regeneration, Carl Sargeant AM.

The petitioner is correct in stating some cases involving ground rent increases as a result of rent review clauses within the lease are heard by the Upper Tribunal (Lands Chamber). This is the procedure for disputing decisions made by the Leasehold Valuation Tribunal. What we are forgetting here is these tribunals are the method by which unfair practices can be appealed against. This is where recourse can be obtained.

I have not yet found out what the revised levels of ground rent offered by Swansea Council to the residents of the Elba estate are. I sincerely hope sense is seen and the ground rents are set at a more reasonable and affordable level, which will hopefully avoid the need to travel down the route of resolution through the tribunal systems.

As the petitioner points out, the Leasehold Reform Act 1967 has been in existence for 47 years. This has allowed plenty of time for any problems to manifest, but this has not happened on the scale which has been mooted. The evidence of a widespread problem in Wales is simply not there.

The report from the Leasehold Advisory Service will be made available to all Assembly Members once the final version has been received.

Regards
Lesley

Lesley Griffiths AC / AM
Y Gweinidog Cymunedau a Threchgu Tlodi
Minister for Communities and Tackling Poverty

Bae Caerdydd • Cardiff Bay
Caerdydd • Cardiff

Wedi'i argraffu ar bapur wedi'i ailgylchu (100%)
Pack Page 108

English Enquiry Line 0845 010 3300
Llinell Ymholiadau Cymraeg 0845 010 4400
Correspondence: Lesley.Griffiths@wales.gsi.gov.uk
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P-04-573 Call on the Welsh Government to investigate the residential leasehold system in Wales – Correspondence from the Petitioner to the Committee, 19.11.14

From – Mr Kenneth Douglas

To Mr William Powell, AM Chair of Petitions Committee

Dear Sir,

I refer to your letter dated 8th November 2014, with a letter attached from Lesley Griffiths AM concerning Petition P-14-573 asking for my comments.

I can only speak for myself, and not for all the residents of the Elba Estate, Gowerton, Swansea. The first letters sent, 6th June 2014, to residents, varied; subject to plot size up to 5000%+ per annum, up from 7% per annum, when the properties were purchased, plot size was not an issue at that time.

The Action Committee negotiations with Swansea council have resulted with a reduced offer of £400 per annum for all residents. This may well appear a wonderful result, however, it is still an increase of 800%, and will still be an enormous burden to many young families and pensioners, with the one main equation missing, that any diligent administration would have penciled in first, 'Affordability'. We are also told via the local press, that the properties on the Elba Estate "are worthless", due to the massive increase in the ground rent.

I understand, that following a 'Freedom of Information request', it seems the Elba estate were the highest rated leasehold properties in Swansea, even before this increase: These are working class people, not London stockbrokers. A savvy, experienced administration, receiving such a hot potato from a defunct authority, would have seen the failings of such a lease, a lease that is based on those used in the world of commercial properties, and should have been seen in this case, not fit for residential properties, and therefore not fit for purpose..

I believe this petition is vital, to safeguard the many thousands of residents within Wales, who's councils may be tempted to go the same route, if Swansea council is seen to be successful. I also believe it is essential for good governance, that the Welsh Assembly Government should have the authority to be able to intervene in

such matters, in the same way that it has been seen necessary to Cap council tax charges. Not all councils have competent management, and not all discharge a 'Duty of Care'. We the people, require a recourse at such times.

Thank you for your time

Yours faithfully

Ken Douglas

William Powell AM
Assembly Member for Mid & West Wales
Chair Petitions Committee

6 November 2014

Dear William,

Re: PETITIONS COMMITTEE – P-04-573 – RESIDENTIAL LEASEHOLD SYSTEM IN WALES

The above petition is being processed via the Petitions Committee at this time.

In Carl Sargeant's AM letter dated 3 September he clearly indicates that the Leasehold Advisory Service had advised the Welsh Government that they found absolutely no evidence that this issue exists outside this estate.

Alas, this is not the case.

I have been approached by the family of an 85 year old from Cockett, Swansea, who on reading the newspaper articles on the Elba Site contacted City and County of Swansea (SCC) in May this year to ascertain if she could extend her lease as it has only approximately 12 years left to run; at present she is paying £4.37 ground rent. The Council informed her that they would grant a new lease (50 years) at a modern ground rent of approximately £1,900 per annum.

The elderly lady also enquired after the freehold sale price and received a letter from SCC dated 23 September 2014 stating that the freehold was £27,950 plus Council's legal and surveyor's fees of £1,690. This has subsequently been negotiated down to £25,000 plus £1,600 fees. However, the family are not in a position to proceed with purchase.

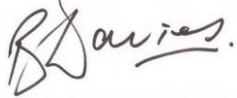
I write as I feel sure that there are more cases like this out there involving the elderly who are under tremendous stress, embarrassed to tell the families or have no family to advise them.

I have requested a full list from SCC of all Leasehold properties that they control.

I will forward all the necessary documentation to you for your consideration in due course

If there are any queries please do not hesitate to contact me.

Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'H. Byron Davies'.

H. Byron Davies
Regional Assembly Member for South Wales West
Shadow Minister for Transport and Regeneration, European Affairs and Whip

Lesley Griffiths AM
Minister for Communities and Tackling Poverty
(Housing and Regeneration)
National Assembly for Wales
Cardiff Bay
Cardiff
CF99 1NA

6 November 2014

Dear Minister,

Re: PETITIONS COMMITTEE - P-04-573 - RESIDENTIAL LEASEHOLD SYSTEM IN WALES

The above petition is being processed via the Petitions Committee at this time. Your predecessor, Carl Sargeant AM under his previous office as Minister for Housing, wrote to William Power AM, Chair of the Petitions Committee on 3 September 2014. Copy enclosed for your easy reference.

In this letter he clearly indicates that the Leasehold Advisory Service had advised the Welsh Government that they found absolutely no evidence that this issue exists outside this estate.

Alas, this is not the case.

I have been approached by the family of an 85 year old from Cockett, Swansea, who on reading the newspaper articles on the Elba Site contacted City and County of Swansea (SCC) in May this year to ascertain if she could extend her lease as it has only approximately 12 years left to run; at present she is paying £4.37 ground rent. The Council informed her that they would grant a new lease (50 years) at a modern ground rent of approximately £1,900 per annum.

The elderly lady also enquired after the freehold sale price and received a letter from SCC dated 23 September 2014 stating that the freehold was £27,950 plus Council's legal and surveyor's fees of £1,690. This has subsequently been negotiated down to £25,000 plus £1,600 fees. However, the family are not in a position to proceed with purchase.

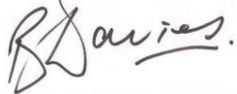
I write as I feel sure that there are more cases like this out there involving the elderly who are under tremendous stress, embarrassed to tell the families or have no family to advise them.

I will be forwarding all the necessary documentation to the Chair regarding this particular case in due course.

I have requested a full list from SCC of all Leasehold properties that they control.

I look forward to hearing from you that LEASE have taken this incident into account when preparing their report and subsequent recommendations.

Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'H. Byron Davies'.

H. Byron Davies
Regional Assembly Member for South Wales West
Shadow Minister for Transport and Regeneration, European Affairs and Whip

Encl

Mr Jack Straw
Chief Executive Officer
Civic Centre
City and County of Swansea
Oystermouth Road
Swansea
SA1 3SN

6 November 2014

Dear Sir,

Re:LEASEHOLD PROPERTIES IN THE CITY AND COUNTY OF SWANSEA

I write further on the subject of leasehold properties within the control of the City and County of Swansea.

I have recently been approached by a Swansea resident who is in a similar position to those people on the Elba site. It would appear that there are more leaseheld properties, other than the Elba site, which are currently experiencing difficulties with the prospect of increases in their ground rents .

Under the Freedom For Information Act 2000 I therefore request a complete and up-to-date list of all properties held by the Council which are currently leaseheld within the jurisdiction of the City and County of Swansea; the term of the leases, the renewal dates of those leases and the ground rent currently being paid to SCC by the leasees.

I look forward to receiving the information.

Yours faithfully



H. Byron Davies
Regional Assembly Member for South Wales West
Shadow Minister for Transport and Regeneration, European Affairs and Whip

cc Mr Geoff Bacon
Corporate Building & Property Services

P-04-532 Improving specialised neuromuscular services in Wales

Petition wording:

We call on the National Assembly for Wales to urge the Welsh Government to ensure that Health Boards implement the investment proposed by the Welsh Neuromuscular Network Vision Document for improving specialised neuromuscular services in Wales.

Additional Information:

The Welsh Neuromuscular Network is recommending the following priority developments: 1. Increase in Family Care Advisors and support. 2. Specialist adult neuromuscular physiotherapists. 3. Appointment of consultant in adult neuromuscular disease. 4. Increase in clinical psychology. 5. An equipment budget to enable minor purchases and lease arrangements.

Petition raised by: Muscular Dystrophy Campaign

Date Petition first considered by Committee: 4 February 2014

Mark Drakeford AC / AM
Y Gweinidog Iechyd a Gwasanaethau Cymdeithasol
Minister for Health and Social Services



Llywodraeth Cymru
Welsh Government

Eich cyf/Your ref: P-04-532
Ein cyf/Our ref: MD/03323/14

William Powell AM
Chair
Petitions Committee Stephen.george@wales.gov.uk

9 September 2014

Dear William,

Thank you for your letter of 1 September regarding Petition P-04-532 about specialised neuromuscular services.

The committee may be aware that we published the Neurological Conditions Delivery Plan on 8 May setting out our expectations for the care of people with neurological conditions including those with neuromuscular disease.

The Neurological Conditions Delivery Plan provides a framework for action by health boards and their partners. It sets out the Welsh Government's expectations for the planning and delivery of person-centred care and focuses on meeting population need, tackling variation in access to services and reducing inequalities across seven themes:

- Raising awareness of neurological conditions
- Timely diagnosis of neurological conditions
- Fast and effective care
- Living with a neurological condition
- Children and young people
- Improving information
- Targeting research

Health boards will now develop and implement their own plans to deliver well co-ordinated services for patients. Specialised care needs to be well connected to local services, providing better patient experience and outcomes. In particular, it is essential that the NHS and its partners focus on meeting population needs, reducing inequalities in health and variation in access to services across Wales. The issues identified by the Muscular Dystrophy Campaign will be considered as part of the implementation of the plan.

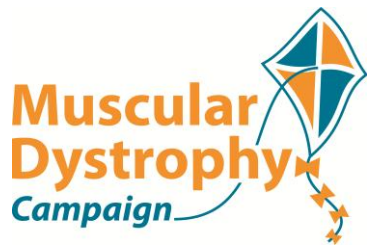
With regard to the new chair of the Welsh Neuromuscular Network this is a matter for the NHS, however, I understand that discussions are ongoing to identify a new Chair.

Best wishes,

Mark,

Mark Drakeford AC / AM

Y Gweinidog Iechyd a Gwasanaethau Cymdeithasol
Minister for Health and Social Services



Muscular Dystrophy Campaign comment for the Petitions Committee on 25th November

The Muscular Dystrophy Campaign acknowledges the correspondence from the Minister for Health and Social Services to the Petitions Committee outlining the Neurological Conditions Delivery Plan and welcomes his statement that the issues identified by the Muscular Dystrophy Campaign will be considered as part of the implementation plan.

It is essential that the complex nature of muscular dystrophy and related neuromuscular conditions is recognised and not just generically grouped with neurological conditions or long-term conditions. Other specialisms are also needed for these rare and very rare conditions, such as genetic, respiratory, rehabilitation and cardiac support.

We understand that after five months there is still no appointment of a Chair of the Welsh Neuromuscular Network, which is a matter needing to be resolved as a matter of urgency to build on the progress made by Dr Andrew Goodall made when he was Chair of the Network.

The Muscular Dystrophy Campaign reiterates the call for Health Boards to act now to ensure that the Welsh Neuromuscular Network's investment priorities identified a year ago are implemented so that all people living with muscle-wasting conditions have comparable access to specialist services to other parts of the UK. The priorities for investment are as follows:

- **increased neuromuscular care advisor support**
- **specialist adult neuromuscular physiotherapy**
- **long-term dedicated neuromuscular consultant time**
- **specialist neuromuscular psychology support**

If the Health Boards in Wales agree to the recommended investment, emergency hospital care could be dramatically reduced.

The Muscular Dystrophy Campaign hopes that the urgent need for neuromuscular service development can be scheduled for a debate in the Assembly at the earliest available opportunity.

Agenda Item 4.17

P-04-582 Much Needed Change to the Rules in our Schools with Regards to Head Lice and Nits

Petition Wording:

There needs to be a change in the rules with regards to Head Lice in school children. Currently school staff are not permitted to point out, even to the offending child's parent, who it is in the class has Head Lice and a generic letter is just handed out. Why can't a parent, whose child is visibly infected and infecting a class, be informed and asked to collect said child. This child should then be kept off school until they have been deemed clear by a member of staff to return as they do in some schools in the US! If a child vomits in school, they are sent home immediately. Head Lice are just as infectious and cause just as much distress to our children. This can be done discreetly, nobody has to know. Unless the parent themselves choose to share the information. It is not a violation of anybody's human rights, if anything it would protect the children of us who are diligent and care, and subsequently spending a lot of money to treat our children to no avail!

Petition raised by: Marnie Hill

Date Petition first considered by Committee: 23 September 2014

Number of signatures: 31

Mark Drakeford AC / AM
Y Gweinidog Iechyd a Gwasanaethau Cymdeithasol
Minister for Health and Social Services



Eich cyf/Your ref P-04-582
Ein cyf/Our ref MD/05358/14

Llywodraeth Cymru
Welsh Government

Mr William Powell AM
Chair of the Petitions Committee
National Assembly for Wales
Cardiff Bay
Cardiff
CF99 1NA

29 October 2014

Dear William,

Thank you for your letter of 30 September addressed to the Minister for Education and Skills, seeking his comments on the petition P-04-582 on the subject of the control of head lice in schools. The letter has been passed to me to respond, as the subject falls within my portfolio.

I understand parents' concerns. Head lice can be a persistent problem which can be uncomfortable and irritating for children and highly frustrating and worrying for parents. It can be extremely challenging to clear any infestation and a co-ordinated approach between parents, teachers, the school nurse and the wider community is advised.

Routine screening, followed by the exclusion of those affected used to take place in some schools. This proved to be ineffective in preventing spread. Despite the fact that head lice are no respecters of social status and the cleanliness of hair, there can still be a social stigma attached to infestation with head lice. To compound matters, children would miss significant periods of school for something that, although uncomfortable and irritating, has relatively mild symptoms.

The best way to stop infection is for parents to learn how to check their children's heads for lice. The responsibility for frequent checks must lie with the individual parent who is best placed to detect infestation. In order to encourage this method the Parent Teacher Associations of some schools have organised family health promotion sessions with health professionals. Many schools participate in initiatives such as National Bug Busting Days (31 January, 15 June and 31 October) which aim to ensure children and parents know how to detect and treat head lice and prevent their circulation.

Bae Caerdydd • Cardiff Bay
Caerdydd • Cardiff
CF99 1NA

English Enquiry Line 0845 010 3300
Llinell Ymholiadau Cymraeg 0845 010 4400
Correspondence.Mark.Drakeford@wales.gsi.gov.uk

Wedi'i argraffu ar bapur wedi'i ailgylchu (100%)

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The Welsh Government has published a leaflet and a factsheet for use in schools (<http://wales.gov.uk/topics/health/protection/communicabledisease/publications/headlice/?lang=en>) which explains and normalises the issue and gives detailed information on how to treat the infestation. Parents may wish to discuss this with the school nurse and teachers if they would find that helpful.

Best wishes,

Mark

Mark Drakeford AC / AM
Y Gweinidog Iechyd a Gwasanaethau Cymdeithasol
Minister for Health and Social Services

P-04-582 Much Needed Change to the Rules in our Schools with Regards to Head Lice and Nits – Correspondence from the Hairforce – Lice Assassins to the Committee, 22.09.14

WELSH ASSEMBLY PETITION

P-04-582 Much needed change in the rules in our schools with regards to Head Lice and Nits

Supporting arguments by Natalie Nurse, The Hairforce – Lice Assassins, Cardiff

I wish to submit supporting arguments to the above petition submitted by Marnie Hill. I run the Cardiff branch of a business dedicated to the professional checking and clearing of head lice and their eggs (the nits), The Hairforce – Lice Assassins. In this position I am uniquely placed to give insight into both the research that exists around this topic and the human evidence extracted from our client base, and how both these sources support the need for the sort of change the petition is seeking.

WHY EVIDENCE SUPPORTS THE PETITION:

1. The highly infectious nature of the issue

Head lice are passed from human to human by close contact, and that contact is a natural occurrence in the classroom and in the playground amongst groups of children. Children carrying head lice therefore put other children constantly at risk.

A quantification of that risk can be found in academic research which shows that as far back as 2005 nearly 50% of 4-11 year olds, or nearly 3 million children, have nits and lice annually in the UK, with 10% to 15% having them at any one time. Researchers suspect that this figure is a gross underestimate of the true size of the issue in 2014. In addition the traditional way of measuring the reach of the problem – i.e. just the 4 to 11 age group – does not take into account the rise of nursery education, and therefore the under 4 age group; the fact that infestations are carried from primary school into the secondary school system, so beyond the age of 11; and the rest of the family members – parents, grandparents, and carers who are often infested by the primary carrier. Research in 2011 estimated that a quarter of all parents caught Head Lice from their children.

The speed at which infestations are properly dealt with is therefore critical to containing the repercussions through the age ranges and through different environments.

The market growth rates amongst 4–11 year olds since the late 1990's show a significant pattern of growth – 19% 1997; 28% 1998; 37% 2003; 50% 2005 (Sources: KG Coates; 1997 & 1998 AM Downs; 2003 J Harris; 2005 Hill).

In addition research shows that as Head Lice spread, growing numbers of children have their schooling adversely affected, and with that their parents working lives similarly disrupted – children lose 2.74 million days from school, and parents take 2.78 million days off work to tackle infestations (Sept 2011 NYDA). An Ipsos Mori poll in the same year in Northern Ireland revealed that parents were taking 97,120 days off work and children were losing 63,327 days of school as a result of the problem (Sept 2011).

2. The negative effect on the well-being of our children within School

In 2012 a ground breaking piece of research appeared in the USA which strips away the traditional product bias in Head Lice research and turned to the children and their interests. The publisher of this research – the **National Association of Social Workers** – gives both credibility and a refreshing sense of honesty to the paper. Significantly this is a body that is child centric not product sales driven.

This 2012 research by Purdy and True, whilst conducted in America, speaks of our children here in Wales and the rest of the UK. Their child centred study sought to discover the personal and emotional responses of children to having head lice – and their findings will be of interest to all, as they hinge of the very happiness of the children.

The research identified that amongst 7–11 year olds having head lice was seen by the individual child as a 'symbolic failure', associated with (real and imagined) ridicule and blame from peers. There was a strong association of head lice with embarrassment, sadness and anger, as well as peer rejection and negative labelling:

- 60% of children interviewed had **experienced public humiliation** as a result of having head lice

- 90% reported being **teased by schoolmates, parents, and relatives** when they had head lice
- **Rejection** by peers was the number one concern of the participating children
- Peer **acceptance was greatly diminished** for a child who had head lice; and **negative labelling** often **followed the child throughout his or her school life**
- The majority of the children in the study showed signs of **diminished self-perception** because of this issue. Furthermore, most of the children felt a sense of personal responsibility for having lice, and expressed feelings of being 'bad' or 'dirty'

All the findings '**illustrated the intense negative impact that head lice infestations, and the perceptions surrounding infestations could have on children**'.

The credibility of this research is underpinned by its clinical methodology. It utilises cognitive-developmental frameworks used in understanding child development. The cross referencing of those frameworks with what these children revealed has lead Purdy and Ture to believe that these effects can have **long term implications into adulthood**. They write that negative self-perception can remain with a child for years and has the potential to affect their social development – 'A sense of inferiority develops when perceived or actual failure is dominant. A child with head lice may experience teasing from peers, resulting in exclusion from activities and relationships. Consequent inferiority may evolve into the reduction of self-esteem, isolation, and shame. The child may feel less worthy of respect from others and inadequate in social situations. These person-environment relationships are critical to the development of competence, self-direction, relatedness, and self-esteem. Repeated head lice infestations may prevent the sense of belonging necessary to the preparation for competent adult performance.' This theory is supported by the work of leading authorities in child psychology (Erickson and Piaget) who believe that positive development is critical if a child is to achieve psychological competence.

The findings of this research are supported by The Hairforce – Lice Assassins, the UK’s nit and head lice clearing service. Through our hands-on work physically clearing thousands of infestations, we witness the diminishing effects head lice have on children on a day to day basis. Clearing a sustained and/or heavy infestation can transform a child; elicit immediate comments from the school and their teachers about them socially and academically; positively change their demeanor and their feelings towards going to school; and physically restore them and their health. One of the most frequent comments from the parents of the children they clear is ‘my child is his or herself again’. To quote Dee Wright of The Hairforce, ‘Because we work closely with the child and see them over a number of appointments we can actually track and witness the effects head lice have, and the positive change that is evident as they are cleared. What these children need more than anything is to get this parasite and its eggs, the nits, out of their hair quickly, safely and effectively so they can get on with their childhood and schooling, and be restored as a person’.

3. The risk to the health of our children in School

The significance of Head Lice as a health issue has for some time been pigeon-holed by the Department of Health and Education, as a minor issue. However thinking ignores significant facts concerning Head Lice:

- They are blood suckers and move from host to host in a society that is more mobile and more international
- Pediculosis, the medical term for an infestation of lice, is a communicable disease and causes serious dis-ease for those who catch it
- They are commonly known in public health to carry the highly infectious impetigo
- There is growing evidence and data to show that these parasites carry serious organisms that impact on human health – this link is to a

comprehensive list of research findings which gives significant weight to this argument <http://www.headlice.org/news/research/index.htm>

4. No nit policies work in the USA

No nit policies are a policy of zero tolerance of Head Lice in the classroom and were a part of American school culture for many years. Some states abandoned them a few years ago because of the very issues raised by Marnie in her Petition – fear of exclusion, discrimination etc. Since rescinding that policy many schools in the USA have found that the Head Lice situation has significantly worsened and in the last year many school boards have returned to no nit policy (www.headlice.org has tracked this policy reversal).

HOW THE HAIRFORCE – LICE ASSASSINS CAN HELP

1. We counter the ineffectiveness of the products

In 2006 research by the National Public Health Service for Wales Communicable Disease Surveillance Centre in Cardiff published a leading piece of research on Head Lice. The results conclusively showed that 80% of the time lice were immune to the products applied to eradicate Head Lice. This research was based on a substantial sample drawn from 3 of the 5 health authority areas of Wales. The findings confirmed that Head Lice had further evolved developing immunity to the various chemical formulas that constitute this £33 million market.

This research confirmed what a lot of parents already knew, and still know – the products do not deliver what they say they do, often establishing a long term cycle of despair for both the parents and the child.

The leading entomologists in the UK believe that 80% figure to be higher in 2014, and at The Hairforce the parents we see are living testament to that – using products regularly but still remaining infested.

This evidence is played out consistently in the press. In Caroline Scott's substantial article on head lice in the Daily Mail in September 2012 she made a very clear analysis of how parents – especially mum's – are peddled false hope by Head Lice products under the guise of 'expert' advice. It was a healthy break

from the usual hopeless narrative around head lice, because it gave further in-depth explanation as to why this problem just simply won't go away. Scott wrote about Clara who has 'tried every product on the market without success ranging, from tea-tree and herbal shampoos to some really nasty chemicals'. At The Hairforce - Lice Assassins, we see this same experience repeated time after time amongst our substantial client base.

One of the accusations levied at mums is that somewhere in every class there is a mum that doesn't care about head lice, and because she doesn't tackle it everyone else's efforts are undermined. What we see, and what Scott's article verifies, is that mums try very hard to do something about head lice but the products they are using on the back of expert advice are letting them down. If, as the article lays bare, products are often backed by poor evidence; deeply flawed research (the base sizes of much of the research are shockingly low); and more worryingly research - and therefore the 'impartial' experts behind that research - is funded by the drug companies themselves, you see an equivalent to a Ponzi scheme with concerned parents as the losers. As Scott concludes 'It's an ideal market to sell expensive products that don't quite work.'

In our business we see the really unacceptable face of this when we clear heavy infestations. The worst case we have ever seen is of a 6 year old girl whose very serious infestation had been tackled by her GP with repeated prescriptions of dimeticone over a long period of time. What we found was a child whose hair was brittle, whose scalp was scarred, and most distressingly whose hair was simply coming away in places when you attempted to nit comb - and who was still riddled with head lice. Repeated uses of dimeticone hadn't solved anything and had literally siliconed the nits so firmly onto the hair that you couldn't get all of them off. You may feel criticism for the mother when you read this, but she made repeated trips to her GP for help and with his help put her faith in a product.

The Hairforce was developed as a direct response to the 80% failure rate delivered by the products. We believe that parents and children deserve an open and honest solution to the Head Lice issue, which supports rather than exploits them. 'We do exactly what we say on the tin' and we back this with a 100% guarantee that we will shut it all down and end the infestation. Our process is entirely chemical free so Head Lice are unable to become immune to our

process. We use a clever combination of technology (we Hoover the hair with a specialist lice Hoover, and dehydrate the eggs with controlled heated air) and hand removal. In just 2 appointments, 7 days apart – 2.5 hours of intense, forensic work – we remove everything, cutting off the development process. In contrast a parent can be many weeks, often months, and sometimes years struggling to keep it under control themselves. That invariably involves a lot of product – and at the price of the products, that can add up to a lot of money. People who use our service would say it is the best money they have ever spent after having lived with months or years trying to clear them. We use unique controlled, heated air technology with the to dehydrate the nits in order to speed up the whole process, but we also do what Scott advocates in her Daily Mail article – we remove all the nits (the eggs), because at the heart of shutting down an infestation you need to get those nits out of the hair. The products would have you believe that isn't necessary because they want you to keep using them, time and time again.

At the end of the day Hedrin Once have used the following line in their TV campaign for a reason – ‘Hedrin Once **could** kill head lice and their eggs’ – because the advertising regulators who caution against unsubstantiated promises would have made them.

It is clear that the focus on product has been allowed to drive the policy and policy makers have not listened to both the research that repeatedly challenges their effectiveness, nor to the parents who are constantly fire-fighting this issue. But when products are so fundamentally ineffective and repeated applications simply add to the problem, allowing infestations to often take a hold and multiply substantially this means the problem is never really addressed. Because of this we would argue that the authorities need to step back from this product focus and say at the center of this issue are the children, their welfare, and their happiness, and there is a fundamental need for a truly effective approach to clearing and shutting down head lice infestations and to controlling the situation.

2. We are fast

If a child is identified as having Head Lice we need to see them twice, 7 days apart. For an average infestation the first appointment is 1.5 hours at which we

clear everything out that is visible. This means that child can go straight back to school and get on with their studies without being infectious to anyone else and the parent can get back to work.

We would then see them a week later for a one hour appointment. This second appointment deals with those eggs that are not visible at the first appointment because when Head Lice lay their eggs they are invisible sacks of liquid. After their second appointment everything has been extracted and the infestation totally shut down.

Heavy and very heavy infestations require a third appointment. At the first appointment two Lice Assassins would work on the hair together to extract the extra volume of both Head Lice and nits (the eggs).

Alternatively with the products parents are working with 20% effectiveness rate and must then remove all the eggs to ensure further hatching does not occur.

3. We can provide the role of Nit Nurse in Schools

We provide schools with a professional Checking service where we can check specific classes or the whole school. These are constructed to preserve the privacy of the children. Each child receives exactly the same check regardless of whether we can identify Head Lice or not, ensuring that no one can work out who has it and who doesn't. Results are not communicated to anyone during the process. At the end of the job we then hand over the results to a dedicated person who will then email those parents whose children are found to have Head Lice.

This service removes the uncertainty of who may or may not have Head Lice and how it is identified, and then ensures the problem is tackled for that community.

In addition we also conduct forensic Head Lice checks for other members of the family if they are unsure whether they have caught them or not, ensuring that the cycle of re-infestation is prevented.

How we can work with the Welsh Government

A petition of this nature has immense logic when you examine the situation – this is an infectious disease that can spread swiftly within the school environment, with significant repercussions for children and their parents. The Petition is one pillar of

the support parents and children require. They also need an effective way of shutting down the infestation and getting their child back into school. The potential for failure at this stage needs to also be established. We can provide this essential support.

1. Providing a support service to those with Head Lice

We can provide some very clear deliverables

- We can clear head lice infestations guaranteeing 100% effectiveness
- We can significantly shorten the time children are away from school and get them back in the classroom in a matter of hours without any risk to their classmates
- We can check the whole family to identify who else has them and reduce the risk of re-infestation
- We can deliver a service and approach that removes the stigma of Head Lice for individuals and within the community

2. Checking service in Schools

We can provide a supportive network of detection that enables the school system to professionally identify those in need

- A discreet, privacy preserving checking service for all with a link to then clearing

3. Expand to meet demand

Our employment model is to create part time employment for women in the community, offering 15 to 18 hours a week paid work. This fits with the demands of family life and brings women back into the job market. This model would enable expansion through the school system as well as benefit the community with employment opportunities.

4. Establishing the relationship and raising awareness in Schools

We can work with the Welsh Assembly and the school system in establishing this solution to the Head Lice issue and in communicating it to the parents:

- A launch road show for school staff, parents and school nurses
- Educational pack and/or mobile phone app
- School email communication pack for schools to parents
- You Tube demonstration and education

Natalie Nurse

Lice Assassin

The Hairforce – Lice Assassins

www.thehairforce.co.uk

029 2236 2013 and 07538 367 692

Key sources for reference:

1. Surveillance of insecticide resistance in head lice 14 Jun 2006; J D R Thomas BMJ
2. The Times 14th June 2006 'Head lice defeat the lotions & potions. How lice are becoming invincible'
3. Daily Mail, Caroline Scott 20th September 2011 'Head lice cures are money down the drain'
4. NYDA publication 27th September 2011 Ipsos MORI (2011) Capibus Survey. Head Lice Study. 08 July–14 July 2011
5. Belfast Telegraph, Claire McNeilly 15th September 2011 'Parents missing 97,120 days at work because of head lice'

These sources can be provided if requested.



P-04-601 Proposed Ban on the Use of E-Cigarettes in Public Places

Petition wording

We call upon the Welsh Government not to proceed with their proposed ban on the use of e-cigarettes in enclosed public spaces, substantially enclosed public places, and places of work in Wales. This proposal, if implemented, can only lead to fewer people using e-cigarettes and more people smoking cigarettes.

Additional Information:

Already 100,000 people in Wales are using e-cigarettes. These people are smoking fewer or no cigarettes; this should be a cause for celebration, not concern. A recent BBC poll found that 62% of the public opposed a ban on the use of e-cigarettes in public. In Spain where a ban on the use of e-cigarettes in public was introduced, there was a 70% decline in the use of e-cigarettes and a rise in the rate of smoking. We fear the same will happen in Wales if the Welsh Government implements their proposed ban. With a ban on the advertising and promotion of e-cigarettes soon to be introduced, following the passing of the Tobacco Products Directive, where are smokers to find out about e-cigarettes, particularly if they are banned in public places? Smokers need to see people using e-cigarettes in public, they need to be able to go up and speak to e-cigarette users so that they can find out further information and then hopefully make the switch to a safer alternative.

Petitioner: Simon Thurlow

First considered by the Committee: 7 October 2014

Number of Signatures: 1,196 electronic signatures

Mark Drakeford AC / AM
Y Gweinidog Iechyd a Gwasanaethau Cymdeithasol
Minister for Health and Social Services



Llywodraeth Cymru
Welsh Government

Eich cyf/Your ref P-04-601
Ein cyf/Our ref MD/05473/14

William Powell AM
Assembly Member for Mid & West Wales
Chair Petitions Committee
Ty Hywel
Cardiff Bay
Cardiff
CF99 1NA

committeebusiness@Wales.gsi.gov.uk

29 October 2014

Dear William,

Thank you for your recent letter on behalf of the Petitions Committee regarding Petition P-04-601 about the proposed ban on the use of e-cigarettes in public places.

Smoking remains a huge risk to public health in Wales with around 20% of our NHS admissions related to smoking, at a cost of more than £1million a day. We continue to invest in discouraging people from starting to smoke, as well as supporting those who want to quit. Our aim is to reduce smoking levels in Wales to 16% by 2020 with an ultimate vision of a smoke-free society, in which the harm from tobacco is completely eradicated.

With regards to the contribution e-cigarettes can make to help smokers quit, at present, they are unregulated products and are not licensed as aids to smoking cessation. As there is also insufficient evidence about the long-term safety of e-cigarettes we advise users to be cautious and urge people to speak to their GP or pharmacist, or contact Stop Smoking Wales for help to stop smoking, rather than relying on e-cigarettes alone.

As you are aware, the Public Health White Paper, *Listening to you: your health matters* which was launched on 2 April, sought views on whether or not the Welsh Government should consider restricting the use of e-cigarettes in enclosed and substantially enclosed public and work places such as restaurants. Our proposal in no way interferes with the use of e-cigarettes as an aid to smoking cessation as it does not restrict their use in places where smoking is permitted. Rather, it is concerned with the impact the use of e-cigarettes is having on the enforcement of the current smoking ban, that they are re-normalising smoking behaviours and may act as a gateway to smoking, particularly among children and young people.

Bae Caerdydd • Cardiff Bay
Caerdydd • Cardiff
CF99 1NA

English Enquiry Line 0845 010 3300
Llinell Ymholiadau Cymraeg 0845 010 4400
Correspondence.Mark.Drakeford@wales.gsi.gov.uk

The consultation ended on 24 June and we are currently considering the 676 responses we received. A summary report will be published on the Welsh Government website in autumn and will inform next steps to be taken.

I hope the Committee finds this information helpful.

Best wishes,

Mark

Mark Drakeford AC / AM

Y Gweinidog Iechyd a Gwasanaethau Cymdeithasol
Minister for Health and Social Services

Agenda Item 4.19

P-04-544 Ban the Shooting of Greenland White-fronted Geese

Petition wording:

We call on the National Assembly for Wales to urge the Welsh Government to reverse their decision not to ban the shooting of an endangered species, the Greenland White-fronted goose, meaning that Wales remains the only country on the flight path of this endangered species where they can still be legally shot and killed. Scientific evidence has shown that the species is extremely vulnerable to hunting pressures. In their consultation report, the Welsh Government also admit that failure to take appropriate steps to reduce as far as possible Greenland White-fronted geese adult mortality could be seen as a failure to meet conservation obligations. Unlike Scotland, Ireland, Iceland and Greenland there is no current ban on the shooting and killing of this endangered bird in Wales. A voluntary ban is in place on part of the Dyfi estuary in Wales but there is evidence that the geese also use other areas away from the estuary in mid and North Wales where no voluntary agreements are in place.

The population of these geese, as a whole, is declining and they have been of conservation concern since the late 1970s when sharp declines triggered protection from hunting on their wintering grounds. They receive heavy statutory protection. However, since the mid 1990s the population has again declined sharply. While WOS has acknowledged that long running voluntary bans on shooting are in place at some wetlands such as the Dyfi Estuary, it believes that nothing less than a statutory ban on shooting will ensure its protection. The society is concerned that any voluntary ban could be lifted at any time and that the current approach does not cover all the sites where this declining subspecies spends the winter.

Petition raised by: Aaron Davies

Date Petition first considered by Committee: 29 April 2014

Number of signatures: 240

Carl Sargeant AC / AM
Y Gweinidog Cyfoeth Naturiol
Minister for Natural Resources



Llywodraeth Cymru
Welsh Government

Eich cyf/Your ref P-04-544
Ein cyf/Our ref CS/05294/14

William Powell AM
Chair Petitions Committee
Ty Hywel
Cardiff Bay
Cardiff
CF99 1NA

/ST November 2014

Dear Bill

Thank you for your letter regarding a petition entitled '*Ban the Shooting of Greenland White-fronted Geese*'.

As you point out, the Minister of the time, Alun Davies AM, was prepared to reconsider his views on this topic if further scientific evidence came to light.

During the public consultation on this subject, shooting information from the Anglesey area was made available which covered the same period as that referred to in the current letter to you from the Welsh Ornithological Society. The most recent correspondence makes it clear that this is not additional material and there are therefore no grounds for reviewing the decision.

The petitioner also makes some general points regarding unofficial and anecdotal evidence of killing. The areas used by Greenland White-fronted Geese are heavily monitored by RSPB, Wildlife trusts, NRW, Wildfowling Groups and many amateur ornithologists, yet there have been no reports or suspicions of the kind he describes.

Yours sincerely

Carl Sargeant AC / AM
Y Gweinidog Cyfoeth Naturiol
Minister for Natural Resources

Bae Caerdydd • Cardiff Bay
Caerdydd • Cardiff
CF99 1NA

Wedi'i argraffu ar bapur wedi'i ailgylchu (100%)

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English Enquiry Line 0845 010 3300
Llinell Ymholiadau Cymraeg 0845 010 4400
Correspondence.Carl.Sargeant@wales.gsi.gov.uk

Printed on 100% recycled paper

Agenda Item 4.20

P-04-577 Reinstate Funding to the Real Opportunities Project

Petition Wording

We call on the National Assembly for Wales to urge the Welsh Government to reinstate funding to the Real Opportunities project previously funded by the European Social Fund in Wales, or some new similar project that has the same values as Real Opportunities. The project is vital to helping 14-19 year olds with a learning disability or autistic spectrum disorder to gain life skills and independence.

Additional Information:

The Real Opportunities project enables 14-19 year olds with a learning disability or Autism Spectrum Disorder to develop skills vital for their transition into a college education as well as enabling them to transition into the world of work and develop basic life skills vital to their independence. The project has helped over 1700 young adults with learning disabilities or Autism Spectrum Disorder and has helped train over 1000 peer mentors with the intention of increasing the levels of integration between mainstream school pupils and those in a special needs unit. The values of this project are vital to these young people who at the start may have little or no awareness of personal hygiene etc and at the end are self aware of their personal hygiene and have completed Agored Cymru qualifications that they would otherwise be unable to do.

Petition raised by: Aled Davies

Date Petition first considered by Committee: 15 July 2014

Number of signatures: 25 - An associated e-petition collected 226 signatures.

Jane Hutt AC / AM
Y Gweinidog Cyllid a Busnes y Llywodraeth
Minister for Finance and Government Business



Llywodraeth Cymru
Welsh Government

Eich cyf/Your ref P-04-577
Ein cyf/Our ref JH/05082/14

William Powell AM
Chair, Petitions Committee
Ty Hywel
Cardiff Bay
CF99 1NA

6 November 2014

Dear William,

Thank you for letter of 17 October regarding an EU funding proposal your Committee has received from Mr Aled Davies. This follows Mr Davies' petition, received by you in August, requesting the Welsh Government re-instate funding for the Regional SEN Transition into Employment Initiative (Real Opportunities project) which was supported through the 2007-2013 European Structural Fund programmes.

While the Welsh European Funding Office (WEFO) will offer an open call for new project proposals as soon as the 2014-2020 programmes are agreed by the European Commission, it will be seeking to support strategic projects which can deliver a joined-up approach to support individuals at a regional or pan-Wales level.

WEFO recognises the achievements of the Regional SEN project and is keen to see the activity continue. Mr Davies may therefore be interested to know that as part of the preparatory work underway, WEFO is in discussion with Caerphilly Council, who led the Real Opportunities project, to progress a new project aimed at supporting young people with learning difficulties, including support for young people in Carmarthenshire. My officials will continue to work with the Council to help develop their proposal as quickly as possible.

Should Mr Davies wish to consider aligning his proposal with that of Caerphilly Council's then I suggest he contact them direct: tel: 01443 815588 / 01495 226622 or email: info@caerphilly.gov.uk

However, should he wish to pursue an independent EU funding application, he should in the first instance contact WEFO for information on eligibility and how to apply: tel: 0845 010 3355

or email: Enquiries-WEFO@Wales.GSI.Gov.UK

Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Jane', written in a cursive style.

Jane Hutt AC / AM

Y Gweinidog Cyllid a Busnes y Llywodraeth

Minister for Finance and Government Business

**P-04-577 Reinstate Funding to the Real Opportunities Project –
Correspondence from the Petitioner to the Committee, 20.11.14**

Hi Kayleigh

Many thanks for the attached, and apologies that this reply is after your set deadline. Unfortunately I have been having issues with logging in to my email and EE have had issues with their mobile towers in the area which has prevented me sending emails on my phone. Thankfully after a long wait they have been able to fix it and I hope we are not too late to reply.

Please can you thank the Petitions Committee for their kind words regarding our hard work in providing proposals to support young people with learning difficulties across Wales.

We have extended 2 invitations to Jane Hutt to meet with us & discuss our proposal. We have also advised her that the Children's Commissioner for Wales's office have indicated they would be happy to comment on our proposal if she wishes to contact them. Keith Towler & his Policy Team have both visited our club recently and have asked to be kept in the loop with our progress. I trust she has received our invites but we have had no response?

Jane's reply directing us to the Caerphilly Council switchboard is a little disappointing and in truth appears to suggest a lack of engagement. The Mix Committee, Peer Mentors & a high percentage of club members & families are already "plugged in" to the Real Opportunities additional funding process which we fully support. Consequently we are aware that whilst the project has been widely viewed as a success, the WEFO funding renewal process is complex and lengthy with no guarantees of success or timescales for implementation. Our concern in raising this petition was that if the project ceased without some additional resource contingency whilst new funding was sought then vulnerable families would suffer.

Sadly that is exactly what has happened. The Real Opportunities Project closed in August 2014 with no additional interim support. Across Wales, many skilled staff who have built valuable relationships with learning disabled young people and their families, schools, colleges & employers have been made redundant. The families who had come to rely on this support are now suffering as a result of this service closure. With each passing day the return on the significant investment already

provided by WEFO in Wales is unravelling. This cannot be good value in social or financial terms. It is unacceptable to pin the responsibility for the support of our disabled friends and their families in Wales on the hope of a future European funding application.

Our proposal is intended to share how our own experience of a learning disabled Youth Club environment brings together the benefits of Real Opportunities type transition support and the key principles of The Children Commissioners 2014 Full Lives Short Breaks Report. Our proposals are scale-able, sustainable and value for money. We believe this essential support can be provided for approximately the same cost as the Match funded element previously required to support the WEFO Real Opportunities programme. It is therefore not dependent on additional WEFO money or timescales.

We are anxious not to duplicate resources and mindful of Jane's comments The Mix Committee have this week spoken with the Project leader of the Real Opportunities WEFO funding application. We have sent her copies of our proposals & again offered our full support if we can help in any way with the application process. We have clarified how our model builds on the existing work of the Real Opportunities project and

- Provides the preferred Short Break opportunities identified by young disabled people themselves in the Children's Commissioners Full Lives Short Breaks Report
- Delivers these Short Break opportunities at a fraction of the cost of residential support, allowing the majority of young people and their families to benefit before they reach "critical" or "substantial" need.
- Provides a base for the delivery of transition focussed life skills & independence training through activities such as travel training, Agored certification, 1 page profiles, CV preparation and interview support. An environment preparing young people for independence, education and employment rather than dependency.
- Restores the Peer Mentor programme allowing young people to develop their own social responsibilities through supporting their learning disabled friends at school, and into the wider community.

Additionally Tyler Payne, the other named Petitioner has been invited to present at the Senedd on 11thDecember 2014 as part of the Real Opportunities evaluation process. Tyler is 17 & has been a Peer Mentor with Real Opportunities for the past 3 years. Tyler's brother Bradley is a participant in the Real Opportunities programme. He is autistic & has a learning delay and will also be presenting to explain how the project has influenced their family life. Bradley is a member of The Mix where Tyler & I are Peer Mentors.

We would once again like to invite Jane, members of her team & indeed interested members of the Petitions Committee to meet with Tyler & Bradley on the 11thDecember. We would welcome an opportunity to discuss how our petition proposals integrate with both the new WEFO application and the Full Lives Short Break recommendations whilst enabling Welsh local authorities to act now to support our learning disabled friends and their families. We are sure our proposals can be improved with engagement from Jane's team and welcome any further advice from members of the Petitions Committee & their colleagues.

Warm Regards

Aled