

Agenda – Petitions Committee

Meeting Venue:

Committee Room 1 – Senedd

Meeting date: 24 November 2015

Meeting time: 09.15

For further information contact:

Steve George – Committee Clerk

Kath Thomas – Deputy Clerk

0300 200 6565

SeneddPetitions@assembly.wales

Public

1 Introduction, apologies and substitutions

(Pages 1 – 17)

2 New petitions (09.15–09.25)

2.1 P-04-655 Demanding our Rights for the Welsh Language in the Private Sector

(Pages 18 – 28)

2.2 P-04-657 Charging for Parking and the Relationship to High Streets and Their Success

(Pages 29 – 34)

3 Updates to previous petitions (09.25–10.00)

Economy, Science and Transport

3.1 P-04-633 To Raise Awareness of the Poor Broadband in Our Area

(Pages 35 – 41)

3.2 P-04-468 Road Safety Concerns A48 Chepstow

(Pages 42 – 45)

3.3 P-04-539 Save Cardiff Coal Exchange

(Pages 46 – 52)

3.4 P-04-565 Revive Disused Railway Lines for Leisure

(Pages 53 – 54)



Public Services

- 3.5 P-04-540 Stop Sexism In Domestic Abuse
(Pages 55 – 61)

Communities and Tackling Poverty

- 3.6 P-04-519 Abolition of Park Homes Sales Commission
(Pages 62 – 63)

Natural Resources

- 3.7 P-04-537 Planting Trees to Reduce Flooding
(Pages 64 – 68)

Education and Skills

- 3.8 P-04-581 Opposition to Cuts in Provision for Learners of English as an Additional Language
(Pages 69 – 70)
- 3.9 P-04-516 Make Political Science Compulsory in Education
(Pages 71 – 72)

4 Motion under Standing Order 17.42 to resolve to exclude the public from the meeting for the following business:

Items 5 and 6

Private

5 Discussion of Oral Evidence Sessions

(10.00-10.10) (Pages 73 – 110)

5.1 P-04-576 Allow Children in Wales to Have a Family Holiday During Term Time

5.2 P-04-606 Ensure Schools Exercise their Statutory Powers Under Regulation 7 of The Education (Pupil Registration) (Wales) Regulations 2010 Without Interference or Bias.

6 Review of the National Assembly for Wales Petitions System

(10.10–10.30)

(Pages 111 – 132)

Public

7 Evidence Session – P-04-522 Asbestos in Schools

(10.30 – 11.00)

(Pages 133 – 141)

Huw Lewis AM – Minister for Education and Skills

Joanne Larner – Welsh Government

Kathryn Massey – Welsh Government

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Agenda Item 2.1

P-04-655 – Demanding our Rights for the Welsh Language in the Private Sector

This petition was submitted by Cymdeithas yr Iaith and collected 442 signatures online

Text of the petition

We call upon the National Assembly to insist that the Welsh Government ensures that all private and voluntary sectors that come within the scope of the Welsh Language Measure 2011 offer enhanced Welsh-language services by collaborating with the Welsh Language Commissioner to introduce regulations to the National Assembly prior to the 2016 Assembly election or at the earliest possible opportunity.

Hundreds of thousands of people in Wales are being deprived of basic Welsh-language services every day by a large number of organisations, such as telephone, broadband, energy and transport companies. This totally unnecessary injustice occurs because the Welsh Government and the Welsh Language Commissioner have not fully implemented the powers that they have under the Welsh Language Measure, which was unanimously passed by the Assembly almost five years ago. The Welsh Government and the Welsh Language Commissioner are, therefore, hampering the democratic will of the people of Wales.

Furthermore, we believe that the Welsh Language Measure should be amended in order to speed up and simplify the process of imposing Welsh-language Standards on organisations and companies, establishing general rights for the Welsh language and extending the scope of the Measure to cover the remainder of the private sector, including supermarkets and banks.

Assembly constituency and region

-



Eich cyf/Your ref: P-04-655
Ein cyf/Our ref:FM -/00874/15

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

committeebusiness@Wales.gsi.gov.uk

14 October 2015

Dear William,

I am writing in response to your letter of 29 September 2015 seeking my views on a petition presented to the Petitions Committee regarding rights for Welsh speakers in the private sector.

Since the Welsh Language (Wales) Measure 2011 ('the Measure') came into force, I have been wholeheartedly committed to its implementation.

So far, the current Government has created the role of the Welsh Language Commissioner; established the Welsh Language Tribunal, and presented the first set of regulations to specify Welsh Language Standards for approval by the National Assembly. This work has laid firm foundations for a new regulating regime for the Welsh language. I am pleased to say that by the end of this Government, over 200 organisations will be subject to standards, which is a significant step forward.

In accordance with the Measure, the order in which organisations have been made subject to standards has been led by the Welsh Language Commissioner, and has been set out in her rolling programme for conducting standards investigations. Many voluntary sector organisations were included in the Commissioner's second standards investigation, and Regulations are currently being prepared to specify standards for those organisations. Some private sector bodies also featured in her third standards investigation. We will be receiving the Commissioner's conclusions following her third investigation later this year. It is for the Commissioner to decide when to conduct further investigations which could include telephone, broadband, energy and transport companies as referred to in the petition.

As I stated in the Committee for Communities, Equality and Local Government on 24 September 2015, I am happy to commit to amending the Measure. This will deal with the concerns raised in the petition. The Measure was a significant milestone as far as legislating for the Welsh language is concerned; it confirmed the official status of the language and created a new system of enforcing duties that will improve the Welsh language services. However, during its implementation we have come across some elements that could be streamlined and improved. It is appropriate that we re-examine the Measure to ensure that it works in the most efficient manner.

Yours sincerely

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

CARWYN JONES

P-04-655 Mynnu ein Hawliau i'r Gymraeg yn y Sector Breifat – Gohebiaeth gan y Deisebydd I'r Cadeirydd 18.11.15

Annwyl William Powell AC,

Diolch am gynnig y cyfle i ni ymateb i lythyr y Prif Weinidog ynghylch Safonau'r Gymraeg a'n deiseb.

Mae ymateb y Prif Weinidog yn aneglur ynghylch prif bwyntiau'r ddeiseb ac nid yw'n cynnig y sicrwydd yr ydym, fel deisebwyr, yn gofyn amdano.

(i) Gweithredu Pwerau Llawn y Mesur Presennol

Mae'r Prif Weinidog yn dadlau'r canlynol yn ei lythyr: “Penderfyniad y Comisiynydd fydd hi bryd i gynnal ymchwiliadau pellach gallai gynnwys cwmnïau ffôn, band-eang, egni a thrafnidiaeth, fel y cyfeirir ati yn y ddeiseb.”

Mae'r datganiad hwn yn rhoi darlun camarweiniol i aelodau'r pwyllgor. Er mai gan y Comisiynydd, yn hytrach na'r Llywodraeth, y mae'r pŵer i gychwyn ymchwiliad Safonau, gwyddom, fel mater o ffaith, i'r Llywodraeth ofyn i Gomisiynydd y Gymraeg hepgor dros 200 o gyrff, gan gynnwys cwmnïau trafndiaeth, o'r trydydd cylch o Safonau. Gwnaed hynny gyda'r awgrym gan y Llywodraeth y byddai, drwy hepgor y cyrff hynny, modd pasio'r drydedd set o Safonau cyn etholiadau'r Cynulliad. Er i'r Comisiynydd ildio i ofyniad y Llywodraeth, bellach mae'r Llywodraeth wedi cadarnhau nad oes modd eu pasio cyn yr etholiadau wedi'r cwbl.

Ceir rhestr o'r cyrff a hepgorwyd gan y Comisiynydd o'r trydydd cylch o Safonau, yn dilyn cais gan y Llywodraeth, yn ein llythyr yma:

<http://cymdeithas.cymru/dogfen/llythyr-am-gylch-3-y-safonau-iaith-awst-2015>

Atodaf ymateb i lythyr a chais rhyddid gwybodaeth gennym i'r Llywodraeth a'r Comisiynydd sy'n dangos bod y Llywodraeth wedi gofyn i'r Comisiynydd hepgor cyrff o'r rhestr yng nghylch 3. Mewn llythyr at y Llywodraeth ar 23/1/15, dywedodd y Comisiynydd:

"Mewn llythyr y danfonais atoch ar 9 Medi 2014, fe nodais y byddwn i fel Comisiynydd yn fodlon ystyried diwygio'r nifer o bersonau yr arfaethir eu cynnwys yng nghylch 3, ynghyd â'r amserlen ar gyfer cyflwyno adroddiadau safonau yng nghyswllt y personau hynny.

"Bwriad y cynnig hwnnw oedd ceisio hwyluso'r gwaith o gyflwyno dyletswyddau ar bersonau drwy'r prosesau angenrheidiol, ynghyd â sicrhau y caiff safonau eu gwneud yn benodol gymwys i'r nifer uchaf posibl o bersonau cyn i etholiadau'r Cynulliad Cenedlaethol Cymru gael eu cynnal ym Mai 2016.

"Mewn ymateb i'r llythyr hwnnw, fe nodwyd gennych mewn gohebiaeth ar 23 Medi 2014 y byddai'n dra annhebygol y gellid llunio rheoliadau ar gyfer cylch tri cyn etholiad y Cynulliad yn 2016, gan dderbyn y niferoedd uchel o bersonau oedd wedi eu cynnwys yng nghylch 3 o'r rhaglen.

"Gyda hynny mewn golwg, rwyf wedi penderfynu diwygio'r nifer o sefydliadau y cynhelir ymchwiliadau safonau mewn perthynas â hwy yng nghylch 3. Bydd 64 o bersonau bellach 02/05 yn rhan o'r cylch hwn, yn hytrach na'r 259 o bersonau yr adnabuwyd yn wreiddiol. Atodaf restr lawn o'r personau hynny at eich sylw."

Felly, nid yw'n gywir awgrymu mai mater i'r Comisiynydd yn unig yw penderfynu ar y rhaglen o gynnal ymchwiliadau Safonau. Credwn mai mater i'r Comisiynydd yn unig y dylai fod, ond, fel rydym wedi dangos uchod, dros y flwyddyn a hanner ddiwethaf, mae'r Llywodraeth wedi llwyddo i newid penderfyniad y Comisiynydd ynghylch pa gyrff sy'n cael eu cynnwys yn y rhaglen o osod Safonau.

Ymhellach, yn y gorffennol, mae Comisiynydd y Gymraeg wedi dweud wrthym fod angen sicrwydd gan y Llywodraeth ynghylch ei hamserlen ddeddfwriaethol cyn y gall gychwyn ymchwiliad Safonau.

Rydym ar ddeall yn dilyn cyfarfod diweddar a gawsom gyda'r Comisiynydd y bydd yn cyhoeddi amserlen ar gyfer gweddill cyrff y sector preifat a gwirfoddol y mae modd eu cynnwys yn y Safonau cyn diwedd y flwyddyn.

Hoffem ofyn i'r pwyllgor gysylltu â Chomisiynydd y Gymraeg gan ofyn am gopi o'r amserlen honno. Wedi i'r pwyllgor dderbyn yr amserlen, awgrymw'n yn garedig y dylai'r pwyllgor ofyn i'r Llywodraeth gytuno bod modd a bwriad gweithredu ar yr amserlen honno (gan dderbyn mai mater i'r Llywodraeth nesaf fyddai hynny).

Ar 20fed Hydref 2015, dywedodd y Prif Weinidog wrth y Cyfarfod Llawn: "... mae'r Llywodraeth wrth gwrs yn gefnogol o'r syniad o osod dyletswyddau ar gwmnïau yn y sector preifat. Fe gwblhaodd y comisiynydd ei thrydydd ymchwiliad yn ystod yr haf, ac rwy'n disgwyl derbyn yr adroddiadau sy'n deillio o hyn yn hwyrach yn yr hydref. Roedd yr ymchwiliad hwnnw yn cynnwys rhai cwmnïau sector preifat, fel y Swyddfa Bost, a'r cwmnïau dŵr. Er mwyn inni allu llunio safonau, mae angen i'r comisiynydd fod wedi cynnal ymchwiliad i'r cwmnïau o dan sylw a darparu adroddiad i Weinidogion Cymru. Mater o broses ac o wneud pethau'n gywir yw hwn, ac rwy'n ffyddiog y byddwn yn gosod safonau pellach ar y sector breifat wrth i'r broses fynd yn ei flaen."

Fodd bynnag, nid ydym wedi cael ymrwymiad clir gan y Llywodraeth y bydd yn pasio Safonau ar gyfer y sectorau hyn, er gwaethaf ymrwymiad yn Strategaeth Iaith y Llywodraeth i wneud hynny erbyn 2017. Yn y pwyntiau gweithredu yn Strategaeth Iaith y Llywodraeth, sy'n weithredol tan 2017, gwneir yr ymrwymiad canlynol:

"Gwneud safonau a fydd yn galluogi'r Comisiynydd i osod dyletswyddau ar gwmnïau'r sector preifat sy'n rhan o gwmpas Mesur y Gymraeg, gan gynnwys cwmnïau telathrebu, gweithredwyr bysiau a threnau, a chwmnïau cyfleustodau..." tud. 44, Iaith Byw: Iaith Fyw

Mae angen sicrwydd gan y Llywodraeth a'r Comisiynydd eu bod nhw'n mynd i wireddu'r addewid hwnnw, achos nid yw'r Llywodraeth bresennol wedi rhoi'r sicrwydd hwnnw i ni.

(ii) Cryfhau ac Ymestyn Mesur y Gymraeg

Croesawn fwriad y Llywodraeth i ddiwygio'r Mesur. Fodd bynnag, nid yw'n gyfystyr ag addewid y bydd y diwygio yn bodloni ein gofynion eraill fel deisebwyr sef:

- sefydlu hawliau cyffredinol i'r Gymraeg, ac
- ymestyn sgôp y Mesur i weddill y sector breifat, gan gynnwys archfarchnadoedd a banciau.

Gofynnwn felly i'r Pwyllgor holi'r Llywodraeth ymhellach ynghylch y materion hyn.

Diolch eto am y cyfle i gynnig sylwadau pellach ar lythyr y Prif Weinidog.

Yr eiddoch yn gywir,

Manon Elin James

Cadeirydd, Grŵp Hawl, Cymdeithas yr Iaith Gymraeg

By virtue of paragraph(s) vi of Standing Order 17.42

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Agenda Item 2.2

P-04-657 – Charging for Parking and the Relationship to High Streets and Their Success

This petition was submitted by Ann Dierikx, having collected 89 signatures on line and 32 paper signatures.

Text of Petition

We, the undersigned, call upon the National Assembly for Wales to urge the Welsh Government to commission research, in partnership with local authorities in Wales, to assess fully the relationship between car parking charges and successful local high streets.

Prof Calvin Jones of Cardiff Business School has emphasised the negative economic impact of car parking charges, especially in market towns. In the light of this – and a current Ministerial study on the issue – we call upon the Welsh Government to urge Welsh local authorities to impose a moratorium on the introduction of car parking charges at new sites in their ownership and any increase in parking fees until the 2017 election.

In addition, we urge the Welsh Government to ensure that local authorities engage proactively with relevant town and community councils, before implementing any changes in the local car parking regime. Town and community councils should be given the opportunity to adopt car parks in their area – as no one is better placed to understand the dynamics of the local high street

– before any other options, notably outsourcing of management, is contemplated.

Finally, we call upon the Welsh Government to make clear and transparent regulations governing the procedures relating to car parking charges to be followed by local authorities.

Assembly Constituency and Region

- Brecon and Radnorshire
- Mid and West Wales

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-04-657
Ein cyf/Our ref EH/04429/15

William Powell AM
Chair, Petitions Committee

committeebusiness@Wales.gsi.gov.uk

16 October 2015

Dear William

Thank you for your letter of 12 October regarding the petition you have received in relation to charging for parking and the relationship to high streets.

Each local authority is responsible for setting parking charges in its own car parks and the Welsh Government does not have powers to intervene or challenge those decisions. In June, I published research that I commissioned to examine the relationship between car parking charges and town centre footfall in Wales. The research can be accessed through the following link:

<http://gov.wales/docs/caecd/research/2015/150610-assessing-impact-car-parking-charges-town-centre-footfall-en.pdf>

I recognise that there is a range of views about the relationship between car parking provisions and high street activity. I believe that local authorities are best placed to determine the charges to be levied in their own car parks as part of their overall car parking strategy. When setting this strategy, I believe it is important that local authorities should consult widely and fully with local people and businesses.

Edwina Hart

Bae Caerdydd • Cardiff Bay
Caerdydd • Cardiff
CF99 1NA

English Enquiry Line 0300 0603300
Llinell Ymholiadau Cymraeg 0300 0604400
Correspondence.edwina.Hart@Wales.gsi.gov.uk

Rydym yn croesawu derbyn gohebiaeth yn Gymraeg. Byddwn yn ateb gohebiaeth a dderbynnir yn Gymraeg yn Gymraeg ac ni fydd gohebu yn Gymraeg yn arwain at oedi.

We welcome receiving correspondence in Welsh. Any correspondence received in Welsh will be answered in Welsh and corresponding in Welsh will not lead to a delay in responding.

Assessing the Impact of Car Parking Charges on Town Centre Footfall

March 2015

Prepared for the Welsh Government [by mruk Research]

1. Executive summary

1.1 Background

1.1.1 The Welsh Government is looking to improve its evidence base on the relationships between car parking charges and town centre footfall. mruk therefore undertook this research in order to examine the relationships between local authority decision making in relation to parking charges in Wales, the views of people visiting town centres across Wales, local stakeholders and examples of best practice across the UK.

1.2 Methodology

1.2.1 mruk undertook a literature review of existing evidence, a series of six in-depth interviews with Local Authorities, 16 in-depth interviews with business owners/ workers and 208 instreet interviews with town centre visitors in five key towns across Wales¹. More detailed information on the methodology can be found in Chapter 2.

1.3 Key findings and conclusions

1.3.1 Charging for car parking is a complex issue. It is only one aspect of a complex interplay of factors influencing willingness to travel by car, time and money spent, and business activity in town centres. It is very difficult to separate the influence of car parking charges from other factors.

1.3.2 Car park charging is often perceived, particularly amongst businesses, as being a key determinant for changes in footfall levels in town and city centres. Over three-quarters of the business owners / workers interviewed suggested that car parking options have an impact on the number of people coming into the town centre and therefore on their custom. However, the available evidence almost entirely anecdotal.

1.3.3 Beyond anecdote, there is very little published evidence which links changes in car park charges to changes in town centre footfall. Local Authorities and other stakeholders similarly rely mostly on anecdote when relating car park charges to footfall. However, their feedback does suggest that a relationship exists.

1.3.4 Visitors to town centres suggested that car park charges impact on how long they to remain in the centre and, consequently, how much they spend whilst there. However, the general availability of spaces is felt by visitors to be more important than cost in their overall decision about visiting. Traffic flow and parking signage are felt by visitors to have the same,

¹ 1 Including councils in Carmarthenshire, Denbighshire, Newport, Swansea and Wrexham, town centre interviews in Aberystwyth, Llanelli, Newport and Ruthin

if not greater, effect on their decision to visit the town centre, how long they spend there, and how much money they spend.

1.3.5 Out of town developments were unanimously cited as being at least partly responsible for having a detrimental impact on footfall and business trade in the town and city centres. The fact that most of these developments offer free parking was felt to give shoppers a reason to go to them over town or city centres.

1.3.6 Whilst a 'blanket' free parking strategy has been suggested to encourage more car park users, these were generally found not to benefit target visitors (for example, the spaces were used primarily by town centre workers who were taking up the spaces all day, rather than shoppers) and consequently had an unexpectedly negative impact on footfall.

1.3.7 Local Authorities often primarily use car park charges as a revenue stream, ignoring or deemphasising the complex, nonlinear effects that they can have on town centre footfall. Some stress the importance of finding a compromise between generating sufficient parking revenue and keeping charges at a rate that will not alienate shoppers and drive them out of the town or city centre.

1.3.8 There are also three broad types of methodological conclusions that can be used to inform future research. Firstly, **there is a lack of robust evidence that can be used to link car parking strategies and town centre footfall**. Robust, numerical information based on recordings of footfall, business revenue, car park usage, and changes to car parking strategies is not available amongst the Local Authorities surveyed. Secondly, **charging for car parking is one of a complex array of factors that can influence town centre vitality**. Disentangling them through qualitative research and a small-scale survey is a challenge. Further research using larger sample sizes would be needed to build a stronger evidence base. Finally, **town centre economies are highly localised and are hyper-specific**. Towns are very different economically; different factors are at play across locations. Parking strategies will need to be tailored to local areas to maximise the impact on footfall.

1.4 Recommendations

1.4.1 **Car park charging should not be viewed in isolation from other factors (availability of parking, signage, traffic flow) which affect willingness to drive in town centres**. An overall systemic approach could be taken to future research which examines this complex interplay, rather than one aspect of it. Further quantitative research with visitors, potential visitors and businesses would allow for robust trade-off testing of potential parking packages. These could be modelled to determine the strategies most likely to improve footfall.

1.4.2 **Local Authorities should be encouraged to consider the impacts of car parking charges in the broadest possible sense, particularly if their primary goal in changing them is to generate revenue**. They should engage with key stakeholders involved in the local economy when changing their car park charges, for example business owners, shoppers, council members etc. This is key to ensuring the optimum charging strategies are adopted.

1.4.3 Local Authorities should be encouraged to collect more robust data on the impact of car park charging in their areas. This will help further planning around car park charging, both at the local and national level.

1.4.4 In developing solutions to encourage greater town centre footfall **the Welsh Government should work closely with Local Authorities and business groups to develop parking strategies** that:

- Take into account other key decision-making factors (e.g. availability of spaces, parking restrictions, car park security etc.)
- Protect sustainable revenue income for councils

1.4.5 In addition, a one size fits all approach to parking strategy is unlikely to work across Wales. The Welsh Government will need to work with Local Authorities to **develop parking strategies that factor in local nuances** in town centre layout and retail offerings which differ between locations. For example, in some areas strategies will need to focus more on parking availability or cost, while in other areas it will be more important to focus on promoting the retail offer in town centres vs. the out-of-town offer.

Agenda Item 3.1

P-04-633 To Raise Awareness of the Poor Broadband in Our Area

Petition wording:

Superfast Cymru is coming to the Maerdy Exchange but will we get an improved service? Some locations will not benefit at all because they are too far from the cab and the cable is aluminium which does not conduct broadband properly. The real answer is a cab in the village. Please sign to support this petition.

Petition raised by: Geraint and Jane Evans

Date petition first considered by Committee: TBC

Number of signatures: 60 – Paper Petition

**P-04-633 To Raise Awareness of Poor Broadband in Our Area.
Correspondence from the petitioner to the Committee. 15.11.15**

Broadband issues here at Llawrbetws

- 1 We advertise caravans online through various websites. I am unable to upload pictures to the various websites
- 2 Businesses invoices are often sent via email.
- 3 Quarterly Vat return cannot be submitted online
- 4 Online banking is virtually impossible at times
- 5 Customers visiting the caravan park and the house that we let out expect wifi and our reviews mention the lack of broadband
- 6 Customers like to keep in touch via email to us and we email them with information and when billing
- 7 Need the internet to order online
- 8 Customers ask for images to be sent to them, in particular when enquiring about a caravan that is for sale, unable to send them have to send from home and email them to home or save on a pen drive to use at home.
- 9 Many aspects of running a business can only be submitted using the internet, e.g NRW licensing procedure, looking for information e.g council websites, online trade organization information system (www.bhhpa.org.uk), etc etc
- 10 It is a constant battle to carry on our business and if I have to do things at home I have to remember to take the relevant information home as I cannot remotely log on to our system because of the broadband issues we have

The list goes on and on but these are just a few points.

P-04-633 To Raise Awareness of the Broadband in Our Area – Correspondence received from interested parties

1. Hi Jane

Our Broadband is very slow down to .3mb at times. Very rarely up to 2mbs usually 1.8mbs.

We use the internet for online orders.

Sending customers images and other information can take a long time.

We could get a better service in some 3rd world counties!

Kind regards

David

2. I live and work on a working farm in Glanrafon, without broadband there are many issues with the day to day running of a farm. There are many roles that broadband is the only option to do some of the work:

1. Registering calves and cattle movements, this can only be done online and has to be registered within 7 days of birth or 3 days of movements. Also if there is any queries then e-mail communication is the most popular method

2. I do my quarterly VAT online

3. We recently applied for a grant with the WAG that could only be applied through e-mail.

4. As part of our business we sell working sheepdogs all over the country, we advertise our dogs on various websites and social media, broadband is vital to our business to communicate with prospect buyers. One of our most popular way of advertising is youtube, but its not possible for us to look at any videos from our form because of the slow broadband. It also takes hours to upload the video to youtube.

5. When breeding registered sheepdogs, a blood test is required for registering the puppies, the only way of doing this is online form to America before sending the blood test away, without broadband this would not be possible.

6. agricultural business now want to send their invoices through e-mail, we

must have e-mail access.

7. Online banking is getting more popular along with paying invoices through BACS.

These are just some of the day to day activities to do when running a farm, there are many more times where we use the broadband throughout the day, having faster and reliable broadband would make the business run smoother.

Buddug Jones

3. Dear Sirs,

Sat here once again....waiting...and waiting...and waiting. OK, broadband is on a go slow again, it's only Wednesday and I've rebooted the hub 5 times since Monday morning. In fact Monday, we gave up and went home to continue sending emails and we weren't getting anywhere and we had a backlog of emails due out that weren't sent out on Friday due to poor broadband speeds.

So once again I've done the speed test....it's 3pm and we're going superfast at the moment!!! I have an amazing download speed of 1.7mb but we've got 30mins till the kids school bus pulls up, they all get home and log on to their tablets....then for us, the day is over. If we're lucky, we may get a few emails out but god help my customers who want any images sending over of costumes....they'll need to wait till I get home.

So, I'll give you a bit of background. We're a costume and prop hire company based in North Wales and we moved to the 460 exchange back in December 2014. We're 5 miles from our original address in Corwen which was on a different exchange. Broadband speeds there were great! But we outgrew the premises so had to move. Then we had to change the phone number....not a problem we thought....we'll divert the old number to the new for 12 months and we're good to go. So we spoke to BT who said about the VIOP system....ideal, broadband phone that sounds like a plan!!! Oh dear, this is where EVERYTHING went wrong. It took Openreach 5 weeks to get the phone and broadband working correctly. Every day started with a call to BT. We had no access to emails, Christmas was fast approaching and we couldn't update

our website with our new address or contact details and the VOIP system wouldn't work as the broadband was so intermittent. We lost customers....lots of them. From the outside I could see that customers thought we'd closed shop and done a bunk to warmer climes. Our old premises was closed, our old phone number didn't work, our new phone number didn't work, no emails were getting through and our website showed our old address. Great....just great.

It's now a few months down the line and we're all so used to the broadband that we've re scheduled the working day. I sit at home till 10am answering emails that are sent overnight. I work all day answering the phone and dealing with customers then leg it home again at 5pm to continue with emails from there. I've even had to purchase a laptop to load our data onto so I can work from home. This includes all our catalogues of images...over 1000 high res photographs, the whole accounting and VAT system and our complete website.

The VOIP system lasted till about March. At this point we were still taking 1 or 2 calls daily from the old number but the line was so bad we were answering the phone to capture their contact number then ringing them back from one of our mobiles....so professional. We're in contract with the VOIP system till November. The phone itself cost over £100 and is now gathering dusk in the attic.

I have spoken to BT on several occasions about the lack of speed and all they keep saying is our exchange is capable of 4mb. But we're not getting to half this speed. Streaming movies is a no go. Skype...forget it.

Our customers want instant answers to emails and on many occasions we'll have calls where we talk through images online....but we can't do any of that. The phone line itself is very poor quality and generally we keep the phone on divert to a mobile to get a clear line....this costs us money for every call we answer.

It's the 21st century, technology is not going to stop and as a micro business dealing with customers worldwide we've got to try and keep up. I'm not expecting the 76Mb of superfast fibre nor the 38Mb of fibre or even the 17Mb that is the usual for Broadband....but 4Mb, 6Mb or even 8Mb I think

isn't unreasonable. We're paying for a service the same as everyone else and it's not fit for purpose.

Please tell me where we go to from here? With BT I'm hitting a brick wall and think it's unfair to vent my anger out at the guys and girls in the call centres. How do we get BT to roll out an effective broadband system to our area? I'm not expecting the same speeds as inner London but isn't it fair to expect a mere 10% of the service that is available in other areas? We are not based in the middle of nowhere and in this village I'm surrounded by 16 homes who are all experiencing the same issues. The 460 exchange serves hundreds of homes and we are all being short changed. There are many small businesses who are affected by this and with each week that passes we are all losing more and more customers.

Please help.

Regards,

Jill Lightfoot

Agenda Item 3.2

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

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: clerk@chepstow.co.uk



My Ref: SB/23092015TRS1

Edwina Hart MBE CStJ AC AM
Minister for Economy, Science and Transport
Welsh Government
Cardiff Bay
Cardiff
CF99 1NA

29th October 2015

Dear Minister,

A Review and Explanation of the 50mph speed limit on the A48 Bridge at Chepstow

Thank you for your letter of 13 October 2015, which was discussed at Council last night..

A thorough explanation

You said that you had *provided a thorough explanation of the reasoning behind the decision' (to retain the 50 mph speed limit)*. We have looked carefully through all the correspondence over the past 2 years and no explanation of any kind has been given.

The Town Council has received comments only on the '*process*' of making the decision and on some of the '*organisations*' consulted and on some of the '*factors*' that were to be considered but no information at all about the data, its evaluation, or what the other organisations have said, and the arguments for and against the options, and the reasoning behind the decision itself.

We have sent a large amount of detail on the safety issues as well as photographs showing the dangerous situation on the bridge but we have never received, at any stage, any response to any of the points we have raised in the past 2 years nor comments saying that our interpretation of the law or of safety issues on the A48 bridge, is wrong. No evidence, data or opinions, from any qualified traffic engineer has been put forward in 2 years.

We asked for an explanation of the reasons behind the decision to retain 50mph for our Council meeting in September following the Government's speed limit review, and for an official to attend to explain the situation, but no information or official was forthcoming.

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

You said that *'my officials have met with you to discuss the issue in detail'* but this is not the case. An official came to Chepstow in April 2014 to look at the situation on the bridge but the official did not discuss the situation with us nor explain Government thinking.

The Welsh Assembly Government's Petitions Committee wrote several times to you asking for an explanation and they too received only comments about the *'process'* and not an explanation of why 50 mph was so important here and why it was safe to retain it.

In your letter of 16 September 2015 you said that the review was in line with the Welsh Government's Guidance on Speed Limits. We looked at that Guidance and we have demonstrated (attached to our previous letter) that the speed limit on the bridge does *not* conform at all with Government Guidance. You have not commented on this nor explained how the A48 bridge at Chepstow conforms with the Guidance.

You said that the Gwent Police have been consulted, but you have not said what their comments were and why the views they put forward carry more weight than those of the Town Council or the Petitioners. We still do not know what their comments were.

We have received no clear explanation as to why the simple action of starting the 50mph zone 320 metres further north on the A48, just after the end of the bridge, cannot be taken.

We would still like to know the Government's response to the points made by the Petitioners and the Council and the reasoning as to why 50mph is so necessary on this short stretch of road, and why it is acceptable to the Government and the Police.

We would like to see the speed limit review report on the A48 bridge which, using the factors you have mentioned, concluded that there should be no change from 50mph to 30mph, and we would still like to see the comments of the Gwent Police. It would be helpful to see the Government's risk assessments for the bridge and to have some transparency on this matter so that we can understand the Government's thinking.

Danger of a high speed head- on collision on the A48 bridge at Chepstow

The A48 bridge is in an urban area. It has street lights at 30 metre intervals, well within the 180 metre interval required by UK and Welsh law for a 30mph zone. The pavement is well used by pedestrians and by vulnerable users as it is a main route to school.

For vehicles and pedestrians the A48 bridge is a **narrow 'trench' between two concrete walls - only 10 metres apart and 320 metres long from which there is no escape. Within this 10 metre width there are two carriageways with no central crash barrier between them and a pavement less than 2 metres wide often full of pedestrians and school children and no side crash barrier. Vehicles up to 2.5m wide approach each other at closing speeds of 100mph and pass within 1 metre of each other and within 1 metre of pedestrians at those speeds. 40 ton lorries, tankers, and 50 seater coaches approach each other at closing speeds of 80mph - with nowhere to go to avoid a collision.**

A momentary slip by any driver or a swerve to avoid a cyclist or a slipped load could result in a disastrous head on collision and vehicles ricocheting off the concrete side walls and crossing the pavement in under 1 second. It is not safe for traffic to travel at these speeds on the A48 bridge at Chepstow even without pedestrians being present. A new and open review is needed of traffic and pedestrian safety on this bridge.

Railings

On railings there is still much to discuss. Railings are not crash barriers and need to be installed *along with* central and side crash barriers and a 30mph speed limit. Railings will not be enough if two 40 ton lorries strike each other at a closing speed of 80mph in this narrow 'concrete trench'.

The A48 bridge at Newport has crash barriers, railings, and other safety measures.

The A48 bridge at Chepstow has none of these.

Also, the height of railings is not straight forward. It is not clear whether bicycles will be on the road on the outside of railings (where they could be a hazard for vehicles, and be unable to seek any refuge on the pavement if a lorry passes too closely) or whether they would have to share the narrow pavement inside the railings, and, if so, the railings would need to be raised from 1.04m to 1.4m. Furthermore, school children frequently have bags overhanging the carriageway and could be hit and dragged along by the wing mirrors of passing vehicle unless the guard rails were higher still. We would welcome some discussion on the proposals and also sight of the risk assessment used for the installation of guard rails.

Need for a new and open review of safety on the A48 bridge at Chepstow

In view of the recent awful collision in France, it is right for us to strengthen our call for a further review of the safety of this bridge and for a 30mph speed limit on this bridge, and for crash barriers as well as railings to be installed.

The A48 bridge at Chepstow is the narrowest point on the A48 between Gloucester and Cardiff. It cannot be appropriate or safe to permit vehicles to approach each other, and pass each other, at closing speeds of 80mph to 100mph on such a narrow unprotected bridge let alone have pedestrians within a metre of them.

We want a more detailed explanation of the arguments against 30mph and sight of the reports and risk assessments on the bridge. Let us not wait for an accident to provide the appropriate collision statistics. We need to do something now to prevent a serious accident. A new and open review of both traffic safety as well as pedestrian safety is urgently needed and we should to be consulted as part of it.

Yours sincerely



Cllr Dale Rooke
Town Mayor



Sandra Bushell
Town Clerk

Agenda Item 3.3

P-04-539 Save Cardiff Coal Exchange

Petition wording:

This petition seeks a commitment from the Welsh Government to set up a public enquiry into the events surrounding the Coal Exchange and to support public opinion which seeks to protect and conserve the building.

The Coal Exchange is one of Cardiff's most important buildings and one of the finest buildings in Wales. It's where the world's first million pound deal was struck during the city's industrial heyday (equivalent to over £100m today). Yet far from cherishing this building, Cardiff council proposes to demolish the main body of the building, keeping only the facades.

If this happens, then the magnificent interior with its immense historical significance will be lost forever. This grade 2* listed building deserves better, and the views of the public need to be heard.

The Council have been claiming for the past year that it is on the point of collapse. No works have been done, yet there is no apparent evidence that the building is about to collapse. It is questioned if Cardiff Council were able to use section 78 powers under the building act to progress their plans, and this needs to be investigated openly.

So much of Cardiff Bay's social and built heritage has already been destroyed; it seems inconceivable that more can be cast aside with cynical abandon.

It's unclear why the council refuses to see the value of restoring the Coal Exchange to protect this iconic building for the use and enjoyment of future generations.

The issues are of the highest level of public interest, and it is considered essential that an open public consultation occurs to review matters.

Petition raised by: Jon Avent

Date Petition first considered by Committee: 11 March 2014

Number of signatures: 389 signatures. An associated petition hosted on another website collected 2680 signatures.

P-04-539 Save Cardiff Coal Exchange: Correspondence from the Save the Coal Exchange Ltd. 16.11.15

Dear Steve,

A good deal has been happening with regards The Coal Exchange since committee members came to visit in June. I attach a brief update that I have shared with the petitioner Jon Avent before submitting. I trust you will bring it to the attention of members, as particularly the actions of Cardiff CC give cause for concern.

If you need any further information please let me know.

Best regards,

Val Hill

Treasurer, Save the Coal Exchange Ltd

Save the Coal Exchange

Petition ref: p-04-539

Current status: for consideration

Petitioner: Jon Avent

There have been many developments since members of the Petitions Committee visited The Coal Exchange on 30th June which I felt may be pertinent to your discussions, and final decision as to whether to recommend a Public Enquiry into future use of the building.

- ⤴ In September Save the Coal Exchange were awarded a £10K Start-Up grant by Heritage Lottery to support the writing of a robust Business Plan and other governance issues, insurance for volunteers and some community engagement. This includes an HLF mentor.

- ⤴ We had previously been granted a mentor by Princes Regeneration Trust under their Brick scheme. The two mentors are in touch with each other.

- ⤴ Following an inspection and report by Mann Williams on the front exterior of the building and the south west wing, the H & S department of Cardiff CC revoked the prohibition on both the forecourt and underground car parks on 8th September.

- ⤴ While the forecourt car park is now in full use, the entrance to the underground car park is behind the Council's plywood barrier, and to date they have refused to give us access to this despite our submission of a clear plan of the parts the barrier that need to be moved, including our offer to reinstate the railings to protect members of the public using the pavement that is currently behind the plywood barrier. Without access we cannot do the necessary remedial work or improve public safety.

- ⤴ Mann Williams have undertaken a further inspection of the foyer, Hall and front of the building up to roof level. We are still awaiting the full report, but are assured that while there will be some minimal

maintenance repairs needed in the Hall the area is currently structurally safe and can be re-opened for public use.

- ⤴ The Capita Report on potential development of the Exchange, commissioned by Welsh Government's Economic Development Minister was published and a copy sent to Save the Coal Exchange Ltd. Though we might disagree with some details, we welcome this as a great improvement on anything existing before.

- ⤴ Around the 15th October Officers from Cardiff CC Economic Development department interviewed potential developers - we understand there were 4 developers interviewed.

- ⤴ Signature Living (based in Liverpool) were chosen as preferred developers.

- ⤴ On 9th November a Director of Save the Coal Exchange Ltd along with the Director of Coal Exchange Ltd (who used to run events in the Hall and has a lease registered at The Land Registry), visited Signature Living in Liverpool. Signature Living's current plan is to develop the Exchange into a boutique / heritage hotel along the lines of their hotels in Liverpool. These cater mainly for hen and stage nights, weddings etc. They offered use of the Hall to Coal Exchange Ltd for events and a museum / heritage centre along with an office to Save The Coal Exchange Ltd. Signature had no plans to develop the North Wing at this point, but to leave the black barrier in place. They expect the hotel would be open by August 2016, having been assured by a Cardiff CC consultant in Major Projects that ownership would be sorted out swiftly, and planning permission would only be needed for change of use, and would be very rapid.

- ⤴ On 12th November the same CCC consultant from Major Projects came to the Exchange to post a "Demand for Payment" notice on the wall claiming payment for £177,593.56 + 8% daily interest from 12th November 2015. This under Sections 78, 107 and 94 of the 1984 Building Act. The notice was addressed to "Occupier or Owner". It is well documented that significant concerns exist over the misuse of s78 powers by CCC and the justification for any ongoing claims for costs relating to those powers are a key element of the Petition request for a Public Enquiry.

- ⤴ The information with regards to Signature Living and the Notice was shared with Stephen Doughty MP on 13th November. He met with Paul Orders and Neil Hanratty from Cardiff CC and challenged the way they were operating. Stephen also spoke with Ken Skates AM who had no knowledge of CCC's actions. CCC asserted the North of the building was to eventually be turned into apartments.

- ⤴ We have also been in touch with Burgess Salmon, solicitors for the Crown Estate who currently hold the Exchange in escheat and they show some surprise at CCC's actions. Stephen Doughty has also been in touch with them.

I have tried to keep these notes brief as I am aware of the huge volume of work you have to deal with on very different topics, but if you feel it would be useful to have copies of the Mann Williams Report, Notice, correspondence with Burgess Salmon or any other documents please let me know.

Note: Save the Coal Exchange Ltd is a not-for-profit company limited by guarantee with charitable aims and objectives, constituted in December 2014 following a public meeting on the future of the Coal Exchange.

Val Hill

Treasurer, Save the Coal Exchange Ltd

16th November 2015

P-04-539 Save Cardiff Coal Exchange: Correspondence from the Petitioner to the Clerking Team. 05.11.15

Jessica

One very initial observation I would like to make in relation to the recent comments from Edwina Hart is her reference to the involvement of Cadw.

It would be useful to understand who the person or persons at Cadw are who have been 'involved', as there does not appear to have been any substantial involvement from Cadw.

Regards

Jon

P-04-539 Save Cardiff Coal Exchange: Correspondence from the Petitioner to the Clerking Team. 16.11.15

Kathryn

Many thanks. I confirm that Val Hill had shared her document with me and I was happy with the content.

I would like to add that the matter of the use of section 78 powers is still being perpetuated by Cardiff Council, despite the fact that freedom of information releases has shown that there was an underlying plan by Cardiff Council to redevelop significant areas of the site for new-build multi-storey residential use.

The use of statutory powers in this way by Cardiff Council and the associated problems and obstruction to the protection of this nationally important building that this has created has always been at the heart of my petition and its aim of seeking a public enquiry.

It is very welcome that there may be a future use for the building, but this still seems to be progressing in a way that lacks transparency by Cardiff Council using procurement methods which are unclear. All of which should be properly explored in a public enquiry.

The fact that Cardiff Council continue to believe that they have a claim over the building in relation to 'section 78 works' remains a significant concern."

Regards

Jon

Agenda Item 3.4

P-04-565 Revive disused railway lines for leisure

Petition wording:

The Welsh Government should look turning the hundreds of miles of disused railway lines (axed under Beeching) into high quality cycle/walk ways. The lines cover the whole of Wales and this scheme would: encourage healthy activities and lifestyle; provide a safe way to travel for those who want a green alternative; provide safe cycling for children and encourage use for going to school, clubs etc; reduce traffic on our roads; boost Welsh tourism especially by cyclists and walkers; enable the establishment of a vast number of varied, small businesses along the routes – shops, B&B etc. Rural areas will benefit. The potential good for the health of the population of Wales and its economy is unlimited and the return in this investment can be understood before it even starts.

Petition raised by: Albert Fox

Date Petition first considered by Committee: 17 June 2014

Number of signatures : 14

P-04-565 Revive disused railway lines for leisure –Correspondence from the Petitioner to the Clerking Team. 18.11.15

Annwyl Jessica,

Please forgive the tardiness of my reply... .

Having read the Sustrans letter I understand their view point. However my proposal was to open up the routes to areas of Wales that need regeneration. Making these new routes for tourists etc. would enable the small businesses to open to cater for users. It would require the right sort of publicity and may indeed help make Wales the cycling destination in Wales.

I appreciate this is a generalisation but from little acorns, oak trees grow. It will take a leap of faith but with the right planning and financial backing who knows what can happen. I also understand that there are many demands on the WG budget but still believe a gradual roll out can work.

Cofion,

Albie Fox

Agenda Item 3.5

P-04-540 Stop Sexism In Domestic Abuse

Petition wording:

We call upon the National Assembly for Wales to urge the Welsh Government to stop Domestic Abuse (DA) by treating it as a gender inclusive and human phenomenon in which many men and women share both suffering and responsibility.

Practical NOT Politics

The current proposal blames men, and only men, for all violence and puts a radical gender based prejudice before the real needs of women, men and children and where 97% of men do NOT fit this profile.

Fear of repercussions and lack of publicity in Wales have prevented open and vocal dissent.

This Petition invites an alternative approach that recognises that 86% of DA is the responsibility of both women and men. It also offers greater protection to children and removes the discrimination that arises solely from radical gendered prejudice against those people in same sex female relationships.

Petition raised by: Healing Men

Date Petition first considered by Committee: 11 March 2014

Number of signatures: 238

P-04-540 Stop Sexism in Domestic Abuse: Correspondence from the Petitioner to the Chair 10.11.15

William Powell AC/AM
Chair, Petitions Committee
National Assembly for Wales
CARDIFF
CF99 1NA

10th November 2015.

Dear Mr Powell,

Petition P-04-540 Stop Sexism in Domestic Abuse

Thank you very much for the copy of the letter that the Minister for Public Services (the Minister) sent to you on the 29th September last in response to my letter to you dated 13th January 2015.

I regret that the Minister's letter has been somewhat difficult to relate to the issues raised in my letter despite being some 6 months overdue. It is curious that the Minister has taken such a considerable time to largely ignore the issues so carefully raised. However, it is noted that the Minister makes some recognition of the significance of the effects of domestic violence and abuse (DA) on boys and girls, but is totally silent on the risks of intergenerational transmission and perpetuation of DA behaviours in Wales.

Protecting girls and boys in Wales is at the heart of Healing Men's (HM') petition to the Welsh Government (WG) since all instances and forms of DA must be recognised in order to develop effective interventions and strategies to break the cycle of inter-generational transmission of violent and abusive behaviours being learned by each subsequent generation of boys and girls in Wales.

Although the Minister touches on the significance of girls and boys in Wales experiencing or witnessing DA, the Minister is strangely silent on the irrefutable phenomenon of inter-generational transmission despite its obvious role in perpetuating the suffering and distress and the substantial economic burden that the nation and the people of Wales will continue to bear and which can be directly attributed to continuing DA in Wales.

- How can the Minister be silent on this issue when responding to tackling DA and also protecting boys and girls in Wales?

- How can the Minister develop effective strategies to tackle DA in Wales without openly acknowledging all instances and forms of DA?
- Is the Minister silent on this issue because of fear of a profound political backlash by entrenched and hugely influential supporters, both within, and acting on, the Welsh Government, of the radicalised “understanding”¹ of DA that makes men, and only ever men, responsible for DA²?

Healing Men protects boys and girls by drawing the Minister’s attention to the continually increasing, international, authoritative, respected and longstanding research and practice demonstrating that DA is a “... *gender inclusive and human phenomenon in which many men and women share both suffering and responsibility*”³. The evidence base for this must be beyond any sensible dispute and I invite the Minister to challenge this if he is in any doubt whatsoever. Nevertheless, the Minister’s response seems steadfastly stuck in the old, outdated and Marxist principles formulated 150 years ago or so.

- Isn’t the Minister’s response like proposing to drive down the M4 in 2015 in the horse and cart that Karl Marx may have used almost two centuries ago?
- Is this the best the Minister can do for his constituents and the people of the modern nation of Wales?

Healing Men protects boys and girls by drawing the Minister’s attention to the fact that girls and boys are at three times the risk of being victims of or exposed to DA when both parents are abusive

- Why is the Minister, again, strangely silent on this crucial finding and seemingly is ignoring this phenomenon despite its centrality to protecting boys and girls and tackling DA in Wales?
- Does consciously ignoring this distressing phenomenon constitute institutional child abuse by the Minister and the WG?

Healing Men protects girls and boys by drawing the Minister’s attention to the fact that the highest incidence of reported physical abuse is perpetrated by mothers⁴. An allied phenomenon is that mothers are reported to inflict more abuse on their daughters than their sons and statistically speaking, a daughter is safer with her biological father than her mother. Yet again the Minister is strangely silent on these crucial dynamics in DA.

¹ Welsh Women’s Aid, letter to the Petitions Committee October 2014

² See previous correspondence from Healing Men – definitions and statements made by others

³ Healing Men – Petition to the Welsh Government 2013/14

⁴ NSPCC helpline report and others as cited in previous correspondence by Healing Men

- Aren't these crucial and challenging findings, which are brought to the Minister's attention by HM's petition, deserved of discussion and debate in the service of the people of Wales?
- How can any meaningful attempt to tackle or eliminate DA in Wales just ignore such a central and vital phenomenon?
- How will the nation of Wales tackle DA in Wales unless all instances and forms of DA are openly recognised and effectively addressed?
- Is the Minister silent on this issue because it is politically unpalatable to politically powerful vested interests?

Healing Men protects girls and boys by drawing the Minister's attention to the hugely informative and well documented experiences of the founder of the very first women's refuge in Chiswick, London in 1972. And yet the Minister is strangely silent on these powerful and highly relevant experiences by Erin Pizzey that are increasingly supported and internationally substantiated and which have not been discredited. Ms Pizzey emphatically states:

"Domestic violence is not and never has been a gender issue.

For over forty years men have been demonised and pushed out of family life often separated from their boys and girls and many men have killed themselves so bereft that they saw no other way out. For me it is recognising that violence in the family is a generational issue.

Children born to dysfunctional families, marinated in violence and sexual abuse will often grow up to repeat these patterns"

- Why is the Minister silent on these issues? Is it because Erin's findings are contrary to the old orthodox Marxist dogma and powerful vested interests that cannot allow any divergent views?

Healing Men protects girls and boys by drawing the Minister's attention to barriers to equality being created by the Minister's and the WG's policies and dogma on DA. Girls and boys left with violent parents because of irrelevant and self serving political dogma creates barriers to equality and is contrary to the Gender Equality Duty required of the WG as well as being an affront to good government and the people of Wales.

- Is the WG exposing itself to future legal action in following this radical ideology?

Healing Men protects girls and boys by drawing the Minister's attention to Welsh Women's Aid's (WWA) exceedingly and hugely generous surpluses amounting to £1,306,638 generated from WG grants over a matter of a few months with a suggestion that an objective review may easily channel scarce and meagre resources into more modern and effective ways to address DA

other than the WWA's "understanding" and its deeply questionable effect on boys and girls

- How can it be acceptable to the Minister and the WG that Welsh Women's Aid has accumulated a surplus of £1,306,638 from WG grants in just 26 months of operations as a limited company and to remain silent when this is brought to the Minister's attention? Surely this is worthy of acknowledgement and response?
- How can the WG and the Minister demonstrate fiscal probity when half the money granted to WWA – ostensibly for the provision of refuge for those fleeing violence – goes directly into creating such a huge trading surplus and £493,468 in cash reserves at the bank?
- Shouldn't the WG recover this excessive surplus and put the money to better and more active use?

Healing Men protects girls and boys by drawing the Minister's attention to the fact that WWA and associated organisations prohibits boys from entering their refuges even if they are with sisters who are older.

- Why is the Minister silent on this issue that is so pertinent to safeguarding boys in Wales?

Healing Men protects girls and boys by drawing the Minister's attention to the overwhelming dominance of extreme radicalised members of the Welsh Assembly, the Welsh Government and associated radicals in other positions of power and control ⁵ and how this virulent sexual prejudice will damage the boys and girls of Wales and their relationships with each other.

- Why is the Minister silent on this issue that is so pertinent to the building of healthy relationships for the girls and boys of Wales and so important for the their children and later generations of boys and girls.

The Healing Men protects girls and boys by drawing the Minister's attention to the bias and discrimination practiced against the fathers of girls and boys by the DYN project and how this may create barriers to equality by unjustly stigmatising their fathers whilst refusing to even acknowledge the adverse consequences, especially for girls, of being left with the other parent who is abusive and may even be violent. The Minister's response is curious

- Is the Minister concerned about the contents of my letter to yourself dated 13th January 2015?
- Why has the Minister ignored the DYN Project's outrageous practice of screening male callers to its helpline whilst, if it is helpful, not applying the same criteria to female callers?

⁵ "Is Wales a One Party State?" Swayne O'Pie - Copied to all Assembly Members.

- Why has the Minister ignored the flagrant disregard of accepted UK wide helpline standards by the DYN project?
- Is the Minister unconcerned at men being abused in this way and which is supported and funded by the WG?
- Would the WG support other such radical bigotry if practiced by the comparably discriminatory British National Party or the National Front?
- How can it be acceptable that £5,000,000 to £6,000,000 and more be spent annually by the WG on charities mainly supporting women and £150k or less each year on services for men (including the DYN project)?
- Could this bamboozling be intentional? There is no effective support for men, therefore there are no male service users, therefore, (the radical extremists argue) there are no male victims.
- Isn't this a gross affront to social justice and equality in Wales where victims are intentionally made invisible to support radical politics? Would it be acceptable to treat Somalis, Muslims or women in this way? Why is it acceptable, then, to treat male victims of DA in this discriminatory way?

It is noted that that the Minister suggests that victims of DA are NOT gendered “ .. *the Welsh Government recognises victims can be from across the whole spectrum of society, irrespective of gender*”. This would seem to be in direct contradiction to the stated “gendered” policies followed by the Minister and the WG.

- Does this include heterosexual men – i.e. the Minister and the WG recognising men as the victims of female instigated DA? If so, isn't this akin to HM's petition and shouldn't this be opened and discussed?
- Has the Minister carefully considered his response to the Petitions Committee? Is it that the words used in the response to the Committee by the Minister are of little significance since the Minister is determined, in practice, to concede to the powerful and dominant radicals and continue to effectively devote all resources, facilities and money into providing and supporting those “gendered” organisations that support female victims and with which the radicalised elements are associated and male victims will continue to be effectively dismissed, mistreated or ignored?

Men form almost half the population of Wales and there is widespread and growing concern about the increasingly biased and discriminatory attitudes that are becoming seen as radical and extremist.

- Is it possible that career and personal interests have been put before the best interests of the Nation and the people of Wales?

- How long will it be before the awareness of the complexity and non-gendered nature of DA becomes critically important to the mothers of sons, partners of men and the daughters and sons of fathers and their collective worries become reflected in the ballot box?

It seems feasible that the Minister has little knowledge of, or interest in, the letter to which he has been asked to respond because the letter poses no immediate threat. However, the falseness of the currently dominant radicalised paradigm is now so well established in the academic literature that it is suggested that the Minister and the WG are becoming increasingly exposed to future accusations of negligence in respect of endangering boys and girls in Wales. These issues will not go away and, I am sure, will be ultimately be reflected by the people of Wales in the ballot box.

In any case I feel it is abundantly clear that the Minister is unconcerned about the WG's policies that will perpetuate DA in Wales and institutionalise the abuse of the current and future generations of boys and girls in Wales. I hope that you find that as reprehensible as I do.

Yours sincerely,

Tony Stott

For Healing Men

Agenda Item 3.6

P-04-519 Abolition of Park Homes Sales Commission

Petition wording:

We call upon the National Assembly For Wales to urge the Welsh Government to remove from Legislation the right of Park Owners to demand commission on the private sale of park homes now that they are no longer involved in the selling process.

Petition raised by: Caerwnon Park Residents Association

Date Petition first considered by Committee: 10 December 2013

P-04-519 Abolition of Park Homes Sales Commission: Correspondence from the Petitioner to the Clerking Team. 12.11.15

Dear Jessica,

...

The only correspondence we have received was a copy of a letter dated 5th May from Lesley Griffiths to William Powell thanking him for his letter of 23rd April in which she states that she is currently developing a research proposal for the review of the economics of the park home industry and that she will gather information from both the site owners and site residents as part of the process.

I am sorry that we did not respond to the Committee decision to wait for our comments, I missed looking at the response from the committee because I was on holiday. Mr. Mountford does not use a computer and therefore I missed the Committee's decision, we should have said that Ms Griffiths promised us last year that she would carry out a review in the late Spring of 2015, and we should also have said that we were not happy with the amount of time this has taken to get set up, we now know that it will be 2016 before this report is published. It is my fault that I did not respond straight away and I do apologise, I am responding now and say that we are grateful that a review is finally under way but that we are disappointed that it is taking so long. Ms. Griffiths has not contacted us directly but Kirsty Williams did ask the question on our behalf of Ms Griffiths as to how long this would all take and Ms Griffiths replied that the deadline for the publication of the final report would be June 2016.

We would very much like to keep the petition going and thank the Committee very much for their work thus far.

Many thanks and apologies

Kind regards

Sue Richardson

Agenda Item 3.7

P-04-537 Planting Trees to Reduce Flooding

Petition wording:

We call on the Welsh Assembly to urge the Welsh Government to reduce flood risk to thousands of homes across the country by supporting the planting of at least 10 million trees over the next 5 years, creating hedges, tree belts and wooded areas targeted where they will best help soak up rainfall and slow down water runoff. This tree planting will count towards the 100,000 hectare tree planting target the Welsh Government has already set, to soak up CO₂ from the atmosphere.

Petition raised by: Coed Cadw

Date Petition first considered by Committee: 18 February 2014

Number of signatures: 2708

Date: 9th November 2015

By e-mail: angharadrees@woodlandtrust.org.uk

Dear William Powell AM , Chair of the Assembly Petition's Committee,

We are writing with our response to the Minister for Natural Resources, Carl Sargeant AM, letter to the Petitions Committee, dated the 30th of July regarding petition number P-03-537. We thank the committee for the opportunity to respond once again to this correspondence, and in greater detail.

Welsh Government Policies

First of all, Coed Cadw would like to welcome the Minister's acknowledgement in his opening paragraph that the Welsh Government recognises the potential benefits that woods and trees can play in helping alleviating the effects of flooding and that planting schemes in appropriate locations does make a contribution to flood risk management. The tone of the response is encouraging, but we hope that this can now start to be translated into actions on the ground. A lot of good assessment work is being undertaken by NRW which are showing positive opportunities, but there is a need to initiate action. May we ask how the Minister's statement will affect flood defence programmes and the allocation of flood defence expenditure? Would the Minister be prepared to require that a minimum proportion of the flood defence budget is allocated to land management measures? We look forward to being involved in the proposed steering group to be set up by NRW for the developing Natural Approach to Flood Risk Management activity in the Clwyd Catchment. The Trust was disappointed to learn that the Severn Rivers Trust have just been refused a small grant under the *Environment and Sustainable Development Directorate Small-scale Project Funding* to implement the second year of a 5 year multi-farm plan aimed at reducing overland flows in the Nant Alan catchment, which will contribute towards a reduction in flood risk for the flood prone towns of Llanfyllin and Llanfechain in Powys.

We are now also alarmed at indications that the RDP may not be fully funded by WG and that there may be no Glastir Woodland Management grants. Given that this is the main mechanism for funding biodiversity work in woodlands this would be bad news for the conservation of woodland biodiversity and would appear to undermine the WG's Nature Recovery Plan. It also means, of course, that Wales would be able to draw down fewer grants from the EU than we would otherwise have been able to do, to the overall detriment of the Welsh economy.

Regarding the RDP, the Welsh Government needs to address the mechanisms for delivery and ensure that schemes are open and accessible and enable the delivery of the full range of planting options that were built in to the RDP, for example the wording of the articles in the RDP does make provision for the replication of the type of shelterbelt planting as seen at Pontbren. However, the scheme rules for the new Glastir Woodland Creation still do not allow for this, which is why the 8 farmers in the Alan Valley scheme have had to seek funding through other routes. It is welcome news that there is now no minimum width for this scheme, which will encourage farmers to plant shelter belts and riparian woodland, but the scheme is still based on traditional forestry prescriptions that don't allow for flexibility required in planting density and proportion of shrub species. The recent success of the Coed Cymru and the Rivers Trust

Soil and Water Nature Fund Scheme demonstrated the potential scale of delivery of targeted tree planting that is out there if the scheme rules are right, but we are now in a situation where good work started by this scheme cannot be followed up due to lack of available grant. We would invite the committee within their capacity to raise the above questions with the Minister and his civil servants.

Glastir

We note the Minister's point regarding the recent introduction of Environmental schemes; Glastir Restoration, Woodland Creation and Woodland Management as a means of increasing woodland planting in Wales as a contribution towards its woodland creation aspirations and an acknowledgement that Glastir alone will not achieve these objectives. However, we would draw the Committee's attention to the latest planting figures for Wales which really are quite stark. The area of new woodland created during the 2014-15 planting season was just 100ha, down from 900ha in both 2012-13 and 2013-14. (From the latest Forestry Commission statistics here: [http://www.forestry.gov.uk/pdf/Ch1_Woodland_FS2015.pdf/\\$FILE/Ch1_Woodland_FS2015.pdf](http://www.forestry.gov.uk/pdf/Ch1_Woodland_FS2015.pdf/$FILE/Ch1_Woodland_FS2015.pdf))

What this shows, in our view, is that there is certainly an appetite for tree planting amongst landowners and farmers, but that this does need encouragement, and when, as during the last planting season, so funding is available, interest declines sharply. Funding is important as woodland creation can offer a whole range of benefits to the wider community, including reduction of flood risk, and because tree planting is a key part of Wales' carbon reduction planning. We acknowledge the barriers are complex. The Trust would like to do some more detailed opportunity mapping to try and identify locations where the creation of larger new woodlands would be desirable. We cannot do this alone and will need to co-operation of WG staff and access to data.

We absolutely agree with the Minister's point that all Glastir applications and all publically funded forestry schemes must comply with the UK Forestry Standard but would point out that the UKFS only covers high level principles and that monitoring practical compliance with UKFS requires auditing against the more details UK Woodland Assurance Standard. (UKWAS). It is vital that the WG continues to ensure that NRW manages its own estate in full compliance with the requirements and the spirit of the UKWAS standard.

Urban Trees

We note the Minister's comment on how we, Coed Cadw should actively contact other Welsh Local Authorities to raise awareness of key partnerships in order that they consider initiatives such as the *Greener Grangetown* as part of their planning proposals and designs. We are endeavouring to do this but we really don't have resources to do so on any extensive basis and fundamentally we believe it to be a public sector responsibility. We do work with Local Authorities on a selective basis to promote woods and trees including working with Conwy County Council on the Elwy Riparian project but this was an example of planting of farms rather than urban scene. In addition we would highlight the work that Coed Cadw has done over the years promoting Free Tree Packs for community groups and schools, a significant of which have been planted in urban areas. Last year's planting season; 2014-2015 we distributed a grand total of 32,430 individual trees Wales through our Community Tree Packs within Wales.

Promoting the benefits of trees in towns and cities is another example of our latest work in this field. Through our various promotional materials such as the Urban Woodland Publications we have available and the Free Tree Packs for community groups and schools mentioned above, we have been making a contribution to the promotion of good practice with regards to the urban tree agenda in a limited way over a number of years. We have also taken opportunities to lobby relevant authorities in the past and will be doing again by using our Wales is Better with Trees Policy Document, available imminently.

In addition, we are in discussion with NRW on scoping a major new project Woodland Towns project with several local authorities, but roll out will depend on obtaining substantial funding.

Some of the Committee Members may also be aware that we've been running a campaign [Make Wales Better With Trees](#) since the start of 2015 which will end in December. Tens of thousands of people in Wales' cities, towns and

villages benefit every day from having trees near to where they live. But many also lose out, especially those who live in areas with little tree cover or who have no woodland they can visit nearby. We want everyone to benefit from trees where they live, so we're working to encourage local authorities around Wales to plant more trees near to communities, and to persuade the Welsh Government to support them in doing this. We believe that every city, town and village in Wales should benefit from having trees over at least 20% of their area, matching the leafy suburbs which are seen as the best places to live, which is why we are calling on the Welsh Government to support this by establishing a challenge fund for tree planting to improve the environment where people live.

Therefore, the committee should note that we do a lot of work with Local Authorities up and down Wales within our capacity and will continue to do so, but fundamentally we do see this as Welsh Government's role to be setting priorities for Local Authorities and provide a framework which makes it possible for small NGOs like ourselves to develop approaches that deliver the aspirations of the Future Generations and Environment Acts. We would also like to ask how NRW and the Welsh Government is ensuring SUDS best practice is shared amongst LAs?

Advice and Support for Landowners

We welcome the Minister's commitment to consider supporting officers on the ground as it is a good way of advocating woodland creation and lead to better management of existing wood during the funding decision process. However, there still seems to be a real immediate issue in relation to the funding of officers on the ground. We commend that the core grant funding funds central activities of Coed Cymru, with whom we work closely, which is vitally important, but regret that this pot of money currently does not actually fund actual officers providing advice on the ground. Our understanding is that the Cooperative Measure Article 16 of the new RDP, can provide the mechanism for project officer time to be funded, these will be people working with other NGO's as part of wider catchment partnerships. As mentioned earlier we believe that there is considerable potential out there to delivery an increase in tree planting on farms and here are projects currently being developed that are waiting for access to funding in order to progress. Funding for project officer time will enable to promotion of capital funds for implementation through existing RDP mechanisms, as long as the correct mechanisms are in place for delivery, as mentioned earlier.

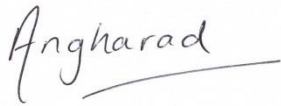
We do acknowledge that there is an important resource in agents and advisers in the private sector, and we frequently refer enquires we receive to private sector agents for follow up. We support the use of private sector agents to prepare woodland plans under Glastir provided that this role is not confined to commercial foresters but includes people who have appropriate expertise on the use of trees in farming, for example for run-off and water quality management and those who have recreation management and ecological expertise.

We would welcome clarification of how Farming Connect will provide woodland advice and how this will be integrated with Glastir woodland requirements? We fear that forestry advice will continue to be treated in a separate silo and focused on plantation management, ensuring the continued artificial separation between farming and forestry, with most farmers receiving no advice on how they can use targeted tree planting to strengthen their farm business including helping with issues of water management. How will advisors with the expert tree knowledge and advice feed that through to landowners – landowners not getting advice from appropriate people will result in poor uptake of scheme ultimately. There is a need for better communication and good relationships between landowners and on the ground agents and officers. Currently, Coed Cymru are involved in Farming Connect in that they are on the Board, but they have no engagement in the development of individual Glastir schemes.

Conclusion

As a way of moving forward this discussion we would appreciate if the Committee could put these questions we've raised in our response to the Minister and his team within your capacity of holding the Welsh Government to account. One again we thank the committee for their continued engagement with this petition and we look forward to see how the petition is moved forward and the outcome of the next discussions

Yr eiddoch yn gywir,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Angharad". The signature is written in a cursive style and is underlined with a single horizontal stroke.

Angharad Rees

Swyddog Ymgyrchoedd / Campaigns Officer

Agenda Item 3.8

P-04-581 Opposition to cuts in provision for learners of English as an Additional Language

Petition Wording:

We, the undersigned, call upon the National Assembly for Wales to urge the Welsh Government to reconsider its cuts to pupils acquiring English as an Additional Language (EAL) in schools. Additional funding is required to prevent the marginalisation of pupils from minority ethnic backgrounds in schools through specialist support which aims to raise educational standards and ensure equality of opportunity for all.

The reduction in the MEAG grant impacts exclusively upon ethnic minority pupils at a time when unprecedented numbers of EAL learners are in our schools. Lack of consultation fails to examine the scale, scope and impact of our support upon individuals, their families and whole school achievement.

Additional Information:

The reduction in the MEAG grant impacts exclusively upon ethnic minority pupils at a time when unprecedented numbers of EAL learners are in our schools. Lack of consultation fails to examine the scale, scope and impact of our support upon individuals, their families and whole school achievement.

Petition raised by: Helen Myers

Date Petition first considered by Committee: 23 September 2014

Number of signatures: 37

P-04-581 P-04- Opposition to cuts in provision for learners of English as an Additional Language – Correspondence from the Petitioner to the Clerking Team. 18.11.15

Dear Jessica,

Unfortunately, further discussion regarding my petition is no longer relevant.

My original petition referred to my concerns regarding the future of the MELA grant, which was ring fenced funding specifically for EAL learners across Wales.

As you will be aware, this grant, regrettably, no longer exists; all funding for EAL support is now funded by the EIG (Education Improvement Grant.) The future of EAL support will therefore depend on any plans for further devolution of the grant to schools, and whether the status of ethnic minority pupils will be deemed a priority alongside multiple bids attempting to draw funding from the grant.

Many thanks for your support in bringing this matter to the attention of the Committee, Jessica. I have appreciated your prompt and efficient service in dealing with my petition.

Regards,

Helen Myers

Specialist Teacher/Athrawes Arbenigol

EMLAS (Ethnic Minority Language & Achievement Service/ Gwasanaeth Iaith a Chyflawniad Lleiafrifoedd Ethnig) Education Department/Adran Addysg Dynevor Centre/Canolfan Dinefwr Dynevor Place/Plas Dinefwr City and County of Swansea/Dinas a Sir Abertawe

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Agenda Item 3.9

P-04-516 Make political science compulsory in education

Petition wording:

We call upon the National Assembly for Wales to urge the Welsh Government to make political science a compulsory part of the school curriculum.

Petition raised by: Mark Griffiths

Date petition first considered by Committee: 26 November 2013

Number of signatures: 12

**P-04-516 Make Political Science Compulsory in Education:
Correspondence from the Petitioner to the Clerking Team. 17.11.15**

Dear Jessica ,

Many thanks for your email. Sorry I thought I had previously replied.

I do not have a direct response to Mr Powell's letter, other than i feel political education is an essential element in a functioning and pluralist democracy. To have young and insightful generations engaging in the democratic process requires a politically literate peoples and culture. At present I do not feel the education system offers our young this.

Again many thanks for the lengthy consideration the committee has offered on this.

Regards

Mark Griffiths

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Agenda Item 7

P-04-522 Asbestos in Schools

Petition wording:

We call on the National Assembly for Wales to urge the Welsh Government to put measures in place to ensure that parents and guardians of children across Wales can easily access information about the presence and management of asbestos in all school buildings.

Given the health risks associated with the presence of asbestos in public buildings, we believe parents and guardians across Wales have the right;

- to know if asbestos is located in their school;
- to know whether, where asbestos is present, it is being managed in line with the Control of Asbestos Regulations 2012;
- to access that information easily online

Petition raised by: Cenric Clement-Evans

Date Petition first considered by Committee: 10 December 2013

Number of signatures: 448

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