



Cynulliad
Cenedlaethol
Cymru

National
Assembly for
Wales

Cofnod y Trafodion The Record of Proceedings

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[The Petitions Committee](#)

29/11/2016

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Cofnodir y trafodion yn yr iaith y llefarwyd hwy ynnddi yn y pwyllgor. Yn ogystal, cynhwysir trawsgrifiad o'r cyfieithu ar y pryd. Lle y mae cyfranwyr wedi darparu cywiriadau i'w tystiolaeth, nodir y rheini yn y trawsgrifiad.

The proceedings are reported in the language in which they were spoken in the committee. In addition, a transcription of the simultaneous interpretation is included. Where contributors have supplied corrections to their evidence, these are noted in the transcript.

Aelodau'r pwyllgor yn bresennol
Committee members in attendance

Gareth Bennett Bywgraffiad Biography	UKIP Cymru UKIP Wales
Mike Hedges Bywgraffiad Biography	Llafur Labour
Neil McEvoy Bywgraffiad Biography	Plaid Cymru The Party of Wales

Swyddogion Cynulliad Cenedlaethol Cymru yn bresennol
National Assembly for Wales officials in attendance

Kayleigh Driscoll	Dirprwy Glerc Deputy Clerk
Graeme Francis	Clerc Clerk
Lisa Salkeld	Cynghorydd Cyfreithiol Legal Adviser
Kath Thomas	Dirprwy Glerc Deputy Clerk

Dechreuodd y cyfarfod am 09:21.
The meeting began at 09:21.

Cyflwyniad, Ymddiheuriadau, Dirprwyon a Datganiadau o Fuddiant
Introduction, Apologies, Substitutions and Declarations of Interest

[1] **Mike Hedges:** Can I welcome everyone to the meeting this morning? Can I remind people that they are welcome to speak Welsh or English? Headsets are available for translation of Welsh to English. There's no need to turn off mobile phones or other electronic devices, but please ensure that any devices are in silent mode, and I say that from personal experience; it's awfully embarrassing when it starts making a funny noise. We've got no apologies, but we know that Janet Finch-Saunders may well be late.

Deisebau Newydd New Petitions

[2] **Mike Hedges:** So, we will make a start. We've had a new petition, on the funding of services, which was submitted with 21 signatures and which went to the Cabinet Secretary on 10 October. We've received a response. We've had a research brief. We've had the petitioner's further comments. Neither the Royal National Lifeboat Institution nor the Royal Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals receive significant public funding, but the RNLI website says that they do not seek public funding. They're very proud of being supported by voluntary donations. All third sector organisations are able to apply for funding from the Welsh Government. I'm not sure what we can do with this as a committee. We could close the petition and we could suggest to the petitioner that he may wish to share the Cabinet Secretary's letter with any organisations he feels would benefit from information about Welsh Government funding. And also suggest that perhaps he looks at local authorities as well, who also give local funding. Are we happy with that?

09:22

Y Wybodaeth Ddiweddaraf am Ddeisebau Blaenorol Updates to Previous Petitions

[3] **Mike Hedges:** Updates to previous petitions, 'The Wildlife Warriors', submitted by Caerphilly junior forum and was first considered on 11 October this year with 13 online signatures and 83 paper signatures. We last considered it on 11 October and we agreed to await the views of petitioners before deciding whether to take any further action. We've had further comments which are included in the papers. What action do we wish to take? The petitioner from the youth forum suggests that the Eco-Schools project referred to by the Cabinet Secretary could be given an expanded remit to cover more of the areas proposed in the petition. It also suggested that it be made more inclusive by removing the requirement for members to be elected, and making it open to pupils at a younger age. Eco-Schools is run by Keep Wales Tidy with funding from the Welsh Government. What we can do: we could write to Keep Wales Tidy to ask for their reflections on the petition, and we could ask the Cabinet Secretary to provide information about a new project, Bee Friendly, which the committee could share with the petitioners. Are we happy to do that?

[4] **Neil McEvoy:** Yes.

[5] 'A Ban on the Manufacture, Sale and Use of Snares in Wales' was submitted by the League Against Cruel Sports and was considered on 11 October, having collected 1,405 signatures. The committee last considered it on 27 September and agreed to forward the correspondence received to the Cabinet Secretary for Environment and Rural Affairs, and requested to be kept informed about the outcomes of discussions being facilitated by the Welsh Government before deciding whether to take further action at a later date.

[6] This item is an update for information only. The committee should note that the Climate Change, Environment and Rural Affairs Committee is holding a scrutiny session on the use of snares on 30 November, i.e. tomorrow. The petitioner and others who have written to the committee are providing evidence to this. The climate change committee will provide an update following this session, which can be considered by Members at a future meeting alongside the expected update from the Cabinet Secretary. Shall we await further information?

[7] **Gareth Bennett:** Yes.

[8] 'Abolition of Park Homes Sales Commission'. This petition was submitted by Caerwnon Park Residents Association and was considered for the first time on 10 December 2013. The committee last considered it on 11 October and agreed to write to the Cabinet Secretary for Communities and Children to seek the Welsh Government's reflections on the recommendations of research into the economics of the park homes industry. We've had a response from the Cabinet Secretary. The petitioner has also provided further information, and we've had the opportunity to see and read all that. What do we wish to do? The Cabinet Secretary's response states that the Welsh Government is against any abolition of commission payable to a site owner on the sale of a park home due to concerns over the impact this would have on the viability of some sites and pitch fees. The petitioner has requested that the committee seeks to facilitate a meeting for them with the Cabinet Secretary. The petition and the broader issues surrounding park homes have been given detailed consideration by the Assembly since it was submitted in 2013. Also, there was a private Member's park homes Bill brought in in the last session by Peter Black, the Liberal Democrat Assembly Member for South Wales West, which eventually became law. What do we wish to do?

[9] **Gareth Bennett:** What did that change? That Bill.

[10] **Mike Hedges:** I knew you were going to ask me that question. I was trying to remember—

[11] **Gareth Bennett:** I'm just wondering what they want. You know, they're suggesting other things. I'm wondering what was already changed by—

[12] **Mike Hedges:** Lots. It was a fairly substantial piece of legislation, giving them greater security and a whole range of other things, but it didn't deal with the pitch fees.

[13] **Gareth Bennett:** If they're coming up with different possibilities, maybe it's the best idea that we do write to the Cabinet Secretary.

[14] **Mike Hedges:** And ask whether he or his officials would meet with them. Then we'll bring it back here. Yes? Are we happy with that?

[15] **Gareth Bennett:** Yes.

[16] **Mike Hedges:** Can I declare an interest on the next item, 'Close the Gap for deaf pupils in Wales'? My sister is profoundly deaf, so I have a close association with the deaf community.

[17] This petition was submitted by the National Deaf Children's Society Cymru and was first considered on 15 May, having collected 205 signatures. The previous committee took detailed evidence on this petition in December 2014. It had previously gathered correspondence from the Welsh Government, the Welsh Local Government Association, Governors Wales and others. It was last considered on 20 January and agreed several actions, including a visit to a nearby school to see at first-hand the work they have done to provide excellent acoustics for the whole school population. Unfortunately, due to diaries and pressure of time, the committee was unable to arrange this visit. The petitioner has been in discussion with the clerking team and has provided the committee with a detailed update on the issues raised by the petition, which have been provided to Members. The petitioner has stated that young people themselves have identified that action is needed most urgently in relation to classroom acoustics and deaf awareness. They have suggested a number of potential actions that could be taken to address the barriers identified by deaf pupils. I suggest we write to the Cabinet Secretary for Education, passing on their comments. Is that okay?

[18] **Neil McEvoy:** Yes.

[19] **Mike Hedges:** ‘Cilmeri Community Council Appeal for The Prince Llywelyn Monument’—this goes back to September 2014. It was last considered on 27 September and we agreed to forward the petitioners’ comments to the Cabinet Secretary for Economy and Infrastructure and ask him to provide an update when a decision on the proposals for the new signs has been reached. We’ve had a response. The petitioner was informed that the petition would be considered by the committee but had not responded when papers for the committee were being finalised. The Cabinet Secretary’s letter states that the Welsh Government has approved in principle the design of the new sign. We could write. I suggest we request an update from the petitioner on the development of the sign, and also ask the Welsh Government when the sign is likely to be installed. Yes? It just seems a relatively simple thing to do.

[20] **Gareth Bennett:** How long is it going back, this one—2014, is it? It’s strange that it’s taken so long.

[21] **Mike Hedges:** It’s taken two years to put up a sign. Anyway, we are where we are.

[22] We’re looking at three petitions on buses in what is effectively west Wales: ‘Wanted—Buses for Meirionnydd’, ‘Save the Wrexham/Barmouth X94 Bus Service’ and ‘Increase Funding for Welsh Bus Services’.

[23] The first one is ‘Wanted—Buses for Meirionnydd’, which is asking us to review the funding for rural bus services and to consider funding for additional services to improve access to health services. ‘Save the Wrexham/Barmouth X94 Bus Service’—this goes back to November 2013. And there’s ‘Increase Funding for Welsh Bus Services’, which was first considered on 26 November 2013. These petitions were received between April and November 2013. The previous committee agreed to group them and carry out a short inquiry into the issues raised. Prior to this, the committee had sought views on petition P-04-475 from organisations including the older people’s commissioner, the children’s commissioner, Disability Wales and Age Cymru. Joyce Watson also undertook a rapporteur visit with the petitioners to hear their concerns first-hand. Oral evidence sessions were held in spring 2014. The Minister at the time was not available to give oral evidence but provided a written response to a number of detailed

questions in January 2015. In February 2015, the committee agreed to seek the petitioners' views on this and then prepare a final draft report.

09:30

[24] In autumn 2015, the Enterprise and Business Committee began an inquiry into bus and community transport services in Wales. As a result, the Petitions Committee asked the Enterprise and Business Committee to take the evidence already gathered into account. The Enterprise and Business Committee produced a report with a series of recommendations. The report was produced shortly before dissolution and therefore it was not debated in Plenary. Members may also wish to note that a new petition on a bus route in Rhondda Cynon Taf has been recently started. What do we wish to do? I understand one of them has actually been dealt with positively.

[25] **Mr Francis:** Yes, we believe that there was certainly a time when the X94 service restarted. We're not sure on the current status.

[26] **Mike Hedges:** Would it be possible to find the current status of each of those and then report back?

[27] **Mr Francis:** And do so via contacting the petitioners to ask for their—

[28] **Mike Hedges:** I suppose we could contact the petitioners and ask them what the current position is—these are historical, over three years ago now, so ask them what the current position is and then we can come back to visit it and come to a conclusion. Okay.

09:32

**Cynnig o dan Reol Sefydlog 17.42 i Benderfynu Gwahardd y Cyhoedd
o'r Cyfarfod**
**Motion under Standing Order 17.42 to Resolve to Exclude the Public
from the Meeting**

Cynnig:

Motion:

bod y pwyllgor yn penderfynu gwahardd y cyhoedd o weddill y cyfarfod yn unol â Rheol Sefydlog 17.42(vi).

that the committee resolves to exclude the public from the remainder of the meeting in accordance with Standing Order

17.42(vi).

Cynigiwyd y cynnig.

Motion moved.

[29] **Mike Hedges:** I move the motion under Standing Order 17.42 to resolve to exclude the public from the remainder of the meeting. All agreed? Yes. Okay.

Derbyniwyd y cynnig.

Motion agreed.

Daeth rhan gyhoeddus y cyfarfod i ben am 09:32.

The public part of the meeting ended at 09:32.