

## Agenda – Petitions Committee

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Meeting Venue:

Committee Room 3 – Senedd

Meeting date: 4 October 2021

Meeting time: 14.00

For further information contact:

Gareth Price – Committee Clerk

0300 200 6565

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## P-06-1173: Give legal protection to designated Special Landscape Areas in Wales.

Y Pwyllgor Deisebau | 4 Hydref 2021  
Petitions Committee | 4 October 2021

Reference: SR21/0497-1

Petition Number: P-06-1173

**Petition title:** Give legal protection to designated Special Landscape Areas in Wales.

**Text of petition:** In response to our Climate Emergency we ask the Welsh Government to safeguard Special Landscape Areas for future generations. SLAs are areas of high landscape importance for environmental, physical, visual, cultural or historical value and may be unique, exceptional or distinctive but they are NOT PROTECTED.

Their ancient woodlands, rare species, special areas of habitat or the setting in which they exist are vulnerable to new roads, business parks or other damaging developments.

More details

An example of an SLA at risk is in and around the conservation village of Pendoylan in the Ely Valley through which the Vale of Glamorgan Council propose building a new freight road. This road will destroy ancient woodland and endangered wildlife habitat as well pollute the air and water courses on which this SLA depends.

Sadly, being a Special Landscape Area carries no protection so planners and developers are at liberty to develop whatever schemes they wish.



We call on the Welsh Government to be mindful of their commitment to environmental and climate change policies and of their responsibilities to the Wellbeing of the Future Generations Act.

The unique areas of Wales that have already been identified as Special Landscape Areas need urgent legal protection.

## Background

Special Landscape Areas (SLA) are a **non-statutory designation** applied by the local planning authority to define areas of high landscape importance, across the UK. SLA designations recognise and aim to protect the physical, environmental, visual, cultural and historical value of such landscapes.

Planning authorities should state which features, characteristics or qualities require extra protection, and explain how the policy or designation will achieve this protection.

There may be more than one role for an identified SLA:

- to recognise and protect (through development management) locally valued landscapes important for their distinctive character, qualities and sense of place / 'bro';
- to influence positive landscape planning. For example, by producing design guidance to enhance landscape character or to target land management grants towards the conservation of special landscape features recognised within the SLA; and/or
- to raise understanding and appreciation of the importance of local landscapes by communities, visitors and the wider public.

SLAs may be included in a local planning authority's Local Development Plan (LDP) or Unitary Development Plan (where LDPs have not yet been adopted) to identify areas for an extra level of landscape protection through special landscape policies.

The Welsh Government's paper on this petition highlights that **LANDMAP** (a national landscape policy and decision making tool hosted and managed by Natural Resources Wales) and any associated landscape character assessments

should be used to inform local landscape policies and to help identify or revise SLAs.

## Welsh Government action

The Welsh Government's National Planning Policy ([Planning Policy Wales 11](#)) states that:

SLAs are non-statutory designations that define local areas of high landscape importance, which may be unique, exceptional or distinctive to the area. Planning authorities should apply these designations where there is good reason to believe that normal planning policies cannot provide the necessary protection.

The [Welsh Government's Future Wales - the National Plan 2040](#) introduces at Policy 9 an approach for the protection of habitats (amongst other objectives) to ensure that they are not unduly compromised by development. This policy aims to protect areas of land that are important for expanding or connecting ecological networks, adapting to climate change or other pressures, or providing key ecological services.

The Minister's letter on this petition states:

Whilst it is 'early days' for Future Wales policies to filter through the planning system, Welsh Government's policy aspirations are high and ambitious; the legal status of Future Wales means that local policies and decision making must be in conformity with Future Wales.

## Senedd action

There has been no significant action by the Senedd to give legal protection to designated SLAs to date.

Every effort is made to ensure that the information contained in this briefing is correct at the time of publication. Readers should be aware that these briefings are not necessarily updated or otherwise amended to reflect subsequent changes.

Julie James AS/MS  
Y Gweinidog Newid Hinsawdd  
Minister for Climate Change



Llywodraeth Cymru  
Welsh Government

Eich cyf/Your ref P-06-1173  
Ein cyf/Our ref JJ/10901/21

Jack Sargeant MS  
Chair - Petitions committee

petitions@senedd.wales

16 September 2021

Dear Jack,

Thank you for your letter of 22 July concerning Petition P-06-1173 '*Give legal protection to designated Special Landscape Areas in Wales*' and offering the opportunity to present some views to the Committee on the issues that are raised in the petition.

Special Landscape Areas (SLAs) are a long-standing planning policy mechanism, widely used by local planning authorities to provide for the conservation and enhancement of local landscapes. Whilst they are a non-statutory landscape designation (compared with a National Park or an Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty) they are a policy mechanism available to local planning authorities to recognise landscape features, characteristics and qualities of local significance. SLAs have and continue to be seen by local planning authorities as a means of protecting sensitive landscapes in Local Development Plans and in developing an understanding and awareness of those features and characteristics that give a locality its sense of place.

The SLA designation process followed by local planning authorities is robust and evidence-based (Planning Policy Wales 11, para 6.3.12/13); planning authorities should state which landscape features, characteristics or qualities require extra protection and explain how the SLA policy or designation will achieve this protection. [LANDMAP](#) (a national landscape policy and decision making tool hosted and managed by Natural Resources Wales) and any associated landscape character assessments should be used to inform local landscape policies and to help identify or revise SLAs.

Planning Policy Wales 11 is unambiguous stating that "*SLAs are non statutory designations that define local areas of high landscape importance, which may be unique, exceptional or distinctive to the area. Planning authorities should apply these designations where there is good reason to believe that normal planning polices cannot provide the necessary protection.*"

Alongside the policy framework for SLAs as set in Planning Policy Wales we also have a wider, contextual policy framework in Future Wales.

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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.

Future Wales - the National Plan 2040 introduces at Policy 9 a safeguarding approach for the protection of habitats (amongst other objectives) to ensure that they are not unduly compromised by development. This top tier development plan policy sets out a strong policy steer to help ensure that areas of land that are potentially important for expanding or connecting ecological networks, adapting to climate change or other pressures, or which provide key ecological services are not compromised by development. The safeguarding policy operates at a landscape scale and areas may be safeguarded for a wide variety of reasons. These can include increasing the resilience or connectivity of certain habitat types, creating habitat, or for the provision of green infrastructure.

The safeguarding policy approach as set out in Future Wales can assist in the protection and restoration of landscape features and it can enable the planning system to take action which can complement wider approaches to the sustainable management of natural resources.

Whilst it is 'early days' for Future Wales policies to filter through the planning system, Welsh Government's policy aspirations are high and ambitious; the legal status of Future Wales means that local policies and decision making must be in conformity with Future Wales.

I trust that the above information will aid the Committee as you prepare for your consideration of the petition.

Yours sincerely,



**Julie James AS/MS**  
Y Gweinidog Newid Hinsawdd  
Minister for Climate Change

## P-06-1179 Paint the trains on the mid Wales line to resemble caterpillars to encourage tourism

Y Pwyllgor Deisebau | 4 Hydref 2021  
Petitions Committee | 4 October 2021

Reference: SR21/0740-1

Petition Number: P-06-1179

**Petition title:** Paint the trains on the mid Wales line to resemble caterpillars to encourage tourism.

**Text of petition:** To boost tourism in mid Wales have the two carriage trains painted to look like caterpillars. Children from Birmingham and the West Midlands would love to go on the caterpillar line to the coast. It would also bring a smile to everybody who saw them going down the track something much needed in these difficult times.

It's an easy win for tourism which could get national and international press coverage. You could have competitions to name the caterpillar on each train which could be different paint jobs.



## Background

### Rail services in Wales

The Welsh Government operates rail services across the Wales and Borders franchise through [Transport for Wales \(TfW\)](#).

TfW was established in 2015 as a wholly-Welsh Government owned subsidiary company. TfW is the overarching organisation, and its rail element, '[TfW Rail Services](#)' operates the Wales and Borders Rail Service.

TfW's initial purpose was to procure, develop and operate the new Welsh rail franchise and Metro services on the valley lines, following devolution of rail franchise procurement powers. In May 2018, [it was announced](#) that KeolisAmey had been awarded the franchise to run until October 2033.

Due to the impact of the pandemic on demand for rail services, in October 2020 the Welsh Government [announced a new delivery model for TfW Rail Services](#) and in February 2021 [rail operations were brought under direct public control](#).

Senedd Research [published an article](#) which provides more information.

### The Cambrian line

The [Cambrian](#) main line runs from Birmingham across mid Wales to Aberystwyth via Machynlleth while the Cambrian coast line runs from Machynlleth to Pwllheli.

Following the award of the franchise in 2018, plans included a commitment to introduce new or refurbished rolling stock across the network. This included plans to [replace the entire fleet on the Cambrian line](#) during 2022 with new diesel multiple units (DMUs).

Following the announcement that rail operations would be brought under direct public control, [a November 2020 statement](#) outlined that the £800m commitment on new rolling stock remains.

### Design requirements

Any plans to introduce a special design on trains across the network must comply with certain standards. Companies owning and operating trains must ensure that they are sufficiently visible for safety reasons.

A number of standards must be adhered to including [GMRT2131- Audibility and Visibility of Trains](#). Pre-2016 it was a requirement that the front end of trains be painted yellow. However this is no longer required so long as the train complies with certain head lamp requirements set out in [National Technical Specification Notices](#) (NTSNs).

Standard GMRT2131 also sets out a number of issues that have been identified for using different types of train front end colours as follows:

- a) Using colours which already have an operational meaning to drivers and track staff. These include: red and green which are associated with signal aspects...;
- b) Using colours and surface finishes which may impact on the visibility of the train headlight...; and
- c) Patterns and text (for example, logos) which may make the shape of the front end of the train difficult for trackside staff to identify when the train is approaching them...

## Examples of specially commissioned designs

In 2020, Great Western Railway (GWR) [introduced a special train livery](#) to thank key workers for their efforts during the Covid-19 pandemic. The design incorporated ideas from a competition run through social media.

Funding for any special design would also need to be taken into account. The GWR livery was funded by the two private companies that own its rolling stock.

Other examples include the [Pride of ScotRail train](#) featuring the colours of the progress flag to represent the LGBTQ+ community, and a special livery introduced by [Nexus](#) to celebrate [40 years of the Tyne and Wear Metro](#).

## Welsh Government response

The Deputy Minister for Climate Change has responded highlighting: cost and resource requirements; the need to remove the trains from service, the fact that trains are not dedicated to a specific line; and the fact that TfW has a contract

with Global Ltd which owns the rights to train exteriors for commercial advertising sales.

Every effort is made to ensure that the information contained in this briefing is correct at the time of publication. Readers should be aware that these briefings are not necessarily updated or otherwise amended to reflect subsequent changes.

Lee Waters AS/MS  
Y Dirprwy Weinidog Newid Hinsawdd  
Deputy Minister for Climate Change



Llywodraeth Cymru  
Welsh Government

Eich cyf/Your ref P-06-1179  
Ein cyf/Our ref LW/11016/21

Jack Sargeant MS  
Chair - Petitions committee  
Senedd Cymru  
Cardiff Bay  
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22 September 2021

Dear Jack,

Thank you for your correspondence of 22 July as Chair of the Petitions Committee regarding alterations of the paint schemes on trains on the Heart of Wales line to resemble caterpillars to attract tourism.

Initiatives such as this one that has been suggested have a considerable cost associated in terms of time, people and finance and can involve removing trains from service to enable work to be carried out. It also should be noted that trains on the TfW network can often be allocated to a wide range of different routes, and therefore any trains with the design suggested by the petition cannot be guaranteed to be always on the same route. An example of this is the TfW train embellished with the Heart of Wales line anniversary logo, which spends a significant amount of time running on the South Wales Valleys lines.

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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.

In order for TfW to fully consider this proposal, the following would be required to be provided.

- Robust consumer based insight or research that proves the public actually support such an investment in TfW time, effort and cost.
- Robust consumer based insight or research that identifies the potential uplift in customer revenue that might be achieved.
- An analysis of the customer disbenefits that might be generated as a result of removing trains on this route from service so as to implement the project.
- An assessment of how such an activity would directly support the Welsh language & culture aims of TfW.
- A proposal as to how such an initiative might be promoted to the public, by who, at what cost & effort and the outcomes achieved.
- A proposal as to how this project might be funded & the lifetime cost of the project.
- A business case to demonstrate the overall cost/benefit of this proposed new project.

TfW have an established contract with a company called Global Ltd who sell advertising space at its stations and the trains. Global Ltd own the rights for use of all train exteriors for commercial advertising sales. As a result the conditions and exclusions associated with this contract would also need to be considered if the proposal in the petition was to be implemented.

It would also be necessary to determine what existing TfW projects might need to be delayed or stopped in order to accommodate this new, unplanned, unbudgeted project.

Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Lee', is positioned above the typed name and title.

**Lee Waters AS/MS**  
Y Dirprwy Weinidog Newid Hinsawdd  
Deputy Minister for Climate Change

## P-06-1183 Implement a 20MPH speed limit 100 metres either side of the new pedestrian crossing in Glan Conwy

Y Pwyllgor Deisebau | 4 October 2021  
Petitions Committee | 4 Hydref 2021

Reference: SR21/0634-2

Petition Number: P-06-1183

**Petition title:** Implement a 20MPH speed limit 100 metres either side of the new pedestrian crossing in Glan Conwy

**Text of petition:** Thanks to the Minister for Transport, Glan Conwy now has a much needed pedestrian crossing and recent road improvements have increased visibility, however, many residents are concerned about the speed of vehicles which over a 2 week period were recorded by North and Mid Wales Trunk Road Agent (NMWTA) averaging 32.8 MPH. The crossing is used by school children and adults to reach a bus stop and local sporting facilities as well as part of a cycle route. There have been many media reports of near misses and vehicles failing to stop.

A particular worry is that children might believe they are safe and step or run out on to the crossing without looking. The busy summer tourist season will increase the peril as visitors will be unfamiliar with the road as well as possibly being distracted admiring local scenery.



In conclusion the petitioners wish to make the case that 30MPH is too fast for the prevailing road conditions and request that the Minister considers lowering the speed limit to 20MPH in proximity to the crossing.

Collision with a pedestrian at 30MPH has a 25% chance of a fatality and 2.5% at 20MPH or 10 times safer!

A 200 metre length at 20MPH would only add a few seconds to a traveller's journey time whilst dramatically improving safety and importantly help remove parents' anxieties.

## 1. Background

The Welsh Government is the highway authority and traffic authority responsible for the Welsh trunk road and motorway network. Local authorities are responsible for local roads. The A470 forms part of the Welsh trunk road network.

The Welsh Government works with two trunk road agents, the South Wales Trunk Road Agent (SWTRA) and the North and Mid Wales Trunk Road Agent (NMWTRA), to manage, maintain and improve the network.

The Welsh Government is responsible for setting speed limits on trunk roads in line with its current guidance. This was issued in 2009 and states that “20mph speed limits may be used on trunk roads in exceptional circumstances, generally over short lengths and for limited times of the day”.

In early 2021 works took place on a pedestrian crossing on a stretch of the A470 at Glan Conwy. The speed limit on this stretch of the A470 is currently 30mph, the petitioners are calling for it to be reduced to 20mph 100 metres either side of the crossing.

## 2. Welsh Government action

In a letter to the Chair dated 6 September, the Deputy Minister for Climate Change outlines that following a review of this section of the A470 NMWTRA has

undertaken work to highlight the approach to the crossing to drivers. He also highlights Welsh Government plans for 20mph speed limits.

In 2019 the Welsh Government set up a task and finish group to consider whether 20mph should become the default speed limit in residential areas. The group reported in July 2020. The Welsh Government accepted the group's recommendations, including that the default speed limit on restricted roads (those with a system of street lighting placed no more than 200 yards apart) should be reduced from 30mph to 20mph.

The first phase of introducing a default 20mph limit has begun through pilots in 8 communities across Wales to gather data before a proposed full rollout in 2023. In September 2021 the Deputy Minister announced continued funding for these pilots.

The Welsh Government also recently consulted on the proposals.

### 3. Welsh Parliament action

Prior to installation of the pedestrian crossing on this stretch of the A470, the issue was raised in a June 2018 written question from Janet Finch-Saunders MS.

In July 2020 the Senedd debated the introduction of default 20mph speed limits.

Every effort is made to ensure that the information contained in this briefing is correct at the time of publication. Readers should be aware that these briefings are not necessarily updated or otherwise amended to reflect subsequent changes.

Lee Waters AS/MS  
Y Dirprwy Weinidog Newid Hinsawdd  
Deputy Minister for Climate Change



Llywodraeth Cymru  
Welsh Government

Eich cyf/Your ref P-06-1183  
Ein cyf/Our ref LW/10935/21

Jack Sargeant MS  
Chair - Petitions committee

[petitions@senedd.wales](mailto:petitions@senedd.wales)

6 September 2021

Dear Jack,

Thank you for your letter of 3 August regarding Petition P-06-1183 you have received from Daniel Worsley asking for a 20mph speed limit to be introduced 200 metres either side of the new pedestrian crossing on the A470 in Glan Conwy.

The Welsh Government takes the safety of all road users very seriously and it routinely reviews the speed limits on the trunk road network, in line with the current [guidance](#) with the aim of identifying the need for improvements to safety including engineering measures or changes to speed limits. Speed limits are set based on a number of criteria including personal injury collisions and level of development adjacent to the road.

A review of the route was undertaken last year and although the site did not qualify for a Vehicle Activated sign (VAS), works have recently been completed by the North and Mid Wales Trunk Road Agent to highlight the approaching crossing in both directions.

The Welsh Government would encourage concerned residents to raise concerns with Go Safe, the Road Safety Partnership, who are responsible for speed limit enforcement. They can do so via the following webpage: <https://gosafe.org/contact-us/community-concern/>

The 20mph Task and Finish Group (TFG), chaired by Phil Jones completed their work and published their [report](#). The report sets out the case for change and associated evidence. We have accepted all of the TFG recommendations and our response highlighting how each of them will be progressed can be found [here](#), with a view for the 20mph default speed limit to come into force in April 2023.

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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.

Plans to reduce the national default speed limit in Wales from 30mph to 20mph on residential roads and busy pedestrian streets will form part of the Welsh Government's legislative priorities for this year. The first phase of this change is being rolled out in eight communities across Wales this year in order to gather data and develop a best practice approach before the proposed full rollout in 2023. Further details can be found [here](#).

The first phase of introducing the 20mph default speed limit has started in 8 communities across Wales in order to gather data and develop a best practice approach before the proposed full rollout in 2023. The data gathered will be used to support and inform future decisions. These communities are:

- St Dogmaels, Pembrokeshire
- Llanelli North, Carmarthenshire
- St Brides Major, Vale of Glamorgan
- Central north, Cardiff
- Cilfrew Village, Neath Port Talbot
- Abergavenny, Monmouthshire
- Severnside, Monmouthshire
- Buckley, Flintshire

As part of this approach the Welsh Government has launched a consultation for people to have their say on the change before the necessary legislation is laid. The consultation will run for 12 weeks and will come to an end on 30 September. Full details about the consultation can be found [here](#).

Yours sincerely,



**Lee Waters AS/MS**

Y Dirprwy Weinidog Newid Hinsawdd  
Deputy Minister for Climate Change

**P-05-1183 Implement a 20MPH speed limit 100 metres either side of the new pedestrian crossing in Glan Conwy, Correspondence – Petitioner to Committee, 23.09.21**

Dear Committee Members,

We are pleased to hear the Deputy Minister is commencing the roll out of 20MPH limits in residential areas across Wales in 2023.

Whilst this is a step in the right direction it is long time in the future and in the meantime our residents are at risk using the pedestrian crossing on the A470. We are getting reports of near misses daily and it is inevitable that there will a serious accident sooner rather than later. Whilst the provisions in place look to be adequate they are just not working with too many drivers approaching at high speed and many seemingly oblivious to the crossing not noticing pedestrians crossing.

Vehicle Activated Signage would certainly help in making drivers aware they were approaching a crossing. The review has definitely drawn the wrong conclusions whereas a day spent watching the crossing and its near misses would draw the opposite conclusion. 20MPH limit would be less effective without VAS as the drivers who do not notice the crossing probably wouldn't see the speed limit signs either.

We need the Government's help URGENTLY! To quote Churchill, "Action this day."

Best Regards,

## Briefing: Start a Welsh student Erasmus Scheme for students who study in Wales with European Union countries

Y Pwyllgor Deisebau | 04 Hydref 2021  
Petitions Committee | 04 October 2021

Reference: SR210831

Petition Number: P-06-1188

**Petition title:** Start a Welsh student Erasmus Scheme for students who study in Wales with European Union countries

**Text of petition:**

When we were members of the European Union we were on the Erasmus scheme.

Now we are out we would like to start an Welsh student version of the Erasmus scheme.



## 1. Summary

Welsh Government cannot enter into international agreements and so cannot re-join the ERASMUS+ programme.

Welsh Government has instead launched its own 5 year, £65m International Learning Exchange programme that shares a number of the characteristics of the 2014 ERASMUS+ programme.

The first mobilities are intended to begin from 2022/23. The scheme will operate in Wales in parallel with the UK Government's own Turing mobility scheme.

## 2. Background

The UK no longer participates in the ERASMUS+ EU staff and student mobility scheme. Welsh Government cannot enter into international agreements, meaning it is not possible for Wales to re-join the scheme.

In its place, the UK Government has launched the Turing Scheme with projects operating from 01 Sep 2021. The Turing scheme is open to all UK nations but has significant differences from the ERASMUS+ scheme.

- Whilst ERASMUS+ provided for inward and outward mobility (i.e. institutions could send persons abroad, and also fund persons to come to the UK) the Turing Scheme is an outward mobility only scheme. This means it is not a reciprocal scheme.
- The ERASMUS+ scheme facilitated mobility of staff and students. The Turing Scheme funds only students and learners.
- Whilst ERASMUS+ supported mobilities to EU member states and specific third-party countries, the Turing Scheme is a global scheme meaning persons can potentially mobilise anywhere.
- The Turing Scheme allows for shorter periods of mobility (4 weeks) than the ERASMUS+ scheme did. Shorter periods of mobility are intended to be more attractive to students from under-represented and deprived backgrounds.
- Both schemes provide participants with fixed rate grants for living costs and travel, however the Turing Scheme targets additional living cost

funding at students from 'disadvantaged' backgrounds and provides an additional travel grant.

- 'Sending' institutions under the Turing Scheme are expected to make reciprocal agreements with the 'receiving' institutions regarding fees – students should not have to pay additional fees.
- The range of projects funded by the Turing Scheme is narrower than ERASMUS+. The Turing Scheme funds mobilities only, not wider partnership and capacity building projects.

### 3. Welsh Government action – launching the 'ILE'

The previous Welsh Government set out its disappointment that the UK would not continue to participate in the ERASMUS+ scheme post EU exit.

On 21 March 2021 Welsh Government announced its own International Learner Exchange (ILE) Scheme. Institutions will be able to participate in both the Turing Scheme and the ILE. The first mobilities under the ILE Scheme are intended to begin in academic year 2022/23, with £65m of funding committed until 2026/27. Welsh Government intends that 15,000 participants will be 'sent' overseas, and 10,000 will be 'received' from overseas.

Full details on the operation of the Scheme are not yet available, however Welsh Government has explained that the Scheme is intended to share some characteristics of the ERASMUS+ Scheme that are absent from the Turing Scheme, including:

- Funding outward *and* inward mobility (although it is proposed that there will in practice be a limit placed on inward mobility funding).
- Funding students *and* staff
- Potentially supporting a wider range of mobility types beyond the learning and work-placements available under the Turing Scheme.
- Supporting youth-work settings.

#### 3.1. Further details of the ILE

Welsh Government have issued a Written Statement and an update in July 2021 regarding the development of the scheme.

Welsh Government has awarded funding to Cardiff University to establish, develop and operate the programme, which will be done via a wholly owned subsidiary company. The University will serve as the 'Programme Executive' and has established an Advisory Board.

It is intended that the scheme will allow applications from the following sectors:

- Higher Education
- Vocational Education and Training, including Adult Education
- Schools
- Youth Work

Welsh Government explains in its written statement that it intends for the programme to achieve the following (directly quoted):

- 'Enable reciprocal exchanges (whether based on physical mobility or co-operation remotely) between educational and training institutions as well as youth work settings in Wales and internationally;
- Support, as far as possible, the entire range of activities which have been available to learners in Wales under the EU's Erasmus+ programme 2014 - 2020;
- Build on the success of Global Wales in developing links with priority countries across the world, including the US, Vietnam and India, and supporting an ambitious range of scholarships that will attract the best and brightest students from across the world to study in Wales;
- Ensure that opportunities are available to the widest range of learners and young people, including underrepresented groups, those with additional learning needs and protected characteristics;
- Include additional flexibilities, notably allowing for shorter exchanges involving higher education;
- Support capacity building necessary to facilitate a wide range of participation in the Programme;
- Potentially, support exploratory exchanges to broker international research partnerships,;
- Align closely with our International Strategy'.

Start a Welsh student Erasmus Scheme for students who study in Wales with European Union countries

Every effort is made to ensure that the information contained in this briefing is correct at the time of publication. Readers should be aware that these briefings are not necessarily updated or otherwise amended to reflect subsequent changes.

**Jeremy Miles AS/MS**  
Gweinidog y Gymraeg ac Addysg  
Minister for Education and Welsh Language



Llywodraeth Cymru  
Welsh Government

Eich cyf/Your ref P-06-1188  
Ein cyf/Our ref JMEWL/10999/21

Jack Sargeant MS  
Chair - Petitions committee  
Senedd Cymru  
Cardiff Bay  
Cardiff  
CF99 1SN  
petitions@senedd.wales

13 September 2021

Dear Jack,

Thank you for your letter of 31 August regarding the petition you have received from Thomas Aled Canter, who would like Wales to start a Welsh student version of the Erasmus scheme.

The experiences and opportunities the Erasmus+ programme provided in Wales were highly valued, as were the important partnerships it created with organisations across Europe. That is why we announced the International Learning Exchange Programme in March this year.

This investment of up to £65m is a down payment on our young people's futures, and will ensure that, wherever possible, the opportunities and benefits our learners and staff have enjoyed from Erasmus+ will continue to be available to them in future. Funding has initially been provided for four full academic years of activity, starting in 2022/23, and will support outward and inward mobility for students, learners and staff across the education sector.

Yours sincerely,

**Jeremy Miles AS/MS**  
Gweinidog y Gymraeg ac Addysg  
Minister for Education and Welsh Language

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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.

## Briefing: Provide tuition grants to support medical students studying medicine as a second degree

Y Pwyllgor Deisebau | 04 Hydref 2021  
Petitions Committee | 04 October 2021

Reference: SR210837

Petition Number: P-06-1189

Petition title: Provide tuition grants to support medical students studying medicine as a second degree

Text of petition:

Students studying undergraduate medicine courses having previously studied the first degree are having to pay £9,250 upfront for tuition, totalling £37,000 by the start of their fourth year of studies.

Many students are having to work part-time jobs during their intense studies and have to try to find external support. Provide these medical students with tuition fee grants to avoid students being unable to focus on, and being unable to fund their studies.



# 1. Background

Those who wish to study an undergraduate medical doctor course are able to access the usual package of student tuition and living costs support from Student Finance Wales for the first four years of their course. During the fifth and subsequent years they apply to the NHS for tuition and living cost support and an income assessed healthcare bursary, and to Student Finance Wales for the reduced rate maintenance loan.

## 1.1. First Degree rule

In most cases, if a student already has a first degree from a UK institution, they are not eligible for further student financial support for either their fees or their living costs to study for a second degree.

Student Finance Wales practitioner guidance explains that:

Students who hold a first degree cannot access further student support, unless they are topping up a an Ordinary degree or a Foundation Degree to an honours degree..

## 1.2. Exception to the First Degree rule

The regulations allow for an exception if the second undergraduate degree is a medical doctor degree, but this exception **applies to living cost support only**. In these cases, students are **not** eligible for further tuition fee support.

This means, as the petitioner points out, that such students will have to self-fund their full tuition fees (£9,000 to £9,250) for the first four years of the course (they may become eligible for NHS support from the 5<sup>th</sup> year). This situation is the same in Wales, England, Northern Ireland and Scotland.

## 1.3. Numbers impacted

Approximately 360 Wales domiciled students enrolled onto a medicine undergraduate degree in 2019/20. It is not known how many of these were studying medicine as a second degree and therefore it is not possible to assess the financial impact of introducing this policy.

## 1.4. Tuition fee grants

The petition calls for tuition fee grants to be provided in the relevant cases. Prior to 2018, Welsh Government provided tuition fee grants to new undergraduate students as part of its normal student financial package. These were funded from the Welsh Government budget. The ~~same First Degree Rule~~ applied in relation to tuition fee grants.

Every effort is made to ensure that the information contained in this briefing is correct at the time of publication. Readers should be aware that these briefings are not necessarily updated or otherwise amended to reflect subsequent changes.

**Jeremy Miles AS/MS**  
**Gweinidog y Gymraeg ac Addysg**  
**Minister for Education and Welsh Language**



Llywodraeth Cymru  
Welsh Government

Eich cyf/Your ref P-06-1189  
Ein cyf/Our ref JMEWL/11000/21

Jack Sargeant MS  
Chair - Petitions committee  
Senedd Cymru  
Cardiff Bay  
Cardiff  
CF99 1SN

14 September 2021

Dear Jack,

Thank you for your letter of 31 August regarding the petition (P-06-1189) to provide tuition grants to support medical students studying medicine as a second degree.

The Welsh Government is committed to investing in the training of our NHS workforce to attract the very best health professionals in Wales. More widely, we moved from a position of providing tuition fee grants to tuition fee loans in direct response to the Diamond Review recommendations on tuition fee support. Key to this decision was to ensure student support remained stable and sustainable. Resources are finite and difficult decisions are taken by the Welsh Ministers to maintain the affordability of student support across Wales, balanced with the objective to allow as many students as possible to access the support for the first time. Care is taken to ensure that the offer of support is fair as possible.

We fund the education and training for a range of Health Education Courses through our NHS Wales Bursary Scheme. The Bursary Scheme provides financial support to eligible students who are studying Health Education Courses and to incentivise them, following qualification, to work within the health care sector in Wales. The student's tuition fees are paid by the Bursary and they can apply for assistance towards their living costs (a non-means-tested £1,000 grant and a means-tested Bursary up to £2,643 per year), including additional support if they have dependents, and Disabled Students' Allowances (DSAs). The student can also apply for a reduced rate maintenance loan of up to £4,675 from Student Finance Wales (SFW).

The NHS Wales Bursary Scheme is only made available to students who have been offered places on certain courses. For a second degree, tuition fees (a maximum of £9,000 charged in Wales) would need to be self-funded by the student for the first four years. In year five students will be eligible for support from the Bursary Scheme for living costs and tuition fee support. This support is the same as that received in year five by students doing medicine as a first degree depending on when students start their course.

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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.

With regard to statutory student support, our generous package of support is limited to eligible students undertaking a first undergraduate degree in accordance with Education (Student Support) (Wales) 2018 Regulations, as amended. Eligible students undertaking a five year degree in medicine in Wales, as a first degree, may be eligible under the regulations to apply for support from SFW on the same terms as other full-time students for the first four years of their course (subject to previous study). For the fifth and subsequent years of their course the student will apply to the NHS Wales Bursary for tuition fee support and help with living costs; they can also apply for a reduced rate maintenance loan from SFW.

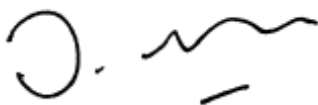
For years one to four of a first degree, eligible students can apply to SFW for a tuition fee loan up to £9,000 per year and a mixture of means-tested maintenance grant and loan support up to £10,350 per year; the maintenance amount is also subject to where the student is living whilst studying in Wales. They can also access means-tested grants for dependants and non-means tested DSAs. For most, the level of maintenance support provided is equivalent to the National Living Wage.

However, limited support is provided under the regulations to students who have already obtained an honours degree in the UK and wish to pursue a five year degree in medicine as a second degree. The support available from SFW would be a full rate maintenance loan for years one to four (up to £9,350 per year) and a reduced maintenance loan for year five (up to £4,675); the amount awarded is also subject to where the student is living whilst studying in Wales. No fee support is available from SFW for all years of the course, however, the student would be able to apply to the NHS Wales Bursary Scheme for fee support in year five.

I have set out in the Annex below the tuition fee support arrangements for a second degree in medicine. There are no plans to amend the funding arrangements in our student support regulations for students wishing to undertake a second undergraduate degree / postgraduate degree, or equivalent qualification. However, to further support students in this area, the Minister for Health and Social Services has recently announced an increase of funded student places for the C21 North Wales programme to 25 places in September 2021 and 40 places in September 2022 as well as an uplift of Swansea University's graduate-entry medicine intake to an extra 25 students in 2021.

I appreciate the comments raised by the petitioner and I trust the above provides clarity on the support arrangements for eligible medical students.

Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, consisting of a large 'J' followed by a series of loops and a horizontal line at the end.

**Jeremy Miles AS/MS**

Gweinidog y Gymraeg ac Addysg  
Minister for Education and Welsh Language

## Annex

4 year accelerated graduate entry course in Medicine as a second degree (fees charged up to £9,00 in Wales)		
Year of Study	NHS fees support	SFW support*
1	No fee support – student must self-fund £3,465	Tuition Fee Loan available up to £5,535
2 to 4	Yes – up to £3,465 in Bursary support per year	As above per year
<p>*In year 1 students can apply for a full rate maintenance loan from SFW. Years 2 to 4, as these students can apply for income assessed healthcare bursaries from NHS Wales, they may be eligible for a reduced rate maintenance loan from SFW.</p>		

5 year undergraduate course in Medicine taken as a second degree in Wales		
Year of Study	NHS fees support	SFW support*
1 to 4	No fee support	No fee support
5	Yes – provided by the NHS Bursary Scheme	As above
<p>* For years 1 to 4 the student can apply for the full rate maintenance loan from SFW. In year 5 this will be the reduced rate maintenance loan from SFW. Students can also apply for help with living costs from the NHS Wales Bursary in year 5.</p>		

**P-05-1189 Darparu grantiau ffioedd dysgu i gefnogi myfyrwyr meddygaeth sy'n astudio meddygaeth fel ail radd, Gohebiaeth – Deisebydd at y Pwyllgor, 24.09.21**

Annywl Pwyllgor Deisebau,

Mae'r ddogfen yn crynhoi y sefyllfa bresennol yn dda iawn ac yn llawn. Er hyn, nid yw'r ddogfen yn ystyried budd cynnig benthyciad neu grant ffioedd dysgu ar gyfer blynyddoedd 1-4 meddygaeth fel ail radd. Yn yr ystr hyn, mae'r ddogfen yn arwynebol.

Mae gan Gymru ddifyg doctoriaid. Mae gan Gymru ddifyg graddedigion meddygaeth sy'n dod yn ol i Gymru ar ol astudio tu allan i Gymru. O ganlyniad, mae doctoriaid yn y GIG dan fwy o straen nag y dylent fod ac yn aml mae doctoriad yn gorffen bob dydd yn y gwaith yn hwyr bob dydd oherwydd diffyg doctoriaid. Mae hyn wedi cyfrannu at amseroedd aros uwch ar gyfer llawdriniaethau dewisol ac amseroedd aros hir at gyfer gweld meddyg teulu. Mae angen fwy o gefnogaeth i ddoctoriaid y dyfodol yng Nghymru.

Mae gradd 2:1 neu well yn ofynnol ar gyfer pob cwrs meddygeth fel ail radd ac mae'r nifer fawr o ddoctoriaid presennol yng Nghymru yn dod i'r gweithle drwy'r llwybr yma. Mae'r llwybr hon yn llwybr a gydnabyddir

Mae Plaid Llafur Cymru yngyd a pheidiau eraill yn y Senedd yn credu yn gryf mewn cydraddoldeb cyfleoedd ("equality of opportunity"). Heb gynnig cefnogaeth dros y 4 neu 5 mlynedd o astudiaeth meddygaeth i fyfyrwyr ail-radd, nid oes cydraddoldeb cyfleoedd i ddoctoriaid y dyfodol. Mae nifer o fyfyrwyr yn gweithio er mwyn cefnogi eu hunain ac yn ei chael yn anodd iawn i dalu'r costau dysgu. Mae eraill yn gorfod gadael y cwrs oherwydd diffyg arian ac llawer fawr yn methu fforddio ystyried yr opsiwn o feddygaeth fel ail-radd o gwbl. Mae hyd y cwrs hefyd yn ei wneud yn anodd i myfyrwyr fforddio'r gost a chasglu digon o arian i dalu amdano. Mae'r straen yma ar ben y straen uwch (gan gynnwys y straen ar iechyd meddwl) sydd yn gwynebu myfyrwyr meddygaeth ar gwrs anodd a phrysur tu hwnt. Mae'n anheg fod myfyrwyr meddygaeth yn cael eu cosbi gan fod ganddynt radd yn barod.

Diolch yn fawr am eich ystyriaeth gofalus,

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

Document is Restricted

# P-06-1190 Ban the use of peat in horticulture and all growing media by 2023

Y Pwyllgor Deisebau | 4 Hydref 2020  
Petitions Committee | 4 October 2020

Reference: SR21/0837-1

Petition Number: P-06-1190

Petition title: Ban the use of peat in horticulture and all growing media by 2023

**Text of petition:** Peat bogs and moors are extremely important in the fight against the climate emergency; sequestering carbon better than many natural landscapes, reducing flooding and providing biodiversity. We need to ban the use of peat in horticulture and all growing media by 2023, including imports.

Peat currently makes up 40% of growing media used by the public, and over 60% of that used in the professional sector. There are other materials such as coir, composted wood and leaf mould which can be used. Peatlands should not be mined but protected and restored.

The Senedd should protect and restore all Welsh peat bogs and moors and crucially ensure that all growing media sold and used in Wales is peat free.

- 3 million cubic metres of peat sold for horticultural use annually in UK,  $\frac{1}{3}$  from UK peatlands (IUCN <http://bit.ly/peat-extraction-horticulture>)
- 20 million tonnes carbon dioxide lost to atmosphere annually from UK's damaged peatlands (IUCN <http://bit.ly/peat-climate>)



- Peatland destruction releasing vast amounts of CO<sub>2</sub> (New Scientist <http://bit.ly/peatland-destruction>)
- Peatlands support many important species & unique ecosystems (IUCN <http://bit.ly/peat-species>)

## 1. Background

Soil is an important carbon store. The vast majority of carbon in the terrestrial environment is stored in soils rather than vegetation. Welsh soils are estimated to contain 410 million tonnes of carbon. Peaty soils have a high carbon and organic matter content. Deep peat soils make up over 4% of Welsh land area, and shallow peaty soils cover an additional 17.3%.

The 2020 State of Natural Resources Report states that the majority of the peat resource in Wales is in poor condition, and that:

...maintaining the carbon content of these soils is a key priority in limiting overall greenhouse gas emissions in Wales as well as managing water resources in the face of inevitable climate change.

The Welsh Government's Prosperity for All: A Low Carbon Wales states that:

..peatland is currently not well represented in our carbon budgets or within the current emission pathways advised by the UKCCC

Environmental groups say that the rate of restoration is too slow, and have been campaigning for a ban on the sale of peat in compost. The Horticultural Trades Association say that an immediate ban is not realistic as “access to the amount and quality of alternative materials needed is not yet in place”, and that:

Success is dependent upon government recognising the need to support the industry to bring to market new and novel alternative materials

The UK Government previously set a voluntary target for the horticulture sector to stop selling peat compost to gardeners by 2020, however this approach has been unsuccessful.

A [similar petition](#) has been considered by the UK Parliament and is now closed. In response the UK Government highlighted the [England Peat Action Plan](#) which commits to “a full consultation on phasing out the use of peat in horticulture in 2021”. The action plan also recognises “that the voluntary approach has not delivered”.

In response to this petition, the Minister for Rural Affairs and North Wales, and Trefnydd, Lesley Griffiths MS (the Minister) says that the Welsh Government is “working with the UK Government with a view to launching a consultation on a sales ban for peat and peat containing products”, and that:

Whilst there is no current peat extraction in Wales, preventing sales of peat compost is in line with our Well-being of Future Generations Act commitment to be globally responsible

## The UK Internal Market Act 2020

The UK [Internal Market Act 2020](#) established new rules for the regulation of goods across the UK. The Act established the principles of mutual recognition and non-discrimination, and enshrined them in UK law as Market Access Principles.

Under the mutual recognition principle, if a good complies with the rules relating to its sale in the part of the UK in which it was produced or imported to, then it can be sold in any other part of the UK without having to meet the standards in those other parts, even if they are different.

Under the non-discrimination principle, any rules regulating how goods must be sold in one part of the UK which discriminate directly or indirectly against providers from other parts of the UK do not generally apply.

Banning the sale of growing media containing peat may come within the scope of the Market Access Principles in the Internal Market Act 2020. This means that the effect and enforceability of the petition’s proposal may be impacted in practice.

## 2. Welsh Government action

The [UK Peatland Strategy \(IUCN\)](#) calls upon the four UK governments to develop and coordinate country-level action plans and programmes to deliver a series of objectives and outcomes.

In November 2020 the Welsh Government launched its National Peatland Action Programme 2020-2025 - “Wales’ first national action programme for peatland restoration”. It is being delivered by Natural Resources Wales (NRW), and targets peatland bodies most in need of restoration with the aim of delivering 600-800 hectares of restoration per year.

In response to this petition, the Minister highlights that the programme “is just the starting point when meeting our ambition”, and has “a capital budget of £1m/yr and a dedicated delivery team in NRW”.

Welsh Government peatland restoration has previously been delivered through a number of different mechanisms, including the Sustainable Management Scheme (SMS), Section 106 agreements and the EU LIFE scheme.

Prosperity for All: A Low Carbon Wales outlines action the Welsh Government aims to take to ensure all Welsh peatlands are brought into sustainable management (Policy 66).

### 3. Welsh Parliament action

On 16 June 2021 Joyce Watson MS asked the Deputy Minister for Climate Change, Lee Waters MS (the Deputy Minister) “what steps the Welsh Government are taking to encourage Welsh gardeners and horticulturalists to go peat-free”. In response the Deputy Minister highlighted the five-year National Peatland Action Programme, and said that “there will be a full review” of the programme.

In response to this petition, the Minister states that the review will take place within 18 months of the end of the five year programme, which is expected to be delivered to Welsh Government “by the end of period 3 of the 2024/25 financial year”.

Every effort is made to ensure that the information contained in this briefing is correct at the time of publication. Readers should be aware that these briefings are not necessarily updated or otherwise amended to reflect subsequent changes.



Eich cyf/Your ref P-06-1190  
Ein cyf/Our ref LG/10260/21

Jack Sargeant MS  
Chair - Petitions committee  
Senedd Cymru  
Cardiff  
CF99 1SN

21<sup>st</sup> September 2021

Dear Jack,

Thank you for your letter of 31 August to Julie James MS, Minister for Climate Change, regarding Petition P-06-1190 Ban the use of peat in horticulture and all growing media by 2023. Your letter has been forwarded to me for a response as responsibility for horticulture falls within my portfolio.

Welsh Government are working with the UK Government with a view to launching a consultation on a sales ban for peat and peat containing products. Whilst there is no current peat extraction in Wales, preventing sales of peat compost is in line with our Well-being of Future Generations Act commitment to be globally responsible.

I launched Wales' first national peatland action programme (NPAP) in November of last year. The NPAP outlines a plan of action to be taken over five years (2020-2025) under six priority themes:

1. Peatland erosion
2. Peatland drainage
3. Sustainable management of blanket peats
4. Sustainable management of lowland peats
5. The restoration of afforested peatlands
6. The gradual restoration of our highest carbon emitting peatlands

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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.

These actions are well under way, with restoration activity undertaken on over 650ha in the first year of delivery. It is important to acknowledge the initial 5 year Programme is just the starting point when meeting our ambition. It will take considerable commitment over many years by Government, Natural Resources Wales and partners to achieve our ambition.

The NPAP focuses on areas most in need of restoration or management activity across the whole of Wales as well as safeguarding areas in good and recovering condition. The aim is to progressively restore an estimated 600-800 ha per annum with a capital budget of £1m/yr and a dedicated delivery team in NRW. A cross cutting theme of the NPAP is to build up capacity and co-ordinate a national monitoring and recording system to capture information on condition and restoration activity.

Within 18 months of the end of the 5 year Programme, NRW will undertake a review against the Priority Themes and report on the delivery and outcomes achieved with partners. It will consider the experiences, learning and evidence gathered throughout its delivery and make recommendations to whether a second National Peatland Action Programme should be commissioned and if so in what form, scale and rate. It is expected, this will be delivered to Welsh Government by the end of period 3 of the 2024/25 financial year.

Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Lesley Griffiths". The signature is written in a cursive style with a large, sweeping flourish at the end.

**Lesley Griffiths AS/MS**  
**Y Gweinidog Materion Gwledig a Gogledd Cymru, a'r Trefnydd**  
**Minister for Rural Affairs and North Wales, and Trefnydd**

**P-05-1190 Ban the use of peat in horticulture and all growing media by 2023,  
Correspondence – Petitioner to Committee, 28.09.21**

The Minister's letter focusses on the National Peatland Action Programme, which is a fantastic initiative. But we do have to act \*internationally\*, as she says, in line with the global responsibility of the Future Generations Act.

Unless we ban the use of all peat in horticulture, we are simply exporting the problem to another country and another threatened ecosystem and carbon sink.

Also, I question whether we need yet another consultation when all the evidence shows that peatlands are valuable ecosystems in their own right and also sequester vast amounts of carbon.

Please do let me know if you would like me to provide this evidence to the Committee.

## Ensure that centre assessment grades contribute towards final GCSE and A Level grades

Y Pwyllgor Deisebau | 4 Hydref 2021  
Petitions Committee | 4 October 2021

Reference: RS21/0837-4

Petition Number: P-06-1192

**Petition title:** Ensure that centre assessment grades contribute towards final GCSE and A Level grades.

**Text of petition:** We must support year 10 and year 12 students that have been negatively affected by the latest announcement on the grading measures set by Qualifications Wales.

Being a year 12 student who has put their blood, sweat and tears into continuing their study in this difficult period, I understand how devastating the announcement has been outlining that the hard work we have put in and will continue until the end of the year will NOT be counted towards our final GCSE/A-level grade. DO BETTER!!!



# 1. Relevant decisions regarding awarding of qualifications in 2021 and 2022

This petition refers to two aspects of a decision taken by the then Minister for Education, Kirsty Williams, in January 2021 and confirmed in her Direction to the regulator, Qualifications Wales, in February 2021, which affect arrangements for awarding qualifications in 2022. The new Minister for Education and Welsh Language, Jeremy Miles, explains the rationale in his letter to the Committee. The two aspects are as follows:

- 2021/22 Year 11 pupils who were due to take some individual GCSE units at the end of Year 10 in summer 2021 (but not complete the whole GCSE course) were not able to have these assessed. Therefore, they are unable to use the assessment of any units in 2021 towards their award of a GCSE in summer 2022, as would normally have been the case without the cancellation of exams due to the pandemic. However, pupils who completed their whole GCSE course by the end of Year 10 in summer 2021 were awarded GCSEs according to their centre determined grade.
- 2021/22 Year 13 pupils will not be able to use the centre determined AS level grade they received in Year 12 in summer 2021 towards their award of an A Level grade in summer 2022. However, they still have an AS level according to their centre determined grade.

Qualifications Wales, has answered the following two 'Frequently Asked Questions' on its website:

## **What will happen if I'm a Year 10 learner?**

If you have completed the course and were going to be entered for the whole GCSE course this year, then you can be awarded a grade determined by your school. However, it will not be possible to take just some units of a GCSE this year, and we will need to consider what the assessments arrangements will be for those subjects next year.

## **Will my AS grade contribute to my A level in summer 2022?**

We've considered whether there is any fair way of allowing AS results from this summer to contribute towards A levels in summer 2022, but unfortunately there isn't. Learners in Year 12 will be awarded an AS grade that teachers and lecturers will determine and will provide for progression into the A level course of study, and support UCAS

applications. A levels are usually awarded by putting marks achieved in all units together (including AS units). There isn't a fair way to use grades from the summer 2021 AS units.

## 2. Further background information

Continued disruption to pupils' attendance in school during 2020/21 due to the pandemic meant that, as in summer 2020, there were no exams in summer 2021.

The Welsh Government [announced in January 2021](#) that centres (schools and colleges) would determine pupils' grades. The then [Minister directed the regulator, Qualifications Wales](#), to work with stakeholders including the awarding body, WJEC, to operate a [Centre Determined Grade \(CDG\) model](#). The Minister's Direction stated that Year 12 students' AS level grades in 2021 would not contribute to A levels awarded in 2022 and there would be no assessment of individual GCSE units taken by Year 10 in 2021 that could be used towards their GCSE grade in 2022.

The CDG model is similar to, although not the same as, the [Centre Assessment Grade \(CAG\) system used in 2020](#). Centres' judgements in 2020 were focused on pupils' potential i.e. what they would have achieved had they sat the examinations. In 2021, centres have used a range of evidence, including non-exam assessments, mock exams and classwork, to judge a pupil's 'demonstrated attainment' and award them an appropriate grade.

Assuming there is no further substantial disruption, [exams are set to return in 2022](#), with some changes to account for the disruption so far. WJEC have recently published [details of these adaptations](#) to A/AS levels and GCSEs in 2022.

The decision that AS grades awarded in 2021 will not contribute to A Levels awarded in 2022 is the same as in the previous year. AS grades awarded in 2020 did not contribute to A Levels awarded in 2021. As the Minister's letter explains, this is because the AS awarding process in 2021 is different to the anticipated A Level awarding process in 2022 (assuming exams are possible) and the decision that the two should not be combined.

Senedd Research's [article of September 2021](#) gives further information on the awarding of qualifications during the pandemic.

Every effort is made to ensure that the information contained in this briefing is correct at the time of publication. Readers should be aware that these briefings are not necessarily updated or otherwise amended to reflect subsequent changes.

**Jeremy Miles AS/MS**  
**Gweinidog y Gymraeg ac Addysg**  
**Minister for Education and Welsh Language**



Llywodraeth Cymru  
Welsh Government

Eich cyf/Your ref P-06-1192  
Ein cyf/Our ref JMEWL/11026/21

Jack Sargeant MS  
Chair - Petitions committee  
Senedd Cymru  
Cardiff Bay  
Cardiff  
CF99 1SN

20 September 2021

Dear Jack,

Thank you for your letter of 2 September drawing my attention to a petition submitted to the Petitions Committee which emphasises the need to support year 10 and year 12 learners who may have concerns with the 2022 qualification arrangements.

I recognise that learners, their families and practitioners are keen to know the detail of the arrangements that will be put in place for those learners taking qualifications in 2022.

To recap and provide a little more context to the concerns of the petitioner, when the decision was made to cancel examinations for the 2021 summer exam series in February 2021, due to the ongoing situation with regard to the pandemic, it was agreed that learners in Year 12 would be awarded an AS grade that was determined by their centre. This was to recognise the hard work and learning during the academic year, to support progression onto the A level course and to support UCAS applications.

However, it was confirmed at the same time that the centre determined AS grades would not contribute to the final A-level award in 2022. The use of AS levels awarded via the adapted arrangements was considered in detail by the [Design and Delivery Advisory Group](#). As A-levels are usually awarded by putting 'marks' from different units together (including AS units) it was decided that there was not a fair or equitable way to combine a 'grade' based approach from centre-determined grades, with a 'mark' based approach in 2022 with

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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.

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the anticipated return to exams. This is the same approach that was taken for learners completing AS levels in 2020 via centre assessment grades.

In March, Qualifications Wales confirmed that it was planning to run exams for 2022 and that adaptations will be made to subject specifications to reduce the content assessed such as the reduction of non-examination assessment, removal of units of assessment and optionality, to reflect the disruption there has been for learners.

To inform these adaptations the WJEC undertook detailed engagement with practitioners on the proposals, using the adaptations made for 2021 as a starting point, and held consultation exercises with the education profession and with learners, parents and carers. This generated positive engagement with over 1,200 responses from teachers, lecturers, senior school and college leaders and over 900 responses to the learner, parent and carer focussed survey. The WJEC published the outcomes of the Learner Survey on 3 September [Report](#).

To support planning for the autumn term, education professionals were notified of the finalised adaptations before the end of the summer term. It is expected that the finalised adaptations will be made publically available on the WJEC website shortly. I would therefore encourage learners to engage with their centres to ensure they are aware what these adaptations mean for their chosen subjects and also visit the [WJEC](#) web pages which will continue to publish the latest details, advice and guidance.

Alongside this, drawing on our experience from 2021, Qualifications Wales is developing contingency plans for alternative assessment arrangements in case of further disruption – this will be informed by learning and reflections from the centre determined grade process, as well as preparations being made by other regulators, to ensure learners in Wales are not disadvantaged. I recognise the importance for schools and colleges, as well as learners, to have an understanding of the expectations around qualifications and associated contingency arrangements as soon as possible and my officials are working closely with Qualifications Wales to enable this.

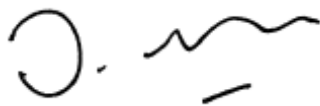
I also recognise the importance of ensuring appropriate support is in place for those learners who may feel anxious at the prospect of taking exams for the first time. During the last academic year we sought to prioritise learner well-being and progression, to ensure learners had the knowledge, skills and confidence to move to their next steps in education, employment or training – this commitment will continue in 2022.

To support teaching and learning we have worked alongside WJEC to develop a range of [resources](#) for different qualifications including knowledge organisers and exam walk-throughs. Further resources are now being developed to support other qualifications. We have also published a collection of resources and guidance to support the provision of blended learning and made resources available for learners and parents to support continuity of learning and progression. <https://hwb.gov.wales/blended-learning>. Alongside this we have put in place a range of support for learners in respect of mental health and wellbeing including the development of a Young Person's Mental Health Toolkit which is available via [Hwb](#).

You will also be aware that in June, I announced a further £150 million investment for 2021/22 through the [Renew and Reform plan](#) for education. £6.25 million of this is to support learner wellbeing and progression in schools, to establish resilience for future COVID-19 outbreaks and longer-term planning and £24 million to continue support and mentoring for learners through the [Recruit, Recover and Raise Standards](#) programme including the specific support that learners in qualification years will need.

I hope this information will be helpful for the Petitions Committee and I would like to thank you for drawing this petition to my attention.

Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, consisting of a circular initial followed by a series of connected, wavy lines.

**Jeremy Miles AS/MS**

Gweinidog y Gymraeg ac Addysg

Minister for Education and Welsh Language

# P-06-1196 The inauguration of an Honorary National System of Awards; The Cymru Knighthood Award

Y Pwyllgor Deisebau | 4 Hydref 2021  
Petitions Committee | 4 October 2021

Reference: SR21-0837-8

Petition Number: P-06-1196

Petition title: The inauguration of an Honorary National System of Awards; The Cymru Knighthood Award

Text of petition:

We the Welsh public dearly wish to bring Dignity to our Nation's Achievers  
It is a sheer tragedy that so many of our Nations' achievers lie buried, forgotten and uncelebrated in graves around the World... throughout our proud and long history

Long it has been my wish to honour these beautiful souls, here in Cymru who have passed into history and who's hearts must have been broken knowing that they did not get their true recognition in..... "The Land of Our Mothers & Fathers"



# 1. The UK honours system

## 1.1. Background

Honours are granted by the monarch. Most honours given today are part of the Order of the British Empire. This was founded by King George V in 1917 to reward non-combat service in the First World War.

Schedule 7A to the Government of Wales Act 2006 makes the Crown a reserved matter. This includes the UK honours system.

## 1.2. Selection

Anybody can nominate someone to receive an honour. The UK Government publishes guidance on what honours can be awarded for.

Ten independent subject committees consider nominations for honours and advise the Prime Minister. The Prime Minister submits a lists of recommendations for honours to the Queen. The Defence Secretary and Foreign Secretary also submit lists.

Honours lists are published at New Year and for the Queen's Official Birthday in June.

## 1.3. Awards

The Queen can award different types of honour, including making someone:

- a Companion of Honour (CH);
- a Knight or a Dame;
- a Commander of the Order of the British Empire (CBE), Officer of the Order of the British Empire (OBE), or Member of the Order of the British Empire (MBE).

The Queen may also remove honours, on the advice of Ministers and a Forfeiture Committee. Under the Honours (Prevention of Abuses) Act 1925, it is illegal to deal in honours.

## 2. The St David awards

### 2.1. Background

In February 2013, the Welsh Conservatives proposed a motion that the (then) National Assembly for Wales:

1. Notes the importance of recognising and celebrating Welsh cultural identity; and
2. Believes consideration should be given to the introduction of a Welsh Honours System to acknowledge and reward those who have made valuable contributions to Welsh life. [...]

The Assembly approved the motion. The Welsh Government announced the inauguration of the St David Awards in July that year and the first awards were given in March 2014. Since then, the awards have been given annually.

### 2.2. Selection

There are ten St David awards, each in a different category. In the first nine categories, anyone can nominate individuals or groups. The independent St David Awards Advisory Committee selects finalists and the First Minister chooses the winners. The last award is the First Minister's Special Award; the First Minister chooses the winner directly.

### 2.3. Awards

Winners of St David awards receive a trophy, while finalists receive a certificate and silver badge.

## 3. Welsh Government action

The Minister for Social Justice responded to this petition in September 2021, confirming that the Welsh Government does not plan to introduce a Wales-specific honours system.

In the letter, the Minister said:

I believe consideration should be given to how the UK Honours System is made more inclusive, not just in terms of its processes but also in relation to its historical cultural context.

The Minister indicated that she would be willing to provide input into any review of how the honours system could be made more inclusive, and that the Welsh Government was working with stakeholders to help increase the diversity of people nominated for honours.

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Jane Hutt AS/MS  
Y Gweinidog Cyfiawnder Cymdeithasol  
Minister for Social Justice



Llywodraeth Cymru  
Welsh Government

Eich cyf/Your ref  
Ein cyf/Our ref JH-/10461/21

Jack Sargeant  
Chair  
Petitions Committee

petitions@senedd.wales

16 September 2021

Dear Jack,

Thank you for your correspondence of 2 September on the petition from Neil App Jones about the Inauguration of an Honorary National System of Awards.

May I begin by congratulating you on your recent appointment to the Chair of the Petitions Committee.

The UK Honours system is intended to recognise and celebrate outstanding achievement, dedication and commitment, and those whose work has brought distinction to British and Welsh life.

As a Devolved Administration, the Welsh Government cannot make its own awards as part of the UK Honours system and at this time there are no plans to establish a Wales specific Honours system. You will be aware the Welsh Government does contribute to the UK Honours system as a means of recognising the achievements and dedication of the people of Wales and, although not part of the UK Honours system, the Welsh Government in 2014 established the publicly nominated St David Awards which is the national awards of Wales.

I remain steadfastly committed to embracing diversity and improving inclusion throughout our society, so you will not be surprised to learn I believe consideration should be given to how the UK Honours System is made more inclusive, not just in terms of its processes but also in relation to its historical cultural context. The Welsh Government stands ready to input to any such review.

We do have an opportunity to make a positive difference in Wales. Over the last 12 months we have made changes designed to raise the profile and widen the reach of Honours. In

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addition to extending our networks, we have hosted a series of awareness-raising sessions with stakeholders to talk through the Honours process, and to provide help and support with the often daunting task of preparing a nomination. There is still much more to do if we are to see a more diverse range of Honours awarded in Wales.

I hope that my reflections and summary of the work being undertaken is helpful to your Committee and, in particular, demonstrates while we don't have plans at this time to put in place a Wales-specific honours system, there is much we can do within the current arrangements in Wales to ensure the many outstanding individuals in our society are recognised for their achievements.

Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Jane". The signature is written in a cursive style with a long horizontal stroke above the first letter.

**Jane Hutt AS/MS**

Y Gweinidog Cyfiawnder Cymdeithasol  
Minister for Social Justice

# P-06-1198 Welsh Government Ministers should save the trees, hedgerows and fields in Cefn Yr Hendy, Miskin

Y Pwyllgor Deisebau | 4 Hydref 2021  
Petitions Committee | 4 October 2021

Reference: SR21/0988-1

Petition Number: P-06-1198

**Petition title:** Welsh Government Ministers should save the trees, hedgerows and fields in Cefn Yr Hendy, Miskin.

**Text of petition:** We urge the Welsh Government to stop their plans to sell the 49 acres of green fields they own in Miskin for 460 houses. We ask they do not sell the land for house building and to desist in their plans for the development. We urge Welsh Ministers to take heed of the Climate Emergency, to adhere to the principles of the Future Generations Act and withdraw plans for these fields. As no new school will be provided on the site, this will also cause increased traffic on the roads and pollution.

The fields border Coed Yr Hendy (ancient woodland), the River Clun and the Pant Marsh which is a site of nature conservation. The fields have many trees that will be lost due to new road building for the new estate. Any house building will damage the hedgerows and saplings. A large number of birds, small mammals and insects make Coed Yr Hendy and the fields their home, birds and bats are always swooping over the fields to feed - we should not take this away from them. Building on these fields will have a disastrous outcome for local wildlife and the local ecological system.



In light of this country's declared Climate Emergency it is essential to retain existing hedgerows, trees and green spaces when you consider how they absorb and filter carbon dioxide, other air pollutants, they aid with rainwater drainage and help with reducing soil erosion. Continuing to leave these fields for sheep farming would bring immense benefits to our environment in Miskin and beyond.

Senedd Research cannot comment on individual cases or discuss the merits of individual planning applications.

## 1. Background

In 2020, the petitioner submitted a very similar petition to the 5<sup>th</sup> Senedd's Petitions Committee. This related to the same site and raised the same issues. Due to a change of personal circumstances the petitioner asked for it to be withdrawn. This was agreed by your predecessor Committee.

### Development at Cefn yr hendy, Miskin

In 2018 outline planning permission was granted for the development of 460 houses at Cefn Yr Hendy, Miskin.

The documents relating to the outline planning application can be seen on Rhondda Cynon Taf County Borough Council's (RCT CBC) website.

### The planning process

Local Planning Authorities (LPAs) should make planning decisions in accordance with national and local planning policy plus other relevant issues, known as 'material considerations'.

Planning Policy Wales and Future Wales: the national plan 2040 set out the Welsh Government's principal national land use planning policies.

Local planning policies are set out in the LDP for the area. The LDP sets out proposals and policies for the future use of all local land. It is the main document that planning applications should be determined in accordance with, unless material considerations indicate otherwise.

In principle, any consideration which relates to the use and development of land is capable of being a material consideration. It is ultimately for the courts to decide.

## Outline planning permission

There are three main types of planning permission that can be sought – outline, detailed and full. In the case of outline permission, applications are made initially without full details of all design elements of the proposal. Outline planning applications therefore allow for a decision to be made on the general principles of a proposed development, prior to submitting a fully detailed proposal at a later date.

There are two types of outline approvals, those where all of the detailed design elements are ‘reserved’ for future approval and those where some elements have been included in the outline submission whilst others have been reserved.

In the case this petition relates to, outline planning permission was granted with all matters reserved other than access. Applications for the approval of these reserved matters are required to be submitted within three years of the outline permission being granted. However in May 2021 the developer was granted permission to extend this time period by a further three years.

The outline permission was granted subject to 31 planning conditions including conditions requiring tree protection measures, a wildlife protection plan, a habitat management plan and a scheme of mitigation for protected species.

Several applications have since been made by the developer to discharge some of these conditions (this seeks approval from the LPA that the condition has been met). For example in September 2020, the developer was granted permission that the condition to produce a wildlife protection plan could be discharged. This plan can be viewed as part of the documents relating to the application.

## 2. Welsh Government action

As outlined a similar petition was due to be considered by your predecessor Committee in 2020 before it was withdrawn. In March 2020, the then Minister for Economy, Transport and North Wales, Ken Skates, wrote to the predecessor Committee Chair. His letter provided further detail on the site and stated the following:

- The property concerned is subject to a joint venture agreement between the Welsh Ministers and Talbot Green Developments Limited where the joint venture parties are obligated to jointly promote the property for residential development and to dispose of the property with the benefit of planning consent for residential development.
- This agreement is a legacy from agreements entered into by the former Land Division of the Welsh Development Agency.
- A public inquiry was held in March 2019 at Pontyclun to consider whether the fields should be registered as a Town and Village Green. The Inspector found that the statutory test for registration had not been met and therefore rejected the application.
- The site is allocated in the adopted RCT LDP for residential development as part of a strategic site allocation.
- An accompanying planning obligation (a section 106 agreement) secures an employment and skills plan, a park and ride financial contribution, provision of the local centre, implementation of a 25 year long habitat land management plan and woodland buffer zone management plan, provision of public open space and play areas and associated management, and 20% affordable housing.
- There is also a requirement for payment of a Community Infrastructure Levy which will be calculated at the time of the reserved matters approval.
- Open fields adjoining the northern boundary of the site will be kept open and managed for ecology and public access purposes as part of the habitat land management plan.
- Natural Resources Wales and the RCT LPA ecologist each raised no objection subject to the conditions and section 106 agreement referred to above.

In a letter to the Chair dated 27 September 2021, the Minister for Economy, Vaughan Gething, outlines that the Welsh Government owned land (to which the planning permission relates to) is subject to Joint Venture Agreement (JVA) with a private sector partner. The JVA dates back to 2014 and under the terms of this agreement the Welsh Government are contractually bound to proceed with the sale.

### 3. Welsh Parliament action

In October 2017 Andrew RT Davies MS asked a series of written questions relating to the development **including a question** on whether the Welsh Government had contributed any money towards agency, consultancy and management fees. Ken Skates MS, the then Cabinet Secretary for Economy and Infrastructure, responded:

The Welsh Government has incurred professional fees for the completion of studies and the preparation and submission of a planning application, as has the company. In view of the fact that this is a joint venture with a private company the full financial details are considered to be commercially sensitive.

As outlined earlier, in 2020, the petitioner had submitted a very similar petition to the 5th Senedd's Petitions Committee which was withdrawn.

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Vaughan Gething AS/MS  
Gweinidog yr Economi  
Minister for Economy



Llywodraeth Cymru  
Welsh Government

Ein cyf/Our ref VG/11167/21

Jack Sargeant MS  
Chair - Petitions committee  
Senedd Cymru  
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27 September 2021

Dear Jack

Thank you for your letter to the Minister for Climate Change dated 24 August. I am replying as the subject land falls under my portfolio responsibilities.

The Welsh Government owned land is subject to Joint Venture Agreement(JVA) with a private sector partner. The JVA dates back to 2014 and under the terms of this agreement the Welsh Government are contractually bound to proceed with the sale.

The resulting development will provide much needed homes to the area. Any development will be controlled by the planning process which will require the developer to demonstrate an increase in biodiversity. Natural Resources Wales will be a consultee as part of the planning process.

A school site was included in the masterplan for the development, however the local authority have confirmed that it is not required.

Yours sincerely

**Vaughan Gething AS/MS**  
Gweinidog yr Economi  
Minister for Economy

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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.

Welsh Government Ministers should save the trees, hedgerows and fields in Cefn Yr Hendy, Miskin” | “Dylai Gweinidogion Llywodraeth Cymru achub y coed, y gwrychoedd a’r caeau yng Nghefn yr Hendy, Meisgyn”

**Additional information for Petitions committee from petitioner**

**Background and opinion of petitioner.**

I ask the petitions committee and Welsh Ministers to save 49 acres of greenfields in Miskin, Pontyclun RCT.

These fields were historically agricultural with some lead mining in the 19th Century, and again agricultural use for generations - farm land for pasture and taking of silage. They are farmed to this day by a tenant farmer. The fields surround the north of the village of Miskin, border the small historic settlement of Mwyndy, are bordered to the West by Coed Yr Hendy (ancient woodland – Blanket Tree Preservation order TPO – 42 (2000) RCT), and are close to the River Clun and the Pant Marsh (of which part is a Site of Nature Conservation).

The fields were bought along with many other parts of ‘Central Llantrisant’ in the 1980’s by the forerunner to the Welsh Government (monies from the public purse).

For generations (over 70 years) local residents have used the fields for pastimes - walking, blackberry picking, playing with children etc and continue to do so to date. This has been done in peaceful co-existence with the farming activities.

I have seen the response of Mr Gething today regarding contracts. My question to that would be, why when permission was granted on some of these fields in 2008 for the Welsh Development Agency and Scarborough Developments to build 216 houses, ( a related company to Talbot Green Developments which shares the same office with the previous ‘Scarborough developments’, in Scarborough England, which WG is acting with on this matter) did the plans then not come to fruition then? Not a breach of contract in 2008?

Even if we accept the argument that Welsh Ministers may have a duty to bring the fields to development – it does not mean all must come to development and it does not mean that plans cannot be more sensitively made to protect the health and wellbeing of children at YGGG Llantrisant and exclude the most Western access point proposed (See Map A2).

There are many reasons these plans concern us, not least the impact on the roads, and lack of more schools or health services, which are already

stretched in our area. You can forget trying to get a dentist appointment locally since Covid 19, unless you pay to go privately! How can this small village sustain c1000 new inhabitants?

I am concerned as to Defra reports on soil erosion - soil is already being destroyed faster than it can be created - and cannot see why Welsh Ministers would still see this land as being a good site for development given that, plus concerns raised by residents as to the impact of water run off from new building into the River Clun (north of the of fields, at edge of JKL on map – A1 appendix) as well as all we know now about the importance of sustaining nature, hedgerows and trees. The fields have 2 prominent Oak trees as well as a number of Oak saplings. The fields are full of wildlife, and the number of bats swooping at dusk is an amazing sight. A large number of birds, small mammals and insects make Coed Yr Hendy and the fields their home - where will the birds swoop to feed if they are built on? Build on these fields, and the impact on local wildlife will be disastrous.

I am aware of existing housing targets ( more recently called into question as to accuracy) and point to the fact that Plasdwr housing development is a 10 minute drive from here, and that Rhondda Cynon Taff had 2785 empty homes in 2015 (their own figures).

This land was in the LDP for 400 houses and a school, and the plans approved at RCT planning committee and in 2018 planning permission was granted on it for 460 houses plus a school, with specified access points at areas where existing, old trees and hedgerows as well as saplings would need to be cut down. However the committee (at which I was present) heard that RCT had no money to provide a school at the site and funding would need to be sought at an unspecified point in time from the Welsh ministers to fund a school there. Outline planning permission for 460 houses and a school was again renewed in May 2021 from RCT.

Currently the land is open to tender from developers and I am aware developers are not including a school in their plans – therefore there will be a significant cost to the public purse, or a lack of a school. I am aware of other developments where developers have had to include and fund a school. Why not here? Appendix A3 contains a link to the sale, with a video where the scale of these fields can be seen. Please look at this and absorb the beauty of our Welsh countryside.

I applied for Village Green status on the land in recognition of the fact that people have been using these fields for decades for enjoyment, walking and play with children. We were not successful in the Village Green application to preserve this beautiful Welsh Land for community use. We met most of the stringent criteria but sadly in the Inspector's view, did not provide significant pastime use of the land from 1997-2000 ( due to lack of witnesses at inquiry for that period). He did however recognise that there was otherwise "clear

evidence of the use of the site for lawful sports and pastimes” (Bedford 2019, p104).

Link to Village Green Inquiry

<https://www.rctcbc.gov.uk/EN/Council/CouncillorsCommitteesandMeetings/DelegatedDecisions/RelatedDocuments/Decisions/2019to2020/Section152CommonsAct2006%E2%80%93ApplicationtoRegisterLandatCefnYrHendyFieldsMiskinPontyclunasaTownorVillageGreen.pdf>

The enjoyment of so many families of their local green space will be destroyed. Our beautiful Welsh green fields will be destroyed ( while many brown field sites remain undeveloped!). I do not need to repeat here the vast amount of evidence which shows the importance of nature, green spaces, and free and open space for children and adults, to our mental and emotional wellbeing.

I urge you to show the strength of the Assembly's commitment to all our futures, to the climate emergency declaration and see if you can help to save all, or some of these fields from unsustainable development. Not only will that maintain good living conditions for those living locally (no increase in traffic, pollution, demands on health services) but will enable local residents to continue to use the open space which has been highly valued for emotional and physical wellbeing for generations.

I also feel the news articles in which Welsh Government implores people to plant trees makes a mockery of us all. It is contradictory for them to tell us to plant trees when they are knowingly destroying established trees, saplings and ancient hedgerows ( which can be seen in maps from 1800s).

If the fields are preserved, the tenant farmer would be able to continue to farm his sheep as he has for decades, support his family livelihood and maintain this land in its natural state. Daily we hear on the news that we are in a climate crisis, that we should plant trees. Welsh Ministers should not promote or allow the destruction of the fields, hedgerows and trees, that, after all, were bought from the public purse in the 1980s.

This land was in the Local Development plan for 2011 – 2021 for 400 homes and a new Primary school, with a Grade Separated Interchange to be provided to join the A4119. This was initially granted outline Planning Permission in 2018 by Rhondda Cynon Taf (RCT hereon) and this was renewed on 14<sup>th</sup> May 2021 and represents planning permission in principle. At present tenders are invited from house builders. I am aware that house builders are not including a primary school in their plans.

I am also aware that while the closing date for tenders was 20.9.2021 this has been extended following developers finding issues with the land which had not been identified correctly by the landowner in their own site investigations. Which begs the question what other issues have been overlooked or were recorded incorrectly.

### **A) Environment.**

1. It is my view that the sale of the Greenfields land by Welsh Ministers is morally wrong and not in line with the legislation or principles they introduced in the Well Being of Future Generations Act 2015 ( known as WBFG here on). Through destroying these fields and trees it also undermines the Sennedd's commitment to its own declared Climate Emergency.

How on earth can the wanton destruction of this land fit with us being a globally responsible nation?

How can it lead to a healthier Wales – it will lead to increased pollution in the area, further drain on local health resources and increased car journeys – especially if no school is provided? It will take away the leisure use that residents have proven their use of from 2000 to this day.

It also undermines the requests we, the public, hear from our Welsh Government about how we should live more sustainably, plant trees and look after our countryside (news articles Appendix A3). Continuing with the sale of this land will lead to established trees and hedgerows being cut down to be able to build and put roads in – see woodland specifically at circle B on map in appendix A2.

The hedgerows – in the fields will have to be significantly cut down to allow for houses and roads, and can be seen in maps from 1898. Once gone, these are gone for good.

<https://www.francisfrith.com/uk/mwyndy/maps> ( maps over centuries showing hedgerows)

The fields themselves are full of wildflowers each spring and summer with wild orchids also (see photos from June 2021 in Appendix A4, in field B in Map under A1) – these will all be lost forever if built upon.

I am also concerned for the loss of these fields as carbon sinks and surface water run off. The northern reaches of the fields in question then slope down hill to the Afon Clun and the Pant Marsh (SINC) which is a site where the rare Small Scabious Mining Bee has been found, and planting done by conservation groups of the Devils Bit Scabious plant has been done in 2020. See Maps at A1 for a screenshot from the media posts of the map where it has been found in 2020. As of yet surveys have not yet been done by Buglife on these Greenfields or the fields at the northern edges – Map at A1, fields H-M) and the discovery of the bee in the area post-dates environmental surveys done for the planning application in 2017.

Links - <https://twitter.com/buglifecymru/status/1330214727402876939>  
<https://www.facebook.com/pontyclunenvironmentgroup/posts/2770150386566110>

<https://twitter.com/BuglifeCymru/status/1303964490623483904?fbclid=IwAR2UH8XI7n8qMC9zs-tBJOH3GziCKRdemizjwdFOAPJAyglbOcgFxiSFFvw>



BuglifeCymru on Twitter

“We were very excited to discover a 'new' population of Small scabious mining bee (*Andrena marginata*) last week as part of our @PostcodeLottery 'Searching for Scabious' project. This scarce and much declined bee was found at Pant Marsh in Rhondda Cynon Taf. 📷  
(c) @olds\_liam”  
twitter.com

The Marsh Fritillary butterfly is also found in the Pant Marsh and I am exceptionally concerned that the ecological reports do not consider the impact of the increased surface water run off on the river and these insects. We do not get a second chance to conserve nature in these times. We all know the value of the environment to our future life on this planet.

The Pant Marsh is described by RCT’s Ecologist as a “original, flood plain grasslands site, very rare, species rich” and is currently under management by RCT as a nature reserve for 25 years. It is described as a fantastic habitat for hoverflies, marsh fritillary butterfly, grasshoppers, orb spiders and grass snakes. You can also see the planting of the Devils Bit Scabious and a description of it’s importance in the video link below (video by RCT’s own ecologist in September 2021). It also shows the Afon Clun and refers to existing water quality issues. Surely building and concreting over land so close, causing possible run off is irresponsible?

Video link: <https://youtu.be/QidTWtb8IA8>

Or search for Pant Marsh virtual video tour.

(you may hear the constant hum of the busy A4119 throughout too!)

The ancient woodland of Coed yr Hendy has a footpath running through it close to the edge with the fields in question. In wet weather this is incredibly boggy and you can see streams of water running through it (northward and downhill) from the fields. I do not need to be an expert in land drainage to know that building on the neighbouring fields will cause more run off downhill and that the ground will become even more boggy – causing to possible

monumental damage to this protected woodland. Politicians should recognize the experience of local people in knowing the lie of the land.

With the declared climate emergency in mind this is an opportunity for the Welsh Government to be climate-smart and save this greenfield site. A site that is a valuable natural resource and a carbon sink, something we desperately need in Wales today. "Greenfield land is most likely to have green habitat, such as trees, grasses, and hedgerows. The removal of these would mean the removal of key carbon sinks from an area. The role of soil should also not be overlooked; concreting over soil means that it cannot do its vital job in sequestering carbon" – SERA 2017 – link in A3

### **B) Traffic and pollution**

I also note that the A4119, running along the side of some of the fields has extremely high pollution. There is an air quality management area ('Mwyndy') on the A4119 immediately bordering this site. The Rhondda Cynon Taff Council "Air Quality Progress Report 2019" shows that Nitrogen Dioxide (NO<sub>2</sub>) readings for this AQMA have been above the EU and UK legal limit for the last 12 of 13 years. Link to information on Air Quality Management, Mwyndy RCT

[Agenda Item 4 - Protecting Improving Air Quality in Rhondda Cynon Taf \(rctcbc.gov.uk\)](#) (2015)  
[Report.pdf \(modern.gov.co.uk\)](#) (2020)

To add a large house development which will primarily discharge onto that road is going to worsen those readings irrevocably, and is again not in keeping with the future generations principles.

### **c) Quality of the land**

The land is agricultural yet the Agricultural Land Classification Survey completed for the planning application in 2017 was done via a desktop assessment which graded it at 'no better than 3b'. When we are looking at digging up 49 acres of Greenfields I would have expected closer attention to detail than this.

### **d) Education – new school issues**

The provision of a new primary school is within the LDP however we understand from Mr Gething that this is not being insisted upon and there is no requirement for developers to include one in plans. Therefore are Welsh Ministers content that a new housing estate is sustainable on this basis?

1. The removal of the condition of the school means existing schools will need to absorb the extra pupils. It is proposed this is met with development monies, however, as the catchment area currently falls under Pontyclun PS,

this will mean extra pressure on an already strained school. Quoting a July 2016 Estyn report for the school, it states that classroom environment is under pressure, so much so that 'it inhibits classroom organisation and routine'. Therefore, how will the extra demand be met in an already over-capitated school?

2. One proposal is to have the catchment area amended to include Penygawsi and/or Tonysguboriau in Llantrisant and Talbot Green respectively. Both of these are not viable options.

Firstly, Tonysguboriau requires young children to walk along the A4119 up to Talbot Rd and then down to the school. Besides making very young children walk alongside the A4119 over the bridge where the pedestrian width is already too small, the walk of just over 2km is too far for 3-11 year olds to walk twice a day, particularly in British weather. The walk would require adult supervision which in today's world with both parents working, would not be possible.

In terms of Pengawsi, the walk is slightly shorter at 1.6km but is through a tunnel under the A4119, through wooded and undeveloped areas, past a grave yard and into the school. In 2008, Ian Jenkins who worked with the education department at RCT deemed expecting children to walk the route as unsafe for children to walk. Nothing has changed in the past 9 years to suggest that this decision could be overturned. Remember, these are 3-11 year old boys and girls.

3. If we put sustainability to one side, and assume that the trips to those schools would instead be made by car, then these extra trips at peak hours will need to be factored in to the traffic analysis. Both routes would require extra travel along the already over congested A4119. However, as developments are required to be sustainable, the car option needs to be excluded.

Therefore, should this proceed, a school must continue to be a requirement, not an optional item!

The only school in the village currently is YGGG Llantrisant, a Welsh speaking Primary school. It is clear it could not accommodate the needs of 460 new households. In 2017 there were 304 on roll with a capacity of 338 children. New building has been completed at the school in 2021 to accommodate existing children – how can it physically manage more children than it has capacity for? Also, if it is at capacity, and parents wish for their children to attend a Welsh Speaking primary – would they then be travelling to the nearest Welsh Primaries in Llanhari ( 3.4 miles) and Church Village (4.9miles) from Miskin.

Miskin is very much a family community, people raise their children here. I think from 460 homes even a lay person could estimate at least 460 new children to educate!

Lack of a school provision on the development goes against Welsh Government targets on class sizes, on encouraging use of Welsh (by causing YGGG Llantrisant to become oversubscribed) and is not sustainable as it will lead to hundreds of car journeys for children to attend school NOT in walking distance. The only school in walking distance is YGGG Llantrisant. The nearest English speaking primary school is Pontclyun Primary school (1.2 miles away). I don't know many Primary age children who would be walking there and back each day. Indeed, I see the parents driving them back and fore each day from Miskin!

Councillors of RCT approved the plans on the basis that a school was part of the masterplan, and a new school is referred to in the outline planning permission.

Welsh Ministers are doing an absolute disservice to children and young people by not expecting developers to build a school. If the Council of RCT state it is no longer a requirement, I would like to see the evidence behind this and why they are going against the adopted LDP. Welsh Ministers should have an interest in this as well, it should not just be residents advocating for children!

**d) Plan not in line with the LDP.**

I recognize the planning site is in the Local Development plan, however the adopted LDP for RCT clearly states a school, 400 homes and a Grade separated interchange with access to and from the A4119 must be provided. The Outline Planning permission granted in 2018 allows 460 homes and no grade separated interchange is required in a stark departure from the adopted Local Development Plan.

I will now discuss Western access point, which is to be off the existing roundabout by Ysgol Llantrisant, the village primary school. (see Map A2, circle A)

The LDP states that the access for the new estate should be via Grade Separated Junction, well away from the school. However the plan is for existing roundabouts for access. The roundabout and land leading towards the woods, by YGGG Llantrisant is NOT within the LDP for access or building.

YGGG Llantrisant is 20 footsteps away from the start of the proposed building site. Speaking from personal experience, crossing the road to take my

children to school there can already be hazardous. Adding to that building site traffic and increased traffic when the estate is built, will increase danger to children walking to school.

There will be increased pollution. The applicant's projected figures on pollution do not account for building site pollution and heavy plant machinery. I do not want children at that school to be exposed to diesel fumes in their formative years. You must also remember that children are being taught in that school with windows open due to Covid 19, and are likely to for some time. Air pollution has proven links to illnesses and breathing difficulties, especially for those with asthma.

When talking about our children's wellbeing, we are also talking about RCT's and Wales' economic future and wellbeing. You must look at the long term, Welsh Ministers have legal responsibility to take actions to stop problems happening. Again I say, the LDP did not include this piece of land for a reason.

Would you be happy for your children to attend the school with a building site starting 20 steps away?

I also refer you to the planning appeal of 2008 which made an approval for only 216 Homes on the land to be provided with the Grade Separated Interchange.

Welsh Ministers, in their role as landowners here, should want to be in keeping with legislation and principles of fairness. By themselves going outside of the LDP they give green light to any other developer that LDPs are not worth the paper they are written on, nor the time of council officers or Assembly staff involved in the painstaking completion of them.

### **e) Pressure on local health services**

**I would like to draw your attention to one of the five ways of working set out in the WCFG Act to help public bodies achieve the 7 principles of the Act. Namely, "Prevention" - How acting to prevent problems occurring or getting worse".**

Even before Covid 19 the nearest hospital, the Royal Glamorgan Hospital was under pressure. On 11.1.2017 Wales Online reported that the A&E department at the Royal Glamorgan Hospital was in crisis and scenes were beyond words. It was reported that elderly patients lining the corridors on trolleys waiting to be seen, current waiting times can be between 4 -6 hours. Cwm Taf Health Board were quoted as saying **"there is a high level of demand at the Royal Glamorgan Hospital" they also said "the escalation levels at RGH are currently between 3 (severe pressure) and 4 (extreme pressure)".**

460 additional homes could potentially generate a further 1150 patients for this hospital this is based on the developer's calculation of 2.5 people per household.

This amount combined with other committed development in this area will exacerbate the services and have a detrimental impact on the quality of care received by its patients.

In 2017 my neighbours sought to register their 3 year old son for dental care locally, on being told no NHS dentists could register him, she sought via help via her MP Owen Smith. Mr Smith contacted the Health Board and my neighbour was provided with a response in writing from Alison Williams Chief Executive of the Cwm Taf Health Board wrote " unfortunately at present the one dental practice in Pontyclun and two in Talbot Green are **NOT** in a position to accept new patients", she also said " we are continually reviewing access to dental services across Cwm Taff and are aware that there is a high demand in the Taff Ely area". She was advised to contact other dentists, with the closest being in Pontypridd, 7 miles away.

Again I return to my point that this is not a sustainable development. All of the above health issues have exacerbated. I have not been able to get routine dental care for myself locally since March 2020 and have paid to go privately. Not everyone is able to do this. This is therefore not only unsustainable development it is also discriminatory to those on low incomes. The "More Equal Wales" and "A Healthier Wales" principles in WGFG Act I feel are relevant here. We already know that Dental decay in children in Wales and especially in RCT is at shocking levels - with the local health board Cwm Taf quoting 44% of children in RCT as having dental decay  
<https://cwmtafmorgannwg.wales/services/primary-care-community-services/baby-teeth-do-matter/>

The added pressures on Cwm Taf health board owing to Covid 19 are continuing and I repeat, further local development is not sustainable.

#### **f) Loss of open space**

While much of the above relates to the loss of open space I will briefly mention that the plans for 460 houses on the site (c1150 residents) does not meet the Fields in Trust nor RCT's Policy AW6 (Point 10) regarding open space. Open space in Wales follows the Six-acre Standard as set out by Fields in Trust.

First published in the 1930's the Guidance is based on a broad recommendation that 6 acres (2.4 hectares) of accessible green space per 1,000 head of population enables residents of all ages to participate in sport and play; 75% of local authorities adopt this or an equivalent standard (2014 Fields in Trust / David Lock Associates Survey).  
<https://www.fieldsintrust.org/guidance>

RCT's AW6 policy point 10 states “**10. Open space is provided in accordance with the Fields in Trust Standards**” -

[http://www.cartogold.co.uk/rhondda/text/05\\_aw\\_policies.html](http://www.cartogold.co.uk/rhondda/text/05_aw_policies.html)

If we turn to look at the proposed map we can see that they are calculating small pockets of open space towards this, which in actual fact not functional open space. It is paying lip service to policy and I cannot see how they have included 2.4 hectares in open space (for 1000 residents) in fields which are 19.8 hectares.

While the developers may state the land that borders the fields at the north is open space – this is not accurate, it is not part of this parcel of land, it is not owned by Welsh Ministers ( so how can they declare it's future designation?) it is used consistently for farming and it leads to the Pant Marsh which is protected in it's own right.



## CONCLUSION

I would like to thank you for taking the time to read through this. As you can see there are many issues which I think are important. I summarise by stating that the plans are not sustainable and there is no 'place making' at the heart of them and therefore not in keeping with Planning Legislation in Wales. It is an 'add on' to a tiny village with no new services that would enhance the lives of new or existing residents.

I think this petition raises so many issues that it is right it is thoroughly debated by Welsh Ministers. This are not solely planning matters but it goes to the heart of what residents in Wales need from our Government – fair, principled decision makers who respect and value our country and

countryside and recognize that decisions today impact on all of our wellbeing tomorrow.

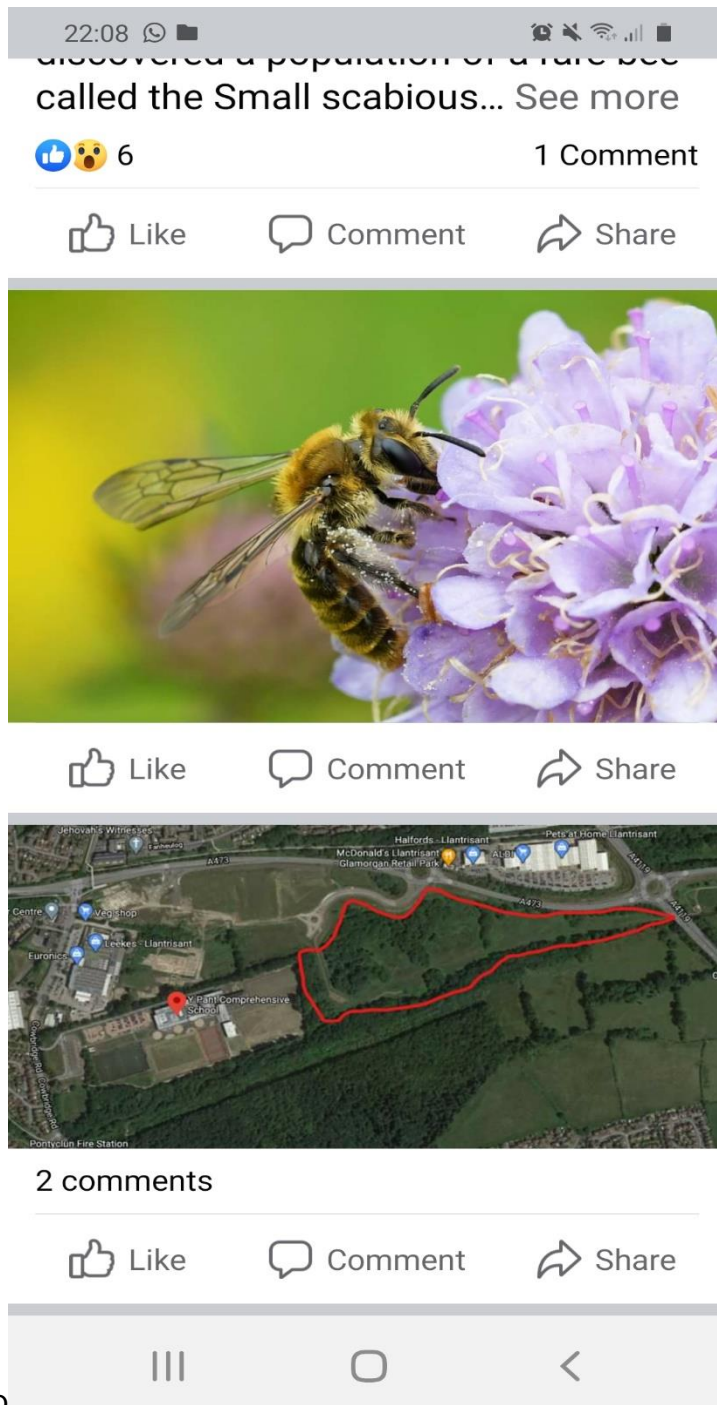
I urge Welsh Ministers to uphold the principles of the WBFG Act, to show commitment to the declared Climate Emergency and desist in their plans for the sale of the fields. If they cannot, they should amend the plans. Welsh Ministers should be leading the way ethically and practically. I can recycle and reuse, walk not drive, and plant as many trees as I can in my garden for the rest of my life – none of this will ever have the positive environmental impact that this single decision by Welsh Ministers could have in terms of the climate and wellbeing.

S Seymour 27.9.2021

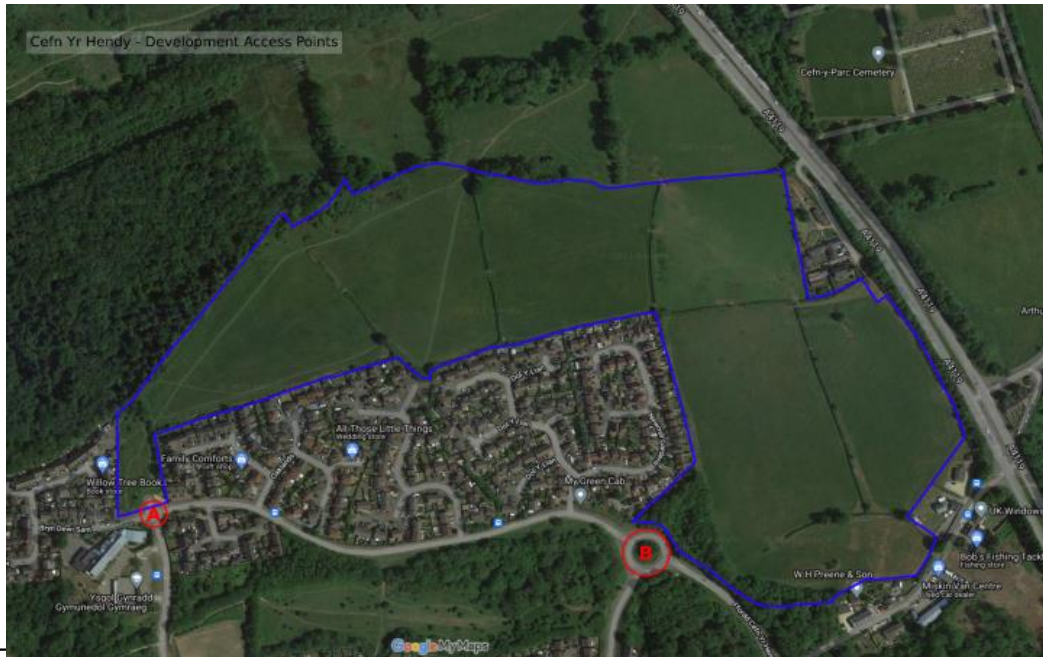
## Appendix

### A 1. Google Map of area with map Key





A1 – Scabious bee map



A2 –

**A3. News articles**

WG urges residents to plant trees -

[https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/uk-wales-58259637?fbclid=IwAR1vkdp3IOkFWezl3nzdubCAUFdfwjiDH\\_M20HKPP5Wx5vwLMbd-Os0Cnm8](https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/uk-wales-58259637?fbclid=IwAR1vkdp3IOkFWezl3nzdubCAUFdfwjiDH_M20HKPP5Wx5vwLMbd-Os0Cnm8)

Article regarding development from SERA

[https://www.sera.org.uk/designing\\_development\\_to\\_deliver\\_on\\_nature\\_climate\\_and\\_housing?fbclid=IwAR3FXia\\_5Kky5r6iV1Sm29WwCZKt8fOtd7\\_yLxoZPYWpoeZUIHcrE35h9w](https://www.sera.org.uk/designing_development_to_deliver_on_nature_climate_and_housing?fbclid=IwAR3FXia_5Kky5r6iV1Sm29WwCZKt8fOtd7_yLxoZPYWpoeZUIHcrE35h9w)

Natural Resource Wales – wildlife and plant species at crisis

<https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/uk-wales-58641886>

Link to advert for sale of fields including video

<https://www.brutonknowles.co.uk/property-search/development/property/5335--1184990142?fbclid=IwAR2UH8XI7n8qMC9zs-tBJOH3GziCKRdemizjwdFOAPJAygLbOcGFxjSFFvw>

Link to current RCT Local Development Plan. This land is described as Policy SSA8 – Mwyndy Talbot Green and covers areas in Talbot Green and not solely these fields. For ease – this part refers to Cefn Yr Hendy area

**Cefn-yr-Hendy**

f) Residential development of 400 dwellings adjoining the existing residential area, served from the existing spine road roundabouts, new primary school and local centre. The residential development will be built at a range of densities, with higher density development to be constructed between the



A4 – photos of the fields





END

## Petitions Briefing: Cardiff Children's Services

Y Pwyllgor Deisebau | 04 Hydref 2021  
Petitions Committee | 04 October 2021

Reference: SR21/837-11

Petition Number: Petition P-06-1199

Petition title: Place Cardiff Children's Services into special measures and conduct an urgent independent review

### Text of petition:

Cardiff Social Services and in particular Children's Services are in complete meltdown. A recent inspection by CIW has been described as a whitewash with staff being told "to toe the party line". Families are being failed and torn apart, children are being removed from loving parents and victims of domestic abuse then forced to have contact with the abuser.

## 1. Summary

- The Social Services and Well-being (Wales) Act 2014 ('the Act') gives the Welsh Ministers powers to intervene in local authority social services. It



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also requires local authorities to publish Annual Reports about their social services functions.

- Under the Act's Code of practice in relation to measuring social services performance, 'each local authority must have arrangements in place to collect and return the data on the statutory performance measures'. It should in theory be possible to compare these children's social services performance measures across Welsh local authorities.
- However it appears that only data at an all Wales level is currently being published about social services performance measures relating to children. The StatsWales website states that this is due to not all local authorities being 'able to provide fully completed returns, due to issues with implementing or preparing for the new Welsh Community Care Information System computer system'.
- Care Inspectorate Wales (CIW) is the independent regulator of social care and childcare in Wales. Its role includes reviewing the performance of local authorities in their delivery of social services functions. It carries this out through a combination of inspection and performance evaluation activity.

## 2. Powers of intervention

Part 8 of the Social Services and Well-being (Wales) Act 2014 ('the Act'), sets out information about the grounds on which the Welsh Ministers may intervene in local authority social services and sets out their powers in this regard.

- Section 150 of the Act sets out the grounds on which the Welsh Ministers may intervene in a local authority's exercise of its social services functions. The section contains three grounds, namely that the local authority:
  - a) has failed or is likely to fail in the exercise of a duty that is a social services function;
  - b) has acted or is proposing to act unreasonably in the exercise of a social services function; or
  - c) is failing or is likely to fail to perform a social services function to an adequate standard
- Section 151 of the Act permits the Welsh Ministers to give a warning notice to a local authority if they are satisfied any of the grounds in section 150 exist and sets out further details in this regard.
- Section 152 provides the Welsh Ministers with a power to intervene in a local authority's exercise of its social services functions if a warning

Title:

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notice has been given and the authority has not taken the required action and sets out further details in this regard.

The Welsh Government has issued a range of Codes of Practice for the Social Services and Well-being (Wales) Act 2014. Depending on the nature of concerns set out in the petition, these may include:

- Code of Practice on general functions
- Code of Practice on the role of the director of social services
- Code of practice in relation to measuring social services performance
- Code of Practice Local Authority Adoption Services
- Code of Practice on Local Authority Fostering Services

## Performance measures under the Act

2.1. The Social Services and Well-being (Wales) Act 2014 introduced a new performance measurement framework for local authorities in relation to their social services functions. These measures replaced all existing performance measures for local authority social services that were required by the Welsh Government.

When exercising social services functions, local authorities must act in accordance with the Code of practice in relation to measuring social services performance (issued under section 145 of the Act) and must have regard to any relevant guidelines contained in it. It says that:

In measuring whether the quality standards are achieved, each local authority must have arrangements in place to collect and return the data on the statutory performance measures detailed in this code of practice to the Welsh Government from May 2017 onwards.

The quantitative data stated in this code of practice must be submitted annually and reflect a full financial year's worth of data (the first year will detail the financial year April 2016 to March 2017). In relation to social services, quantitative data is numerical and can be transformed into statistics.

It goes on to say:

Without an understanding of the difference care and support has made to people's well-being, it is impossible to fully understand the effectiveness or to identify opportunities for improvement.

All Wales data is [published in respect of social services performance measures about children](#). The Welsh Government publication says that **only data at a 'Wales level' has been published**, because

While extensive efforts have been made to gather reliable and accurate information from local authorities, 2016-17 and 2017-18 data remains imperfect. Not all local authorities have been able to provide fully completed returns, due to issues with implementing or preparing for the new Welsh Community Care Information System (WCCIS) computer system.

The Social Services all Wales performance measures for children for the year 2018-19 are the latest year published and a provisional date for updated statistics is stated as being September 2020. The 2018-19 statistics are as follows:

Performance Measure	Performance Measure
PM24. The percentage of assessments completed for children within statutory timescales	88.9
PM25. The percentage of children supported to remain living within their family at 31 March	64.7
PM26. The percentage of looked after children returned home from care during the year	9.6
PM27. The percentage of re-registrations of children on local authority Child Protection Registers	5.1
PM28. The average length of time for all children who were on Child Protection Registers during the year (days)	253.3
PM29a. Percentage of children achieving the core subject indicator at Key Stage 2	58.3
PM29b. Percentage of children achieving the core subject indicator at Key Stage 4	10.9
PM30. The percentage of children seen by a registered dentist within 3 months of becoming looked after	59.5
PM31. The percentage of children looked after at 31 March who were registered with a GP within 10 working days of the start of their placement	90.6
PM32. The percentage of looked after children who have experienced 1 or more changes of school, during a period or periods of being looked after, which were not due to transitional arrangements, in the year to 31 March	10.0
PM33. The percentage of looked after children on 31 March who have had three or more placements during the year	9.2
PM34a. The percentage of all care leavers who are in education, training or employment at 12 months after leaving care	53.5
PM34b. The percentage of all care leavers who are in education, training or employment at 24 months after leaving care	50.7
PM35. The percentage of care leavers who have experienced homelessness during the year	11.5

### 3. Local Authority Social Services Annual Reports

The 2014 Act requires that a local authority must prepare and publish an annual report about the exercise of the social services functions of the authority in respect of that year.

Cardiff Council's Children and Young People Scrutiny Committee considered the [Social Services Annual Report 2020-21](#) at its scrutiny meeting in July 2021.

Title:

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Previous Cardiff Council reports can be found on this [Local Authority Social Services Annual Report](#) webpage and the 2019-20 report in these [papers](#).

## 4. Inspection of a local authority's social services performance

Care Inspectorate Wales (CIW) is the independent regulator of social care and childcare in Wales. Its role includes reviewing the performance of local authorities in their delivery of social services functions. It carries this out through a combination of inspection and performance evaluation activity.

The most recent publication is the CIW [Cardiff Council risk based inspection report](#) which covers inspection activity in November and December 2020 which looked at:

- How well the local authority is discharging its statutory functions to keep people safe and promote well-being during the pandemic.
- How well the local authority was providing early help, care and support and seamless transitions between services for disabled children and their families
- What the local authority is doing to prevent the need for children to come into care; and are children returning home to their families quickly enough where safe to do so.

Prior to that the CIW [Local authority annual performance review letter 2019/20](#) covered the period April 2019 - March 2020. It included 'annual focused activity undertaken in children's services on 25 and 26 February 2020'.

The previous report on the [Inspection of Children's Services: City of Cardiff Council](#) was published in 2016.

Every effort is made to ensure that the information contained in this briefing is correct at the time of publication. Readers should be aware that these briefings are not necessarily updated or otherwise amended to reflect subsequent changes.

Julie Morgan AS/MS  
Y Dirprwy Weinidog Gwasanaethau Cymdeithasol  
Deputy Minister for Social Services



Llywodraeth Cymru  
Welsh Government

Your ref: Petition P-06-1199  
Our ref: JMSS/10375/21

Jack Sargeant MS  
Chair - Petitions committee  
Senedd Cymru  
Cardiff Bay  
Cardiff  
CF99 1SN

23 September 2021

Dear Jack,

Thank you for your letter of 3 September asking for my views on the petition to 'Place Cardiff Children's Services into special measures and conduct an urgent independent review'.

The pandemic has made it exceptionally challenging for local authorities and the workforce to support vulnerable children and families in their communities. I continue to be impressed by the resilience, hard work and creativity of the children's social care workforce, local authorities and partners in meeting the challenges.

The Welsh Government has remained focused on working with local authorities to ensure they continue to prioritise the delivery and development of their early intervention and preventative services and on improving outcomes for care experienced children and young people. This is aligned with our continuing policy objectives to reduce numbers of looked after children and supporting families to remain together. These policy aims will help our local authorities sustainably deliver better outcomes for vulnerable children and families in their communities.

We are regularly in touch with local authority children's services and are aware of the progress they are making in delivering our shared objectives for looked after children and children and young people at the edge of care. There are robust mechanisms in place to ensure local authorities are providing high quality children's services to their communities. Care Inspectorate Wales (CIW) play an important role by providing independent assurance about the quality of children's social services in Wales. All local authority children's social services are reviewed by CIW through an annual cycle of performance, evaluation and inspection.

Canolfan Cyswllt Cyntaf / First Point of Contact Centre:  
0300 0604400

Bae Caerdydd • Cardiff Bay  
Caerdydd • Cardiff  
CF99 1SN

[Gohebiaeth.Julie.Morgan@llyw.cymru](mailto:Gohebiaeth.Julie.Morgan@llyw.cymru)  
[Correspondence.Julie.Morgan@gov.wales](mailto:Correspondence.Julie.Morgan@gov.wales)

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.

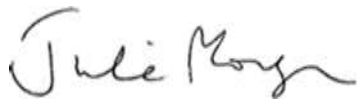
We welcome receiving correspondence in Welsh. Any correspondence received in Welsh will be answered in Welsh and corresponding in Welsh will not lead to a delay in responding.

CIW takes a risk based, proportionate approach to their work and actions to reduce risks to children's safety and well-being and ensures improvement measures are taken when concerns arise. If CIW has significant concerns about children not being adequately safeguarded, matters are then escalated to the involvement and intervention of Welsh Government, under section 151 of the Social Services and Well-being (Wales) Act 2014.

I have recently taken the opportunity, in correspondence with the Cardiff Council Cabinet Member for Children & Families, to highlight our continuing focus on supporting our most vulnerable children and families and to ensure the local authority is working collectively to relieve ongoing pressures and deliver sustainable services.

I hope you have found my reply helpful and noted the safeguards which are in place which would lead to Welsh Government intervention into a local authority children's service.

Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Julie Morgan". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

**Julie Morgan AS/MS**

Y Dirprwy Weinidog Gwasanaethau Cymdeithasol  
Deputy Minister for Social Services

**P-05-1199 Place Cardiff Children's Services into special measures and conduct an urgent independent review, Correspondence – Petitioner to Committee, 27.09.21**

Sir/Ma'am,

**Petition :- : P-06-1199**

Many thanks for your email and the opportunity to contribute further following the response from Julie Morgan MS.

Firstly, I am somewhat surprised that Ms Morgan has engaged, previously when this matter was brought to her attention, she passed it to one of her ministerial team, who duly sent a response with several links to the complaints procedure for Cardiff Social Services, Care Inspectorate Wales and the like. Really not helpful.

However, what does not surprise me in the response is the attempt to blame the failings on Covid, the issues I have raised date from April 2019, long before covid and continue to this day and have nothing to do with the pandemic.

In fact, the Children's Strategy 2019 – 2022 was introduced as a result of the alarming number of looked after children in Cardiff at that time a figure that has not decreased since, and this is due to the fact that, *"the default position for the Local Authority with regards to child protection is to pursue the legal route"* these are not my words but the words of a Social Worker currently allocated to my family. Once legal proceedings are instigated and a child becomes looked after, it is easier for the Social Worker and is less work than offering support and intervention. In essence the child is safeguarded and move on next case. This approach is totally contrary to the Children's Strategy and intentions and what Ms Morgan says in her response but is what is happening daily. There is support and intervention offered at an early stage, and the reunification process is not pursued by Social Services as again this involves further assessments and increased work.

Ms Morgan refers to the Care Inspectorate Wales reviews; it is a fact that any review is only as good as the information it receives and documents its ability to review. A source from within Social Services has told me that prior to the last review staff were told to *"Toe the Line"* and not give a true reflection of what was happening in the organisation. A Social Worker who had been allocated to my family in late October 2020, attended my home early December 2020 and informed us *"They were leaving the Local Authority, they were only ever temporary and they could not continue to work there as they were in turmoil"* They duly departed and left us once again with no allocated Social Worker, to date since April 2019 we have engaged with some 12 different Social Workers, this is due to the inability of the Authority to recruit and retain staff due to the working practices and volume of work, huge sickness levels and no succession planning and continuity within the Authority. For example, following a family court process we were not provided with a devolved responsibility document for 6 months, as the Social Worker that had vigorously pursued the matter

through the family courts, wrongly and using selective evidence, having secured the care order, told us quite openly and with some perverse pride, *“That looked after children weren’t their thing, they preferred court work and they would not be doing the devolved responsibility document”*

The above are facts and not in any way embellished for maximum impact, the comments and actions displayed and quoted within the above speak for themselves and demonstrate an organisation that is failing children and young people, with the Director with responsibility earning some close in the region of £200,000 last year the Local Authority are rewarding failure and an urgent, independent transparent review in which staff are given the opportunity to contribute without fear should be conducted at the earliest opportunity.

# Agenda Item 2.11

## **P-06-1203 Do not roll out Covid 19 vaccine passports for retail, hospitality or other premises**

This petition was submitted by John William Gates, having collected a total of 336 signatures.

### **Text of Petition:**

We want the Welsh Government to commit to not rolling out any e-vaccination status/immunity passport to the Welsh public. Such passports could be used to restrict the rights of people who have refused a Covid-19 vaccine, such as preventing them from accessing shops, supermarkets or other premises, which would be unacceptable.

### **Additional Information:**

On Dec 14th 2020, Nadhim Zahawi MP said 'there are no plans for vaccine passports'. He continues to deny the UK Government has plans despite reports that people who have received the Covid-19 vaccine will be offered a passport proving they have been vaccinated as part of a government-funded trial.

The Welsh Government must be completely clear to the public about the use of vaccine passports & their intentions, which will undoubtedly affect societal cohesion & effect the economic recovery of Great Britain this year & into 2022.

### **Senedd Constituency and Region**

- Aberavon
- South Wales West

# Agenda Item 2.12

## **P-06-1214 Ban the use of face masks in the classroom**

This petition was submitted by Eleanor Cartwright, having collected a total of 207 signatures.

### **Text of Petition:**

Children need to be able to learn freely without the use of masks in the learning environment. Some of our over 60s and sometimes younger have trouble hearing and understanding what people are saying when being spoken to by a person wearing a mask. Children will also miss out on learning vital communication skills. Please ban the use of the masks to prevent this from happening.

### **Senedd Constituency and Region**

- Wrexham
- North Wales

# Agenda Item 2.13

## **P-06-1215 Restart Welsh parkruns at the same time as english ones**

This petition was submitted by James Bruce, having collected a total of 155 signatures.

### **Text of Petition:**

Parkrun is good for the health of the nation. It provides a framework to encourage physical exercise and supports mental well being.

We are asking for park runs to be allowed to restart in June at the same time as England and make exercise a priority.

### **Senedd Constituency and Region**

- Cardiff North
- South Wales Central

# Agenda Item 2.14

## **P-06-1216 Reduce costs for PCR test in Wales when returning from abroad and end isolation for vaccinated**

This petition was submitted by Jonathan Thomas, having collected a total of 203 signatures.

### **Text of Petition:**

Costs for PCR tests in Wales are high in comparison to the rest of the UK. Welsh Government insist on testing through NHS, whereas in the rest of the UK you can get a private test,

You are also required to isolate when returning from abroad even if you are double vaccinated or have come into contact with someone who has tested positive. There is no test to release early. We should end isolation if you have been double vaccinated and end testing requirements if you travel abroad.

### **Additional Information:**

Bring us in line with England. Our cases and infections are lower.

### **Senedd Constituency and Region**

- Swansea East
- South Wales West

# Agenda Item 3.1

**P-05-1046 Reconsider lockdown and investigate scientific evidence that it does not work and causes more harm**

This petition was submitted by Anne Ellis having collected a total of 2,189 signatures.

**Text of Petition:**

The Welsh Government is committed to rolling and ever more severe lockdowns based on the rise in the number of Covid positive test results and their belief that this will lead to more cases of Covid and a dramatic rise in deaths. Could they also consider the views of Professors Sunetra Gupta, Carl Heneghan and Karol Sikora (amongst others), and take note of the Great Barrington declaration and its signatories; and acknowledge that lockdown actually causes more harm than good.

**Senedd Constituency and Region**

- Gower
- South Wales West



Eich cyf/Your ref P-05-1046  
Ein cyf/Our ref FM -/01688/20

Jack Sargeant MS  
Chair, Petitions Committee

25 August 2021

Dear Jack,

A request was received, during the last Senedd term, from the then-chair of the Petitions Committee, for my views on a petition received requesting that we reconsider lockdown measures and investigate the scientific evidence.

It now appears that a reply was not provided to that request. As a matter of courtesy, I provide a reply below, in case it should prove useful to the present Petitions Committee in the discharge of its duties.

The science used to inform lockdown measures is provided by the Scientific Advisory Group for Emergencies (SAGE) and our Technical Advisory Group (TAG). The TAG published its evidence with regards to the need for a short-term period of simple, strict national restrictions to reduce the prevalence of Covid-19 in Wales at <https://gov.wales/technical-advisory-group-fire-breaks>. SAGE papers on circuit breaker and other non-pharmaceutical interventions are available at <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/circuit-breakers-implementing-partial-lockdown-for-2-weeks-over-half-term-24-september-2020>.

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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.

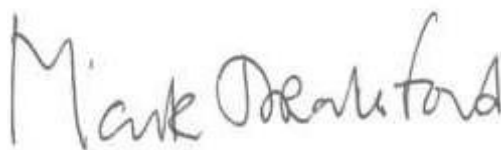
We welcome receiving correspondence in Welsh. Any correspondence received in Welsh will be answered in Welsh and corresponding in Welsh will not lead to a delay in responding.

On 15 October 2020, SAGE published advice specifically on segmentation which can be found at the link below:

[https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment\\_data/file/928740/S0810\\_Summary\\_of\\_SAGE\\_advice\\_on\\_segmentation.pdf](https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/928740/S0810_Summary_of_SAGE_advice_on_segmentation.pdf)

I note that the petition refers to lockdowns being *based on the rise in the number of Covid positive test results and the belief that this will lead to more cases of Covid and a dramatic rise in deaths*. When a person tests positive for Covid, that is recorded as a Covid case, therefore a rise in the number of people testing positive for Covid, is a rise in the number of Covid cases.

Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Mark Drakeford". The signature is written in a cursive, slightly slanted style.

**MARK DRAKEFORD**

**P-05-1046 Reconsider lockdown and investigate scientific evidence that it does not work and causes more harm, Correspondence – Petitioner to Committee, 27.09.21**

I would like to make the point that where we are now clearly demonstrates my previous comments about lockdown. It has, without doubt, created more harm than good. Wales is now in a situation where the NHS backlog is, by its own admission, projected to take five years to clear. So the Welsh NHS - which was lagging pre-pandemic - is now further behind than ever. It was not Covid that caused this. It was the tunnel vision of the Welsh government's reaction to it and its failure to use a more measured and intelligent approach. Unfortunately, politics - and an attempt to be different to England - took over common sense and we all have to pay the price. If there was to be a proper inquiry into the Welsh government's actions there would be many criticisms levelled at it. Mr Drakeford and Mr Gething are good at issuing platitudes but in line with the Great Barrington Declaration - they did not protect the most vulnerable. Elderly patients were discharged to care homes and facilitated the spread of the disease amongst the very demographic that needed protection. The scandalous disruption to education is heart breaking. The waste of money is devastating. The loss of livelihoods is incalculable.

# Agenda Item 3.2

## **P-05-1056 Give Local Authorities powers to control the housing market in rural and tourist areas of Wales**

This petition was submitted by Osian Jones having collected a total of 5,386 signatures.

### **Text of Petition:**

In a number of rural and tourist areas, a large proportion of local inhabitants are deprived of homes as house prices have been inflated by demand for second homes and holiday homes. The First Minister could direct the relevant Ministers to engage in urgent discussions with Local Authorities to draw up a strategy to ensure community control of the housing market mainly through amendments to the planning system.

### **Senedd Constituency and Region**

- Arfon
- North Wales

# Agenda Item 3.3

## **P-05-1129 Apply legislative measures now to enact the Law Commission's recommendations to abolish Leasehold**

This petition was submitted by Mark Habberfield, having collected a total of 425 signatures.

### **Text of Petition:**

On 21st July 2020 all three residential leasehold and commonhold reports were published by the Law Commission (see additional details). We believe the recommendations from these reports should be immediately enacted in Welsh law without delay to protect and improve the lives of nearly 400,000 Welsh leaseholders. It has been over eight years since Scotland lead the way in removing leasehold from their housing and with this report the Senedd now has a clear mandate to apply legislative measures.

### **Additional Information:**

<https://www.lawcom.gov.uk/project/residential-leasehold-and-commonhold/>

The Law Commission published three Reports in which they recommend reforms to three areas of law:

- (1.) leasehold enfranchisement, which is the right for people who own property on a long lease (“leaseholders”) to buy the freehold or extend their lease
- (2.) the right to manage, which is a right for leaseholders to take over the management of their building without buying the freehold
- (3.) commonhold, which allows for the freehold ownership of flats, offering an alternative way of owning property which avoids the shortcomings of leasehold ownership.

### **Senedd Constituency and Region**

- Cardiff South and Penarth
- South Wales Central

Julie James AS/MS  
Y Gweinidog Newid Hinsawdd  
Minister for Climate Change



Llywodraeth Cymru  
Welsh Government

Ein cyf/Our ref JJ/11192/21

Jack Sargeant MS  
Chair - Petitions Committee

petitions@senedd.wales

22 September 2021

Dear Jack,

I am pleased to provide you with an update on the issues raised in relation to petition P-05-1129 – *Apply legislative measures now to enact the Law Commission's recommendations to abolish leasehold*.

Since I wrote to you on 1 February 2021, we have published our [research into the sale and use of leasehold in Wales](#). Subsequently, in my [Written Statement](#) on 17 March, I confirmed that the research complements the other evidence we had already gathered on the challenges and unfairness that can exist within the leasehold tenure. Having considered all of the evidence, I am able to set out my intentions for taking forward leasehold reform in Wales.

Firstly, with regard to leasehold houses, in 2018 we took early action to prevent Help to Buy-Wales funding from being used for unnecessary new leasehold houses. We also secured wider agreement from the industry to stop the routine building of new leasehold houses. I am pleased to say these non-legislative steps have already significantly curtailed poor practice in the sale of new leasehold houses. According to the most recent data from the Office of National Statistics, leasehold accounted for only 2.6% of new-build houses in 2018, compared to 8.1% in 2017:  
<https://www.ons.gov.uk/peoplepopulationandcommunity/housing/bulletins/leaseholdandfreeholdresidentialpropertytransactionsinenglandandwales/2018>.

Our research was not able to identify any advantages of owning a leasehold house, and found that leaseholders of houses who participated in the research were generally more dissatisfied than leaseholders of flats. Indeed, the research indicated there was a 'strong consensus to end the sale of leasehold houses'. Separately, the independent [Task and Finish Group](#) also concluded that houses were being offered as leasehold 'without any justifiable reason' and recommended Welsh Government 'legislate to introduce a ban on the unjustified use of leasehold in new build houses'.

Canolfan Cyswllt Cyntaf / First Point of Contact Centre:  
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CF99 1SN

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[Correspondence.Julie.James@gov.Wales](mailto:Correspondence.Julie.James@gov.Wales)

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.

**Back Page 128**  
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.

Consequently, I consider there is a compelling case for introducing a statutory ban on the unnecessary use of leasehold as a tenure for houses in Wales. Issues such as mis-selling, escalating ground rents and the provision of misleading information to leaseholders about purchasing their freehold are just three examples of problems that have been raised. I am concerned that such practices appear to be intended simply to take advantage of resident leaseholders for the financial benefit of freeholders, rather than serving any useful purpose.

Regarding the Law Commission's reports on Enfranchisement, Right to Manage and Reinvigorating Commonhold, these set out far-reaching proposals for reforming leasehold law and for taking commonhold forward as a workable alternative model to leasehold for the ownership of flats. These proposals have broadly been accepted by the Welsh Government and are reflected in our new [Programme for Government](#).

In my statement on 17 March, I set out my preference for a joint England & Wales approach to implementing the Law Commissions proposed reforms, not least as this will enable the reforms to be implemented more quickly in Wales. Positive progress is being made and the Leasehold Reform (Ground Rent) Bill (<https://bills.parliament.uk/bills/2864>), representing the first of the legislative reforms, was introduced in Parliament on 12 May. The Bill makes proposals to restrict ground rent on all new leases in England and Wales to a peppercorn, effectively restricting ground rents to zero financial value.

The UK Government intends to bring forward a further package of legislative reforms, including those enacting the other recommendations from the Law Commission's work, later during the current Parliament. We are working with the UK Government to ensure these reforms will equally meet the needs of Wales. Whilst the legislation has yet to be drafted, it is anticipated the Law Commission's proposals to reinvigorate commonhold will feature significantly.

In May, the UK Government established a [Commonhold Council](#) - an expert group in which the Welsh Government is also involved - to help ensure the widespread use of commonhold as a positive alternative to leasehold. The principal aim of the Council is to advise on the implementation of a reformed commonhold regime and to bring forward solutions to prepare homeowners and the market for the broad adoption of commonhold for new-build flats. In addition, consideration is being given to the Law Commission's proposals for reforming how existing leasehold buildings could convert to commonhold. The overarching aim is to extend the benefits of freehold ownership to flat owners where possible.

It is unlikely that the proposals will lead to leasehold being abolished entirely, as there may be some limited exceptions where a leasehold option is still the most suitable or only workable model available. However, I would anticipate that once these reforms are introduced we will see very few "new" leasehold houses or flats. In addition, whilst the Law Commission proposals for improving enfranchisement, the right to manage, and the conversion to commonhold, will also help existing leaseholders, particularly those in blocks of flats who wish to exercise their rights, I do not currently envisage existing leaseholders being compelled to convert to commonhold against their collective wishes.

Whilst I appreciate the desire for immediate legislative action, it is important that any legislative reforms of such scale, significance and complexity are carefully considered and planned. Nevertheless, I trust I have been able to reassure you that significant work is under way with the intention of achieving reform as soon as practicable.

Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Julie James". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

**Julie James AS/MS**  
Y Gweinidog Newid Hinsawdd  
Minister for Climate Change

**P-05-1129 Apply legislative measures now to enact the Law Commission's recommendations to abolish Leasehold, Correspondence – Petitioner to Committee, 28.09.21**

Mark Habberfield  
Co-Founder of Welsh Leasehold Campaign

Jack Sargeant MS  
Chair - Petitions Committee  
petitions@senedd.wales

28<sup>th</sup> September 2021

Dear Jack,

I am pleased to provide you with an update to our position with regards to petition *P-05-1129 – Apply legislative measures now to enact the Law Commission's recommendations to abolish leasehold.*

Our position is still very much that leasehold should be abolished.

With regards to the recent legislation in the form of Leasehold Reform (Ground Rent) Bill coming from Westminster, we feel this is a watered-down piecemeal solution being presented by a government that are freeholders themselves, act on behalf of builders and have interests in the hedge funds that profit from leasehold.

Any leasehold is bad. To those who do not live with the nightmare that is leasehold, peppercorn rents seem like a simple solution, but it will still heavily restrict leaseholders to unreasonable fees, little or no recourse to builders and unregulated management agents. This is on top of the mis-selling, escalating ground rents and complex leasehold contracts often designed to maximise profit for the freeholders. Everyone seems to forget that when a leasehold ground rent rises above £250 it becomes a shorthold tenancy meaning someone could lose their home in just one month if they forget to pay that ground rent.

As we have seen time and time again, any loopholes in leasehold contracts will soon be exploited unless it is gone for good. We have seen this with insurance brokerage fees going to freeholders but paid for by leaseholders. We have seen this in preferred contractors billing extra to give kickbacks to freeholders. We have seen this in excessive waking watch costs when they are generally not needed. We have seen this with the latest scandal of charging for fire safety work that turned out to be unnecessary. The stories just keep coming out. The only way to prevent the exploitation of leaseholders by freeholders and their agents is to abolish leasehold altogether, giving residents back control of their properties.

As seen in the evidence gathered by the Welsh Government on behalf of the Minister for Climate Change, there are no advantages to leasehold. The business of leasehold needs to stop and the only way to do this is remove it for good, just as every other country in the world has done bar England and Wales.

Past Welsh MP's have lobbied for the removal of leasehold in Wales for over fifty years and I trust the Petition Committee see how this complex issue would be better solved by abolishing leasehold rather than "polishing" leasehold into an ever more complex system.

Thank you for the opportunity to add further comment and thank you to the Petition Committee for considering this petition.

Yours sincerely,

Mark Habberfield

A solid black rectangular redaction box covering the signature area.

# Agenda Item 3.4

## P-05-1094 Stop the erosion of Pontypridd's heritage – save the White Bridge

This petition was submitted by Cllr. Mike Powell having collected a total of 304 signatures.

### **Text of Petition:**

We the undersigned ask that the Welsh Government via CADW take action to ensure that the White Bridge in Pontypridd is preserved so that the town does not lose yet another important piece of its and Wales's heritage. Stop the erosion of Wales's heritage.

### **Additional Information:**

The White Bridge was built in 1907 and at the time of its construction was the longest reinforced concrete arch in Britain. It was Grade II listed by CADW on 26 February 2001.

RCT Council have stated their intention is to demolish the bridge following storm damage in early 2020 which they say has made it unsafe. Dafydd Elis Thomas, Deputy Minister for Culture, Sport and Tourism, in a letter to Cllr Mike Powell dated 25 June 2020 made clear

“Planning Policy Wales explains that the demolition of any listed building should be considered as exceptional and any such proposal requires the strongest justification, including a heritage impact statement. My officials have emphasised the high level justification that would be required if an application for listed building consent for demolition were to be successful”.  
Once it's gone it is gone.

<https://britishlistedbuildings.co.uk/300024848-white-bridge-also-known-as-berw-bridge-pontypridd#.X0rZH2nRYOM>

### **Senedd Constituency and Region**

- Pontypridd
- South Wales Central

[REDACTED]  
Petitions Committee Welsh Parliament  
Email: [petitions@senedd.wales](mailto:petitions@senedd.wales)

**Gofynnwch Am/Please Ask For: Roger Waters**

**Fy Nghyf/My Ref:**  
101005951321

**Eich Cyf/Your Ref:**  
P-05-1094

**Dyddiad/Date:**  
21 September 2021

Good Afternoon [REDACTED],

Please accept my apologies for the delay in responding, but I am happy to be able to assure you that excellent progress has been made on safeguarding this important structure, in close liaison with CADW.

All scour damage within the river has been addressed and, following detailed inspections and assessments, the bridge has now opened with restrictions on vehicular loading in line with previous weight limits.

We are working closely with CADW on initiating trial repairs to the bridge structure and these trials will inform a comprehensive repair programme which, subject to funding and further agreement with CADW, we hope to undertake next summer. The scale of these repairs will be both costly and disruptive and will necessitate a full closure of the bridge.

I trust the foregoing is of assistance in clarifying the current very positive situation and the proactive approach to safeguarding this structure that the Council has taken.

Yours sincerely



Roger Waters – Director Frontline Services

**Tŷ Sardis/Sardis House**  
Heol Sardis, Pontypridd, CF37 1DU  
Sardis Road, Pontypridd, CF37 1DU

Ffôn/Tel: [REDACTED]

**Nigel Wheeler B.Sc(Hons)**  
Cyfarwyddwr Cyfadran – Ffyniant, Datblygu, a Gwasanaethau Rheng Flaen | Group Director – Prosperity, Development & Frontline Services

**Dewiswch iaith a diwyg eich dogfen | Available in alternative formats and languages**

Croesawn ohebu yn Gymraeg a fydd gohebu yn y Gymraeg ddim yn arwain at oedi. Rhowch wybod inni beth yw'ch dewis iaith e.e Cymraeg neu'n ddwyieithog.  
We welcome correspondence in Welsh and corresponding with us in Welsh will not lead to a delay. Let us know your language choice if Welsh or bilingual.



# Agenda Item 3.5

## **P-05-1142 Workout To Help Out Scheme**

This petition was submitted by Jamie Price, having collected a total of 261 signatures.

### **Text of Petition:**

After the first lockdown the UK Government spent £500m on the eat out to help out scheme!

This time the focus must be on health!

With activity levels falling to an all-time low in this third lockdown & mental health figures rocketing to an all-time high we need to prioritise health post lockdown!

A workout to help out scheme would be for anyone looking to attend a gym, swimming pool and leisure facilities for a day pass, class or an outdoor fitness-related activity. It could provide 50% off someone's bill, capped at ten pounds per person.

This would be an opportunity to prioritise & improve the health of the nation post pandemic whilst relieving some of the future pressures from the NHS!

### **Senedd Constituency and Region**

- Cardiff West
- South Wales Central



Eich cyf/Your ref P-05-1142  
Ein cyf/Our ref DET/00218/21

Janet Finch-Saunders MS  
Chair  
Petitions Committee

Government.Committee.Business@gov.wales

17 February 2021

Dear Janet,

Thank you for your correspondence regarding petition P-05-1142.

The coronavirus pandemic has had a profound impact on indoor activities such as swimming and fitness classes. That is why, throughout the lockdown, going outdoors for exercise is one of the limited reasons we have permitted people to leave their homes.

Since the start of the pandemic the Welsh Government has continued to work closely with the sport sector, and across public services to support different approaches to engaging and encouraging physical activity as a preventative health and wellbeing measure. We have operated a number of funds and schemes through Sport Wales, our provider for sport in Wales.

In 2020 the Welsh Government announced a £14m sport and leisure recovery fund for 2020-21 to help the sector meet the ongoing challenges resulting from the coronavirus pandemic and to help provide longer-term sustainability. The sport and leisure recovery fund is designed to help provide essential support to sports clubs and organisations, independent providers and sporting events which have suffered a significant loss of revenue over recent months. The fund also makes available funding for innovation in local authority leisure centres and leisure trusts which complements funding available for increased costs and loss of income from the local government hardship fund.

The Welsh Government have recently announced the 'private providers' fund which is focused on ensuring support for commercial providers for physical activity in Wales. more information on this please visit <https://www.sport.wales/sport-sector-private-providers-fund/>.

We previously operated the sport freelancer fund and also have the Be Active Wales Fund open for not-for-profit community clubs and organisations <https://www.sport.wales/beactivewalesfund/>. These range of financial support mechanisms all support providers to be viable through the pandemic.

Bae Caerdydd • Cardiff Bay  
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[Correspondence.Dafydd.Elis-Thomas@gov.wales](mailto:Correspondence.Dafydd.Elis-Thomas@gov.wales)

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.

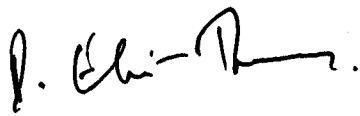
We welcome receiving correspondence in Welsh. Any correspondence received in Welsh will be answered in Welsh and corresponding in Welsh will not lead to a delay in responding.

Increasing opportunities to be physically active is central to ensuring that people across Wales are able to stay healthy and well. That is why, as part of Healthy Weight: Healthy Wales, we invested £500k for Sport Wales to develop a 60 Plus Active Leisure Scheme offer. This will enable Sport Wales to continue to deliver targeted provision of physical activity opportunities, to contribute to a reduction in health inequalities amongst the 60 plus population.

I thank you for your feedback and it has been taken on board. We fully recognise the enormous efforts and sacrifices the Welsh public and businesses have made to keep Wales safe and to save lives. The Welsh Government will continue to provide regular updates via the Covid19 press conferences and our social media channels over the coming weeks.

I hope this information is helpful and illustrates some of the support that is being provided.

Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'P. Elis-Thomas'.

**Yr Arglwydd Elis-Thomas AS/MS**

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

# Agenda Item 3.6

## **P-05-1010 An independent inquiry into the 2020 flooding in Rhondda Cynon Taf so that lessons are learned**

This petition was submitted by Eleri Griffiths having collected 274 signatures on paper and 5,743 online, a total of 6,017 signatures.

### **Text of Petition:**

We, the undersigned, urge the Welsh Government to initiate a full, independent, open and public inquiry into the 2020 flooding of homes and businesses across Rhondda Cynon Taf, and that appropriate steps are taken to rectify any issues so that similar damage can be prevented from reoccurring.

### **Additional Information**

People and businesses across Rhondda Cynon Taf need an inquiry into the flooding that has hit so many of our communities this year, with some affected three times since February. It is time for the voices and experiences of the people and businesses of Pontypridd, Treforest, Taff's Well, Trehafod, Cilfynydd, Rhydyfelin, Nantgarw, Hawthorn, Hirwaun, Abercwmboi, Mountain Ash, Pentre, Treorchy, Treherbert, Maerdy, Porth and others to be heard, so that lessons are learned for the future.

### **Senedd Constituency and Region**

- Pontypridd
- South Wales Central

**P-05-1010 An independent inquiry into the 2020 flooding in Rhondda Cynon Taf so that lessons are learned, Correspondence – Petitioner to Committee, 28.09.21**

**Independent Inquiry into the 2020 Flooding in Rhondda Cynon Taf**

Storm Dennis affected many parts of the UK, but 25% of the damage that occurred in total was suffered by Rhondda Cynon Taf<sup>1</sup>. Within RCT County Borough alone, 1498 properties suffered internal flooding and there was extensive damage to infrastructure including rail and highway networks, town centres, business parks and leisure facilities<sup>2</sup>. As two members of the Petitions Committee reside in Rhondda Cynon Taf, they will have first-hand experience of the scale of the devastation.

This petition was originally brought forward by Heledd Fychan, Councillor for Pontypridd Town Ward and discussed by your committee. As Heledd is now a Member for the Senedd it has been passed to myself to take forward as I was a supporter of the petition. I saw the consequences of the flooding first hand as 43 homes in the lower end of Trehafod in the Rhondda Ward where I am a councillor were flooded. At the time, and as recently as September 2021 it has been noted by the First Minister that an independent inquiry would be a waste of public funds in light of the reporting mechanisms already in place (Section 19 reports) and in light of a report that the Law Commission has been tasked to publish in relation to Coal Tip Safety.

We are now in a much more informed position to look in detail at the analyses and recommendation made by these reports. As we feared there remains a chasm between what information RCT residents want to know and what the reports deliver in reality. This is why we would like the petitions committee to re-consider previous findings and give consideration again to the need for an independent inquiry.

**Why an independent inquiry is needed?**

Attached as [Appendix A](#) is the original submission to the committee, which makes the case for an Independent Inquiry. The original submission also includes a collection of testimonials which I would urge members to read. Therefore the comments below reflect recent development and updates, and why an independent inquiry is still considered essential.

**i) *Limitations of the Statutory Reports***

The First Minister stated during the debate on this issue on 9 December 2020: *“All Members of this Senedd have a role in scrutinising those reports closely as soon as they're available and ensuring that the views and interests of their constituents are represented. And this Senedd has a role in ensuring that we do learn the lessons from those reports and apply them in national policy and local operational practice to keep Wales safe. I believe that the*

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<sup>1</sup> <https://golwg.360.cymru/newyddion/cymru/563567-storm-dennis-argyfwng-stepen-drws-medd>

<sup>2</sup>

<https://www.rctcbc.gov.uk/EN/Resident/ParkingRoadsandTravel/Roadspavementsandpaths/FloodAlleviation/FloodInvestigationReports.aspx>

*professionally prepared and legally required reports from local authorities will allow us to do that."*

To date, only 3 Section 19 reports have been published with at least 16 more expected. Only two detailed ones have been published – one in July relating to Pentre and one recently in relation to Cilfynydd.

I, and others involved in this campaign for justice for flood victims, am still convinced that the reports, thorough as they are and written in good faith, do not allow us to answer many of the issues that need addressing urgently. They are written by the Local Authority as the Lead Flood Authority.

In relation to Pentre, the overarching conclusion is that some brash from tree felling was a contributory factor to causing the flooding in this area, and NRW contend that though some brash did enter the water causeways, it was not responsible for the floods. Some selected people from Pentre were invited to a meeting with local politicians following the publication of this report where they were led to believe that compensation should be received from NRW. Chris Bryant MP stated on twitter on the 1<sup>st</sup> of July that

*".....we now know for certain what a lot of us thought for a long time which is that the main body of the flooding only happened because brash and wood was left on the mountain side near the water course, got into the water course, blocked the culvert and left to the flooding coming down the streets.....NRW must take responsibility and I will be making sure – working with Buffy Williams, Member of the Senedd that we get compensation for everyone who is involved....and at the same time it is really important that RCT have put new measures in place to make sure that nothing like this can ever happen again, that first of all means no wood lying near the water course, secondly a massive more than half a million pound has been spent on a new culvert at the top of Pentre..."*

A statement released by NRW on July the 2<sup>nd</sup> states:

*"We accept that woody material washed off the mountains above Pentre may have contributed to blockages to the culvert system, which also included a significant amount of soil and rock. However, a proportion of the woody debris was unrelated to NRW's felling operations and was washed down as a natural consequence of such an extreme event. NRW therefore disagrees with the report's inference that its harvesting operations were the primary cause of the flooding during Storm Dennis."*

Prior to the publication of the Pentre Section 19 report on June the 7<sup>th</sup> a letter was submitted by Councillor Andrew Morgan, Leader of RCT Council and Chair of the Welsh Local Government Association to the Minister for Climate Change Julie James. The letter in essence notes various problems experienced by Local Authorities when working with the NRW and calling for a review of NRW's remit and that consideration should be given to how well NRW are performing and if there might be alternative arrangements for delivering their functions.

In view of the competing agendas at play here and the obvious blame game that is happening, it is not possible for RCT residents to have any faith that the truth of what happened at each flooding occurrence will be understood and shared publicly. Unfortunately, some politicians seem to show that they are willing to mislead local people and make false promises about compensation rather than present an honest report of what

happened, who did what, could things have been done any differently and what lessons have been learnt.

Heledd Fychan, Member of the Senedd recently undertook a survey of all those who occupied or lived in properties that were flooded in Pentre, after the publication of the Section 19 report. All of those that responded still support an independent inquiry and feel the Section 19 report did not provide the answers or assurances they were seeking. In response to the question 'How confident are you that work undertaken since the floods will stop your home/business from being flooded in future? Only 10% of respondents felt that they were confident that they would not flood again.

## **ii) Emergency Planning**

As a new local councillor for the Rhondda Ward, elected only 8 months previously when the flooding hit I, along with countless volunteers got stuck into the task of helping those whose homes were under water. From my experience in Trehafod I would say the first few days can only be described as chaotic. Considering there was serious flooding and damage in so many communities at the same time, it could be argued that this was to be expected. Basic services were stretched and information hard to come by. Wondering if we were following best practice and official advice I went searching for the Local Authority's emergency plan. On the website there was a plan from 2011 (it was replaced with a more recent version a few weeks later). It is a detailed strategic plan giving guidance to officers and members about what should happen when and where. According to the plan the strategic objectives of the Local Authority in a situation of emergency is:

### **6.2 Objectives**

- *The support of the emergency services.*
- *The provision of a wide range of support services for the community.*
- *The co-ordination of recovery and return to normality of the community including the incident site.*
- *Maintaining the authority's normal service at an appropriate level.*
- *The management of voluntary agencies.*

*Their integration is essential to the effectiveness of the overall response and crucial to the care of those involved. The provision of services covering the following five functional areas will provide the basis for a coordinated local authority response to any emergency situation.*

- *Information*
- *Personal Care and Support*
- *Works*
- *Feeding*
- *Accommodation*

*It was of interest to note that the emergency plan also stipulated that*

*The use of Volunteers in an emergency within Rhondda Cynon Taf will be co-ordinated by the County Borough Volunteer Emergency Committee. The Committee will meet on a regular basis to discuss plans and strategy. The members of the Committee will be:-*

- 1. A representative from Community Care*
- 2. A representative from Children's Services*
- 3. An Emergency Planning Officer*

#### 4. The Fire Service

#### 5. The Police

It is known that the work of dealing with the effects of Storm Dennis was a mammoth task for the Local Authority and other agencies. It is also true that many individual employees, local members and volunteers in many agencies performed above and beyond their role descriptions. Unfortunately it is not possible to truly understand the after picture of what happened, as there has been no analysis shared by Local Authority of the decisions and actions taken in the aftermath of the Storm. The statutory reporting duties does not require the Flood Authority to reveal how it performed against the emergency plan, what the logs of officers reveal about the learning actions that come from the experience and whether those who were leading the chain of command exercised their duties as expected.

### **Climate Emergency**

In 2019, the Welsh Government declared a climate emergency. The Future Trends report, published in 2018, predicted that by 2030 the potential impacts of Climate Change on Wales include flooding, coastal changes, drought, shortages of water, risks to health and wellbeing from high temperatures, and risks to nature. An independent inquiry would help us understand the role the changes to the climate played in the flooding and determine what actions we need to take now – rather than in years to come – to save our climate. To quote Natural Resources Wales from their report into flooding in Wales in October 2020.

*“Only by bringing together all levels of government, public bodies, businesses, communities, families and individuals to respond to this very real threat can we make Wales stronger in our adaptation to future floods. We at NRW are committed to doing just that.”*

*“But to truly learn the lessons from the February 2020 flood events, there needs to be a fundamental consideration of the choices that governments, decision-makers and society have on how the risks can be managed.”*

### **Residents Concerns and Experiences**

RhCTCBC as the main flood authority did employ a company to collate the views of affected residents. However no report has been shared outlining what the residents main concerns were and how, if and when their concerns will be be addressed by the various implicated agencies.

### **Health Impacts**

The stress experienced by local residents cannot be underestimated. The effects are ongoing and can still be clearly seen. Many homes stand empty, other homes have experienced long delays in home renovations due to the Covid pandemic that followed closely on the tails of Storm Denis. A public inquiry would have the ability to investigate the health impact of the flooding and use this information to provide services but also to plan for future climate related events. The wellbeing costs of the flooding has yet to be acknowledged or costed.

I urge the petitions committee to support this call for an inquiry as an opportunity to ensure that the destructive and damaging effects of Storm Denis is used as an experience to inform future planning and create a positive legacy for the future.

# Agenda Item 3.7

## P-05-1097 Ban game bird cages

This petition was submitted by The League Against Cruel Sports having collected a total of 5,287 signatures.

### **Text of Petition:**

Millions of pheasants and partridges are estimated to be factory farmed in Wales each year so that they can be shot for 'sport'. To breed them, tens of thousands of parent birds are confined to cages, often for much of their breeding lives. Cages are cruel and cause animals to suffer. The Welsh Government has previously indicated support for Wales to become a cage-free nation. We call for the Welsh Government to ban the use of cages to produce game birds.

### **Additional Information:**

Life in a cage can lead to distress and injury, and doesn't fully allow for birds' needs or natural behaviour. Their suffering can include painful open foot sores, stress-induced attacks and injury from repeated attempts to escape. To reduce problem behaviours linked to their captivity, such as pecking other birds, devices such as plastic bits forced into their nostrils can also be used.

Pheasants and partridges are semi-wild by nature, making the impact of cages all the greater. Yet they're not even covered by the basic regulations granted to other farmed animals or routinely inspected. Investigations have revealed breaches of guidance such as repeated use of barren cages and dead pheasants left long enough in cages to be cannibalised. Even in cages described as 'enriched', there could be as little as a single shared perch, a plastic curtain and some astroturf.

Whether confined to barren or 'enriched' cages, game birds suffer. The Welsh Government has the power to end this practice.

### **Senedd Constituency and Region**

- Cardiff North
- South Wales Central

**Briefing note from the League Against Cruel Sports for the Petitions Committee of the Sixth Senedd, on Petition P-05-1097 Ban game bird cages, September 2021**

The League Against Cruel Sports welcomes the opportunity to update the newly constituted Petitions Committee on the issues which prompted our Petition calling for a ban on the use of game bird cages, and on developments since it was last discussed by the previous Petitions Committee in March 2021.

In terms of developments since the Petition was submitted, there are four main things to note.

- The Welsh Government's Programme for Government for the Sixth Senedd includes plans to 'Restrict the use of cages for farmed animals.' ([Welsh Government - Programme for Government](#) p.16) We have no further detail as yet on plans and timeframes for the restrictions but the League believes that any measures announced should include 'game' birds bred for 'sport' shooting within their scope.
- The Welsh Government's Review of the Code of Practice for the Welfare of Gamebirds Reared for Sporting Purposes, which began in 2019 and which had not concluded before the Covid pandemic began, remains unfinished. The League was among the stakeholders consulted on the review.
- The [Game Birds \(Cage Breeding\) Bill](#), introduced to the House of Lords by Lord Randall of Uxbridge, would ban the use of raised laying or battery cages to keep pheasants and partridges for egg production in England and Wales. It would also set minimum space requirements for enclosures used for those birds kept for egg laying, whether during or after the laying period. Breaking the law would be punishable by a fine, imprisonment or both. It was drawn in 17<sup>th</sup> place in the ballot for Private Members Bills in the House of Lords and received its First Reading on 10 June 2021. Its provisions would come into force 12 months after being passed. Lord Randall was special advisor on the environment to Theresa May MP when she was Prime Minister.
- A cage breeding ban is being backed by the 'Act Now For Animals' coalition of 50 animal charities. In May 2021 they submitted a green paper to (and aimed at) the UK's Defra. Full details can be found here and we feel are useful to consideration of the issue in Wales too:  
<https://view.pagetiger.com/actnowforanimals/1>

We await more information from Welsh Government on all the first three points, including on how they may influence and interact with each other, and how they affect their response to our petition.

# Agenda Item 3.8

## **P-06-1159 Finally ban the manufacture, sale and use of animal snares in Wales**

This petition was submitted by Robert Curtis, having collected a total of 6,514 signatures.

### **Text of Petition:**

Ask most people in Wales and they would probably tell you that they believe the practice of setting snares for wild animals must have been banned in the dark ages, but sadly the truth is very different. In fact thousands of wild and domestic animals are killed or severely injured in Wales every year due to the use of snares.

Currently we only have a Code of best practice on their use despite the fact that the traps are fundamentally cruel. They have no place in a modern wildlife friendly Wales.

### **Additional Information:**

Snares are thin wire nooses designed to trap and eventually cause the death of their victim. The very nature of their design means that they very often cause the limb amputation or strangulation of the trapped animal and a slow death.

To suggest a "Code of best practice" is the equivalent of having a "Code of best practice" for the use of the Electric Chair. Both are fundamentally cruel and inhumane.

It is also extremely difficult to enforce the regulations for snaring, which occurs primarily on private land in remote locations.

At a time when we are attempting to reintroduce many long lost (due to past ignorant persecution and hunting) species, such as the pine marten, red squirrel, deer, otter and even beaver, the indiscriminating design of the snare will mean that many of these protected species will end up being killed or severely injured.

These indiscriminate traps also pose a very real and unacceptable threat to our beloved family pet cats and dogs. Please make Wales snare free!

## **Senedd Constituency and Region**

- Vale of Glamorgan
- South Wales Central

Lesley Griffiths AS/MS  
Y Gweinidog Materion Gwledig a Gogledd Cymru, a'r Trefnydd  
Minister for Rural Affairs and North Wales, and Trefnydd



Llywodraeth Cymru  
Welsh Government

Eich cyf/Your ref P-06-1159  
Ein cyf/Our ref LG/10199/21

Jack Sargeant MS  
Chair - Petitions Committee  
Senedd Cymru  
Cardiff Bay  
Cardiff  
CF99 1SN

[petitions@senedd.wales](mailto:petitions@senedd.wales)

17<sup>th</sup> September 2021

Dear Jack,

Thank you for your letter of 4 August, regarding the petition you have received from Robert Curtis who is asking for a ban on the manufacture, sale and use of animal snares in Wales.

The Programme for Government 2021 to 2026 published on 15 June included a commitment to ban the use of snares in Wales. This builds on proposals published in The Agriculture (Wales) Bill White Paper last December. Our intention to drive up animal welfare standards is clear and my officials are currently exploring legislative options to ban the use of snares in Wales during this Senedd term.

Yours sincerely,

**Lesley Griffiths AS/MS**  
**Y Gweinidog Materion Gwledig a Gogledd Cymru, a'r Trefnydd**  
**Minister for Rural Affairs and North Wales, and Trefnydd**

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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.

# Agenda Item 3.9

## **P-06-1161 Routine collection and publication of data of how many babies/children return to their care experienced parents care at the end of a Parent and Child Placement**

This petition was submitted by Nicola Jones, having collected a total of 60 signatures.

### **Text of Petition:**

We believe that many care leavers walk out of their placements because little thought is given to their previous experiences or to their mental wellbeing even though a baby has the right to stay with its parent/s if it is safe to do so.

### **Additional Information:**

Many care leavers have social services intervention, when they give birth. This is often due to their history and/or lack of their own parental guidance. These care leavers will undoubtedly have experienced trauma in their childhoods and often suffer from anxiety into their adult lives. They have often never felt safe in their homes as a child and having their own space has been their only safe haven where they are totally relaxed. Currently, if there is any concern, a parent is taken away from their home, family and friends then placed in a foster home or residential home to be assessed with little thought to the parents triggers and mental wellbeing. We believe that this often causes a roller coaster of emotions and parents then walk away from placements only to forever regret a rash decision made in a moment of anxiety that wouldn't have happened if the situation had been dealt with more empathically. We want to fact find to see if a better solution for parent and child is needed.

### **Senedd Constituency and Region**

- Cardiff West
- South Wales Central

**P-05-1161 Routine collection and publication of data of how many babies/children return to their care experienced parents care at the end of a Parent and Child Placement, Correspondence – Children’s Commissioner for Wales to the Chair, 03.09.21**

Comisiynydd  
Plant Cymru  
  
Children’s  
Commissioner  
for Wales

Jack Sargeant MS, Chair  
of the Senedd Petitions  
Committee

**By email only**

3rd September 2021

Dear Chair,

Thank you for your request, on behalf of the Committee, for my views on the petition to routinely collect data on how many babies/children return to their care-experienced parents’ care at the end of a Parent and Child Placement. My Office has previously been contacted by the petitioner and one of my Policy Officers has met with her to discuss the petition and the intentions behind it.

Parent and baby placements are used to assess parenting skills and are also designed to support (predominantly) mothers who are new parents. Placements can be made subject to Section 38(6) of the Children Act 1989, as residential assessments in the course of care proceedings. The progress of such placements and assessments is therefore overseen by the court and the parties to the proceedings, including CAFCASS Cymru and the child’s guardian on behalf of the child. Alternatively placements can be entered voluntarily, without the need to issue court proceedings. In such cases, the local authority remains responsible for oversight of the progress of the placement.

It is for local authorities to monitor the success and operation of such placements as the commissioning and funding organisation, and to work through any shared challenges to make the placements as effective as possible. I am not aware of any independent oversight of such placements collectively, other than individual monitoring by judges in each case that is before the courts.

There are national minimum standards for residential family centres of this nature to uphold, and the court should only be ordering such assessments and placements where these are deemed to be necessary, and at suitable and



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Parc Busnes Glan yr Harbwr/ Harbourside  
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Heol yr Harbwr/Harbourside Road  
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**Pack Page 151**

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Croesawn ohebiaeth yn y Gymraeg yn ogystal â'r Saesneg ac mewn amryw o fformatau  
We welcome correspondence in the medium of Welsh and English as well as alternative formats

approved settings. Some registered foster carers also accommodate parent and baby placements.

Where the parent is also care experienced, particularly where they are under 18 and remain subject to a care order themselves, the local authority has to manage its dual responsibilities to the child as the subject of the case but also to the parent for whom they share parental responsibility.

I am aware that at times these placements can result in parents being separated from their often limited support networks, with a lack of available placements resulting in parents and their children being placed a significant distance from their home communities. Parents can become caught between their own support needs and needing to prove their parenting skills in unfamiliar surroundings, often whilst under intensive scrutiny or assessment.

In research by the CASCADE research centre, the support challenge faced by care-experienced parents has been explored in broader terms.<sup>1</sup> Often, care-experienced parents have limited support networks, are under greater scrutiny as new parents, and face a challenge of asking Local Authority Social Services for support due to fears this could be construed by those undertaking the assessment as a poor reflection on their ability to parent. This is in contrast to non-care experienced parents, who are more likely to have a stronger support network around them. One clear example is that young parents who are not care-experienced are more likely to be living with family and can rely on this type of support, whereas care-experienced parents are unlikely to be living with a family member. My Office has previously raised the need for improved support and accommodation options for all care leavers.<sup>2</sup>

The ultimate aim of parent and baby placements should be to support families to remain safely together wherever this is possible, and to test this out in a safe environment for both the parent and the baby. Such placements could therefore be one important tool in supporting local authorities to achieve their stated policy intentions to safely reduce the numbers of children in the care system along with enhanced, preventative community support. However, as raised by the CASCADE research, a lack of data and understanding of the rates of intervention and outcomes for parents and their children, is contributing to underdeveloped responses to this important area of service provision.

It should not automatically be assumed that a care-experienced parent will require additional scrutiny and social services involvement from the outset. However, often care-experienced young people who become parents are overrepresented in care and child protection proceedings. Research by

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<sup>1</sup> [NimbusRomNo9L-Regu \(cardiff.ac.uk\)](https://cardiff.ac.uk/nimbusromno9l-regu)

<sup>2</sup> [Hidden Ambitions - Children's Commissioner for Wales \(childcomwales.org.uk\)](https://childcomwales.org.uk/hidden-ambitions)



CASCADE<sup>3</sup> and the Nuffield Trust<sup>4</sup> have helped develop an understanding of the complex needs of care-experienced parents, and have highlighted that often these needs result in parents who are care-experienced being more likely than other parents to be involved in statutory interventions that could result in their children being removed from their care. This research also demonstrates the breadth of support that parents may require, and suggests that current offerings of support are at times falling short in effectively helping parents and preventing the need for children to be taken in to care.

In regards to the mental health concerns of parents raised in the petition, the 'Born into Care' Research followed the experiences of 1,000 mothers in Wales<sup>5</sup>, and found that over half of pregnant women at risk of care proceedings had reported a mental health condition and 77% had a mental-health related GP or hospital contact or admission prior to their child's birth. It has also helped to dispel myths that mothers are routinely concealing pregnancies, as the study found that 63% of mothers had booked an initial assessment by the end of the 12<sup>th</sup> week of pregnancy. This helps suggest that timely support could help prevent the need for mothers to enter care proceedings with their children.

Due to the current focus on the need to reduce the numbers of children entering the care system and a Welsh Government's commitment to radically reform Wales' care system, it is important we reflect on all areas of the system to understand the effectiveness of the support and services provided. Mother and baby placements are integral to this, but there is also a need to reflect and enhance other types of support available to all young parents, and to better understand how specifically, services respond to young parents who are care-experienced.

In terms of next steps for the Committee I would recommend that you;

- seek further evidence from young people who have experienced such placements and/or early social services involvement as a result of them being care experienced. I would suggest that you contact Voices from Care, NYAS, TGP Cymru and Children in Wales in the first instance to see if they have members or young people they are working with who'd like to share their experiences.

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<sup>3</sup><https://orca.cardiff.ac.uk/123919/1/Roberts%2C%20Louise%20When%20young%20people%20in%20and%20leaving%20state%20care%20become%20parents.pdf>

<sup>4</sup><https://www.nuffieldfjo.org.uk/resource/born-into-care-wales>

<sup>5</sup><https://popdatasci.swan.ac.uk/study-highlights-vulnerabilities-of-pregnant-women-living-in-wales/>

- further engage with local authorities to help develop an understanding of the breadth of support available to young parents (including those who are in or are leaving care) to ensure there is consistent access to effective support. This can help to share best practice and to identify gaps in services. This should include alternatives to parent and baby placements and specific support for fathers.

Yours sincerely



Sally Holland  
Comisiynydd Plant Cymru  
Children's Commissioner for Wales

**P-06-1161 Routine collection and publication of data of how many babies/children return to their care experienced parents care at the end of a Parent and Child Placement, Correspondence – Petitioner to Committee, 28.09.21**

Thank you for giving me the opportunity to respond to the document written by Sally Holland and send further comments. For the most part I am in agreement with her comments but she and the committee may not be aware of actual practice by Social Services. I only have one young person as an example but she tells me that she knows other care leavers who have lost their babies to adoption due to the stress they have been put under during their pregnancy and while in mother and baby placements. I will use this example but please keep in mind that it is unlikely to be the only case hence the reason for my petition.

"Parent and baby placements are used to assess parenting skills and are also designed to support (predominantly) mothers who are new parents. Placements can be made subject to Section 38(6) of the Children Act 1989, as residential assessments in the course of care proceedings. The progress of such placements and assessments is therefore overseen by the court and the parties to the proceedings, including CAFCASS Cymru and the child's guardian on behalf of the child. Alternatively placements can be entered voluntarily, without the need to issue court proceedings." The example mother was not subject to Section 38 but was forced to agree with a voluntary placement - she was told that if she didn't agree then it would be taken to court and the baby could be taken from her.

"Some registered foster carers also accommodate parent and baby placements." The example mum had made arrangements to come and stay with me after the birth as someone who she trusted and could support her with her new baby, I am also a registered Foster Carer. When Social Services became involved I then trained as a mother and baby placement but social services refused my offer of a placement.

"Where the parent is also care experienced, particularly where they are under 18 and remain subject to a care order themselves, the local authority has to manage its dual responsibilities to the child as the subject of the case but also to the parent for whom they share parental responsibility. I am aware that at times these placements can result in parents being separated from their often limited support networks, with a lack of available placements resulting in parents and their children being placed a significant distance from their home communities. Parents can be become caught between their own support needs and needing to prove their parenting skills in unfamiliar surroundings, often whilst under intensive scrutiny or assessment" Although this is sometimes the only way to ensure a baby is safe, this can cause extreme anxiety for the parent. In the case of my example mother, she was

■ years old, concerns were historical and she had good support. Social Services could have put support in place in her own home as well as having the option of placing her with somebody she knew well.

I would urge that the committee takes note of the research undertaken by Cascade which highlights the need for change. I would also like to reiterate Sally Hollands comments that it is extremely important we reflect on all areas of the system to understand the effectiveness of the support and services provided. There is a need to reflect and enhance types of support available to all young parents, and to better understand how services respond to young parents who are care experienced.

I would urge the committee to follow Sally Hollands recommendations in seeking evidence from young people who have experienced such placements. I am sure my example mother would be happy to contribute. As Sally Holland points out, this would help to share best practice and to identify gaps in services. This should help provide alternatives to parent and baby placements so that low risk cases can be supported in their own homes.

For your information, this young mum was taken from hospital by social services only hours after a long labour and made to walk up two flights of stairs to pack her bags and carry them down to the car where she was forced to leave her baby and then taken to a placement away from any family and friends where she'd never been. I had personally asked the Social Worker to arrange an introduction to the placement prior to the birth - this was ignored. Mum was told it would be deemed negatively if she was on the phone to friends and family, she was told it would be deemed negatively if she spent time in her room with her baby alone - she took this very literally and desperately wanted some time to cuddle her baby away from prying eyes. Although it was supposed to be 'voluntary' she was told if she tried to go home they would have someone sat in her flat with her until it went to court and the baby would then be taken away. A psychological assessment stated that this mum was unlikely to harm her baby but this assessment was ignored. I firmly believe that if this mum had allowed the case to go to court for a judge to decide there would have been no case to answer and mum and baby would have been allowed home, unfortunately, fear of losing her baby made this mum follow social services suggestions causing her unnecessary anxiety. This baby is now ■■■■■ old and I haven't seen a better cared for, loved and thriving child who is meeting all her milestones. This care experienced mother had had enough negative experiences in her life and is now afraid to try for a second child as she is in fear of social services involvement again. I don't believe this is the only example.

I have been a Foster Carer for 8 years and have had many children in my care. Most have needed to be kept safe from abuse or severe neglect but for some, I have seen

the trauma experienced, not from the bad parenting or neglect, but from being taken into care when extra support in the home could have been provided.

Kind regards,

# Agenda Item 3.10

## **P-06-1164 Make bullying and harassment in schools a criminal offence from the age of criminal responsibility**

This petition was submitted by Alanna Louise Virk, having collected a total of 94 signatures.

### **Text of Petition:**

Too many children are suffering in silence, self harming or committing suicide. Encouraging children to be kind to each other is not working. Bullies do not face the consequences of their actions. Make bullying and harassment a criminal offence for children of the age of criminal responsibility (10 years+).

### **Additional Information:**

More often than not it is the victims and their families that deal with the consequences of bullying, not the bullies. Many children commit suicide or have their lives destroyed, but bullies live the rest of their lives without facing any repercussions or consequences for their actions. Children will often not speak out because they feel powerless and believe that the bullying can't be stopped. If it was made law then children may feel more confident in speaking out against their bullies. Bullying and harassment in the workplace is protected under the Equality Act 2010. Why can't children have those same protections?

### **Senedd Constituency and Region**

- Wrexham
- North Wales



Ein cyf/Our ref JMEWL/10851/21

Jack Sargeant MS  
Chair - Petitions Committee  
Senedd Cymru  
Cardiff Bay  
Cardiff  
CF99 1SN

13 September 2021

Dear Jack,

Thank you for your letter of 4 August, regarding Petition P-06-1164 – Make bullying and harassment in schools a criminal offence from the age of criminal responsibility.

Challenging bullying in schools is a key priority for the Welsh Government. We are committed to ensuring all our learners feel safe, secure and are supported to achieve their full potential. We recognise the impact any form of bullying can have on a young person's wellbeing and we encourage schools not only to intervene when problems start to emerge but to promote respectful relationships within the school community to support wellbeing.

Laws are already in place to protect people when bullying behaviour or harassment constitutes a criminal offence. The Welsh Government does not plan to introduce additional legislation in this area.

All schools must, by law, have a school behaviour policy and this policy must set out clearly how the school will address bullying as well as strategies for challenging bullying behaviour. Schools must also record incidents of bullying as part of their wider safeguarding monitoring practice and impact evidence. Recording of incidents also supports schools to take proactive steps to challenge bullying.

To support this we published a suite of guidance 'Rights, respect, equality' in November 2019, which provides statutory guidance for schools and local authorities to help address and prevent bullying in education settings in Wales. The suite also includes advisory guidance for children, young people and their parents/carers to help those affected by bullying.

We continue to work with schools and local authorities to implement and deliver this guidance via training and support, to ensure it is being used as effectively as possible to support children and young people. The guidance will also be updated in due course to reflect the actions contained within the Welsh Government's Race Equality Action Plan.

Bae Caerdydd • Cardiff Bay  
Caerdydd • Cardiff  
CF99 1SN

Canolfan Cyswllt Cyntaf / First Point of Contact Centre:  
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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.

The Welsh Government has also recently published new framework guidance for schools on the development of a whole school approach to emotional and mental wellbeing, which issued in March 2021. The guidance has been designed to help schools develop and build their own consistent and equitable whole school approaches to wellbeing to meet their distinct needs and circumstances. We have also made available £9m in our 2021-22 budget to support this work. This builds on the £5m to support our whole schoolwork in 2020-21.

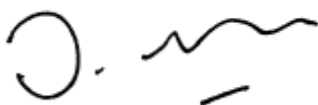
The Together for Mental Health Delivery Plan 2019-2022 highlights preventing suicide and self-harm as a key priority area. We are working with the National Advisory Group for the prevention of Suicide and Self-harm which advises the Welsh Government on this issue to further develop national and regional approaches and have appointed national and regional leads to support this work. We also provide funding through our section 64 grant scheme to Action for Children to deliver their Mental Health and High School Curriculum guide. The guide provides a complete set of online resources proven to increase the understanding of mental health and mental disorders, decrease the stigma of mental illness and increase the ability to seek help, amongst students and teachers.

Previous to the above work, in conjunction with the National Advisory Group, our *Suicide and Self-harm Guidance for Schools* was formally launched in September 2019, to coincide with World Suicide Prevention Day. This guidance adds to the arsenal of tools at the disposal of professionals to tackle the issue when it arises, de-escalating the problem and knowing how and when to seek further help and support.

The Welsh Government has also created an online resource which promotes the numerous digital tools designed specifically to support young people with their own mental health and emotional wellbeing. The Young person's mental health Toolkit links young people, aged 11 to 25, to websites, apps, helplines, and more to build resilience and support them through the Coronavirus pandemic and beyond.

I believe these actions clearly convey the fact that the Welsh Government takes the wellbeing of our children and young people extremely seriously.

Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, consisting of a stylized 'J' followed by a wavy line and a short horizontal stroke.

**Jeremy Miles AS/MS**  
Gweinidog y Gymraeg ac Addysg  
Minister for Education and Welsh Language

# Agenda Item 3.11

## **P-06-1167 Support Welsh travel & tourism businesses**

This petition was submitted by Matthew Sutton, having collected a total of 138 signatures.

### **Text of Petition:**

Coronavirus has had a huge impact on all businesses across Wales, but from the start the travel and tourism industry has had a huge financial impact.

From the original 5 mile rule, to being allowed to trade for just 7 weeks, and now local travel restrictions re-imposed across much of Wales.

### **Additional Information:**

The tourism industry in particular coach holidays takes people to seaside resorts, towns and cities putting plenty of money through local hospitality and retail businesses.

We have received very little funding, and the latest announcement on the economic resilience fund will not be enough to support all the businesses across wales that need the support.

There have been support packages put in place for many business types, but ours seems to be the worst affected and least supported.

We are kindly asking for your support to let the Welsh Government discuss a plan of helping our industry survive this pandemic.

### **Senedd Constituency and Region**

- Merthyr Tydfil and Rhymney
- South Wales East



Ein cyf/Our ref VG/10908/21

Jack Sargeant MS  
Chair - Petitions Committee  
Senedd Cymru  
Cardiff Bay  
Cardiff  
CF99 1SN  
Government.Committee.Business@gov.wales

31 August 2021

Dear Jack

Thank you for your letter of 4 August seeking my views on a petition from Matthew Sutton about the significant financial effect of the pandemic on the travel and tourism industry.

I note the petition refers to the various travel restrictions that impacted these businesses stating they were the worst effected and least supported sector. They also call on the Welsh Government to devise a plan for helping the industry survive the pandemic. The petition refers to certain restrictions still being in place which, of course, is no longer the case following our move to alert level zero on 7 August.

Firstly, the Welsh Government recognises the difficulties and challenges which the travel and tourism industry faced, and continue to face in some instances. This is why we have made unprecedented levels of funding available to support businesses through the pandemic, including through the Economic Resilience Fund (ERF) and the non-domestic rates (NDR) linked grants and discretionary grants which were delivered by local authorities. To date we have provided more than £2.5bn in financial support, safeguarding more than 160,000 jobs. This is in addition to a full 12 month rates holiday package for those in the hardest hit sectors. The measures we have taken are in addition to those provided by the UK Government, such as the Self Employment Income Support Scheme, Job Retention Scheme and Bounce Back Loans.

I can confirm that the coach industry was eligible to apply for ERF and did so, including under the Sector Specific Fund. A 'Coach Operators Fund', along the lines as that set up in Scotland, has not been necessary in Wales due to the number of financial support packages made available here.

Canolfan Cyswllt Cyntaf / First Point of Contact Centre:  
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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.

In addition, early in the pandemic eligible businesses could apply to the Covid-19 Wales Business Loan Scheme delivered by the Development Bank of Wales (DBW) which provided loans of between £5k and £250k at favourable interest rates. The DBW continues to have loan and equity funding available for Welsh businesses and an additional £270m has been allocated to the Flexible Investment Fund. This means more than £500m is available through the fund up to 2030 to support the long-term success and sustainable growth of our firms, in turn creating and protecting thousands of Welsh jobs.

The last ERF package of support is designed to meet operating costs between 1<sup>st</sup> July 2021 and 31<sup>st</sup> August 2021 and therefore support businesses beyond the move to alert level zero on 7 August. It will be the final package of emergency support for those that are able to trade, unless Wales re-introduces closures or very significant trading restrictions. We will, however, closely monitor the impact on businesses, while noting further international travel related restrictions continue to be eased.

Looking to the future the Welsh Government is looking to establish a Business Development and Recovery Fund to help businesses recover, develop and grow. Further details will be announced on the Business Wales website in the coming weeks

I think this demonstrates the significant level of support afforded to the sector. I know from our stakeholders meetings that travel and coach operators in Wales have managed to secure support through these funding support mechanisms. Feedback from a recent stakeholder meeting from one coach operator was: *“Welsh Government have out-stripped other nations and support and guidance have been very good”*. We also have other positive feedback from the sector.

Regular engagement with the sector throughout the pandemic was important and Visit Wales met the Welsh coach holiday operators, Confederation of Passenger Transport – Cymru, Coach and Bus Association Cymru, Road Haulage Association and Coach Tourism Association to discuss and address issues facing this particular sector. Recovery plans beyond the emergency financial support and safe re-opening are being shaped through this group.

We are now focusing on a reconstruction mission – that is taking forward the Recovery Plan for the sector ([“Let’s Shape the Future”](#)) published in March, and many of the interventions covered in this Plan are already being delivered or are in progress. We are aligning the plan with the new Programme for Government commitments, and have the further aim of the Recovery Plan acting as a bridge back to our Government’s priorities for the visitor economy, and one of the aims of which is to develop tourism all-year round in Wales.

Yours sincerely,



**Vaughan Gething AS/MS**  
Gweinidog yr Economi  
Minister for Economy

Jack Sargeant MS

Chair of the Petitions Committee

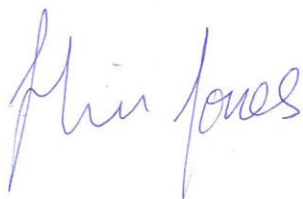
24 September 2021

## Change to Petitions Committee meeting slot

Dear Jack

Thank you for your letter of 16 September. Business Committee considered your request to change the Petitions Committee's meeting slot from a Monday morning to a Monday afternoon slot at our meeting on 21 September. The Committee were content to approve this request.

Yours sincerely



**Elin Jones MS**

Y Llywydd and Chair of the Business Committee

Croesewir gohebiaeth yn Gymraeg neu Saesneg.

We welcome correspondence in Welsh or English.