

# Cofnod y Trafodion The Record of Proceedings

[Y Pwyllgor Deisebau](#)

[The Petitions Committee](#)

22/09/2015

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Cynulliad  
Cenedlaethol  
Cymru

National  
Assembly for  
Wales

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Cofnodir y trafodion yn yr iaith y llefarwyd hwy ynddi yn y pwyllgor. Yn ogystal, cynhwysir trawsgrifiad o'r cyfieithu ar y pryd.

*The proceedings are reported in the language in which they were spoken in the committee. In addition, a transcription of the simultaneous interpretation is included.*

**Aelodau'r pwyllgor yn bresennol**  
**Committee members in attendance**

|                  |   |
|------------------|---|
| Jeff Cuthbert    | Llafur (yn dirprwyo ar ran Joyce Watson)<br>Labour (substitute for Joyce Watson)                      |
| Russell George   | Ceidwadwyr Cymreig<br>Welsh Conservatives   |
| Alun Ffred Jones | Plaid Cymru (yn dirprwyo ar ran Bethan Jenkins)<br>The Party of Wales (substitute for Bethan Jenkins) |
| William Powell   | Democratiaid Rhyddfrydol Cymru (Cadeirydd y<br>Pwyllgor)<br>Welsh Liberal Democrats (Committee Chair) |

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

|                   |   |
|-------------------|---|
| Kayleigh Driscoll | Dirprwy Glerc<br>Deputy Clerk           |
| Steve George      | Clerc<br>Clerk                          |
| Lisa Salkeld      | Cynghorydd Cyfreithiol<br>Legal Adviser |
| Kath Thomas       | Dirprwy Glerc<br>Deputy Clerk           |

*Dechreuodd y cyfarfod am 08:59.*  
*The meeting began at 08:59.*

**Cyflwyniad, Ymddiheuriadau a Dirprwyon**  
**Introduction, Apologies and Substitutions**

[1] **William Powell:** Bore da, bawb. Good morning, all. Welcome to this first Petitions Committee of the autumn term. We have apologies this morning from Joyce Watson and Bethan Jenkins. I'm delighted that we're joined by Alun Ffred Jones and Jeff Cuthbert as their subs for this morning's meeting. We're just also being joined by Russell George. So, normal housekeeping arrangements apply. There are no scheduled fire alarms, so, if it goes off, it's the real thing and we're in the hands of the ushers. Normal guidance in respect of mobile phones applies.

09:00

## Deisebau Newydd New Petitions

[2] **William Powell:** We move now straight to agenda item 2, which is new petitions. The first is agenda item 2.1, P-04-641, 'Owners of Un-developed Land'. This petition was submitted by Paul Hunt and has the support of 11 signatures. The text reads as follows:

[3] 'We the undersigned urge the National Assembly for Wales to urge the Welsh Government to compel the owners of un-developed or abandoned land to display their name, address and contact details somewhere prominent on the land.'

[4] A first consideration letter on this matter was sent to the Minister on 9 June. We've got a response from the Minister here. Also, the petitioner has been informed of that response. As you can see, the Minister's letter sets out clearly the current arrangements, and it's made pretty clear that the Welsh Government has no powers in relation to land registration, which is a reserved matter. It isn't, however, clear whether the Minister's response indicates a view as to whether the Assembly has power or otherwise to legislate on this matter. I think it would be useful for us to seek some legal guidance on this one and whether it would be appropriate at this time just to seek a couple of initial comments and maybe to seek a short brief on that point.

[5] **Ms Salkeld:** Sure. I can certainly do a fuller note for the committee. Land registration itself isn't a subject within Schedule 7, so it's not a subject that the Assembly has competence over, but it appears from the petitioner's letter that it might be wider than that. It could encompass planning as well, which, of course, would be a subject that the Assembly has competence over. It's not going to capture all land because, if you do something around planning, it's only going to capture the land where people apply for planning permission for it. So, if there is just generally undeveloped land that has no planning permission, it wouldn't capture that. Certainly, it seems wider than a land registration issue itself.

[6] **William Powell:** Yes. I think, in the light of that, it would be useful if we could have some follow-up legal advice and then move to consider as to whether to take it forward or not. Jeff Cuthbert.

[7] **Jeff Cuthbert:** I'm very happy to have that, and I appreciate I'm just subbing for today, but could you just explain why you think it might involve planning when, reading the very simple petition, it doesn't seem to refer—to me as a layperson—to planning issues? It's more to do with knowing who to contact if something untoward is happening on that land. Is that, potentially, a planning matter?

[8] **Ms Salkeld:** It's more that if, as in many of these cases, a company has applied for planning permission to develop land and then, for whatever reason—perhaps they haven't got enough funds—they haven't been able to develop it and then the site lies undeveloped—

[9] **William Powell:** Land banking or something of that kind.

[10] **Ms Salkeld:** —and is not being properly maintained, those details would be known to the local authority. Whether there is some way, through the planning system, that you could make it a condition of planning, perhaps—I don't know—that, when you get the planning permission, there is a permanent display of who owns the land. At the moment, when you apply for planning permission, there will be some sort of notice that goes up on the land, but it doesn't go up for very long.

[11] **William Powell:** A site notice.

[12] **Ms Salkeld:** Yes. So, whether there was something that, perhaps, the Assembly could do around that. But, as I say, it wouldn't capture all land because, if a company hasn't applied for planning permission recently for that land—it's just that somebody owns it and doesn't do anything with it—it won't capture that. The only thing that would capture that, of course, would be the registration system, where people can find out who owns registered land.

[13] **Jeff Cuthbert:** Okay. Thank you.

[14] **William Powell:** That's most helpful; thank you very much. So, if colleagues are content to leave it like that for today and to return to the matter with the help of that further legal advice, I think that would be a good way forward.

[15] Agenda item 2.2 is P-04-648, 'Amendment to Unconventional Oil and

Gas Direction 2015'. This petition was submitted by Councillor Arfon Jones and has collected 1,254 signatures. The text reads as follows:

[16] 'We the undersigned call upon the Minister for Natural Resources to amend the THE TOWN AND COUNTRY PLANNING (NOTIFICATION) (UNCONVENTIONAL OIL AND GAS) (WALES) DIRECTION 2015 to call in all Planning Applications for Unconventional Oil and Gas development including exploratory drilling for Shale Gas, Coal Bed Methane and Underground Coal Gasification, to the Minister.'

[17] I suppose I should declare something of an interest in this matter in that I've spoken, both in the Chamber and in other committees, but also in a campaign context on the steps of the Senedd on a couple of occasions, on the topic of fracking and have a position that's well known. I don't know whether others have anything similar to declare. Jeff Cuthbert.

[18] **Jeff Cuthbert:** Yes, I understand the issue on fracking; this does go further to talk about coal-bed methane and coal gasification, which I understand from the papers are different techniques in terms of extraction. I also understand why—. I'm not quite sure why you would want to necessarily—. Fracking is one thing; whether it's correct to lump it in with the other exploratory drilling techniques and purposes, I'm not sure. Does this widen the matter quite considerably?

[19] **William Powell:** I think it probably does. Maybe I was being over-cautious in doing that. Russell George, you indicated.

[20] **Russell George:** No, it's all right.

[21] **William Powell:** If I can give the context here, the first consideration letter was sent to the Minister for Natural Resources on 29 June. We've got a response from the Minister, and that's available in our public papers. The petitioner has been informed of that response. As colleagues can see, the letter from the Minister, Carl Sargeant, sets out why he believes that there is no need to cover borehole drilling in the direction that's referred to in the petition, and also the perception of a loophole is, in his view, based upon a misunderstanding of the position. The petitioner has been asked to comment, and has not done so as yet, but we will be having an opportunity to meet the petitioners today, at 12.45, on the steps of the Senedd when we have the formal presentation. Russell George.

[22] **Russell George:** Thank you, Chair. The Minister's been clear in his letter, and the Minister says it's a misunderstanding, and the petitioner has not responded yet, but if we're meeting the petitioner today, then I think it would be a bit unfair to close the petition at this stage.

[23] **William Powell:** Absolutely.

[24] **Russell George:** Let's meet the petitioner and discuss it with him and then bring it back to another meeting.

[25] **William Powell:** Are colleagues content with that approach? Thank you.

[26] Agenda item 2.3 is P-04-649, 'Welsh-Medium Education—Garland or Albatross'. This petition was submitted by Norman Hudson, and he has the support of 117 signatures. I'll give a flavour of the text of this petition:

[27] 'The Welsh Government is rightly committed to achieving best value for money in all Public Services: sadly, the Department for Education and Skills spends £2billion each year only to provide the lowest standard of education in the UK. The Minister has said that "Education today is the Economy tomorrow"; if he is right, the outlook for Wales is truly bleak. When set against International PISA standards, the quality of Education in our Schools has been in catastrophic decline since Devolution. The Government says, in its defence, that delivering Public Services in Wales is hampered by poverty and by a dispersed population: but, GDP is lower in Northern Ireland and there are fewer people per square mile both in Northern Ireland and in Scotland. The Environment seems to be in safer hands. A derelict site cannot be developed without a prior Environmental Impact Assessment; no stone may be turned if there's the faintest chance of a newt hiding under it or a migratory bird fossicking over it.'

[28] I think that gives colleagues a flavour of Mr Hudson and his concerns. A first consideration letter was sent to Huw Lewis, the Minister for Education and Skills, on 16 July. We've got a response from the Minister, and the petitioner has also been informed of that response and has sent a detailed commentary upon it, as well as additional data that he believes support his case. All of these colleagues have got in the public papers. I'd very much appreciate any perspectives from colleagues. Alun Ffred.

[29] **Alun Ffred Jones:** Wel, mae **Alun Ffred Jones:** Well, the Minister's ateb y Gweinidog yn llawn iawn ac response is very comprehensive and

mae'n ymddangos o ymateb pellach y deisebydd fod ganddo fo nifer o bwyntiau sydd yn amherthnasol i'r cyhuddiad gwreiddiol mai dysgu'r iaith Gymraeg sydd yn gyfrifol am, er enghraifft, berfformiad economaidd gwan. Felly, nid wyf yn siŵr iawn sut y gallwn fynd â hon ymlaen gan fod ateb y Gweinidog mor glir. Nid wyf yn credu bod yna dystiolaeth yn y ddeiseb ei hun nag yn ymateb y deisebydd sydd yn cyfiawnhau i ni fynd â'r mater ymhellach.

it appears from the further response of the petitioner that he has a number of points that are irrelevant in relation to the original allegation that the teaching of Welsh is responsible for, for example, the poor economic performance of Wales. So, I don't see how we can take this forward because the Minister's response is so clear. I don't think that there is evidence in the petition itself or in the petitioner's response that justifies our continuation of this matter.

[30] **William Powell:** Diolch yn fawr. Jeff Cuthbert.

[31] **Jeff Cuthbert:** Yes, thank you. From the initial text of the petition, the first two paragraphs are opinion. As far as I can see, the only specific request that we had, at least the first time around, was to ask for the Welsh-medium education experiment to be abandoned unless it can be clearly shown that its continuance is 'doing no harm'. That is a rather strange phrase. You presumably have things in there so that they're improving matters and not just spending money to do no harm. I agree with Alun Ffred, I have to say, in terms of his general points. I just get the sense that it's a sort of anti-Welsh-language approach, but I might be wrong on that. But, that's how it came across to me.

[32] **William Powell:** I think we've got absolute clarity from the Minister and then the subsequent feedback from the petitioner makes it clear that we're not going to find a meeting of minds here. But I think in this case—and I'll ask Russell if he has a perspective on this as well—I'm minded also at this early stage to close the petition. I don't see that there is a route forward really.

[33] **Russell George:** I think, Chair, in a way, when we look at petitions, we put our views aside, and I think that we obviously have to treat every petition the same. I think, by the letters, I can see that it looks like it's ending its process at committee stage. I perhaps would at least respond to the Minister with the petitioner's further comments. That's what we'd normally do, but bearing in mind that the petition looks like it's coming to an end because



there is not a meeting of agreement here. I'm not strong either way.

[34] **William Powell:** For consistency, we should—

[35] **Russell George:** For consistency, we should—. Yes, that's what we normally do.

[36] **William Powell:** Okay, we've done that previously and we should do that now and in moving to close, we should share the views. Is that your suggestion?

[37] **Russell George:** I would normally just say that we should share the views with the Minister and then wait for the Minister to respond and then make a decision. But I'm conscious that it looks like—

[38] **William Powell:** It would depart from our previous practice to close at this first stage.

[39] **Russell George:** It would do, yes.

[40] **William Powell:** I understand.

[41] **Alun Ffred Jones:** Os felly, **Alun Ffred Jones:** If that's the case, I  
rwy'n cynnig ein bod ni—. A ydym suggest that we—. Are we sending  
ni'n danfon y sylwadau pellach these further comments on to the  
ymlaen i'r Gweinidog beth bynnag, Minister regardless, or not? If not, I  
neu beidio? Fel arall, rwy'n cytuno y agree that we should close the  
dylem gau'r ddeiseb. petition.

[42] **William Powell:** That is Russell George's proposal and that is what we, as a committee, have previously done, fairly consistently, with petitions, certainly at this first stage.

[43] **Alun Ffred Jones:** Iawn. Rwy'n **Alun Ffred Jones:** Right. I'm content  
hapus i wneud beth y mae'r pwyllgor to do whatever the committee usually  
yn arfer ei wneud, felly. does.

[44] **William Powell:** Okay. I think we have an understanding there, but I agree with all other colleagues that this is close to the point of closure.

[45] Agenda item 2.4 is P-04-651, 'To Work to Protect Local Government

When Determining the Budgets this Autumn'. This petition was submitted in a very high-profile way just last week by the Neath Port Talbot branch of Unison. It had the support of 196 signatures, and the text of this petition reads as follows:

[46] 'We petition the Welsh Government to work to protect local government when determining the budgets this Autumn. Help protect the services we all rely on so much, services we need when we are struggling the most. Help protect our jobs that we are so proud to do to within our communities. The Welsh Government MUST find other options to consider, options that would have considerably less impact on our local communities.'

[47] Our first consideration letter, prior to last week's presentation, was sent to the Minister for Finance and Government Business on 12 August. We've got a response from the Minister and her response is available, as colleagues will see, in our papers, and it sets out a number of the factors that are impacting upon the budget discussions this time round, and the areas of spending that the Government has sought to prioritise.

09:15

[48] The petitioners have responded to the Minister's letter and, indeed, their response is also in the public papers. I should declare that I am a member of Powys County Council, and therefore there is a particular aspect in which I have an interest in these matters. I'd appreciate any comments or declarations from colleagues. Russell George.

[49] **Russell George:** Chair, I'm happy to make the declaration that I'm also a member of a county council. I think what we should do with this petition is to write to the finance Minister seeking her views—that's what we'd normally do—and I think it's also right that we raise it with the Finance Committee as well, and ask them to consider this as part of their scrutiny process as well.

[50] **William Powell:** Absolutely. I should just clarify the information that I had with respect to 196 online signatures—on the day, we had a really substantial box that I received, which had a further 1,500 signatures as well in paper form. Are there other colleagues wishing to comment on this?

[51] **Jeff Cuthbert:** I'm content with that approach.

[52] **William Powell:** Yes, absolutely. Okay. I am very happy to take that

forward, as proposed by Russell George. That concludes the new petitions for today.

09:16

## **Y Wybodaeth Ddiweddaraf am Ddeisebau Blaenorol**

### **Updates to Previous Petitions**

[53] **William Powell:** We move now to updates to previous petitions, and we start with agenda item 3.1, P-04-523, 'Protect the elderly and vulnerable in care homes'. This petition was submitted by Justice for Jasmine and was first considered on 10 December 2013 and has the support of 4,216 signatures. We first considered this petition on—. We last considered it, rather, on 2 June and we agreed to ask the First Minister to inform us as a committee when there was substantive progress to report. On 14 July the First Minister issued a written statement, as colleagues will be aware, informing the Assembly that he was publishing an independent report by Dr Margaret Flynn following her review into events in care homes in south-east Wales in the earlier part of this century. The First Minister's statement indicated that the Welsh Government would make a statement on its response to the report in the autumn term. We made the petitioners aware of that statement and they've indicated they would like the committee to continue, for now, to defer consideration until they've had the opportunity to meet the First Minister, and that's taking place at the end of October, so that we can take the matter further forward. In the light of that, are colleagues content to adopt that approach and to ask the First Minister to inform the committee once that meeting has taken place?

[54] **Jeff Cuthbert:** Yes.

[55] **William Powell:** Thank you. Agenda item 3.2, P-03-240, 'Road safety on the A40 in Llanddewi Velfrey'. This petition has been around for some considerable time. It was submitted by Llanddewi Velfrey Community Council and was first considered back in the third Assembly in September 2009. It had the support of 154 signatures. We most recently considered this on 2 June and we agreed to write to the Minister seeking her views on the petitioner's concerns, and also asking that she provide an update on progress in due course. And, as good as her word, the Minister wrote to us on 15 July to draw attention to her written statement of the previous month, which confirmed her intention to progress delivery of the A40 Llanddewi Velfrey to Penblewin scheme as soon as possible, and also that an employer's

agent would be in place by September, with construction expected to start in autumn 2017, and also that European structural funds are being set aside and allocated to support delivery of the scheme, which will take approximately two years to complete.

[56] The petitioners have been informed of the response and have been asked to comment, but had not done so when the agenda was assembled. I'm conscious, of course, that it being a community council it may well not have actually met in full session during the summer period. I think, given the longevity of the petition and that virtually all of the main asks have been delivered or committed to with a timeline, it may well be about time for us to close this petition. Our colleague Joyce Watson has been particularly active in liaising with this community council over some of the particular actions. I think, if we do so, I should write to congratulate them on sticking with it, and on what they have achieved through using this process. Are colleagues happy?

[57] **Russell George:** I think we should write to them, and I think it's achieved—. We've taken this petition as far as we can, which has been successful, and I agree we close the petition.

[58] **William Powell:** Excellent. Okay. Thank you very much.

[59] Agenda item 3.3 is P-04-365, 'Protect buildings of note on the Mid Wales Hospital site'. Now, this petition was submitted by Mr John Tushingham, was first considered on 28 February 2012, and has the support of 206 signatures. We last considered this on 29 April 2014, and we agreed at that time to write to the Brecon Beacons National Park Authority, asking it to keep the committee informed when it does consider the matter, and for further information on the reasons for the delay in consideration. No response has been received.

[60] I should declare that this site is within my own county council ward, and that I am familiar with some of these issues. Nevertheless, I am disturbed to be reminded that a letter dispatched from this committee received no response from the national park, and appears not to have done so in about 15 months. It probably falls rather short of good practice. On 15 August this year, a member of the public, a Mrs Virginia Brown, wrote to me as Chair to ask if Cadw could be asked to reconsider the listing of the building, which had previously been refused. And her letter, and related attachments, are in the public papers. I think I should open this to colleagues

to comment. Alun Ffred.

[61] **Alun Ffred Jones:** A gaf fi ofyn, **Alun Ffred Jones:** Can I ask, have we a ydym ni wedi gofyn i Cadw ail- asked Cadw to reconsider listing this ystyried rhestru'r adeilad yma, neu ai building, or was that a suggestion awgrym oedd hynny gennyh chi? from yourselves?

[62] **William Powell:** That was the suggestion from Mrs Brown, who is one of the petitioners.

[63] **Mr George:** We have asked, I think, previously, the Minister—

[64] **William Powell:** Oh, earlier in the life of the petition, we have asked, apparently.

[65] **Mr George:** We certainly had information from the Minister, or Cadw—I can't quite remember—that said that they'd considered listing, but that they didn't think it was appropriate, for the sorts of reasons that are set out in Mrs Brown's letter.

[66] **Alun Ffred Jones:** Wel, os felly, **Alun Ffred Jones:** Well, in that case, if os ydy Cadw—. Mae yna resymau fan Cadw—. There are reasons here why hyn pam na ddylid cofrestru'r the building shouldn't be listed, so if adeilad, felly os ydy'r llwybr yna that path is closed to us, it seems we wedi'i gau, mae'n debyg y dylem ni should try to have some sort of geisio cael ymateb gan yr awdurdod response from the planning cynllunio, sydd â chyfrifoldeb am y authority, which is responsible for mater. Felly, mae'n debyg y dylem ni this issue. So, maybe we should ask ail-ofyn am ymateb i'r llythyr again for a response to the original gwreiddiol? letter?

[67] **William Powell:** Yes, I'd be very happy to sign off a follow-up letter, maybe copying in Mr John Cook, the chief executive, and possibly also the chair of the authority, so that there's some additional focus on us getting a response. Any other comments from colleagues at this time? No. So, we're happy to do what was proposed by Alun Ffred Jones.

[68] Agenda item 3.4 is P-04-578, 'Noise Mitigation Works on the M4 to the West of Junction 32'. This petition was submitted by Margaret Watt, and we first considered it on 15 July 2014, and Mrs Watt has 19 fellow petitioners. We last considered it on 14 July 2015, so exactly a year after it

was originally received, and we agreed to ask the Minister if it would be possible to re-check the noise levels at the petitioner's house, to ensure that they have not increased since they were last checked. The Minister has responded, and her letter is clear, and is in the public papers. The response indicates it would not be feasible to produce noise reports for individual properties and the current priority list will be reviewed following the next overall noise surveying exercise of the motorway and the trunk road network. This is programmed to start in early 2017. The petitioner has been informed of this response and has been asked to comment, but at this stage we haven't heard from Mrs Watt. Russell George.

[69] **Russell George:** How long has it been since we wrote the letter? How long have we been waiting for a reply?

[70] **William Powell:** It was during the course of the summer, I believe.

[71] **Mr George:** The letter to—sorry?

[72] **William Powell:** Mrs Watt.

[73] **Russell George:** How long have we been waiting for a reply from Mrs Watt?

[74] **Mr George:** We wrote to her about a week and a half to a fortnight ago.

[75] **Russell George:** Okay. We should give it more time, then, perhaps. But, if we haven't received a reply within the next four weeks, then perhaps we should then close the petition, Chair.

[76] **William Powell:** Also, I should say that the constituency Member for Mrs Watt, Mark Drakeford, has taken a particular interest in this matter. We should keep him abreast of these developments, and in this case not a development that Mrs Watt would be particularly content with. But, nonetheless, I think it would be useful for him to be kept informed.

[77] Agenda item 3.5 is P-04-594, 'Cilmeri Community Council Appeal for The Prince Llywelyn Monument'. This petition was submitted by Cilmeri Community Council and was first considered on 23 September 2014 with the support of 205 signatures. We've considered correspondence from the petitioners previously on 28 April and we agreed to write to the Minister for Economy, Science and Transport, seeking her views on whether road signage

on the A483 to the monument is feasible. We have a response from the Minister dated 21 July, which is in the public papers. The petitioner has been asked for a response, but had not done so at the time the papers were being assembled. But, again, as in a previous case, I'm conscious that it's an initiative of the community council, which may well not have met during August.

[78] As colleagues can see, the guidance that we've received from the Minister relates to brown signage more in the context of tourism businesses. It doesn't really seem to be a particularly good fit here, because I thought it was locational signage, with maybe a strip of brown signage and a statement about the significance of the monument. I'd really appreciate colleagues' views on this one. I'm conscious we're also in the presence of the former Minister for culture. So, in that context, there may be some particular clarification.

[79] **Alun Ffred Jones:** Rwy'n cytuno gyda'r sylwadau nad ydy'r eglurhad gan y Gweinidog yn addas ar gyfer y math o ofyniad sydd gan y deisebydd yn yr achos yma. A wyf yn iawn i ddweud bod y Gweinidog wedi awgrymu y byddai cyfarfod yn digwydd rhwng Cadw a'r cyngor? Os felly, a ddylem aros i weld beth yw canlyniad y cyfarfod hwnnw?

**Alun Ffred Jones:** I agree with the comments that the explanation from the Minister isn't wholly appropriate for the petitioner's requirement in this particular case. Am I right to say that the Minister has suggested that a meeting should take place between Cadw and the council? If so, should we wait to see what the conclusions of that meeting are?

[80] **William Powell:** Yes, I think we should probably await the outcome of that, but also maybe send a follow-up to the petitioners, to the chair of the community council, just to alert him to look out for that, because I think that's a really important additional point.

[81] **Alun Ffred Jones:** Hynny ydy, mae'r gofeb yma yn un ddiddorol iawn ac yn un bwysig iawn, iawn. Yn sicr, mi ddylid gwneud popeth sydd yn bosibl i dynnu sylw ati ac i roi gwybodaeth arni am ei harwyddocâd. Felly, mae gennyf gydymdeimlad efo'r deisebydd, yn sicr. Mater o chwilio am ffordd ymlaen ydy hyn.

**Alun Ffred Jones:** That is, this monument is a very interesting one and a very, very important one. Certainly, all efforts should be made to draw attention to the monument and provide information on it about its significance. So, I do sympathise with the petitioner, certainly. It's a matter of looking for a way forward.

Dylai cyfarfod fod yn fuddiol.

A meeting should be beneficial.

[82] **William Powell:** Absolutely. And Cadw has already been actively involved, as I recall from previous consideration of this petition, in undertaking works and an interpretation plan on site. I think Alun Ffred Jones's comments are very well made. There are quite a number of monuments of lesser significance that do enjoy quite substantial brown signage and other interpretations. So, I think certainly this is still very much a petition with scope for further progress.

09:30

[83] Agenda item 3.6, P-04-599, 'Impact of Domestic Rating on Self Catering Accommodation'. This petition was submitted by Mr Chris Harris and was first considered on 23 September 2014. It has the support of 23 signatures. We last considered this on 14 July 2015 and we agreed to write to the Minister to seek her views on the petitioner's further comments, and specifically whether, if the evidence warrants it, consideration will be given to applying any changes retrospectively. We've got a clear response from the Minister on this, and further comments from Mr Harris. I'd welcome colleagues' thoughts on this one. Russell George.

[84] **Russell George:** Chair, some of the issues have been addressed, but I think that the Minister's been clear that he can't change it retrospectively, so we've taken this as far as we can as a committee.

[85] **William Powell:** I suppose it was effectively a financial refund that was being sought.

[86] **Russell George:** And the Minister has given a response on that, so I think we've taken this as far as we can go, so I therefore suggest we close the petition.

[87] **William Powell:** Yes, I'd be happy to write in that vein. Jeff Cuthbert.

[88] **Jeff Cuthbert:** I must admit I'm content with that. I can see Chris Harris's further response, but really what that's saying is that they're irritated that the Minister didn't agree with them. I mean, that's basically what it's saying. So, I would agree with Russell.

[89] **William Powell:** But the substantive point is that there has been this



amendment to policy, and it is what the petitioner was seeking, but not with that aspect of retrospective consideration. So, I'm happy to write in that vein and to pick up the points that you make.

[90] Agenda item 3.7, P-04-626, 'De-Trunk the A487 Through Penparcau, Trefechan & Aberystwyth Town Centre'. This petition was submitted by Dylan Jones, Penparcau Community Forum, and was first considered on 24 March 2015, and has the support of 65 signatures. We most recently considered this on 2 June and agreed to write to the Minister to establish whether there is a firm timetable for considering the de-trunking of the A487 in Aberystwyth. We've got a response from the Minister, as colleagues will see. The petitioner has been informed, but when we assembled the papers for this meeting, we hadn't had a response. I think probably it would be sensible for us, in line with normal practice, to send a chase on this.

[91] **Mr George:** If I could just update the committee, there's a little bit of confusion here. The Minister's letter refers to the national transport plan. I believe she's making a statement this week about the national transport finance plan, which is the same thing, apparently. The name of it has changed, so there was a bit of confusion. So, I think there's actually a statement on this today, and it may be that it's already been published, and therefore the details of what's proposed for this de-trunking may be in that. I'm afraid I only found that out yesterday and haven't had a chance to check what's in the plan. So it may be as well for the committee to ask the Minister if she could, in the light of her statement, bring the committee up to date on the proposals for this particular road section.

[92] **William Powell:** And if we have a written statement, we could forward it electronically to Penparcau Community Forum as well.

[93] **Mr George:** Yes, that would make sense.

[94] **William Powell:** Are colleagues happy with that approach?

[95] **Russell George:** Yes, I'm happy with that.

[96] **William Powell:** Good, thank you.

[97] Agenda item 3.8, P-04-333, 'Stop neglect and abandonment of horses and ponies by enforcement of microchipping laws'. This petition was submitted by the Society for the Welfare of Horses and Ponies, and was first

considered at one of the early meetings of the committee in the fourth Assembly, on 11 October 2011, and has the support of 2,114 signatures. We last considered correspondence on this petition way back on 2 July 2013, and we agreed to await the publication of consultation analysis. No response was received, and the clerking team sent a reminder to the Government. As a result, the Deputy Minister for Farming and Food has written to bring the committee up to date, as colleagues will see, as well as including the consultation analysis. These documents are all in the public papers. We have asked the petitioners to comment, and we also have their response. I'd be keen to know colleagues' views on this. This petition, of course, predates the initiative undertaken by the former Minister for Natural Resources Alun Davies AM in terms of the emergency legislation around fly-grazing, which has some relationship to the wider topic. I think, probably, we are very close to the point where this petition has run its course, but I value colleagues' thoughts. Russell George.

[98] **Russell George:** Chair, I suggest we do close the petition. It was submitted some time ago. I think we've been looking at this since 2011; other events have overtaken what we've been looking at, so I think it's the time now to close the petition. In doing so, we should write to the Deputy Minister to inform her of the petitioner's views.

[99] **William Powell:** Absolutely, and particularly in relation to their support for the Welsh Government getting behind the creation of a single database across the EU with regard to horses. So, we are happy to take that forward in that way.

[100] Agenda item 3.9 is P-04-445, 'Save our Welsh cats & dogs from death on the roads'. This petition was submitted by Miss Monima O'Connor, first considered on 15 January 2013, with the support of 10 online signatures, and an associated petition collected approximately 500. Now, we last considered this back on 9 December 2014 and we agreed a series of actions: to pass the petitioner's further comments to the Minister for information and also to keep a watching brief on the petition until the review of the regulations has concluded. The Deputy Minister for Farming and Food has now written to update us on that review, and Rebecca Evans's letter is in the pack. The petitioner has also submitted comments, and these are here, available for us too. I'd be quite keen to ask the Deputy Minister to inform the committee once the arrangements for the literature review associated with the regulations have been finalised. Would colleagues be content with that way forward?

[101] **Russell George:** Agreed.

[102] **William Powell:** Thank you.

[103] Agenda item 3.10, P-04-500, 'Call For Regulation of Animal Welfare Establishments in Wales'. This petition was submitted by Lisa Winnett and was first considered on 24 September 2013, with the support of 265 signatures. The committee last considered the petition on 3 March 2015, and we agreed to await the outcome of the steps outlined by the Minister at that time, but to write to ask that she inform committee as soon as any further progress had been made. Now the Deputy Minister for Farming and Food has written to update the committee as requested, the petitioner has also been informed of that and we have a recent response that I think all colleagues have got as a piece of late correspondence. If I could give colleagues a moment just to familiarise yourselves with this response, and the comments in response to Rebecca Evans's own comments.

[104] **Russell George:** I think, Chair, all we can do is wait at this time for the petitioner's further comments.

[105] **William Powell:** We have. That's what I was just drawing attention to—

[106] **Russell George:** Sorry, I didn't hear you, Chair—

[107] **William Powell:** —as late correspondence.

[108] **Russell George:** Is this this document in front of me, is it?

[109] **William Powell:** Yes, absolutely.

[110] **Russell George:** Sorry.

[111] **William Powell:** It came in just as we were about to close the papers for today's meeting, which is why it wasn't in the original set.

[112] I think, in the context of Miss Winnett's remarks, it would be consistent with what we've previously done to share these—particularly given the vehemence of the comments—with the Minister Rebecca Evans for her further consideration. Okay, colleagues are content with that approach.

[113] **Russell George:** Can we put these notes on the next—well, when we have a reply from the Minister, can we incorporate these notes—?

[114] **William Powell:** Absolutely, so we've got the context of the points that have been discussed. Yes. Happy to do that.

[115] Agenda item 3.11, P-04-629, 'Review and Enforcement of Control of Horses (Wales) Act 2014'. This petition was submitted by Lynne Tamblyn and was first considered on 2 June 2015. It has the support of 135 signatures. We considered this for the first time on 2 June, with a number of actions. We agreed to write to the Deputy Minister, asking for her response to a number of the issues raised by the petitioner, particularly in relation to funding, so that horses can be rehomed, rather than put down, and whether the management arrangements used in the New Forest, which the petitioner thought were good practice, might be helpful here in Wales. We agreed to forward also to the petitioner a transcript of the post-legislative scrutiny session that the Environment and Sustainability Committee undertook in March of this year. We've got a response from the Deputy Minister for Farming and Food, so as to update us as a committee. We did indeed forward to the petitioner the transcript of scrutiny session, and the petitioner has been informed of the latest correspondence but hasn't sent us a response as yet. So, I think it would be sensible for us to accord the petitioner the courtesy of some additional time to study those documents and, hopefully, to come forward with a response, if colleagues are content with that approach.

[116] **Jeff Cuthbert:** When did we actually write back to the petitioner?

[117] **William Powell:** Quite recently, I think.

[118] **Mr George:** It would have been in the preparation of papers for this meeting. So, about a week and a half to a fortnight ago.

[119] **Jeff Cuthbert:** Oh, right. Yes, I agree with you, then.

[120] **William Powell:** I'm grateful for that. Thank you.

[121] Agenda item 3.12, P-04-373, 'School Exclusion Zones for Mobile Hot Food Vans'. This petition has been around for some time and was submitted by Arfon Jones—I believe that's Councillor Arfon Jones, who we shall be seeing later today. I believe that's the case, but maybe we can confirm that in

the margins of the presentation later on. It was first considered on 13 March 2012 and had the support of 43 signatures. The committee last considered this on 30 June and agreed to write to the Minister for Health and Social Services, as suggested by the Minister for Economy, Science and Transport, including whether this issue could be appropriately addressed in the Public Health (Wales) Bill, and also to seek the views of the Welsh Local Government Association. We've got papers, from both the Minister for health and the WLGA, and the petitioner has been informed of the responses but has not commented as yet. So, I'd welcome colleagues' thoughts on this. It's an interesting and important issue, no doubt. Maybe I can ask the question later as to whether this is from the same petitioner.

[122] **Alun Ffred Jones:** Can I ask something?

[123] **William Powell:** Yes.

[124] **Alun Ffred Jones:** You said something, that Mr Arfon Jones is before—.

[125] **William Powell:** Councillor Arfon Jones is the lead petitioner in one of the new ones that we considered earlier. I'm not clear in my own mind as to whether or not this is the same petitioner. My sense is that it is, but the title of 'councillor' is not referred to here. I can clarify that point later on.

[126] **Russell George:** I think, Chair, it's moving to closing this, but I think, if we do not get a response, then let's move to close it. If we get a response, then we'll have to look at this again.

[127] **William Powell:** It might have some additional steps to go.

[128] **Russell George:** And if we don't get a response within four weeks, well, then, close the petition.

[129] **William Powell:** Well, that's absolutely common sense. Exactly. Okay. Thanks, colleagues, for that

[130] Agenda item 3.13, P-04-408, 'Child and Adolescent Eating Disorder Service'. This petition was submitted by Helen Missen and was first considered on 17 July 2012, having collected 246 signatures. We most recently considered this petition on 2 June 2015 and agreed to continue to keep a watching brief on the petition while also asking the Minister to respond to the most recent comments of the petitioner, and also to ask the

Minister for further details of how the recent announcement on an additional £7 million-worth of funding for CAMHS would support services for children and adolescents suffering from eating disorders. We've got a response from the Minister and, indeed, a fairly comprehensive commentary on that from the petitioner. I'd very much welcome colleagues' thoughts on this one.

09:45

[131] I'm conscious that our colleague, Bethan Jenkins, as chair of the relevant cross-party group, has taken a prominent part in our consideration of these matters. Obviously, she's not with us today, but I think it would be—. There has also been, I think, a report launched over the summer by the cross-party group on eating disorders, which might well have some relevant points. Russell George.

[132] **Russell George:** I wouldn't want to make a decision to close this petition without—. I'd feel uncomfortable doing it without Bethan being here, considering her involvement as well. The petitioner isn't happy that the issue has been resolved, there is a lot still to be done. There's not been the progress made that the petitioner wanted. I think that there's been a lot of sympathy among the members of the committee with this petition in the past. I don't know what—. I know we seem to be writing to the Minister, the Minister writes back, and it bounces back and forth—

[133] **William Powell:** And that comment's been reflected in the Minister's comments as well.

[134] **Russell George:** Yes, exactly. So, I don't really know where to take this, but I don't feel quite comfortable to close this petition.

[135] **William Powell:** As I said, there was this one other point that I would have liked to have drilled down into, which is whether or not there's anything of relevance in the report that was launched back in late July or early August regarding eating disorders. I think that's one other piece of the jigsaw, maybe, to look into.

[136] **Russell George:** Well, can we ask the clerking team to look at that and to summarise it?

[137] **William Powell:** We could do, and also maybe defer it to our next meeting.

[138] **Jeff Cuthbert:** Let's defer to the next meeting.

[139] **William Powell:** In that context, yes.

[140] **Russell George:** And bring it back with that little summary of—.

[141] **William Powell:** Yes. Okay. Happy to do that. Thank you.

[142] Agenda item 3.14, P-04-501, 'Day Centres for the elderly in Wales to be made statutory': this petition was submitted by Pamela Hughes. It was first considered on 24 September 2013 and had collected 1,240 signatures. We last considered this on 2 June 2015 and agreed to write to the Minister, asking for his views on the current situation across Wales and how he envisages the Social Services and Well-being (Wales) Act 2014, and indeed the second social services Bill, will impact on the provision of day care for the elderly. We've got a comprehensive response from the Minister, together with a further response from Martin Shewring on behalf of the petitioners. This is a petition that's arisen because of the strength of feeling within the town of Aberystwyth but, obviously, is of national relevance too. The Minister's been pretty clear here that he doesn't see the petitioner's key asks as being achievable, or indeed desirable, in his view. I'd very much appreciate colleagues' thoughts as to the way forward here. I think we are maybe close to the point of drawing this petition to a conclusion in the light of that.

[143] **Jeff Cuthbert:** I would agree that we've put the matter to the Minister, and the Minister basically doesn't agree, and there we are.

[144] **William Powell:** Yes. I think that that's probably what we shall have to do. So, on behalf of the committee, I'll write to Pamela Hughes and her fellow petitioners to reflect that reality.

[145] Agenda item 3.15, P-04-571, 'Treating Pernicious Anaemia': this petition was submitted by the Pernicious Anaemia Society and first considered on 15 July 2014. It's got the support of 91 signatures. We most recently considered this on 16 June 2015 and agreed to welcome and support the Minister's intention to seek advice from the national specialist advisory committee, and also to request that he keep us informed of the outcome of that, and to write back to the petitioners, asking that they respond to the specific issues in the Minister's letter. The Minister has now written to say that he's received a response from Jane Ellison MP,

Parliamentary Under-Secretary for Public Health, about the treatment of pernicious anaemia through a UK-licensed oral preparation of adequate dose in a single tablet. The letter, which is in the public pack, also outlines further steps that he will ask the haematology national specialist advisory group to consider, in relation both to dosage and guidance. Separately, the petitioners have responded to the Minister's earlier letter, so things have gone slightly out of kilter in that respect. The petitioner has been informed of the Minister's more recent response and has been asked to comment on that, but we haven't, as yet, received that. I think, in the context of that, it would be helpful if we could await the further response, because then we'd be up to date with the latest ministerial comments and also the significance of the response from Jane Ellison, the English Minister in that regard.

[146] **Russell George:** Agreed.

[147] **William Powell:** If colleagues are happy, I think that's probably the best way forward.

[148] Agenda item 3.16, P-04-587, 'A Dedicated Support Team for Myalgic Encephalomyelitis (M.E.), Chronic Fatigue Syndrome & Fibromyalgia Sufferers in South East Wales': this petition was submitted by MESiG, ME Support in Glamorgan, and was first considered by us as a committee on 23 September 2014. It had the support of 1,196 signatures. Our most recent consideration of this petition was on 2 June of this year and we agreed to write to Adam Cairns at Cardiff and Vale University Local Health Board, seeking their comments on the specific concerns to which the petitioners refer, also to ensure that the petitioners are aware of the all-Wales neurological conditions implementation group and the work that they're currently undertaking, and, finally, to offer the committee's condolences to the family of the individual mentioned by the petitioners in their correspondence, having recently passed away.

[149] The Minister and, indeed, Cardiff and Vale health board have responded, and their responses are in the pack. We've also got some additional comment from the petitioners. I think it would be useful probably to share that back with the Minister, and to seek the Minister's response to the specific point of detail that the petitioners raise.

[150] **Russell George:** Yes, agreed.

[151] **William Powell:** Colleagues are content.



[152] Agenda item 3.17, P-04-588, 'Charter for Children and Fathers': this petition was submitted by FNF Both Parents Matter Cymru, and was first considered on 23 September 2014. It had collected 633 signatures. We most recently considered this on 30 September and we agreed a series of actions: to write to the Minister to welcome his positive engagement with the petitioners and also to welcome the steps undertaken to implement the recording of gender details of parents by the Children and Family Court Advisory and Support Service; to ask for the Minister's views on the petitioners' comments and, in particular, why CAFCASS in England does not seem to feel that publishing the child and adolescent welfare checklist assessment tool is problematic, whereas in Wales, there is a different view and a different approach taken, and also whether any requirement to record gender information can be placed upon local authorities; and also to ask the petitioners to expand on the reason for their concern about the wider use of the CAWAC tool.

[153] The Deputy Minister for Health has responded, as indeed have the petitioners, to our original request. The petitioners have also included a letter from the First Minister, which is consistent with the stance of the Deputy Minister for Health. The petitioner has been informed of the Deputy Minister's response and has been asked to comment, but, at the time that we were assembling the papers for today, nothing had been received. So, I think we should probably await those comments and then we will be back in line to consider things further. Thank you.

[154] Agenda item 3.18, P-04-630, 'Facebook Regulations for Looked after Children': this petition was submitted by Christine Williams, and was first considered by us, as a committee, on 12 May 2015. It has the support of 11 signatures. The committee considered the petition for the first time back on 12 May and we agreed to write to the Minister for Health and Social Services, sharing the petitioner's additional comments and also asking if he, or indeed his officials, would be prepared to meet the petitioner to discuss the specific issues raised and also to write to the children's commissioner, seeking her views, and to Children in Wales, to ask what information they hold on the issue.

[155] We have a response from the Minister. The petitioner has also responded and her letter, given the nature of the content, we have in front of us as a private paper. Disappointingly, we've not, at this time, received a response either from Children in Wales or the children's commissioner, and

that's despite reminders, but we have had a telephone call within the last 24 hours from Children in Wales seeking to discuss the matter, for which we're grateful. So, I think we need to further chase the children's commissioner in this regard, and I would appreciate colleagues' reflections on this sensitive matter.

[156] **Russell George:** If there's been a call in the last 24 hours, it seems like that they're going to formally write to us. Let's wait for that.

[157] **William Powell:** Yes, in the case of Children in Wales, certainly, and, in the case of the children's commissioner, we are still awaiting that response.

[158] **Russell George:** Yes, absolutely. Let's wait for those responses to come in.

[159] **William Powell:** I think we need to do that before we can undertake anything else, or indeed close—

[160] **Jeff Cuthbert:** I think we should press the children's commissioner for a response. I don't understand why she hasn't responded.

[161] **William Powell:** No, absolutely. I think it may well be an administrative issue, but it needs to be sorted out.

[162] Agenda item 3.19, P-04-642, 'Save the Filter—An Established Youth Stop Smoking and Prevention Service': this petition was submitted by ASH Wales Cymru and was first considered on 14 July 2015, having collected 365 signatures. We last considered this on 14 July and agreed to write to the Minister asking that he give full consideration to the funding proposal and that we are kept abreast of the outcome of that. We've now got a response from the Deputy Minister, and I'm pleased to say that a detailed proposal has now been submitted by ASH Wales Cymru and it is currently receiving consideration. Also, the Deputy Minister has undertaken to inform us of the outcome of that application. The petitioner has been informed also of the Deputy Minister's response and has been asked to comment. So, I think, in that context, we should probably wait for further information from Vaughan Gething on how this one develops. Are colleagues content? Good.

[163] Agenda item 3.20, P-04-422, on fracking: this petition was submitted by Gareth Clubb and was first considered on 2 October 2012 and has the support of 914 signatures. I made a declaration regarding fracking earlier

and would seek to repeat that now. We considered this most recently on 2 June and agreed to await comments from the petitioner on the correspondence received from the Minister. The petitioner has now responded and his comments are in the public papers. I'd appreciate colleagues' comments on this. I think we're probably running somewhere close to the conclusion of this particular cycle on the petition.

[164] **Alun Ffred Jones:** Os caf i Alun Ffred Jones: If I may say so, I ddweud, rwy'n dueddol o gytuno tend to agree with the petitioner, that efo'r deisebydd, nad oes cytundeb ar there is no agreement on the beth yw ystyr y gair '*moratorium*'. meaning of the word '*moratorium*'. Mae'r Gweinidog yn ei ddefnyddio The Minister uses it in one way, and mewn un ffordd, ac mae eraill yn others aren't sure that that is the amau mai dyna ydy o. Ond, ar ôl meaning. But, having said that, I dweud hynny, nid oes llawer o fudd, don't think there's much benefit here mae'n debyg, mewn parhau â'r ddadl in continuing with this argument in honno ar ffurf deiseb. Mae'r the form of a petition. The Minister Gweinidog wedi gwneud ei safbwynt has made his position clear, so I yn glir, felly mae'n debyg y dylid think perhaps that the petition cau'r ddeiseb. should be closed.

[165] **William Powell:** Jeff Cuthbert.

[166] **Jeff Cuthbert:** I would concur with that.

[167] **William Powell:** Okay. I think that is the majority view—that we've got a consensus that we should close this petition, so I'll write to Mr Clubb to thank him for bringing this matter to our attention and for his commitment on the issue.

[168] Agenda item 3.21, P-04-623, 'Improve the Provision of Disabled-friendly Housing in Wales': this petition was submitted by Leonard Cheshire Disability, and was first considered on 28 April 2015. It had the support of 788 signatures. We last considered this petition back in the summer and agreed to seek the Minister's response to the detail and considered comments that had been submitted by the petitioner. The Minister for Natural Resources has now responded and the petitioners have commented on the letter, and they're both in the public papers.

10:00

[169] I think it would be useful for us to share the response that we've had from the petitioners with the Minister. Any other reflections at this time? I suppose we'd better wait for further feedback from the Minister on the issue. If colleagues are content with that approach, that's what we'll do.

[170] Agenda item 3.22 is P-04-619, 'LOCALISM IN PLANNING and COMPENSATION FOR THIRD PARTIES RE. INFRASTRUCTURE PROJECTS'. This petition was submitted by Mr Michael Halsey and was first considered on 24 March 2015 and had collected 462 signatures. We most recently considered this on 16 June and agreed to seek the Minister's views on the petitioner's additional comments. The Minister for Natural Resources has responded and his letter is in the public pack. I note that the Minister has alluded to the amendments that were brought forward during the passage of the Planning (Wales) Act 2015 and the fact that relevant amendments to this petition were unsuccessful. The petitioner has been informed of the Minister's response and has been asked to comment, but at this stage hasn't done so. So, I think probably we need to await those comments, but I'd appreciate any input from colleagues on this one.

[171] **Russell George:** Obviously, I've got a view on this, Chair, because I put forward amendments in my name along the lines of the text of the petition, but the Minister absolutely rejected them at the last stage. So, I think we're moving to close this petition because there's a clear view there. But, we can await the petitioner's comments, by all means.

[172] **William Powell:** I think it would be useful, for consistency, to await Mr Halsey's views, although I think we can possibly anticipate them. Any other comments from colleagues? Content. Good.

[173] Agenda item 3.23, P-04-397, 'Living Wage'. This petition was submitted by Save the Children and was first considered on 19 June 2012. It had the support of 196 signatures. We most recently considered this on 25 November 2014 and agreed to await the outcome of the workforce partnership council's meeting last December. Following reminders from the committee's clerking team, Welsh Government officials did send an update in July, which was followed by another communication from the Minister for Public Services, both of which are in the public papers. The petitioner has been informed of the responses, and they've been asked to comment, but when we were assembling the papers for today's meeting, nothing had been

received. I think, for consistency, we should await those comments, but it's clear that the Welsh Government has set out its store with regard to this matter. So, I appreciate colleagues' thoughts on the best way forward.

[174] **Jeff Cuthbert:** We are awaiting further comments from the petitioner.

[175] **William Powell:** From the petitioner, yes—from Save the Children. To what extent have we chased, or is it a relatively recent request? If necessary, we can send a chaser, because obviously the organisation is very much still in business and doubtless concerned about the topic. So, I'm sure there will be some comments forthcoming.

[176] **Jeff Cuthbert:** It seems to me—a lot of sympathy with the petitioners—but it seems to be more of a request for clarity about how a declared policy is to be implemented. So, we need their response.

[177] **William Powell:** Agenda item 3.24 is P-04-485, 'Abuse of casual contracts in Further Education'. This petition was submitted by Briony Knibbs and was first considered back on 4 June 2013 and has collected 674 signatures. We most recently considered this on 25 November 2014 and we agreed to await the outcome of the review of the position, which was expected in April 2015. Leighton Andrews, the Minister for Public Services, made a written statement on 7 July this year on the publication of research on the use of zero-hours contracts in devolved public services. A copy of that statement is in the public papers today. We are awaiting feedback from the petitioner, from Briony Knibbs, on this matter. I think probably we need to await that before we can undertake anything further.

[178] Agenda item 3.25 is P-04-522, 'Asbestos in Schools'. This petition was submitted by Cenric Clement-Evans and was first considered on 10 December 2013. It had collected 448 signatures. Mr Clement-Evans has been a very assiduous petitioner and, in fact, joins us in the public gallery today. I just caught sight of him. We most recently considered the petition on 16 June, and we agreed to ask the Minister to respond on the question of setting up an asbestos in schools steering group to assist the Department for Education and Skills as it forms and reviews policy on this important issue and also to consider whether to invite the Minister to attend a future committee meeting to answer questions on this topic. We've got a response from the Minister, and that's in the public papers. We received comments on 17 September on this matter, and colleagues have got the exchange in hard-copy form on your desks or in your packs. So, I'll give you a moment to

respond to this piece of late correspondence just to get a flavour of its contents.

[179] **Alun Ffred Jones:** I'm unclear from the letter what exactly is happening with regard to asbestos in schools. It doesn't seem to me to spell out exactly what local authorities are supposed to do and how people can access information. Am I reading it correctly or is there—?

[180] **William Powell:** I'll ask the clerk to comment on that. I think that is the nub of the issue—

[181] **Alun Ffred Jones:** Easy access—

[182] **William Powell:** It's what the petitioner was seeking.

[183] **Alun Ffred Jones:** —to information is paramount, but I don't see how people are supposed to get this easy access.

[184] **William Powell:** I think that is very much at the heart of the petitioner's concerns. I think we've seen quite significant movement on this issue over the months as we've considered it and exchanged correspondence with the Minister. I think the Minister is now closer to engaging with this because there's also been quite a marked difference in terms of the approach that has come forward in England in the last couple of years, certainly under the previous coalition Government. I'll ask our clerk to answer your question, particularly as he's had a little more opportunity to familiarise himself with this latest correspondence than I have.

[185] **Mr George:** I think the issue for the petitioner initially was that the Welsh Government was saying that this was not an issue for which they were responsible—

[186] **William Powell:** It was health and safety.

[187] **Mr George:** It was a health and safety matter; it wasn't devolved. Over time, with correspondence, I think the Welsh Government has accepted that there is a role for the Welsh Government, and that's set out to some extent in the Minister's latest letter. The petitioner's latest letter still flags up the difference between the approach in Wales and the approach in England. I'd particularly draw your attention to his last paragraph about the Welsh Minister being content to rely upon the expertise of those attending the

steering group in England, and that there will be no input with regard specifically to schools in Wales nor from representatives from Wales. We don't know that that's the case because we haven't asked the Minister about that specifically, but that is the concern of the petitioner.

[188] **Alun Ffred Jones:** Well, can we put those questions to the Minister?

[189] **William Powell:** Absolutely. I think this is a really substantive letter and we need to have the Minister's response to it, and I think we—

[190] **Russell George:** Can we ask the Minister to come before us?

[191] **William Powell:** I think we should write to him, but we should also seek a scrutiny session with the Minister on the issue. I think that would be very timely.

[192] **Russell George:** Absolutely, Chair.

[193] **William Powell:** Are colleagues happy with that approach?

[194] **Jeff Cuthbert:** Yes.

[195] **William Powell:** Good. Excellent. Thank you. Diolch yn fawr. Thank you, Russell. Moving now to the next item, 3.26, we have P-04-628, 'To improve access to Education and services in British Sign Language'. I believe we're being—

[196] **Mr George:** There's been a change of plan.

[197] **William Powell:** Okay, fine, no problem. I thought we might have had members of Deffo! in the public gallery, but that isn't the case. The petition was submitted by Deffo!, the campaign group, and was first considered on 24 March 2015, having collected 1,162 signatures. We most recently considered this on 2 June and agreed to write to the Minister, seeking his comments on the legal advice that had been received by committee; also on the petitioners' correspondence, specifically asking that Deffo!'s views are considered alongside other responses to the consultation, which closed on 8 May, and that Deffo!, as a group, be included in the next stage of consultation; also for the Minister's view on Deffo!'s contention that the needs of those seeking or needing British Sign Language training are often unmet or unidentified, due to BSL sometimes being a choice rather than seen

as an immediate or medical need; further, to highlight the petition to the Chair of the Children, Young People and Education Committee, and to request that Deffo! be included in the committee's consultation on the forthcoming Bill on special educational needs; and finally to suggest to the petitioners that they may want to engage with the review that Professor Donaldson is currently undertaking; and also that they may want to highlight the petition to Assembly Members who may be interested in bringing the issue forward as part of private Member's legislation.

[198] We've got our response from the Minister in our public papers. We've also got comments from the petitioners, and they've welcomed a number of comments that are contained in the Minister's letter, which doesn't fully address their concerns. The petitioners have also written to express some disappointment that, thus far, their approach to engaging with the Donaldson review doesn't appear to have been acknowledged, and I think maybe we have a role to play in helping to facilitate that, because of the importance of them having their say as things move forward. The Children, Young People and Education Committee have also noted the petitioners' previous correspondence in relation to any further scrutiny work on the issue that they may undertake as a committee. So, I'd be happy, on behalf of committee, if colleagues are content, to ask the Minister for his comments on Deffo!'s latest correspondence, and also for an assurance that Deffo! will be contacted by staff who are supporting the Donaldson review. If colleagues are happy with that approach, then I'd be content to write on behalf of committee. Content? Good.

[199] Moving now to agenda item 3.27, P-04-634, 'End Exclusion in Schools for Children with No Religion', this petition was submitted by Mr Richard Martin and was first considered on 14 July 2015, having collected 37 signatures. We considered this petition for the first time on 14 July and agreed to ask the Minister to comment further on the petitioner's letter. The Minister has now responded, a copy of which is in the public papers. The Minister's letter highlights, as colleagues can see, his support for the development of a new curriculum by accepting in full the recommendations contained within the 'Successful Futures' report. The petitioner has been informed of the Minister's letter and we've received late correspondence on this matter. Colleagues, you have this brief response in front of you.

[200] 'Many thanks for sending through. My apologies for not responding sooner. It appears that the Minister had made his position clear and it appears that he is not going to consider any change to the current statute. I



wouldn't want to take up any more of the committee's time by following up again but would like to express my gratitude to the committee for their time and diligence in dealing with my petition. Many thanks, Richard'.

[201] From Mr Richard Martin. So, in the light of that, we should close the petition, and I will happily write to Richard Martin, thanking him for the trouble that he's taken in bringing this forward and for his kind remarks in commenting on the committee's work. Agreed.

[202] Moving now to agenda item 3.28, P-04-636, 'Statutory Sex and Relationships Education', this petition was submitted by Cristina Lepri and was first considered on 16 June 2015 with the support of 155 signatures. We considered the petition for the first time back in June and agreed to write to the Minister, seeking his views on the petitioners' further comments, and in particular to ask the Minister if the petitioners can be provided, as they had requested, with the outcomes from the Great Debate and if they can be involved as stakeholders in the next stage of discussion.

10:15

[203] We have now a full response from the Minister and that response is reflected in the public papers. Again, he refers to his support for the development of a new curriculum and also undertakes to ensure that the petitioner is kept up to date with the developments of the review.

[204] The petitioner has also responded and her comments are in the pack. It seems here that we've got a positive outcome with the petitioner broadly positive about the way the Minister is responding. What are colleagues' views on this one?

[205] **Jeff Cuthbert:** Well, you are right; that's my interpretation of the petitioner's response as well. We ought to move to close the petition.

[206] **William Powell:** Yes, and in doing so, write to the Minister drawing his attention to their final comments and to welcome and re-emphasise the commitment that's been made to ensure that the group, which is known as ABFABB, be kept fully up to date with developments within the review. I'd be happy to do that. Thanks, colleagues.

[207] Agenda item 3.29 is P-04-637, 'To Protect the Future of Youth Music in Wales'. This petition was submitted by The Friends of Bridgend Youth

Music, it was first considered on 16 June 2015 and it has collected 1,436 signatures. We considered this for the first time back on 16 June and agreed to write to the Minister, Huw Lewis, asking that he inform the committee when the task and finish group's report is published and that he provides further substantive views on the petition at that stage. In the meantime, we asked that he provide more details of the methodology adopted by the task and finish group, as requested by the petitioners. Finally, we wrote to the UK and Scottish Governments seeking information on the steps that they've apparently taken to reintroduce central funding to safeguard music services.

[208] We've got responses from the Minister for Education and Skills and also from the Minister of State for Schools in England setting out the arrangements that apply across the border. We've also got a response from the petitioners with regard to that and all of the correspondence is in our public papers. I think it would be useful to see Huw Lewis's response to the clarification of the music education hubs model that applies in England. I'd be happy to do that, but colleagues, if you have views—. Alun Ffred.

[209] **Alun Ffred Jones:** Rwy'n cytuno bod angen i ni ofyn i'r Gweinidog addysg am sylwadau pellach ynglŷn â hyn. Y rheswm rwy'n dweud hynny yw bod y ddeiseb hon yn adlewyrchu consyrn cyffredinol ynglŷn â'r hyn sy'n mynd i ddigwydd i addysg gerddorol yng Nghymru. Mae'r Gweinidog yn cyfeirio, wrth gwrs, at y cynllun pum mlynedd hwn—*creative learning through the arts*—sydd, ynddo'i hun, yn ddogfen ddiddorol iawn, ond nid yw, mewn gwirionedd, yn gynllun sy'n ymwneud â cherddoriaeth yn benodol. Rwy'n credu bod angen i ni gael eglurder ynglŷn â lle cerddoriaeth yn y cynllun hwnnw, neu'r tu allan i'r cynllun hwnnw. Felly, rwy'n cytuno y dylid ysgrifennu at y Gweinidog.

**Alun Ffred Jones:** I agree that we do need to ask the education Minister for further comments in relation to this matter. The reason I say that is that this petition reflects a more general concern about what's happening to music education in Wales. The Minister refers, of course, to this five-year creative learning through the arts scheme, which, in itself, is a very interesting document, but, it's not a scheme that relates to music specifically. I think we need to have clarity about the role of music education within or outwith that scheme. So, I agree that we need to write to the Minister.

[210] **William Powell:** I'm grateful for that endorsement. I think it's important that we seek a further response from the Minister on these points and, Jeff

Cuthbert, if you're also content then I'd be happy to write in that vein.

[211] **Jeff Cuthbert:** Yes.

[212] **William Powell:** Moving now to agenda item 3.30, P-04-639, 'Save Further Education in Powys'. This petition was submitted by NPTC Group students and was first considered on 16 June 2015, having collected 1,673 signatures. We considered this for the first time back in June and we agreed to await the petitioners' comments before deciding on further action, and also to write to Neath Port Talbot college, seeking its views on the petition. We've got a response now from the college, and their letter is among the public papers. The letter seems broadly to confirm the thrust of the information in the petition, although there are 'a few slight inaccuracies'. In particular, Mr Dacey seems to broadly confirm a number of points that, in an earlier letter from the Welsh Minister, had been described variously as 'very' or 'completely inaccurate', particularly referring to the £400 fee for mature students. The petitioners have been informed of the letter, but haven't come forward with comments at this time. Again, I'm conscious that, until very recently, Neath Port Talbot college students wouldn't necessarily have been back in session, so there's every possibility that this is the first opportunity that they will have had to consider things. So, I think, particularly given its contents, and some of the contentions that are in that letter, it would be appropriate to share that with the Deputy Minister, Julie James, and also to ask whether any further issues around the impact of cuts have been taken account of. Also, we need to await the petitioners' comments for the reasons I suggested. If colleagues are content with that dual approach then I'd be happy to write on behalf of the committee.

[213] Agenda item 3.31 is P-04-646, 'Petition against Welsh Draft Non-statutory Guidance for Local Authorities on Elective Home Education'. This petition was submitted by Lucy Bear, was first considered on 14 July 2015, and has the support of 2,140 signatures. We most recently considered this, for the first time in fact, on 14 July, and we agreed to write to the Minister asking to ensure that the petitioner's detailed comments are taken into account in the development of revised guidance, and also to request that he keep us as a committee, and the petitioner, informed on the development of the final guidance. We've got a ministerial response, and the Minister has undertaken to ensure that the comments of the petitioner are taken into account in the development of the guidance. He also undertakes to ensure that the committee is informed when the guidance is published this autumn. Petitioners have also submitted additional comments, and these are within

the public papers today.

[214] Colleagues, which is the best way forward on this—probably to share these comments with the Minister?

[215] **Alun Ffred Jones:** Cytuno.                   **Alun Ffred Jones:** Agreed.

[216] **William Powell:** Diolch yn fawr. Moving now to agenda item 3.32, P-04-643, 'Save Croeserw Flying Start'. This is grouped with the petition to follow. This petition was submitted by Donna Taylor and first considered on 30 June 2015. It has the support of 294 signatures. Also, we have agenda item 3.33, P-04-645, 'Save Glyncorrwg Flying Start', which was submitted by Sophie-Kate Reacord and was first considered on 30 June 2015, in that case with the support of 491 signatures. Both petitions were considered for the first time on 30 June and we agreed a series of actions: to write to the Minister to seek a response to both Action for Children and the petitioners' comments; to ask for clarity on how the funding that they supply to local authorities is calculated; and what recent assessment they've made of whether the funding is sufficient to cover costs. Action for Children was asked how much more funding they would need to be able to continue provision at the current level, and Neath Port Talbot County Borough Council was asked to comment on whether replacement provision will be in place by this September, whether the petitioners' concerns that there may be a considerable gap in provision has any foundation, and also why alternative provision has not been put in place earlier, given the amount of notice that had been given by Action for Children. Responses have now been received from the Minister, from Neath Port Talbot council, and Action for Children, and these are all in the public papers. The petitioners have been informed of the correspondence, but at the time when we were assembling the papers, we hadn't received that. As colleagues will have seen, the letter from Neath Port Talbot council is quite trenchant, really, and specific in the criticism that they make of Action for Children. So, I think it's only appropriate for us to share that correspondence directly with Action for Children to give them the opportunity to comment, and give us their perspective. And while we do that, we should also be seeking the views of the respective petitioners for P-04-645 and P-04-643, if colleagues are content that we do that. I think it's important that Action for Children has an opportunity to respond to the comments made about their organisation. Are colleagues happy with that approach?

[217] **Jeff Cuthbert:** Yes. It is quite strident, as you say.

[218] **William Powell:** Yes, absolutely; quite a clear, robust response.

[219] Agenda item 3.34 is P-04-607, 'Call for the Welsh Government to Purchase Garth Celyn'. This petition was submitted by Kevin Bates and was first considered on 9 December 2014 with the support of 650 signatures. We have both the text of the petition and then substantial additional information with regard to this, also you can see that there's something of a link with a much earlier petition on Cilmeri in reference to Prince Llywelyn also in this context.

[220] We most recently considered this petition on 2 June and agreed to draw Ms Gibson's letter to the attention of the Deputy Minister, Ken Skates. We also agreed to write a public statement supporting the benefits of Garth Celyn, which we went on to do. The Deputy Minister for Culture, Sport and Tourism has now given a clear response. We've also received further unsolicited correspondence on the matter, and all of these are within our pack today. I would very much welcome any comments from colleagues on this. Clearly, this is a matter that moves many people and which many people are concerned about, particularly given the forthcoming sale of the premises. Alun Ffred.

[221] **Alun Ffred Jones:** Well i mi ddweud ar y dechrau fy mod i wedi bod yn ymwneud â'r achos yma fel Aelod Cynulliad, a fy mod i'n gyfarwydd â'r amgylchiadau hefyd o fy nghyfnod fel Gweinidog. Nid oes gen i ddiddordeb ariannol na dim byd felly yn y mater. Rwy'n gyfarwydd â dadleuon y perchnogion, ac rwy'n gyfarwydd hefyd â safbwynt Cadw ar y safle. Mae'r dystiolaeth yn gymysglyd, os caf ei roi fel yna, ac nid oes tystiolaeth gadarn sy'n cysylltu Llywelyn â'r adeilad presennol. Mae'r Dirprwy Weinidog wedi gwneud yn glir safbwynt y Llywodraeth, ac ni fedraf weld y gallwn ni fynd â'r mater ymhellach na hynny.

**Alun Ffred Jones:** I should say first of all that I have been involved in this particular case as an Assembly Member, and I am familiar with the circumstances from my period as Minister. I don't have any financial interest or anything like that in this. I am familiar with the arguments of the owners, and I'm also familiar with Cadw's stance on this particular site. The evidence is mixed, if I can put it like that, and there is no robust evidence which links Llywelyn with the current building. The Deputy Minister has made it clear what the Government's stance is on this, ac I can't see how we could take the matter any further than that.

[222] **William Powell:** I think, obviously, you have a broad background in the issue; you're familiar with the matters at stake here. The clarity of the Minister's letter seems to me to leave us with no option but, indeed, to go forward with your proposal that we close the petition, and write to the petitioners, who've shown very considerable energy in this matter, with regret to say that we are unable to progress things any further, but to wish them well in their endeavours, particularly between now and any sale, in the hope that they may be in a position to secure the premises for the purposes that they want to safeguard for the future. Are colleagues happy with that approach?

[223] Agenda item 3.35 is P-04-577, 'Reinstate Funding to the Real Opportunities Project'. This petition was submitted by Mr Aled Davies and was first considered on 15 July 2014 with the support of 25 signatures, and an associated e-petition had a further 226 signatures. We considered this on 30 June this year and agreed, given the petitioner's concerns, to write directly to the Wales European Funding Office asking for a response to the points made, and also to copy the letter to the Minister.

10:30

[224] The chief executive of WEFO, Damien O'Brien, has now responded, and that letter is in the public papers. The petitioner has been informed of that letter having been received, but at the time that we were assembling the papers for today's meeting, no response had been received. So, I think, in that context, we need to await comments from Mr Aled Davies to see how he feels about the specific points that Mr O'Brien of WEFO addresses in his letter, if colleagues are happy with that approach.

### **Papur i'w Nodi** **Paper to Note**

[225] **William Powell:** Finally, agenda item 4, paper to note: P-04-459, 'A direct rail connection from Cardiff Airport to Cardiff central and west Wales'. The petition was submitted by Sovereign Wales, and was first considered on 5 March 2013, with the support of 35 signatures. We agreed, as a committee, at our previous meeting to close the petition, but agreed to forward the petitioner's final comments to the Minister. The Minister has written to say that he has noted the petitioner's comments and that she will continue to press the UK Government for the devolution of rail infrastructure. So, I

thought it was important that we noted the fact that we'd had the further ministerial response. The petition, as I said, was already closed.

[226] Colleagues, I'd like to thank you for your attendance and contributions. I would also just like to flag up the fact that, at 12.45 p.m. today, as I referred to earlier, we have the petition handover on the unconventional oil and gas planning applications petition. Also, on Wednesday, 30 September, at 1 o'clock, we have the handover and presentation of the petition about establishing a conscientious objectors' day in Wales. Also, there's the Plenary debate on 30 September on our committee report on the army in schools petition. So, that concludes the business for the day. Diolch yn fawr iawn. Thank you very much indeed for your attendance and contributions.

*Daeth y cyfarfod i ben am 10:32.*

*The meeting ended at 10:32.*