



Cynulliad Cenedlaethol Cymru **The National Assembly for Wales**

Y Pwyllgor Deisebau **The Petitions Committee**

Dydd Mawrth, 19 Mehefin 2012
Tuesday, 19 June 2012

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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

Russell George	Ceidwadwyr Cymreig Welsh Conservatives
Bethan Jenkins	Plaid Cymru The Party of Wales
William Powell	Democratiaid Rhyddfrydol Cymru (Cadeirydd y Pwyllgor) Welsh Liberal Democrats (Committee Chair)
Joyce Watson	Llafur Labour

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

Sarita Marshall	Dirprwy Glerc Deputy Clerk
Abigail Phillips	Clerc Clerk
Helen Roberts	Cynghorydd Cyfreithiol Legal Adviser

Dechreuodd y cyfarfod am 9 a.m.
The meeting began at 9 a.m.

Cyflwyniad, Ymddiheuriadau a Dirprwyon
Introduction, Apologies and Substitutions

[1] **William Powell:** Bore da, a chroeso **William Powell:** Good morning, and a warm
cynnes. welcome.

[2] The normal housekeeping rules apply, so I do not need to repeat them. We have no
apologies this morning—we hope to be joined very shortly by Russell George.

P-04-334 Deiseb am Uned Arenol Newydd yn Ysbyty'r Tywysog Siarl—Trafod
Ymweld ag Uned Pentwyn
P-04-334 Petition for a New Renal Unit at Prince Charles Hospital—Discussion
of Visit to Pentwyn Unit

[3] **William Powell:** Under this item, we shall consider the note on the recent rapporteur
visit to the renal unit at Pentwyn, which I was unfortunately unable to attend. We have a
comprehensive note of that visit, and some key points come from it. Could those of you who
were able to take part in that visit speak to the note briefly?

[4] **Bethan Jenkins:** I would just thank those who showed us around at Pentwyn and
thank the patients for coming down from the Rhymney valley to show us around. The contrast
between the Merthyr facility and the one at Pentwyn is clear—there is much more space and
more provision for independence. Everybody had their own television and their own personal
space. There was much better provision in terms of toilets and the waiting area—rather
embarrassingly, the waiting area there was probably the same size as the whole Merthyr renal
unit. However, we were concerned about the fact that the chief executive of Cwm Taf Local
Health Board had agreed to meet patients after the Merthyr visit, which was some time ago

now, but still has not—

[5] **William Powell:** I recall that Mr Kendrick made that point to colleagues.

[6] **Bethan Jenkins:** The chief executive had still not met the petitioners. We were concerned about that, given the urgency of the discussion.

[7] I believe that things have progressed in Merthyr with regard to bringing plans forward to place it on the Prince Charles Hospital site, as opposed to it being off-site, which is what the patients wanted. However, we have not seen the plans yet, as other committee members will know. Nonetheless, it was a very useful visit, allowing us to see the contrast with Merthyr. I think that we can learn from that experience and show how the quality of care, though good at both places in terms of the nurses and the support staff, is improved by having the building in good shape. That does ease people's minds. Also, the transport was much better at Pentwyn, although there were some concerns about that, too. All in all, the provision was much more positive.

[8] **William Powell:** That is really helpful. I appreciate the fact that you were the common factor in both visits, because I was with you on the first visit, to the Prince Charles Hospital. You seem to have drawn out some of the key contrasts. I was very disappointed to hear that Mr Kendrick had not had contact. Russell, do you have any comments to add to that?

[9] **Russell George:** Not really. I think that Bethan has summarised the visit really well. From my perspective, having not been on the first visit, it was useful to meet the patients. We had some really good conversations with the patients that spilled over into other issues as well. However, at the moment, there is not a lot that we can do, other than wait for the response from the chief executive of the health board.

[10] **William Powell:** Indeed, we must wait for the response from Cwm Taf. I hope that we shall not be waiting too long, because it is very disappointing that this amount of time has elapsed. On a previous occasion, there was quite an energetic and committed approach, we felt, from the chief executive and the chair. We hope that the pace will be resumed to take this forward. So, are we agreed to await that response? If we do not hear from them, we will chase again, but we hope that that will not be the case.

[11] **Bethan Jenkins:** The Minister has said that they are looking for solutions and procurement routes, but it would be good if we could get a clearer idea about this. From what I understood from the visit to Pentwyn, they are discussing the options now on site. Could we be party to some additional information on what they are actually going to be doing? I do not think that there is a lot of detail in the Minister's response in order for us to understand this. It may be done by contacting the health board directly.

[12] **William Powell:** Yes, perhaps we need to tease out that issue as well. We will discuss that.

[13] **Bethan Jenkins:** It is just for the petitioners' sake. We were discussing this standing in the corridor, but if they could understand fully where they stand with regard to provision for the future, it would give them some peace of mind.

[14] **William Powell:** I think that Mr Kendrick and his colleagues would appreciate that. Good. Thank you.

9.06 a.m.

P-04-366 Cau Canolfan Ddydd Aberystwyth—Trafod Ymweliad
P-04-366 Closure of Aberystwyth Day Centre—Discussion of Visit

[15] **William Powell:** Briefly, there is an update from Bethan and me following the visit just last Friday to Aberystwyth to see the new day centre. A note of that visit has just been circulated. It is a comprehensive note. At this stage, we can tease out a couple of the key points. We were extremely well received by the petitioners in St Paul's church hall and, afterwards, in the new day centre facility by the county council officials. It is a very difficult issue, as we all understand. However, it was made very clear by Councillor ap Gwynn, the new leader of Ceredigion County Council, that the nature of the contractual arrangements that the previous council entered into means that there is no possibility, without enormous penalty, of any reconsideration of the old day centre. Nevertheless, the key issues that came out when we met the petitioners dealt with some aspects of the quality of the infrastructure and the service in the new centre. A key issue for me was the provision of a canopy to enable users of the centre to access the building without being exposed to wet and difficult weather and being made uncomfortable. At the moment, they are potentially exposed to the elements. The issue of bathing facilities and alternative provision seemed to come up time and again when we spoke to the users. Bethan, would you like to give your thoughts on this one briefly?

[16] **Bethan Jenkins:** We got a mixed picture from speaking to the users. Some were happy and some were fine with the provision. However, some said that, if they did not come, the place would be given to someone else and that that would mean they did not go anywhere during the week. Others really did not like the fact that it is in a basement. There is not that much light coming into the building. I am saying that from my own observation. The starkest thing for me, and I will not name names, is that one woman has not had a bath since April because there is no bath in this new facility. I understand that the local Member, Elin Jones, is personally going to take up this matter. However, that reflects the fact that, when you are putting new facilities in place for people with very special needs, the provision needs to be sorted out sooner rather than later. Therefore, the fact that there is no bath on site is a huge concern for wheelchair users. I know that there is a waiting list for adaptations to their houses now. Potentially, they could also go to a care home to have a bath. However, this should be put in place as soon as possible; they should not be waiting months and months. However, obviously, the council was very welcoming. The councillors said that they would be quite happy to have an independent review of the situation.

[17] **William Powell:** Yes, that is a really important point that was stressed very much by the petitioners, and I raised that on behalf of the wider committee—

[18] **Bethan Jenkins:** I would not want to put them on record as saying that they were happy with that, but they said that they would support it.

[19] **William Powell:** Yes, that is reflected in the note, which you will have a chance to look at in due course. That is an important issue for us to work on when we come to consider this in more depth, which we undertook to do at the next Petitions Committee meeting, by which time all colleagues will have had the chance to consider the visit and some of the wider submissions.

[20] **Bethan Jenkins:** I would also make the point that the room is very small. Previously, they had an open day on Wednesdays when they would mix with other people from society in Aberystwyth. Now, because they are referred there by social services, no-one else can access it apart from those individuals, and so they do not get that ability to socialise like they once did. That is important.

[21] **William Powell:** Absolutely. That was very much a theme. We did hear about the

luncheon club provision hosted by Aberystwyth Town Football Club, but that is obviously on a different basis again and is not all centred in the one place, which I think was the advantage of the previous case. If we, as a committee, can commit to studying that and associated documents, we will look at it in the round during the first meeting in July. Are you happy with that? I see that you are. Thank you.

9.10 a.m.

Deisebau Newydd New Petitions

[22] **William Powell:** Today, we have a number of new petitions. First, we have P-04-395, which requests that the Wales Air Ambulance should receive Government funding. It was submitted by Leslie Mark Wilkins, and it has collected 63 signatures. We have the text of this petition before us; therefore, there is no need to go through it in verbatim fashion. The key points are clear. At this point, I would recommend that we write to the Minister for Health and Social Services to bring this forward. It has come up a number of times in Plenary, and there seems to be some uncertainty, or some difference of views, as to what requests have previously been made for core funding by the ambulance trust or some of its associated supporters. I have heard a difference of views in response to Plenary questions in that respect.

[23] **Russell George:** I agree with you, Chair, that there seems to be some confusion here. It would be useful if the committee were to write to the Minister for health to ask for a full explanation. This is a very serious and crucial petition that is very much linked to many other petitions that we have received on health services. We have had so many petitions on services that have moved further away from us, for example, to Shrewsbury and Telford, and on the issues at Bronglais. The Wales Air Ambulance is extremely important to rural parts of Wales, where people have to travel an hour and a half by road, as the petitioner has pointed out in the text of the petition.

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

[25] **Russell George:** It is one that we should take very seriously. Actually, I will be going on a cross-Wales walk on Saturday in aid of Wales Air Ambulance. I was thinking, as I read this petition, that I might even need its services, perhaps, on Saturday.

[26] **William Powell:** I did pick up some messages that you sent out in the week in terms of your pre-walk.

[27] **Russell George:** I hope that I will not need its services.

[28] **Bethan Jenkins:** It is a conflict of interest.

[29] **Russell George:** Yes, it is. Of course, any members of the committee can sponsor me, Chair, for the walk on Saturday.

[30] **William Powell:** Clearly, there is no pressure, but I am sure that we will take that and other approaches in the correct spirit. On Sunday, I was in the company of some of the air ambulance people who are based in Welshpool, at the air show event that took place. Some of these messages also came through very strongly then. So, we agree to write to the Minister and to seek some clarity on this.

[31] The next new petition is P-04-396, which relates to emergency life support skills for Welsh schoolchildren. It was submitted by the British Heart Foundation and is therefore backed by one collective signature on behalf of the organisation. An associated petition

collected over 4,000 signatures and we shall be receiving that later today. What actions do colleagues suggest that we should take on this petition at the moment?

[32] **Bethan Jenkins:** There was a short debate on this, was there not?

[33] **Williams Powell:** Yes, there was.

[34] **Bethan Jenkins:** I think that we should look back at that to see what was said.

[35] **William Powell:** Yes, that would be sensible in order to inform our consideration.

[36] **Bethan Jenkins:** Perhaps we could also write to the Minister again in the light of the petition. I do not want to put words into the Minister's mouth, but I think that he said that many of these issues were covered within the PSE curriculum. I cannot remember more than that.

[37] **William Powell:** I was not present at that particular short debate, but I think that it would be very sensible for us to get that into our consideration, and to write to Leighton Andrews to seek his view on this particular petition. Do you agree, colleagues? I see that you do.

9.15 a.m.

[38] The next petition is P-04-397 on a living wage. There was a very lively and memorable presentation of this on the steps of the Senedd just last week. The petition was submitted by Save the Children's young ambassadors and collected 483 signatures. We have the background here of the statement from the Minister for Local Government and Communities on 30 May, and, as you will recall, he made an undertaking on that occasion to draw together a group of stakeholders with an interest in living wage issues for Wales, including the Confederation of British Industry, the Joseph Rowntree Foundation, the Wales TUC and Save the Children. That will be an important aspect of any consideration of this matter. I would be minded to write to the Minister to flag up this particular petition and seek his views on the detailed requests here. Joyce, do you have any views on this one?

[39] **Joyce Watson:** I have very strong views on this, as it happens. I fully support people having a living wage, particularly in the current climate, where there are cuts coming towards people like a hurricane from England. Having said that, the Minister is doing some work on it and we have a commitment to living wages in the public sector in Wales. We have no control over the private sector, other than to encourage it, and maybe it would see the value of getting more out of its people. Certainly, the fact that the Minister has put a working group together is encouraging; he is taking it seriously on behalf of Government. We should certainly let him know about this—he does know anyway—so that he can keep it constantly in mind when that working group is meeting.

[40] **William Powell:** It would be very useful for us to specifically request an update on the work of the stakeholder group. It has been announced relatively recently, but I hope it will have met and, obviously, it will be useful for us to be aware of that.

[41] **Bethan Jenkins:** It is mentioned here that Save the Children will be part of the stakeholder group. It may be worth us inquiring whether the young ambassadors could be consulted—if they are not part of the group—in another way, given that they were really enthusiastic about the campaign.

[42] **William Powell:** Absolutely. They were really articulate and knew the key issues that mattered to them. I certainly hope that we will have the opportunity to hear from them

directly. I strongly agree with your view that they should have direct access to at least a session with this stakeholder group, if they are kind enough to agree to take that work forward. Good. So, we agree to write to the Minister in those terms on that one.

[43] The next petition is P-04-398 on the campaign for a Welsh animal offenders register. This was submitted by Mari and Sara Roberts and collected 69 signatures. Again, we have a detailed text, which I invite you to consider. As yet, we have taken no action ahead of this meeting. It is clearly an important and emotive issue. I am minded to write directly to the Minister for Environment and Sustainable Development, who has responsibility for this, to seek his views in the first instance. Are there any other actions that you would suggest we take at this time?

[44] **Bethan Jenkins:** Are there any other animal welfare groups whose opinion we could seek? For me, this is a really interesting petition. We could find out what the Royal Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals or some other organisation thinks. Is there an umbrella group whose opinion we could seek, if that is in order?

[45] **William Powell:** I would certainly be happy to extend that initial letter to other groups. Are there any other organisations that immediately come to mind? That would probably be a good start.

[46] **Joyce Watson:** We can scope.

[47] **William Powell:** Exactly. Let us do that. Thank you very much. The next one is P-04-399. This petition was submitted by Royce Clifford and has the support of over 400 signatories. It is in respect of slaughter practices. It reads:

[48] ‘We call upon the National Assembly to urge the Welsh Government to ban the practice of slaughtering animals without pre-stunning them.’

[49] I have not, as yet, taken any action on behalf of the committee on this one. I think that it would be sensible for us to go to John Griffiths again as the relevant Minister, but also, on the equalities issue, we probably need to send our correspondence further. Are there any thoughts on that?

[50] **Russell George:** You should write to two different Ministers, and you have mentioned them both.

[51] **William Powell:** Yes. So, if we also write to Jane Hutt, I think that that would be sensible, given the sensitivity around this in terms of the equalities issue.

[52] The next petition, P-04-400, on the NICE quality standard in mental health, was submitted by Action for Mental Health and has collected in excess of 80 signatures. It urges

[53] ‘the Welsh Government to adopt and implement the NICE quality standard for service user experience in adult mental health in its entirety.’

[54] This issue is of great importance and there is a presentation on this tomorrow. I hope that Members will be able to attend that, if you are available. What are your views on this? We look forward to meeting some of the petitioners tomorrow, who will inform our consideration. Are there any thoughts at this time on what we should do?

[55] **Joyce Watson:** We should write to the Minister for Health and Social Services and, from that, we will be able to understand where Wales is on this. She may be able to answer some of these questions.

[56] **William Powell:** Yes. It is also important to take account of the views of the petitioners that will be evident tomorrow.

[57] Moving on to P-04-401 on the Welsh language in our Assembly. This was submitted by Ceri Phillips on behalf of Cymdeithas yr Iaith Gymraeg and enjoys the support of 748 signatories. As yet, no action has been taken on this. The same organisation brought forward the petition on the Record of Proceedings. There is clearly a need to also take that context on board in our consideration here.

[58] **Joyce Watson:** As a member of the scrutiny committee, I can say that due process will happen. This will be debated and the outcome will be decided, not only by us, as a Petitions Committee, but by the whole Assembly. That is going to happen, and nothing is going to stop that.

[59] **William Powell:** That is in train.

[60] **Joyce Watson:** The outcome will be evident soon.

[61] **Bethan Jenkins:** Mae pwyllgor ar ddydd Iau, pan fydd gwelliannau yn mynd gerbron, felly bydd cyfle i Gymdeithas yr Iaith Gymraeg a phobl eraill weld beth sy'n digwydd bryd hynny. **Bethan Jenkins:** There is a committee on Thursday when amendments will be put forward, so there will be an opportunity for Cymdeithas yr Iaith Gymraeg and others to see what happens at that time.

[62] Yn ystod Cyfnod 3 o'r Bil, bydd modd cyflwyno gwelliannau ychwanegol ar sail yr hyn sy'n digwydd yn y pwyllgor. Rwy'n credu bod pawb ar y pwyllgor yn ymwybodol o farn y gymdeithas, gan iddi roi tystiolaeth. Felly, rydym yn awr yn aros i'r trafodaethau fynd yn eu blaen. During Stage 3 of the Bill, it will be possible to introduce additional amendments on the basis of what happens in the committee. I think that everyone on the committee is aware of the society's opinion, as it has given evidence. So, we are now waiting for those discussions to continue.

[63] **William Powell:** It would probably be useful for us to refer this petition to the Commission, just for it to be aware of the strength of opinion. I thank Joyce for setting the context of the procedure on this.

9.24 a.m.

Y Wybodaeth Ddiweddaraf am Ddeisebau Blaenorol Updates to Previous Petitions

[64] **William Powell:** We now have updates on previous petitions. The first is on P-04-330, a Welsh-language Record in our Assembly, submitted in September 2011 by Catrin Dafydd. It has the support of 1,334 signatures. We had previously agreed to this being fed into the wider process. As was outlined just now by Bethan, this is also going forward in that way. In the light of that, I seek your views as to whether this is the right time to close this petition. It seems that we have unanimous support for that. Therefore, let us agree to do just that.

[65] We move to agenda item 5.2, which has attracted a degree of interest in the wider Welsh media. This is petition P-04-389. It was submitted in May by Reverend Christopher Trefor Davies, with the support of 17 signatories, calling upon the National Assembly to make a statement of support for Welsh agriculture by commissioning and erecting in the Senedd a permanent statue of a sheep.

[66] I should declare an interest in this matter, in that I am a partner in a livestock farm. The principal animals that we farm are sheep, and, therefore, I think that it would be inappropriate for me not to state that. We have clear correspondence from the Presiding Officer on this issue, and it is guidance that I welcome, because it puts the context quite clearly that we are not, as an Assembly, in the business of commissioning permanent works of art because of the nature of our wider building and what it already incorporates. However, in the letter, Rosemary Butler states that we provide, and indeed have recently provided, temporary accommodation for the display of artistic works drawn from different traditions in Wales, and this could potentially be a solution. However, there is a very strong emphasis that the Assembly Commission

[67] 'does not fund the provision of temporary exhibits, therefore the cost would need to be met by the exhibitors'/petitioners' and the design of any sheep statue provided for temporary exhibition would need to be agreed.'

[68] I would be interested in your views and perspectives on this issue.

[69] **Joyce Watson:** I think that it is very clear. I have to say that sheep farming is a major part of Wales, its ethos and culture, so I understand the passion behind this petition. Having said that, we have clear guidelines and we need to send them to the petitioner. We cannot, clearly, do what it asks, and I think that closing the petition would be appropriate.

[70] **William Powell:** Is there any support for that view? It is certainly one that I am very comfortable with. I am extremely grateful for the clarity of the Presiding Officer's guidance.

[71] **Russell George:** I have nothing specific to add, Chair.

[72] **William Powell:** Excellent. We will, therefore, unanimously agree to close the petition and to forward this response to the petitioners. We are grateful to them for bringing this forward, as we are with all other petitions from all parts of Wales.

[73] We will now move on to another important aspect of cultural heritage, which is petition P-03-197, Save the Vulcan. Those of us who joined this Assembly last May will realise that this issue goes back well into the third Assembly. The situation is, unfortunately, clear, in that the decision seems to be in train on this one, and the move to St Fagans is going forward. There has been correspondence on this, and I invite Bethan to share some of the views contained in that correspondence, which she kindly forwarded to us.

[74] **Bethan Jenkins:** Fe wnaeth y deisebwyr fy e-bostio i, ac rwy'n credu bod y clerc hefyd wedi siarad â nhw am y ffaith y bydd y pwyllgor y mae Joyce a minnau'n aelodau ohono yn cynnal cwpl o sesiynau i edrych ar beth fydd yn y Bil treftadaeth gan y Gweinidog treftadaeth, Huw Lewis. Gobeithio, wrth drafod rhestru lleol, y bydd hyn yn codi yn y sesiynau hynny, oherwydd dyna yw un o brif bryderon y deisebwyr o ran rhestru'n genedlaethol a sut mae hynny'n gweithio gyda rhestru yn lleol.

Bethan Jenkins: The petitioners contacted me by e-mail, and I think that the clerk has also spoken to them about the fact that the committee that Joyce and I sit on will hold a couple of sessions to look at what will be in the heritage Bill by the Minister for heritage, Huw Lewis. Hopefully, in discussing local listing, this issue will come up in those sessions, because that is one of the main concerns of the petitioners in terms of national listing and how that works with local listing.

9.30 a.m.

[75] Felly, dyna'r hyn yr ydym wedi So, that is we have proposed for them to do,

cynnig iddynt ei wneud yn awr, fel eu bod yn gallu cynnig mwy o dystiolaeth i'r pwyllgor hwnnw. Yn anffodus, nid ydym wedi gallu achub y Vulcan yn ei chyflwr presennol, ond o leiaf y bydd yn mynd i'r amgueddfa. Mae nifer fawr o adeiladau tebyg nad ydynt yn cael eu safio yn yr un modd. Yn hynny o beth, mae'r ymgyrch yn llwyddiannus, ond credaf mai'r Bil treftadaeth fydd y ffordd ymlaen i'r ymgyrchwyr hyn.

so that they can submit more evidence to that committee. Unfortunately, we have been unable to save the Vulcan in its current state, but at least it will be going to the museum. A lot of similar buildings are not saved in that way. In that sense, the campaign has been successful, but I believe that the heritage Bill will be the way forward for these petitioners.

[76] **William Powell:** Diolch yn fawr. That succinctly summarises the points that I identified in that correspondence and the necessary response to it. There was a fair degree of dissatisfaction from the petitioners with the way in which Cadw currently operates, which may be to do with its remit or other factors that need attention. However, it is appropriate to flag up that concern, given that it is a concern that I have heard expressed by others who want to protect particular heritage buildings. There is sometimes a slowness of response, which is a theme that I have heard identified by constituents and some of our petitioners. Are there any other thoughts that colleagues want to feed in at this stage?

[77] **Joyce Watson:** In this case, there has been a successful outcome—or the most successful outcome that could have been achieved, as Bethan said. We cannot do any more and I therefore recommend that we close this petition.

[78] **William Powell:** I am happy to support that. I see that there is unanimous support for that action, so let us do precisely that.

[79] We now move on to P-03-162, on the concerns around road safety in Llanspyddid, near Brecon. We have received correspondence from the Minister with regard to the threshold number of accidents and so on. The ministerial view is pretty clear on this occasion, and I suggest that, at this point, there is not much more that we can do. I therefore suggest that we move to close this petition. Does that action enjoy your support? I see that it does, so let us do that. Good.

[80] The next petition is P-04-370 on the improvement of psychic and intuitive services in Wales, which I received from Ant Edwards and colleagues some time ago on the steps of the Senedd. It reads as follows:

[81] ‘We the undersigned call on the National Assembly for Wales to urge the Welsh Government to raise awareness with providers of Psychic services and the public of the Consumer Protection from unfair Trading Regulations 2008.’

[82] As you will have seen, we have received correspondence from the relevant Minister, Carl Sargeant, on this matter. He has clearly pointed out that, under the 2008 regulations, this is a non-devolved matter. The petitioners have had sight of that letter, which we forwarded to them, but, as yet, we have not heard back from them with any comments. This is clearly an issue of strong concern, given their perception that there are significant numbers of what could be termed ‘rogue’ operators in this field, which is potentially harmful to the welfare of members of the public. It is probably best at this point, in light of the ministerial advice, for us to contact the petitioners again to suggest that the petitioners contact Dr Vince Cable or his department, the UK Government’s Department for Business, Innovation and Skills. Would you favour that action? I would appreciate any wider comments on this.

[83] **Joyce Watson:** I would favour that action, Chair, because, given that this is a non-devolved matter, we cannot do anything about it. The petitioners must go to where the powers

are held, so we should send them a letter to advise them of that. So, given that we cannot do any more, I would move to close the petition as well.

[84] **Bethan Jenkins:** Mae'r ddeiseb yn gofyn i Lywodraeth Cymru godi ymwybyddiaeth, ac felly mae'r ddeiseb yn cydnabod nad yw'r pŵer gennym yng Nghymru. Felly, nid wyf yn sicr ynghylch ei chau, oherwydd codi ymwybyddiaeth yw'r hyn y mae'r deisebwyr yn gofyn amdano, nid gwneud unrhyw beth mwy na hynny.

Bethan Jenkins: The petition asks the Welsh Government to raise awareness, and therefore the petition recognises that the power is not held in Wales. So, I am unsure as to whether we should close it, because what the petitioners are asking for is to raise awareness, and not to do anything more than that.

[85] Ni chredaf y bydd problem os ailofynnwn i'r Gweinidog ddweud beth y gellid ei wneud i godi ymwybyddiaeth o hyn. Hefyd, efallai y gallem ddarganfod a ydyw Llais Defnyddwyr yng Nghymru—er nad wyf yn siŵr pwy sydd yn rheoleiddio o ran ochr yr unigolyn—wedi cael unrhyw fath o fewnbwn yn hyn o beth yn y gorffennol. Yr wyf yn ymwybodol o'r ffaith nad oes gennym y pwerau, ond mae codi ymwybyddiaeth yn wahanol i ddweud bod yn rhaid i Lywodraeth Cymru wneud rhywbeth nad yw o fewn ei chapasiti. Yr wyf am fod yn deg â'r deisebwr.

I do not think that there will be a problem in us asking the Minister again to say what can be done to raise awareness of this. Perhaps we could also find out whether Consumer Focus in Wales—although I am not sure who regulates from the individual's perspective—has had any sort of input into this in the past. I am aware of the fact that we do not have the powers, but raising awareness is different to saying that the Government has to do something that is not within its capacity. I just want to be fair to the petitioner.

[86] **William Powell:** Having spoken at some length to the petitioners when they presented the petition and had some other feedback from the wider sector, I think that there is merit in what you are suggesting. It is also possible that we could consider approaching the administrators of the business.wales website, which would be another potential route in which this matter could be flagged up. Perhaps we should write to Consumer Focus. We have had a suggestion to close the petition, but I think that there could well be some useful action that we could still take here. Do you have any thoughts on this matter, Russell?

[87] **Russell George:** No.

[88] **William Powell:** I see that you have nothing to add.

[89] **Bethan Jenkins:** You can read his mind.

[90] **William Powell:** Since we have something of a divergence of views, Joyce, would you acquiesce in the suggestion that we write to Consumer Focus on the matter, only in terms of the awareness raising, not on the wider issue because, clearly, your point is absolutely correct? As I said earlier, this is a non-devolved matter.

[91] **Joyce Watson:** I am quite happy to do that, but I still think that we should do that and then close the petition.

[92] **William Powell:** We could combine those actions.

[93] **Bethan Jenkins:** I do not see the point of doing that because we might have action to take further to the correspondence. If the correspondence indicates that nothing can be done, then we could close it. I do not see the point in closing it as well as doing that; we may have other things to consider.

[94] **William Powell:** Perhaps we could adopt a stepped approach here.

[95] **Joyce Watson:** Okay. I am happy. We will do that.

[96] **William Powell:** Excellent. I think that we have progress. Thank you very much for your input, colleagues.

[97] We now move to an issue that is also of considerable concern, particularly in the mid Wales town of Newtown. I refer to petitions P-03-261 and P-04-319, regarding the Newtown traffic situation. We have an extensive technical document in our papers today, which we have had an opportunity to consider. Obviously, this is a long-standing issue and one of real concern in the area. It is fairly clear that we need to forward this report to the petitioners, if they have not already had access to it. I am also keen to have your perspective on this, Russell, as the immediate local Member. Obviously, Joyce and I have a wider remit.

[98] **Russell George:** Thank you, Chair. There are two petitions to be considered, but I will just comment on petition P-04-319, the Newtown traffic petition. As you say, it is a big issue in Newtown, but it is not just a Newtown issue; it is a mid Wales issue. Sometimes, seeing the name 'Newtown' is deceptive, because the issue goes beyond just Newtown.

[99] **William Powell:** Absolutely. It is a key corridor.

[100] **Russell George:** From that perspective, this petition was asking for two different steps: first, for the construction of the bypass to be brought forward as soon as possible; and secondly, for the roundabout to be returned. That was causing a lot of concern. For the first step, the positive point is that, since the petition was started, the Minister has prioritised the Newtown bypass in his traffic plan, which is really good news.

[101] **William Powell:** Absolutely. It is in the plan.

[102] **Russell George:** The less positive news is that, since the petition was started, we have received correspondence indicating that it has already slipped by one year. Therefore, perhaps we could ask the petitioners for their views on that. However, there is generally good news on that point. Secondly, with regard to the roundabout being removed, a traffic study has been undertaken, and its findings have been made available to us. I know that that is a public report, and that people have looked at it. I think that there is a great deal of disappointment with the results of that study because it does not equal what is happening on the ground. That is the perception in and around Newtown.

[103] Some of the comments I have received as feedback are that the study does not address that. One issue the study does pick up on is that the traffic situation has not worsened since the roundabout was put there. That does not match the views on the ground. People also feel that the study did not take into account the fact that some people are avoiding the whole area. Therefore, I think it is really important that we write back to the petitioners to seek their views. I hope that they will give us a full and frank summary of their views and the views of people in the wider area so we can look at that again. I noticed that the Minister said that he would share the data with us. I want to check with the clerks that we have received that information. Although we have received the full study, when he was here, the Minister implied that he would provide the data behind that.

[104] **William Powell:** I am not sure whether we have that.

[105] **Russell George:** I looked through the report, and it contains a lot of data. However, I wonder whether we should check with his office whether there is any further analysis that

would perhaps not have been in the initial study. I think that he indicated he was prepared to give us that.

[106] **William Powell:** We can certainly do that. Joyce, do you have a comment on this?

[107] **Joyce Watson:** I am sure that I have as many thoughts on this as the people in Newtown and the wider area. It is a very complicated issue because there are so many different views on what is causing the problem. Some say it is the lights; some say it is the roundabout; others say it is something else. So it goes on. First, I think we have to pay tribute to Carl Sargeant for reprioritising the route so that it is actually in there when it was not before. Yes, there has probably been a bit of slippage, but there has also been a huge amount of slippage in our capital expenditure, which creates those sorts of problems. Having said all that, I am quite happy to go along with what Russell said about calling for more detail if more detail is available. I also want to note that the bottleneck in Newtown creates problems not only in Newtown but the whole area—

[108] **William Powell:** Yes, the wider Severn valley. Absolutely.

[109] **Joyce Watson:** Yes, it affects the whole area, including its economic development and viability. I think that Carl Sargeant recognised that when he reprioritised this. As a committee, I want us to reassure the people of that area that we do recognise this in its wider context and the importance of it. However, I am quite happy to go along with what Russell said.

[110] **William Powell:** Thank you. There is one other thing I think would be helpful in this context, which is to forward a copy of the report to the petitioners and to Justin Baird-Murray, the chair of the task and finish group on the Powys growth zones, which are local growth zones focusing on Newtown, Llandrindod and Brecon. I am aware that some of the submissions have flagged up issues to do with decline in footfall and associated issues. This could helpfully inform that work. Obviously, the task and finish group was announced in the spring by Mrs Edwina Hart, the Minister for Business, Enterprise, Technology and Science. I think that this would usefully feed into the work of that group as well.

[111] **Joyce Watson:** I am happy with that.

[112] **William Powell:** Excellent.

[113] The next petition, P-04-384, Link to M48 off B4245 Caldicot/Rogiet, was submitted in May this year by Councillor James Harris, with the support of 275 signatories. We have received correspondence from the Minister, and the petitioner has had the opportunity to see that letter, although we have not received any comment back as yet. We can see from the Minister's response what the state of play is on this one at the moment. I am minded to suggest that we close this petition in light of that, but I welcome any views. I see that we are agreed. In that case, I am afraid that that is what we will have to do.

[114] Moving on to petition P-04-387, Signage and Drainage on A467, this was submitted in May by Stacey Gallagher with more than 1,000 signatures. On this occasion, I will read the text here, because it is important to the context.

9.45 a.m.

[115] 'On Saturday 18th February 2012 a loving Husband and Father lost his life on the A467 in a fatal car accident, an accident that we believe could have been prevented had there been adequate drainage in place on this road, ensuring that the large amounts of surface water was not allowed to collect on the road causing the vehicle to aquaplane. There is currently no

permanent signage detailing the risk to flooding on the road.’

[116] As you see, we have received correspondence in our papers from Carl Sargeant on this matter. I will open this to colleagues to say what your views are as to the best way forward here. Clearly, we can see what the Minister is suggesting.

[117] **Bethan Jenkins:** Yn amlwg, mae’r pŵer yn gorwedd gyda’r awdurdod lleol. Rydym wedi cael map o’r hyn y mae’r Llywodraeth yn gyfrifol amdano. Yn anffodus, ni allwn wneud dim â materion awdurdodau lleol. Yn yr achos hwn, byddwn yn hoffi gwneud rhywbeth gan fod y newyddion sydd wedi arwain at sefyllfa lle maent wedi gorfod ein deisebu mor drasig, ond nid wyf yn gweld ein bod yn gallu bod yn fwy o help na dweud wrthynt am gysylltu â chyngor Casnewydd. Efallai y gallem hyd yn oed ddweud wrth Aelodau Cynulliad yr ardal—yr Aelodau rhanbarthol ac etholaethol—fod y ddeiseb hon yn bodoli ac efallai y gallent hwy helpu’r deisebwyr yn lleol er mwyn hwyluso’r broses, gan ei bod mor agos atynt.

Bethan Jenkins: Obviously, the power lies with the local authority. We have had a map of what the Government is responsible for. Unfortunately, we cannot do anything with local authority matters. In this case, I would like to do something because the news that has led to the situation whereby they had to petition us is so tragic, but I cannot see how we could be of more assistance other than to tell them to contact Newport council. Perhaps we could even tell the Assembly Members for that area—the regional and constituency Members—that this petition has been submitted and perhaps they could help the petitioners locally in order to facilitate the process, because it is so close to them.

[118] **Joyce Watson:** I agree with that.

[119] **William Powell:** Diolch yn fawr. That would make a lot of sense. Obviously, there has been significant change recently in Newport council. People will be bedding down into their new roles. If this is referred, as the Minister suggested, with our support as well, then that is the way forward. Keeping the two constituency Members and the four regional Members fully up to speed can only strengthen the case.

[120] Moving now to petition P-04-388, Protect collective worship as a legal requirement, this was submitted in May 2012 by Jim Stewart. It has the support of almost 4,000 signatories. As we are aware, and as you will have seen in the papers, correspondence has been received from the Minister. The Minister has given some sturdy undertakings here. My sense is that there is not a lot more for us to do and that we should close the petition, but I welcome any feedback that you have on this one.

[121] **Russell George:** It is a huge amount of signatures to collect, and it is very important to people. I spoke to the petitioner when he came to the Assembly just a few weeks ago. I agree with your suggestion, Chair. The Minister has written back and he has been very clear. The petitioner should be delighted by his response. One sentence says:

[122] ‘I am not considering a change to the status of collective worship within schools in Wales.’

[123] That answers what the petitioner is asking for, so I think that petition can be closed.

[124] **William Powell:** Let us do precisely that.

[125] Moving to petition P-03-303, Against Homophobic Bullying, this was submitted in November 2010 by Oliver Townsend and has the support of 440 signatories. It is calling upon the National Assembly to urge the Welsh Government to issue compulsory guidance on this

matter and to take this matter as seriously as the petitioners are recommending. In light of the ministerial response, we have been in touch with the petitioner on several occasions regarding this matter and we have not heard back from the petitioner. So, I think that we have to conclude that there is no option for us at this point but to draw the petition to a close, notwithstanding the importance of the issue. There has obviously been a strong and robust response to this important issue. What are your views, colleagues, on this one? I see that you agree to close the petition.

[126] Moving to petition P-04-372, More Ladies Toilets at Entertainment Venues, it is clearly an important issue, and it is, by no means, confined to ladies; we can see that the petitioner is Mr Simon Williams-Jones, who has collected 27 signatures to this petition. We have had feedback from the Minister on this. Again, it looks as though the direction of travel is probably to close this petition, but it would be inappropriate to do so without having any further thoughts fed in from you. So, do you have any thoughts on this? I sense movement—Bethan, do you wish to contribute?

[127] **Russell George:** I will let the ladies respond, as they have more experience of ladies' toilets.

[128] **Bethan Jenkins:** Nid wyf yn gwybod beth i ddweud mewn ymateb i hynny. Mae'r Gweinidog wedi dweud bod y rheoliadau yn weddol ddiweddar—daethant i rym yn 2006—ac nid yw am newid yr hyn sy'n bodoli ar hyn o bryd. Felly, mae'n anodd gwybod, heblaw bod y Gweinidog yn newid ei feddwl, sut y gallwn ddylanwadu ar unrhyw beth yn y fan hon. Mae'n fater pwysig, ond efallai fod angen mwy o ymchwil ar ran y deisebwr gan nad yw'r Gweinidog yn fodlon symud ar hyn.

Bethan Jenkins: I do not know what to say to that. The Minister has said that the regulations are quite recent—they came into force in 2006—and that he does not want to change what exists at present. So, it is difficult to know, unless the Minister changes his mind, how we can influence anything here. It is an important issue, but maybe more research by the petitioner is needed, as the Minister has said that he is not willing to move on this.

[129] **William Powell:** This is a specific petition, but, within the last six months, we have been looking at wider issues about public toilet provision across Wales. It is a matter of real concern, but on this particular issue, we have relatively recent guidance, and it appears that the Minister is not minded to make any amendments, so we will have to close the petition. I see that you agree that we should do so.

[130] We now move to P-04-373, school exclusion zones for mobile hot food. This was submitted in March by Arfon Jones and has the backing of 43 signatories, calling

[131] 'upon the Welsh Government to consider legislation to exclude Mobile Fast Food Vans from operating within a 400 metre exclusion zone around all schools in Wales during the hours of 8am to 4.30pm weekdays during term time.'

[132] As you can see, we have correspondence from the Minister, Leighton Andrews, on this. There could well be mileage in sharing this with our colleague and his, Carl Sargeant, who may well have a view on this matter in the terms that Leighton Andrews has outlined. So, if we write to Carl Sargeant regarding the regulations applying to mobile hot food outlets in the terms of the petition, I think that that would be a step forward, and I welcome any views that you have. Is that agreed? I see that it is; let us do just that, then.

[133] P-04-385, Petition regarding balloon and lantern releases, was submitted in May by Bryony Bromley and has collected 564 signatures. On this occasion, I am not going to declare an interest, but make a confession. Any of you who may have seen my Facebook page

recently will have noticed that there is a fairly prominent picture of me involved in a balloon release, and I could be exposed to criticism if I did not mention that. That was on the occasion of the Diamond Jubilee and it was in respect of the local friends of my local primary school, Talgarth Primary School. I understand that, of the balloons that have been returned so far, the one that has gone furthest was found at Stonehenge. However, I am sure that that is not the furthest. I am assured that they sourced balloons of a biodegradable variety and, therefore, hopefully, they are not breaching the spirit of this petition. I will say no more, because I sense that I should stop digging and open the floor to Joyce Watson, who has indicated that she wants to speak.

[134] **Joyce Watson:** I think that we have all done this in ignorance before we realised the damage that it was causing. I am sure that there will be photos somewhere of me with balloons, too. Having said that, I am now educated on the matter, not ignorant, thanks to people like the petitioners and others who went before them, and I feel heartened by the Minister's letter, because he is trying to become fully apprised of the possible impacts of balloons and lanterns. I would favour that myself. I no longer take part in the release of balloons because it is not just the wildlife on land that is affected, but also wildlife in the sea.

[135] **William Powell:** Yes, and that impact is less easy to assess.

[136] **Joyce Watson:** It is much more difficult, but nonetheless evident. I am pleased with John Griffiths's commitment to do an impact assessment and think about the results of that and, if the need is there, to take additional steps to mitigate the impact. It is not about being a hypocrite; it is about being ignorant of the consequences, and I think that we have all been guilty of that. Now we have a real opportunity, and we need to take it, to be fully informed and I just really think that we need to keep this going.

[137] **William Powell:** Absolutely. This certainly must not be closed.

[138] **Joyce Watson:** I, for one, would like to see more evidence on it.

[139] **William Powell:** At this stage, I think that it would be premature to close it, and not just in the light of my own reasons.

[140] **Russell George:** Without digging myself into a hole, I also have interests to declare in that I have released Chinese lanterns, but that was before I realised the concerns, which are genuine. I could see some of the potential issues when I was involved myself. John Griffiths's letter states that he will look into this seriously, so I think that the petitioners will be pleased with that. Perhaps it is too early to close the petition, but we can at least update the petitioners, if that has not been done already.

[141] **William Powell:** Absolutely. We should update Bryony and her colleagues and, potentially, we need to cast the net wider to catch the various interest groups that should be feeding into the inquiry that the Minister is minded to set up. Thank you for your contributions on that one.

[142] We move on to P-04-360, the Penylan notspot petition. This was submitted in May of this year by Penylan residents with the support of the local Assembly Member, Jenny Rathbone, and it calls upon the Assembly to bring pressure to bear on the relevant stakeholders to deliver an adequate level of service in this part of Cardiff. As you see, we have received correspondence from the Minister and, indeed, from the petitioners, but we probably need to get a bit more clarity on the timescale for delivery here. Could that usefully write to the Minister on that?

[143] **Joyce Watson:** Yes, and let the petitioners know.

[144] **William Powell:** Absolutely. We need to keep the petitioners fully informed on this one.

[145] That brings that section of the agenda to a close.

9.59 a.m.

**Papurau i'w Nodi
Papers Noted**

[146] **William Powell:** We have papers to note under agenda item 6 on the control of noise nuisance from wind turbines, and the promoting physical activity and health in FE petitions. We note those.

**Cynnig o dan Reol Sefydlog Rhif 17.42 i Benderfynu Gwahardd y Cyhoedd o'r
Cyfarfod
Motion under Standing Order No. 17.42 to Resolve to Exclude the Public from
the Meeting**

[147] **William Powell:** I now propose that we move into private session to discuss P-03-238 and the draft report on pollution of the Burry inlet. I move that

the committee resolves to exclude the public from the remainder of the meeting in accordance with Standing Order No. 17.42(vi).

[148] I see that the committee is in agreement.

*Derbyniwyd y cynnig.
Motion agreed.*

*Daeth rhan gyhoeddus y cyfarfod i ben am 9.59 a.m.
The public part of the meeting ended at 9.59 a.m.*