

Answers to Questions not reached in Plenary 17 May 2001

[R] signifies that the Member has declared an interest.

[W] signifies that the question was tabled in Welsh.

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Questions to the Minister for Culture, Sport and the Welsh Language

Sporting Provision in Wales

Q7 Val Feld: Will the Minister make a statement on any discussions held with relevant bodies about the possible use of European structural funds for sporting provision in Wales? (OAQ11483) *Transferred for written answer.*

The Minister for Culture, Sport and the Welsh Language (Jenny Randerson): I have had general discussions about the use of European structural funds for sporting provision in Wales. Those include the bid for the Ryder Cup.

The Sports Council for Wales, which implements sports policy on behalf of the Assembly, is conscious of the need to explore opportunities for European funding, particularly with regard to the larger capital projects funded by the Lottery. It must be recognised, however, that there must be clear, demonstrable economic benefits to be eligible for European grants.

Office of Communications

Q8 Jocelyn Davies: What representation will Wales have on the Office of Communications following the establishment of the new regulatory framework through the proposed broadcasting and communications legislation? (OAQ11492) *Transferred for written answer.*

Jenny Randerson: I wrote to the Secretary of State for Culture, Media and Sport, Chris Smith, following Plenary debate on the White Paper, 'A New Future for Communications', enclosing the full response of the Assembly Cabinet and a record of our debate. With regard to the Office of Communications (OFCOM), the response recommended that the Bill should provide for a member for Wales on the board of OFCOM. If a new Westminster administration legislates to implement the White Paper on communications, I shall seek to ensure that the Assembly will be consulted.

Big Pit Visitor Numbers

Q9 Lynne Neagle: Will the Minister make a statement on visitor numbers to Big Pit since the introduction of free access to the National Museums and Galleries of Wales? (OAQ11465) *Transferred for written answer.*

Jenny Randerson: Visitor numbers at Big Pit for April 2001 were 18,542, compared to 12,076 in April 2000—an increase of 54 per cent. I have placed a table on the culture, sport and Welsh language pages of the Assembly's website that shows the increases in visitor figures at all eight of the National Museums and Galleries of Wales's sites since the introduction of free admission for all visitors on 1 April.

Condition of Millennium Stadium Pitch

Q10 Peter Black: What recent discussions has the Minister had regarding the condition of the Millennium Stadium pitch? (OAQ11444) *Withdrawn.*

Questions 11 and 12 were answered in Plenary.

National Museums and Galleries of Wales

Q13 Richard Edwards: Has there been an increase in visitor numbers to the National Museums and Galleries of Wales following the granting of free admission by the National Assembly earlier this year? (OAQ11401) *Withdrawn.*

National Art in North Wales

Q14 Peter Rogers: What plans exist for the exhibition of national art in north Wales? (OAQ11445)

Jenny Randerson: I am determined that the national art collection be made more accessible to as many people as possible across Wales. I have asked the National Museum and Gallery to consider ways of doing that. This might involve more effective co-operation with local authority galleries and museums. There will be a public consultation exercise later this year and the museum has arranged a seminar for Assembly Members on 17 May to set out the review's early findings, and to enable Members to contribute their views.

Arts Council of Wales (Financial Implications of Decentralisation)

Q15 Pauline Jarman: Will the Minister make a statement on the financial implications of the decentralisation policy in the restructuring of the Arts Council of Wales? (OAQ11490)

Jenny Randerson: The Arts Council of Wales is in the process of drawing up the detailed costings for a new organisational structure based on a greater degree of regionalisation. I have asked the council to plan on the basis that the running costs of the new organisation should not exceed those of the current arrangements. I accept, however, that the council may need to incur one-off costs in order to convert to the new structure. Any such costs that cannot be absorbed within the council's existing budget will need to be considered during the forthcoming budget planning round.

National Museums and Galleries of Wales

Q16 Karen Sinclair: What has been the effect of the introduction of free entry to the National Museums and Galleries of Wales on visitor numbers? (OAQ11409)

Jenny Randerson: Overall visitor figure numbers to the National Museums and Galleries of Wales's eight sites in April 2001 were 159,986, compared to 89,665 in April 2000—an increase of 78 per cent. I have placed a table on the culture, sport and Welsh language pages of the Assembly's website that shows the increases in visitor figures at all of the National Museums and Galleries of Wales's eight sites since the introduction of free admission for all visitors on 1 April.

Promoting Sporting Excellence

Q17 John Griffiths: What strategy is being followed to promote sporting excellence in Wales? (OAQ11472)

Jenny Randerson: The Sports Council for Wales's published strategy, 'A Strategy for Welsh Sport', sets out the policies and plans to encourage sporting excellence in Wales. A copy of the strategy was issued to all Assembly Members and is also available in the Library.

Football Taskforce

Q18 Mick Bates: Has the Minister given consideration to the creation of a football taskforce for Wales? (OAQ11460)

Jenny Randerson: I have met with officials from several football organisations in Wales, including the Football Association of Wales and the FAW Football in the Community Trust. I have discussed a range of issues with them, including the option of setting up a football forum in Wales, predominantly to examine issues relating to football at grassroots level in Wales.

As a result of these discussions, I have asked the Sports Council for Wales to draft terms of reference for a football forum. I look forward to receiving the terms of reference shortly.

Support for the Arts

Q19 Christine Gwyther: Will the Minister make a statement on National Assembly support for the arts in Wales? (OAQ11402) *Withdrawn.*

Artistic School of the Year

Q20 David Melding: When will the administration establish an Assembly award for artistic school of the year? (OAQ11479)

Jenny Randerson: This is the responsibility of my colleague Jane Davidson, the Minister for Education and Lifelong Learning. She has no current plans to establish such an award.

Millennium Stadium (FA Cup)

Q21 Rosemary Butler: What talks has the Minister had to discuss the possibility of the Millennium Stadium being the permanent venue for the Football Association Cup? (OAQ11407)

Jenny Randerson: None. The venue for the FA Cup, and the associated package of matches, is entirely a matter for the Football Association of England. The staging of this package of events at the Millennium Stadium resulted from negotiations between the Millennium Stadium plc and the Football Association. The initial deal involves the stadium hosting the events for a period of three years, with the possibility of an extension period.

Although Welsh league teams are eligible to compete in the various competitions, they are all inherently English competitions. Undoubtedly, the Football Association will wish to see its premier events return to England once an alternative to Wembley Stadium has been developed.

In the meantime, I am delighted that we have the opportunity in Wales to benefit from the enormous media profile that the events will bring with them over the next few years.

Wales Millennium Centre

Q22 Alun Cairns: Will the Minister make a statement on the Wales Millennium Centre? (OAQ11458)

Jenny Randerson: The statement made by the Minister for Finance, Local Government and Communities on 5 April set a number of conditions that the Wales Millennium Centre will need to meet before the Assembly can reach its final conclusions on the project. The Wales Millennium Centre is now working towards fulfilling those conditions.

Community-based Projects in Deprived Communities

Q23 Huw Lewis: Will the Minister confirm her support in principle for the development of community-based cinema facilities and projects in deprived communities? (OAQ11464)

Jenny Randerson: I support extending access to cinema to communities across Wales, and this is an aim of Sgrîn's exhibition policy. It must be done in ways that do not undermine existing cinemas. I have heard about the project that the police and other local partners would like to establish in Merthyr. Depending on the final shape of the project, some funding might be available from Sgrîn and the Arts Council of Wales's lottery fund. I hope that something comes of the idea.

Cyngor Celfyddydau Cymru (Swyddi Newydd)

C24 Elin Jones: Faint o swyddi newydd fydd yn cael eu creu yn dilyn y broses o ailstrwythuro Cyngor Celfyddydau Cymru? (OAQ11485) [W]

Jenny Randerson: Yr wyf wedi gofyn i Gyngor Celfyddydau Cymru gynllunio ar y sail y dylai'r strwythur staffio newydd fod yn niwtral o ran costau ei redeg. O ganlyniad i hyn, ni ddylai fod unrhyw gynnydd sylweddol yn nifer y swyddi o fewn y cyngor yn ei gyfanrwydd, er efallai y bydd angen aiddosbarthu swyddi'n ddaearyddol er mwyn gweddu i'r strwythur rhanbarthol newydd.

Arts Council of Wales (New Jobs)

Q24 Elin Jones: How many new jobs will be created following the restructuring of the Arts Council of Wales? (OAQ11485) [W]

Jenny Randerson: I have asked the Arts Council of Wales to plan on the basis that the new staffing structure should be cost-neutral in terms of running costs. It follows that there should be no significant increase in the number of posts within the council as a whole, though there may be some geographical redistribution of jobs to accommodate the new regional structure.

Broadcasting and Communications

Q25 Helen Mary Jones: Will the Minister make a brief statement on the importance of broadcasting and communications in the cultural life of Wales? (OAQ11493) *Withdrawn.*

Office of Communications

Q26 Rhodri Glyn Thomas: Will the Minister explain how the Office of Communications will work and consult with the National Assembly under the proposed broadcasting and communications legislation? (OAQ11489) *Withdrawn.*

Improving Local Parks

Q27 Peter Black: How can lottery funding help councils to improve local parks? (OAQ11443) [R]

Jenny Randerson: The Heritage Lottery Fund has an urban parks programme, which provides capital grants to restore, regenerate or enhance public access to urban parks and other historic parks and gardens. Subject to satisfying the criteria of the programme, support can be considered for landscape restoration, repair of historic structures, repair of boundary features and refurbishment of furniture, among other items.

Additionally, there is a possibility that funding could be available from the New Opportunities Fund, under its green spaces programme. For such an application to be successful, however, the emphasis would need to be on community involvement.

For specific information and guidance, I refer the Member to the Heritage Lottery Fund, Companies House, Crown Way, Cardiff, CF14 3UZ and the New Opportunities Fund, Thirteenth Floor, Capital Tower, Greyfriars Road, Cardiff, CF10 3AG.

Welsh Publishing Industry

Q28 Eleanor Burnham: What plans does the Minister have to assist the future of the Welsh publishing industry? (OAQ11461)

Jenny Randerson: The National Assembly awards grant aid to the Welsh Books Council annually. The council has been allocated £625,000 for this financial year. The council also receives support from local authorities in Wales. The books council receives an annual publishing grant from the Welsh Language Board, which has been under review recently. I am seeking to simplify the way that the books council is funded and am setting up a task and finish group to achieve this aim and to look at wider issues. I have asked the Deputy Minister for Rural Affairs, Culture and Environment, Delyth Evans, to chair the group.

Priority Changes (Foot and Mouth Disease)

Q29 Alun Cairns: Will the Minister make a statement on any priority changes she has made in her portfolio as a result of foot and mouth disease? (OAQ11457)

Jenny Randerson: I have made no priority changes in my portfolio as a result of the foot and mouth disease outbreak. I responded to a request to give a guarantee for £150,000 to the National Eisteddfod of Wales against the risk of having to cancel the Eisteddfod. The money to back up the guarantee is in the 2001-02 reserve that has been created using savings from elsewhere in the Assembly's budget. No funds have been transferred from elsewhere in my portfolio. Resources of £150,000 that are being offered to Urdd Gobaith Cymru in order for it to run a promotions campaign in the autumn had already been earmarked for the Urdd for this financial year, originally as a contribution to the costs of the National Urdd Eisteddfod in Llandudno in 2002.

National Gallery of Modern Art

Q30 Jonathan Morgan: Will the administration establish a national gallery of modern art? (OAQ11481)

Jenny Randerson: The National Museum and Gallery is well advanced with its preparations for a consultation exercise on its policies for displaying works of art. This is an open and public consultation exercise that will look at a range of options for displaying art works in the future, including the concept of a national gallery. The museum is hosting a debate on the future of art in Wales at the Reardon Smith Lecture Theatre on 17 May, to which all Assembly Members have been invited.

Questions to the Minister for Rural Affairs

Revitalising the Agriculture Industry

Q6 Elin Jones: Will the Minister make a statement on the progress being made by the task and finish group to revitalise the agriculture industry post foot and mouth disease? (OAQ11505) *Withdrawn.*

Reviving the Agriculture Industry (Long-term Strategy)

Q7 Jocelyn Davies: Will the Minister outline his long-term strategy for reviving the agriculture industry that has been deeply affected by the current foot and mouth disease crisis? (OAQ11507)

The Minister for Rural Affairs (Carwyn Jones): The work of the Farming Futures group will set the framework of the long-term direction of the industry, as well as support mechanisms to help farming families to make informed choices about their future sustainability, as well as that of the industry.

Fodder Scheme for Future Agricultural Emergencies

Q8 Christine Gwyther: What discussions has the Minister had with his Westminster colleagues about the setting up of a fodder scheme for future agricultural emergencies in Wales? (OAQ11418) *Withdrawn.*

Facilitating the Recovery of Welsh Agriculture (Long-term Strategy)

Q9 Nick Bourne: Will the Minister launch a long-term strategy to facilitate the recovery of Welsh agriculture following the foot and mouth disease outbreak? (OAQ11431) *Withdrawn.*

Rural Vision for Wales

Q10 Eleanor Burham: Will the Minister produce a rural vision for Wales? (OAQ11470)

Carwyn Jones: The Assembly's strategic document, 'The Rural Development Plan for Wales 2000-2006', published in 1999, provides a framework, which draws on the statement 'Rural Wales' produced by the rural partnership for Wales. In addition, I put a proposal to the rural partnership to develop a policy for rural Wales at its meeting on 14 February. The partnership agreed to focus on safeguarding balanced communities. This will form the basis of a vision for rural Wales. Work on this strategy has had to be put on hold while we responded to the foot and mouth disease crisis, but officials are working on proposals for a strategic framework, which will be prepared over the 18 months.

Update on the Foot and Mouth Disease Crisis

Q11 David Lloyd: Will the Minister provide an update on the foot and mouth disease crisis? (OAQ11498)

Carwyn Jones: As at 9.00 a.m. today, there are 90 confirmed cases of foot and mouth disease in Wales.

Review of Procedures in the Agriculture Department

Q12 David Davies: Will there be a review of procedures within the Assembly's Agriculture Department in the aftermath of the foot and mouth disease crisis? (OAQ11435)

Carwyn Jones: The statutory responsibility for foot and mouth disease control measures in England and Wales lies with the Ministry of Agriculture, Fisheries and Food. Under section 41 of the Government of Wales Act 1998, officials in the National Assembly's Agriculture Department are exercising administrative and executive functions on behalf of MAFF in relation to disease control and eradication processes. The effectiveness of these arrangements is one aspect that will need to be assessed post foot and mouth disease.

Rapid Regeneration of the Farming Industry in Wales

Q13 John Griffiths: What steps are being taken to promote the rapid regeneration of the farming industry in Wales? (OAQ11494)

Carwyn Jones: The Farming Futures group will meet next month. The priority for the group will be to consider the focus of the draft report in the light of the impact of foot and mouth disease. My aim is that the report, setting out the long-term direction for farming in Wales and the supporting programmes of action, should be publicly available by mid summer.

In addition, I, together with my officials, continue to work with counterparts in the other agriculture departments in the United Kingdom to ensure relevant and timely responses to support farming post foot and mouth disease.

Cyfran o Dda Byw a Leddir ac a Brosesir yng Nghymru

C14 Owen John Thomas: O'r da byw a gynhyrchir ar ffermydd Cymreig, pa gyfran sydd yn cael eu lladd a'u prosesu yng Nghymru? (OAQ11438) [W]

Carwyn Jones: Nid yw'r wybodaeth hon ar gael oherwydd fod gan ladd-dai unigol eu polisi eu hunain o ran cael gafael ar anifeiliaid.

Percentage of Livestock Slaughtered and Processed in Wales

Q14 Owen John Thomas: Of the livestock produced on Welsh farms, what percentage is slaughtered and processed in Wales? (OAQ11438) [W]

Carwyn Jones: This information is not available as individual slaughterhouses have their own sourcing policy.

Development of the Welsh Meat Company

Q15 Kirsty Williams: Will the Minister make a statement on the development of the Welsh meat company? (OAQ11450)

Carwyn Jones: The board of the Welsh meat company, now called Welsh Livestock Limited, is considering a number of joint venture processing opportunities for development, both in north and south Wales. The members met in February to discuss the future direction of the company and its proposals to further investigate these joint ventures, along with another proposal on livestock procurement and marketing, were agreed. The company is setting up an office base in Aberystwyth, is recruiting staff to take the business forward and, despite the problems consequent upon the foot and mouth disease outbreak, is preparing to trade later this year.

Penhesgyn Landfill Site

Q16 Peter Rogers: Has the Minister received requests from the intervention board that Penhesgyn landfill site should be used for the disposal of carcasses slaughtered under the livestock welfare disposal scheme? (OAQ11440) [R]

Carwyn Jones: A request was made but subsequently withdrawn.

Restocking Farms after the Foot and Mouth Disease Crisis

Q17 Mick Bates: What plans does the Minister have to enable farmers to restock their farms after the foot and mouth disease crisis? (OAQ11496)

Carwyn Jones: Any restocking must take account of the risk of the disease reoccurring on the farm. Restocking of sentinel animals from outside the infected area is permitted 21 days after final cleansing and disinfection. Sentinel animals would be inspected regularly and blood-tested after being 28 days on the farm to ensure that the disease is not present.

The Prescribed Waste (Wales) Regulations 2001

Q18 Alun Cairns: How many times has the Minister exercised his powers under the Prescribed Waste (Wales) Regulations 2001? (OAQ11453)

Carwyn Jones: This is a matter for the Minister for Environment.

Agricultural and Dairy Produce of Wales

Q19 William Graham: What measures will the Minister introduce to ensure the agricultural and dairy produce of Wales regains its universal acceptance for quality and standards of production? (OAQ11474)

Carwyn Jones: I have asked the Welsh Development Agency's Food Directorate to submit proposals to help the agri-food sector recover from the impact of foot and mouth disease. This will form part of the overall recovery plan for rural Wales, which is part of the work of the Rural Partnership's task and finish group on the rural economy.

I ensure whenever possible that Welsh agriculture and dairy produce gains acceptance for both its quality and high standards. Through the National Assembly's Welsh agri-food strategy, the WDA's Food Directorate leads on economic development in the agri-food sector, promotes Welsh products and implements the lamb and beef, dairy and organic action plans. Welsh produce, its quality and high standards are promoted at agricultural shows, food fairs, exhibitions, farmers' markets both at home and overseas. The Food Directorate is also currently developing a clear strategy and brand positioning for Welsh food and drink.

Welsh Lamb and Beef Promotions Limited also continues to promote lamb and beef in the home markets and overseas where it is actively targeting buyers to reaffirm and re-launch our high quality products. The Meat and Livestock Commission promotes greater efficiency in the livestock and livestock products industries of Great Britain and promotes the consumption of meat and meat products.

The Role of Co-operatives in Welsh Agriculture

Q20 Ann Jones: Will the Minister make a statement on the role of co-operatives in Welsh agriculture? (OAQ11463)

Carwyn Jones: I believe that farmers have a clear opportunity to improve their market position through the development of co-operatives. Collaboration will strengthen the ability of Welsh farmers to negotiate with, and supply, the large abattoirs and processors and their large retail customers.

The formation of co-operative ventures is, however, a commercial matter for individual organisations in the farming industry. The Assembly will support such ventures under the agri-food strategy where there is a genuine and significant potential to help the industry.

Grant aid is available under the marketing development scheme to assist farmers, growers and processors to improve their marketing expertise. The scheme provides support for 50 per cent of eligible costs. The Welsh Development Agency's Food Directorate also provides help to develop producer groups.

Farming Futures Group

Q21 Huw Lewis: Will the Minister make a statement on the progress towards arranging the next meeting of the Farming Futures group to discuss and define the long-term future of Welsh agriculture? (OAQ11475)

Carwyn Jones: The group will reconvene on 11 June.

Restricting the Movement of Livestock

Q22 Cynog Dafis: Will the Minister make a statement on the proposals to restrict the movement of livestock? (OAQ11509) *Withdrawn.*

Training Farming Families in North Wales (Diversification)

Q23 Alison Halford: What measures will be taken to improve the training of Welsh farming families in north Wales, particularly with a view to diversification? (OAQ11433)

Carwyn Jones: The training needs of farmers and their families, both in terms of their current businesses and opportunities for diversification, are being considered by the farm development strategy group. Provision to address these needs will form part of the Farming Connect service.

European Conference on the Restriction of GM Crops

Q24 Mick Bates: Will the Minister consider initiating an European conference, to be held in Wales, on the restriction of genetically modified crops with other regions of the European Union which have similar aspirations on this issue? (OAQ11510)

Carwyn Jones: I have no plans at present to host a European conference in Wales. The Assembly is pressing ahead with its action to issue prohibition notices under section 110 of the Environmental Protection Act 1990 to place separation distances between genetically modified and organic crops on a statutory basis. This will trigger an Article 16 notification under European Directive 90/220 and give the Assembly an opportunity to take its legitimate and principled concerns over the lack of protection for the organic sector directly to the European Commission and to all member states.

The Future of Angling in Wales

Q25 Huw Lewis: What discussions has the Minister had with angling groups and representatives about the future of angling in Wales? (OAQ11477)

Carwyn Jones: I have held wide-ranging discussions with a number of angling groups and individuals. Many angling interests have also responded to the separate consultation exercises on the salmon and freshwater fisheries review and the Nautilus study into Welsh sea and inland fisheries, the outcomes to which were considered by the Agriculture and Rural Development Committee at its meeting on 16 May.

Welsh Country Foods, Gaerwen

Q26 Peter Rogers: Is Welsh Country Foods at Gaerwen on Anglesey being used to slaughter animals on the livestock welfare disposal scheme? (OAQ11437) [R]

Carwyn Jones: Yes.

The Operation of the Intervention Board

Q27 David Davies: Will there be a review of the operation of the intervention board in Wales? (OAQ11469)

Carwyn Jones: I am aware of the criticisms relating to the intervention board and the livestock welfare disposal scheme. I have written at ministerial level to the Ministry of Agriculture, Fisheries and Food and my officials continue to liaise with the board about resolving the operational difficulties that have arisen.

The Development of Carmarthen Mart

Q28 Christine Gwyther: Will the Minister give a progress report on the development of Carmarthen mart? (OAQ11419) *Withdrawn.*

Trees Planted by the Forestry Commission

Q29 Peter Black: What species of trees, and in what proportions, are currently planted by the Forestry Commission in Wales? (OAQ11454)

Carwyn Jones: The information is as follows:

Sitka Spruce	64 per cent
Norway Spruce	11 per cent
Larches	10 per cent
Douglas Fir	7 per cent
Pines	6 per cent
Others	2 per cent

While only 2 per cent of replanting is undertaken using broadleaf species, felled woodlands include up to 10 per cent of open space and natural regeneration of broadleaf species, which do not appear in those figures.

Discussions with DETR (GM Crops)

Q30 Jocelyn Davies: What discussions has the Minister had with the Department of the Environment Transport and the Regions regarding trials of genetically modified crops in Wales? (OAQ11499)

Carwyn Jones: On 18 January 2001, I met the Minister for the Environment at the UK Government, Michael Meacher, and explained to him the Assembly's concerns about genetically modified crops being grown in Wales. On 22 January, I attended, together with the Secretary of State for Wales, Paul Murphy, a meeting with colleagues from the Scottish Executive and the UK Cabinet, to consider the issue of genetically modified crops. We strongly put forward the views of the National Assembly. I have also written to Michael Meacher on 23 March and 5 April 2001.