

# **Petitions Committee – Briefing Paper**

***PET(3)-12-10: 12 October 2010***

## **Part 1: Evidence Session: Work Based Learning for vulnerable young people – evidence from Rathbone Cymru and ACT Training**

The committee will take evidence from the following witnesses as part of its inquiry into Work Based Learning for vulnerable young people:

- Richard Newton, Director, Rathbone Cymru
- Andrew Cooksley, Managing Director, ACT Training

The inquiry has arisen from the committee's consideration of a petition submitted by Action for Children.

The witnesses have provided additional information which is provided in annex 1 along with written evidence submitted by Neath Port Talbot College.

### **Petition wording**

We call on the National Assembly for Wales to urge the Welsh Assembly Government to provide more work based learning provision that better meets the needs of more vulnerable young people, that really moves them on and ensures they achieve at least NVQ2 level qualifications. We would particularly like to see more provision for homeless young people seeking training who are not in the care of a local authority.

**Link to the petition:** <http://www.assemblywales.org/gethome/e-petitions-old/admissible-pet/p-03-270.htm>

**Petition raised by:** Action for Children / Gweithredu dros Blant

**Number of signatures:** 1 (the petition was submitted as an organisation)

**Previously considered by the Committee on:** 19 January, 23 March, 11 May, 25 May, 15 June, 29 June and 28 September 2010

## **Part 1: New petitions**

This section provides brief background information on petitions to be given initial consideration by the Committee on 12 October 2010.

### **1) P-03-299 South Wales Fire and Rescue Service**

#### **Petition wording**

We call upon the National Assembly for Wales to urge the Welsh Government to consider whether recent changes proposed to staff hours and working arrangements at the South Wales Fire and Rescue Service are in line with the National Service Framework; and if they are not, that the Welsh Government takes swift steps to ensure appropriate action is taken to bring the service's arrangements back in line with the framework.

#### **Background**

This petition was raised by Danny Clark and collected 65 signatures. In accordance with Committee procedures the Chair has written to the Minister for Social Justice and Local Government. A copy of this letter is included below.

# Y Pwyllgor Deisebau

## Petitions Committee

Carl Sargeant AC/AM,  
Minister for Social Justice and Local  
Government  
National Assembly for Wales,  
Cardiff Bay  
Cardiff  
CF99 1NA

Bae Caerdydd / Cardiff Bay  
Caerdydd / Cardiff CF99 1NA

Our ref: P-03-299

05 October 2010

### **P-03-299 SOUTH WALES FIRE AND RESCUE SERVICE**

The Petitions Committee has received the following petition from Danny Clark which collected 65 signatures:

We call upon the National Assembly for Wales to urge the Welsh Government to consider whether recent changes proposed to staff hours and working arrangements at the South Wales Fire and Rescue Service are in line with the National Service Framework; and if they are not, that the Welsh Government takes swift steps to ensure appropriate action is taken to bring the service's arrangements back in line with the framework.

The Committee would like your views on the issues raised by the petition. The Committee would specifically welcome information on whether the changes to staffing and working arrangements at South Wales Fire and Rescue Service are in line with the National Service Framework, and if not, what action you plan to take to rectify this.

Thank you for your consideration of this issue.

Yours sincerely

**Christine Chapman AM**  
**Chair, Petitions Committee**

## **2) P-03-302 Compost processing plant**

### **Petition wording**

We call upon the National Assembly to urge the Welsh Government to call upon the Environment Agency (Wales) to take action to suspend operations at Bryn Composting, Gelligaer until such time as the operators can satisfy the Environment Agency (Wales) that they can resume operations in a way that will end the serious nuisance of odour pollution that blights the lives of local residents currently."

### **Background**

This petition was raised by Cllr Hefin David and collected 642 signatures. In accordance with Committee procedures the Chair has written to the Minister for Environment, Sustainability and Housing. A copy of this letter is included below.

# Y Pwyllgor Deisebau

## Petitions Committee

Jane Davidson AC/AM,  
Minister for Environment,  
Sustainability and Housing  
National Assembly for Wales,  
Cardiff Bay  
Cardiff  
CF99 1NA

Bae Caerdydd / Cardiff Bay  
Caerdydd / Cardiff CF99 1NA

Our ref: P-03-302

05 October 2010

### **P-03-302 COMPOST PROCESSING PLANT**

The Petitions Committee has received the following petition from Cllr Hefin David which collected 642 signatures:

We call upon the National Assembly to urge the Welsh Government to call upon the Environment Agency (Wales) to take action to suspend operations at Bryn Composting, Gelligaer until such time as the operators can satisfy the Environment Agency (Wales) that they can resume operations in a way that will end the serious nuisance of odour pollution that blights the lives of local residents currently.

The Committee would like to ask for your views on the issues raised by the petition, and specifically what action is being taken to address the petitioner's concerns about odour pollution.

Thank you for your consideration of this issue.

Yours sincerely

**Christine Chapman AM**  
**Chair, Petitions Committee**

## **Part 3: Updates to previous petitions**

This section provides brief background information on updates to petitions to be considered by the Committee on 12 October 2010.

### **1) P-03-134 Welsh Honours System**

#### **Petition wording**

'We the undersigned call upon the National Assembly for Wales to introduce a Welsh honours system and having instituted such a system to honour the writer, Jan Morris,'

**Link to petition:** <http://www.assemblywales.org/gethome/e-petitions-old/eform-sign-petition-old/p-03-134.htm>

**Petition raised by:** Richard Owen

**Number of signatures:** 38

**Previously considered by the Committee on:** 25 June, 02 October and 20 November 2008, 13 January, 27 January, 10 February, 2 March and 8 December 2009, 23 March and 29 June 2010.

**Update:** Correspondence has been received from the First Minister and from the office of the Presiding Officer, these are included below.

Y Gwir Anrh/Rt Hon Carwyn Jones AC/AM  
Prif Weinidog Cymru/First Minister of Wales



Llywodraeth Cynulliad Cymru  
Welsh Assembly Government

Ein cyf/Our ref: FM/01008/10

Christine Chapman AM  
Chair - Petitions Committee  
National Assembly for Wales  
Cardiff Bay  
Cardiff  
CF99 1NA

5<sup>th</sup> August 2010

Dear Christine

Thank you for your letter of 12 July regarding the Recognising Achievement Receptions.

As my letter of 20 April 2010 explained the Recognising Achievement Receptions initiative was launched in March 2009 - its aim is to recognise significant achievements by Welsh men and women.

Our current process for obtaining nominations is by trawling Welsh Assembly Government Departments for suitable names under the theme for that particular year. They in turn can consult partner organisations on a confidential basis. The nominations are then considered by a Sift Panel. There is no mechanism for inviting public nominations due, in part, to the limited resources available to us for managing and delivering the initiative. However, when, on occasion, a nomination has been received from a member of the public we keep it on file for consideration if and when a suitable theme arises and we inform the nominator accordingly. That said we do recognise that in the future the initiative may evolve into something more akin to a public nomination system and we will need to address that at the appropriate time.

With regard to publicising the Receptions, a Press Release is issued by my office on or immediately after the day of the Reception and, on some occasions, local media have been targeted with information about Recipients from their locality should they wish to publish an article. In doing so we are always mindful that some Recipients may not want their name in the media and we respect that. Similarly some Recipients have posted articles on their, or their organisations' websites.

I hope this answers the Petitions Committee's queries. I once again extend a warm welcome for you to attend our next Recognising Achievement Reception which will be held on 21 October 2010 in Ruthin Castle. This new initiative is still in its infancy but the feedback we have received from Recipients and their guests and civic guests, including

Bae Caerdydd • Cardiff Bay  
Caerdydd • Cardiff  
CF99 1NA

English Enquiry Line 0845 010 3300  
Llinell Ymholiadau Cymraeg 0845 010 4400  
Ffacs \* Fax 029 2089 8198  
ps.firstMinister@wales.gsi.gov.uk

Assembly Members, is overwhelmingly positive. Alternatively you may wish to speak to Jean Harris who heads the Public Administration Division within WAG and the Recognising Achievement Delivery Team. You can contact Jean on [jean.harris@wales.gsi.gov.uk](mailto:jean.harris@wales.gsi.gov.uk).

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to be 'Cj', written in a cursive style.

**Carwyn Jones**





Christine Chapman AM  
Chair of Petitions Committee  
National Assembly for Wales

## PETITION: WELSH HONOURS SYSTEM

6 October 2010

Dear Christine

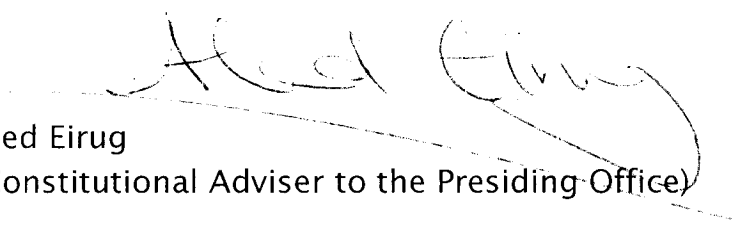
I have been asked by the Presiding Office to reply to your recent letter and update on the Petition on a Welsh Honours System.

The Assembly Commission has no plans to revisit our decision not to establish a National Assembly for Wales Award. However, the development of the Welsh Assembly Government's Recognising Achievement Awards marks many elements of the discussion forum regarding the petition are included in the scheme.

Many Awards Ceremonies are held across Wales and I know that Assembly Members are pleased to see constituents rewarded for their work in many different areas by the scheme.

I hope this is helpful to your request for information.

Yours sincerely

  
Aled Eirug  
(Constitutional Adviser to the Presiding Office)

## 2) P-03-156 Sleep Apnoea

### Petition wording

That Wales should have an effective, cohesive, well-funded policy for all patients with sleep disorders. This would include the provision of Constant Positive Airway Pressure (CPAP) machines for diagnosed sufferers of Obstructive Sleep Apnoea (OSA).

**Link to petition:** <http://www.assemblywales.org/gethome/e-petitions-old/admissible-pet/p-03-156.htm>

**Petition raised by:** Welsh Sleep Apnoea Society

**Number of signatures:** 1 organisation

**Previously considered by the Committee on:** 16 October 2008, 6 November 2008, 13 January 2009, 2 March 2009, 31 March 2009, 24 November 2009, 19 January 2010, 23 March and 11 June 2010

**Update:** Correspondence has been received from the Minister for Health and Social Services and is included below along with a summary of responses received from Local Health Boards. The responses are included in full in annex 2.

P-03-156 SLEEP APNOEA:

SUMMARY OF LOCAL HEALTH BOARD RESPONSES

1.0 Purpose

The Committee has been considering a petition calling for improvements in services for patients with sleep disorders and that all patients who need Constant Position Airway Pressure (CPAP) machines are provided with them. As part of this consideration, the Committee wrote to each of the Local Health Boards in order to identify levels of service provision across Wales. This paper provides a summary of these responses. The full responses are provided as annex 2 to the Committee papers.

	Aneurin Bevan	Abertawe Bro Morgannwg	Betsi Cadwaladar	Cardiff and Vale*	Cwm Taf	Hywel Dda	Powys
What is the average waiting time for a patient from referral to first appointment with a specialist?	<p>Overall average is 27 weeks; however there is much longer wait for patients referred to the south of the county because of specialist diagnostic polysomnography service provided.</p> <p>Work is underway to improve the pathway in South Gwent and reduce the differential wait times between hospitals.</p> <p>The new pathway will 'stream' direct referrals to the specialist service and enable routine patients to receive the core service more efficiently.</p>	22-26 weeks	<p>Services are divided into West (Ysbyty Gwynedd) and East (Ysbyty Maelor). East – 32 weeks West - 26 weeks</p> <p>The clinical pathway was redesigned recently, with patients completing a questionnaire to identify whether they need in or out patient services.</p> <p>Outpatient appointments are at 6 weeks, (50% patients are diagnosed through this route and do not require an inpatient admission for further diagnostics). Those who need a sleep study test will be added to the waiting list.</p>	4 weeks for diagnostic testing. 18 weeks from referral, diagnosis and then treatment.	<p>Two different services: South (Royal Glamorgan) Minimum of 15 weeks (Oximetry diagnostic s), maximum 36 weeks (if need further tests such as Autoset/Stardust) depending on the number of diagnostic investigations North (Prince Charles): 15-20 weeks to be seen by a consultant. Waiting time for limited channel sleep studies sits at 18 weeks.</p>	12 weeks.	<p>Work to a component wait of 10 weeks for new appointment's, with patients having to be treated within the 26 week RTT target.</p> <p>Commissioned services are for patietns to be treated within the welsh target of 26 week.</p>
Do you run clinics specialising in sleep disorders? If so, how often are they held?	<p>Weekly consultant led clinics at St Wolloos Hospital. (new and follow up patients)</p> <p>Sleep Nurse Specialist led clinics twice a week for patients receiving CPAP.</p> <p>At Nevill Hall Hospital, patients are seen by respiratory consultants in their general respiratory outpatient clinics.</p>	1-2 weekly clinics	<p>East – weekly West – monthly</p>	One clinic per week	<p>South – 1.5 clinics a month North - 1 session a month but patients may also been seen in a general respiratory clinic by a specialist consultant.</p>	<p>Weekly clinic for patients with sleep disordered breathing (SDB) and ventilator failure.</p> <p>No direct neurology support but the specialist consultant will treat conditions such as periodic limb treatment and narcolepsy.</p>	None – patients are referred on to an appropriate Health Board.
Do you have medical staff who specialise in sleep disorders? How many sessions do they work on a monthly basis?	1 Consultant in Respiratory and General Medicine with specialist training in sleep disorders who works 2 sessions per week (1 clinic session and 1 administrative session for reporting sleep investigations arising from home	16 sessions	<p>4 ENT and Respiratory medicine consultants providing approximately 12 sessions a month.</p> <p>The service also has links to</p>	Specialist Respiratory Physician with an interest in sleep disordered breathing.	2 WTE Specialist Consultants, one based at Royal Glamorgan and one at Prince Charles.	<p>1 lead consultant with particular interest in SDB. (4 sessions per month).</p> <p>Supported by Sleep/NIV nurse and a technician with a</p>	None

	or inpatient sleep studies).		tertiary consultants in Liverpool for those patients who need higher specialist services.			special interest in SDB.	
What treatment options are available to patients diagnosed with obstructive sleep apnoea?	General health improvement advice Simple specific therapy (e.g. steroid nasal spray for congestion) Mandibular devices for mild obstructive sleep apnoea CPAP as per NICE guidelines Surgical options	Lifestyle changes Weight reduction advice CPAP Mandibular devices	CPAP machine is the most likely treatment, however mandibular devices and some surgical treatments are available if CPAP is not suitable.  Patients may also be managed for other related clinical issues.	Initially lifestyle advice provided, if not successful then level two treatments: airway management, nasal treatment and application of mandibular advancement devices. Referral to ENT may be appropriate in some cases. Level 3 is the assessment and prescription of CPAP.	All patients with confirmed diagnosis and are significantly symptomatic for moderate or above are offered a trial of CPAP. If the patient declines or the trial is unsuccessful, the Mandibular Advancement Device is offered.	CPAP in line with NICE guidance. Some are referred to Swansea for mandibular advancement devices and occasionally bi-level ventilation is offered. In very difficult cases, patients are referred for bariatric surgery. Modafanil is recommended for residual sleepiness when established on CPAP.	Would be arranged by the external Health Board treating the patient
Do you provide CPAP machines to patients with sleep disorders?	Yes, for moderate to severe obstructive sleep apnoea and in some milder cases with excessive sleepiness.	Yes, in accordance with NICE guidelines.	Yes	UHB Operational plan includes a commitment to expand the service to meet NICE Guidance, which will include the appointment of a specialist consultant and clinical support staff.	Yes subject to patient tolerance and funding provided is available. Demand is approximately 200 per annum.	1100 patients are currently on CPAP therapy.	As above.

\*They consider the current position to be unacceptable, and in 2004 wrote to all LHBs notifying them that the sleep apnoea service was closed to new route referrals for clinical governance reasons.

AM

**Edwina Hart MBE OStJ AM**

Y Gweinidog dros Iechyd a Gwasanaethau Cymdeithasol  
Minister for Health and Social Services

Our ref: EH/01687/10

Your ref: P-03-156

Christine Chapman AM  
Chair  
Petitions Committee  
National Assembly for Wales  
Ty Hywel  
Cardiff Bay  
Cardiff  
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Llywodraeth Cynulliad Cymru  
Welsh Assembly Government

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Caerdydd CF99 1NA  
Llinell Ymholiadau Cymraeg: 0845 010 4400  
Ffacs: 029 2089 8131  
E-Bost:Gohebiaeth.Edwina.Hart@cymru.gsi.gov.uk

Cardiff Bay  
Cardiff CF99 1NA  
English Enquiry Line: 0845 010 3300  
Fax: 029 2089 8131  
E-Mail:Correspondence.Edwina.Hart@Wales.gsi.gov.uk

27 May 2010

*Dear Chr.*

Thank you for your letter of 18 May on behalf of the Petitions Committee about sleep apnoea services.

The Ventilation Workshop held on 16 April produced some clear actions to help improve treatment for those with sleep apnoea. Concern was raised by delegates regarding the diagnostic test for sleep apnoea not being included in the Referral to Treatment (RTT) 26 week wait target.

I have therefore asked my officials to raise this as a matter for consideration at future reviews of the RTT target to help ensure that unnecessary long waits for this procedure are not experienced.

In addition, I will also be writing to all Local Health Boards (LHB) to remind them of the NICE technology appraisal produced in March 2008 that recommended a range of clinically effective treatments for sleep apnoea. I will expect all LHBs to ensure that any patient that is prescribed a CPAP machine to assist their breathing should receive one.

*[Signature]*

### **3) P-03-200 The Glamorganshire Canal**

#### **Petition wording**

We call upon the National Assembly of Wales to support the creation of a Glamorganshire Canal historical trail from Merthyr to Cardiff Bay, indicating the major locations en route and other historical sites in proximity to the Canal e.g. Hamadryad Hospital Ship, as a means of encouraging interest in the regional history, tourism and providing an interesting and challenging walking and cycling trail.

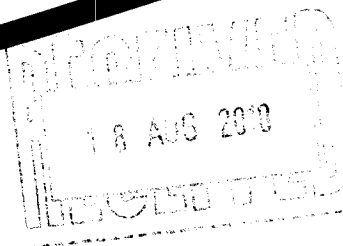
**Link to the petition:** <http://www.assemblywales.org/gethome/e-petitions-old/admissible-pet/p-03-200.htm>

**Petition raised by:** John Williams

**Number of signatures:** 14

**Previously considered by the Committee on:** 19 May 2009, 22 September 2009, 25 May and 13 July 2010

**Update:** Correspondence has been received from Rhondda Cynon Taff and Cardiff Councils. These are included below.



**Environmental Services**  
**Cyfadran y Gwasanaethau Amgylchedd**  
The Pavilions, Cambrian Park  
Clydach Vale, Tonypanyd CF40 2XX  
Y Pafiliynau, Parc y Cambrian  
Cwm Clydach, Tonypanyd CF40 2XX

Tel/Ffôn: 01443 424147, Fax/Ffacs: 01443 424027

Christine Chapman AM  
National Assembly for Wales  
Cardiff Bay  
Cardiff  
CF99 1NA

My Ref/Fy Nghyf:

Your Ref/EichCyf:

Date/Dyddiad:

Please ask  
for/Gofynnwch am:

10641794

10 August 2010

Chris Jones  
01443 494726

### **PETITION: P-03-200 THE GLAMORGANSHIRE CANAL**

Dear Ms Chapman

Thank you for your letter dated 26 July regarding potential works to the former Glamorganshire Canal, which has been passed to me for response.

In principle, the Council is supportive of a community link along the canal, however, the only section where the Council currently has proposals is the section at Pontypridd.

The section at Pontypridd is one of the aspirational elements of the Treforest Connect 2 scheme. This section will provide a community link along the existing footbridge to Pentrebach Road to the old canal path to the rear of Ynysangharad Road. As mentioned in previous correspondence, there is no funding for these aspirational elements at present. Consequently, no feasibility or design work has been undertaken, and detailed scheme proposals have not been developed yet.

Although funding for these aspirational links has not been secured, the Council is exploring potential avenues of funding to progress them e.g. Sewta Regional Transport Plan funding. Sewta has a programme of walking and cycling schemes it is currently in the process of implementing. A scheme to implement a community link along the canal may be included in a future programme, subject to funding availability.

Cont...

The Council is currently considering a planning application (by Sainsbury's) for the development of a large food store that runs close to the short length of canal that remains. As part of the application process, negotiations are taking place with a view to securing improvements in this area through a Section 106 agreement. As I am sure that you are aware, there is very clear guidance about such Section 106 agreements and I would point out that any sums that may be received (assuming that the application is successful) are unlikely to be able to be spent on canal restoration *per se* as there is no direct planning link between the provision of a food store and the restoration of a canal that lies outside of the application site. However, Improvements from the food store development would be likely to include those which would enable better accessibility to the site and may involve improvements along the canal to provide better accessibility by pedestrians and cyclists.

Negotiations are also taking place about a small section of canal which was bought by Brown Lenox, but was filled in for operational purposes and therefore no longer exists. In both the current, and the previous planning permission for a "bulky goods" retail development, the Council secured an agreement with the applicant to set any buildings etc away from the line of the former canal such that it would not prevent any scheme that may come forward for the reinstatement of the canal in the future. The proposed layout at Sainsbury's allows for this and negotiations are ongoing around whether, as part of the construction process, it would be possible for their contractors to excavate this relatively small area.

As part of the planning application process, I can also advise that Chris Jones (the Development Control Manager and case officer for this application) has met recently with Bill Hockey who is Chairman of the Pontypridd Canal Conservation Group to discuss their aspirations for the canal as well to explain the role of the planning system when negotiating Section 106 agreements

I hope that this information is of use to you but please do not hesitate to contact me if you require any further information.

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "G Jones". The signature is written in a cursive style with a large initial 'G' and a period at the end.

George Jones  
Group Director, Environmental Services



AM:MS

**EXECUTIVE OFFICE  
SWYDDFA WEITHREDIAETH**



**County Hall**  
Cardiff  
CF10 4UW  
Tel: (029) 2087 2000

My Ref / Fy Cyf: EM16067

Date / Dyddiad: 23rd August 2010

**Neuadd y Sir**  
Caerdydd  
CF10 4UW  
Ffôn: (029) 2087 2000

Christine Chapman AM  
The National Assembly For Wales  
Cardiff Bay  
Cardiff  
CF99 1NA

Dear / Annwyl Christine

**Petition for The Glamorganshire Canal (P-03-200)**

Thank you for your letter regarding the petition for the Glamorganshire Canal (P-03-200).

It has been explicitly requested that the creation of the Glamorganshire Canal historical trail will be considered as part of the development of the Strategic Cycle Network plan for Cardiff. The development of the network will be based on extensive consultation with local communities. In addition to identifying strategic cycle routes, this plan will incorporate a 5 year prioritised programme of works. The prioritisation criteria have not as yet been developed but are likely to include the opportunities and benefits of the scheme, the barriers, the costs of the scheme, the potential to increase cycling and the potential to improve cycle safety.

This network plan will be an ambitious scheme to reduce congestion, pollution and provide accessible alternatives to using the car and will be fundamental to ensuring that the proposed investment in cycling facilities and initiatives over the coming years is spent wisely. Thus the development of the Glamorganshire Canal will be dependant on the merits of the scheme within the strategic cycle network, and therefore its development within the current budget can not be guaranteed. However I can assure you that as a result of the petition it has been put forward as a route to be considered as part of the network.

I hope that you will be willing to take part in the consultation for the development of the plan. I have added your name to those wishing to be involved. If for any reason you would like your name removed please let me know.

Otherwise we will be in touch again soon with the first of our community engagement initiatives.

Yours sincerely,  
Yn gywir,

**COUNCILLOR / CYNGHORYDD DELME BOWEN  
EXECUTIVE MEMBER TRAFFIC & TRANSPORTATION  
AELOD GWEITHREDOL TRAFFIG A THRAFNIDIAETH**

**PLEASE REPLY TO:** Executive Office / Swyddfa'r Weithrediaeth  
Room / Ystafell 283, County Hall / Neuadd Y Sir,  
Cardiff / Caerdydd, CF10 4UW  
Tel / Ffon (029) 2087 2598 Fax / Facs (029) 20872691



#### **4) P-03-204 Public Accountability and Consultation in Higher Education**

##### **Petition wording**

We call upon the National Assembly for Wales to urge the Welsh government to introduce an open and transparent system to scrutinise the standards of service and value for money offered by the Higher Education sector in Wales, and to ensure changes in service levels are subject to public consultation.

**Link to petition:** <http://www.assemblywales.org/gethome/e-petitions-old/admissible-pet/p-03-204.htm>

**Petition raised by:** Trevor Mayes

**Number of signatures:** 13

**Previously considered by the Committee on:** 22 September 2009, 8 December 2009 and 1 February 2010, 25 May and 13 July 2010.

**Update:** Correspondence has been received from the Minister for Children Education and Lifelong Learning, National Union of Students, Higher Education Wales and Higher Education Funding Council for Wales. These are included below.

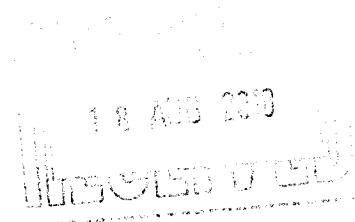
13 AM  
**Leighton Andrews AC/AM**  
Y Gweinidog dros Blant, Addysg & Dysgu Gydol Oes  
Minister for Children, Education & Lifelong Learning



Llywodraeth Cynulliad Cymru  
Welsh Assembly Government

Eich cyf/Your ref P-03-204  
Ein cyf/Our ref LA/02264/10

Christine Chapman AM  
Chair – Petitions Committee  
National Assembly for Wales  
Cardiff Bay  
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7 August 2010

Dear Anne

**RE: P-03-204 Public Accountability and Consultation in Higher Education**

Thank you for your letter dated 26 July 2010 on behalf of the Petitions Committee concerning your further consideration of the petition *Public Accountability and Consultation in Higher Education* following further correspondence from the petitioner.

You have asked if I would consider incorporating the petitioner's comments as noted in your letter into the Review of Higher Education Governance. As the Review is an independent review, I have written to the Chair, Mr John McCormick, asking him if he would consider the petitioner's comments.

I attach a copy of the Terms of Reference for the Review for your information.

Yours sincerely

**Leighton Andrews AM**  
Minister for Children, Education & Lifelong Learning

## **Terms of Reference for the Review of Higher Education Governance in Wales**

### **Context and Rationale**

A Task and Finish Group will be established to conduct a review of higher education (HE) governance in Wales.

*For our Future*, the new strategy for Welsh HE, sets a clear direction of travel for HE in Wales that demands significant changes to the nature of delivery, engagement with regional and local communities and relationships with other providers. It sets a framework for ensuring excellence, competitiveness and responsiveness which will enable HE in Wales to meet the needs of a modern knowledge based, globally competitive economy and inclusive society.

It is critical that Wales' higher education system of national and institutional governance provides an appropriate model and structure to support these aspirations.

*For our Future* called for a review of higher education governance that built on existing strengths, evaluated current shortcomings and considered future need.

Such a review also aligns with the intentions of *One Wales*, the Welsh Assembly Government's agenda for the government of Wales, to implement continued improvement of services and review public service bodies.

### **Remit**

The Review will consider the key issue of whether existing forms of national and institutional governance match the needs, expectations and future requirements of HE in Wales and identify any changes required.

The Review will consider:

- the role that HE governance should have in meeting the challenges and delivering the actions required to ensure Wales' HE system is fully responsive to learner need, nationally robust and internationally competitive;
- the effectiveness of current accountability mechanisms between government and the universities in terms of the delivery of national strategies; and
- any changes to national and institutional governance required to meet these responsibilities.

This will require a thorough, rigorous and analytical consideration of the:

- purpose;
- underpinning principles; and
- operational framework of:

the current systems of governance in higher education.

The following issues and questions will be investigated:

- The opportunities for improving the relationship between national and institutional governance and an assessment of alternative systems.
- The lines of accountability to government and citizens to ensure that HE provision meets national imperatives and responds to public need.
- The contribution that HE governance, nationally and institutionally, can make to delivering a world class sector with world class subject departments, research grant achievement and RAE performance.
- The governors role in overseeing, and supporting institutional commitment to collaboration and regional planning and delivery.
- The current arrangements that exist for governance of collaboration, partnership and regional planning and the changes that need to be made to ensure institutional governors have a part to play.
- The current systems of governor scrutiny activities and any changes needed to ensure HE governors are fully empowered to support, guide and oversee institutional leadership in strategic direction, evaluating quality and auditing processes.
- The current framework of governor recruitment in terms of the involvement of relevant stakeholders and the engagement of staff and students.

The Review will also consider the national role and function of the University of Wales, and its current and future contribution to the implementation of *For our Future*.

## **Equality**

The Task and Finish Group will be mindful of the key principles of equality of opportunity, and the Assembly Government's policies on race equality, disability and promoting bilingualism; sustainable development; and social justice.

## **Evidence, Reporting and Support**

The Task and Finish Group will seek input from external stakeholders and experts and will particularly source evidence, views and opinions from officers and members of the Higher Education Funding Council for Wales (HEFCW), Higher Education Wales (HEW), The Chairs of Higher Education Wales (CHEW), The National Union of Students (NUS), The Leadership Foundation, Colegau Cymru and the relevant trade unions.

The business of the Task and Finish Group will be set up where possible to work around members' other commitments.

The Chair is asked to produce a report by the end of January 2011. The Report will be presented to the Minister for Children, Education and Lifelong Learning.

The Group will be assisted by a team of Welsh Assembly Government officials. The facility is available to commission independent research should that be required.



Christine Chapman AM  
Chair, Petitions Committee  
National Assembly for Wales  
Cardiff Bay  
CF99 1NA

Monday 27 September 2010

Dear Mrs Chapman,

**PETITION: P-03-204 Public Accountability and Consultation in  
Higher Education**

Thank you for your letter of 26 July 2010 regarding the above petition. The role of NUS Wales is to represent policies set by our constituent students' unions, whose views are an expression of the opinions of the students on their campuses. NUS Wales works with our members to promote, defend and extend the rights of students in Wales. We aim to develop and support students' at universities and colleges in Wales but do not generally represent the views of individual students.

NUS Wales feels that the status of student representation has improved over the past decade, with the learner voice now being heard at all levels of higher education. This has enabled students to work with academics to shape their learning experience, as well as to contribute to the quality assurance processes within institutions. The national voice of students, through NUS, has also benefitted from a stronger presence within the higher education sector.



nationalunionofstudentswales

For over a year NUS Wales has been working with a number of sector bodies including HEFCW, Higher Education Wales, the Quality Assurance Agency and the Higher Education Academy to deliver Wales Initiative for Student Engagement (WISE). This initiative seeks to increase student representation and engagement within institutions through empowering, training and supporting course representatives in institutions across Wales. We have recently begun a similar project for students at Further Education Institutions in Wales.

This initiative is important on a number of levels, as it shows a commitment from across the higher education sector to treating students as partners in their learning experience. The 'Have Your Say Project' that is funded by HEFCW is closely linked to this agenda, and has enabled NUS Wales to train course representatives, students' union officers and students' union staff, with the aim of creating excellent student representation at every level of Wales' higher education institutions. This of course is key to resolving student issues on a local level, as well as ensuring that students understand their right to access representation through their students' union if they wish to make academic complaints. Students' union officers also sit on a range of academic and student experience committees within their institutions, as well as on their Governing Bodies.

It is also worth pointing out that students have several opportunities to engage with the QAA Institutional Review process, which reviews how effectively higher education institutions in Wales manage the quality of standards of their academic provision. The students' union is encouraged to produce a student submission as part of this process, which builds on data from the student body, in order to give the review team a distinct student perspective. NUS Wales has worked with the QAA over the past

few years to ensure that students' unions are supported in this process. During the main institutional review visit, the review team also interview a number of students and students' union officers, to ensure that there is an opportunity to hear their views in person. A recent addition to the institutional review process in Wales is the role of the student reviewer, which ensures a student perspective on the review team, something that NUS supports wholeheartedly. Since 2008, students have also been able to raise concerns in the period between institutional reviews about 'any policy, procedure or action implemented or omitted by an institution that appears likely to jeopardise the academic standards and quality of its higher education programmes and /or awards'. The Cause for Concern procedure is clearly outlined on the QAA website<sup>1</sup>. We understand that this procedure is being reviewed to deliver greater transparency and ensure that members of the public have a clearer understanding of the process.

With regards to student representation at a national (Wales) level, NUS Wales has regular liaison meetings with the QAA and HEFCW to ensure that student issues can be raised and discussed, and that cross sector support for student engagement remains on the agenda. The NUS Wales President also holds a position on the QAA Advisory Committee for Wales, the HEFCW Student Experience, Teaching and Quality Committee and the HEFCW Quality Working Group. In addition to these longer standing links with the sector, in October 2009 I (in my capacity as NUS Wales President) was invited to sit as an observer on HEFCW Council. This is the first time that the President of NUS Wales has received this invitation, and I believe that this shows a commitment from the sector towards transparency and student engagement at the highest level of Welsh higher education. The range of meetings that are outlined in this paragraph have

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<sup>1</sup> <http://www.qaa.ac.uk/causesforconcern/default.asp>





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strengthened our ability to have an impact during the early stages of the policy process, to the benefit of our membership.

With regards to the Office of the Independent Adjudicator (OIA), the President of NUS UK sits on the board of Directors to ensure that there is a representative of students involved in the body's proceedings.

The OIA has strict guidelines surrounding the complaints it can consider and a significant point for reference is the requirement of a completion of procedures letter. Once a student has completed an institutions internal complaints procedure, they should expect to receive this letter from the institution. The letter should record the issues considered and the Institutions final findings. For an investigation to be acceptable within OIA guidelines, this completion of procedures letter needs to be submitted to OIA within 3 months of its production. These letters are produced regardless of the results and are proof that all internal procedures have been completed.

In addition to our belief in the independence of the OIA, the recent judicial review of *Budd v OIA*<sup>2</sup> confirmed this independence. The Judge, Mr Ockelton (sitting as a Deputy High Court Judge) confirmed that "there is simply no evidence that the Independent adjudicator is not independent, nor that the Board, however constituted, attempts to influence the Independent Adjudicator. While the Board of Directors may have representatives from specific institutions, they do not have any input or control over specific cases. In fact rules of the Independent Adjudication scheme (rules 8 and 10.2) require the board of directors to be responsible for "preserving the independence of the scheme and the role of the Independent Adjudicator".

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<sup>2</sup> *R (Budd) v OIA* Neutral Citation Number [2010] EWHC 1056 (Admin)



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Finally, we welcome the Minister for Children, Education and Lifelong Learning's Independent Review of Higher Education Governance and feel that it would be unwise to comment on this until the review has been completed and recommendations have been made.

I hope that this information is satisfactory for your enquiry, but please feel free to get in touch if we can be of further service.

Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads 'Katie Dalton'. The signature is fluid and cursive, with a long horizontal flourish at the end.

Katie Dalton  
President  
NUS Wales

**Higher Education Wales (HEW)**

2 Caspian Point, Caspian Way, Cardiff Bay CF10 4DQ Tel: +44 (0)29 2044 8020 Fax + 44 (0)29 2048 9531  
Email [hew@hew.ac.uk](mailto:hew@hew.ac.uk) Web [www.hew.ac.uk](http://www.hew.ac.uk)

**Addysg Uwch Cymru (AUC)**

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Eboest [hew@hew.ac.uk](mailto:hew@hew.ac.uk) Gwê [www.hew.ac.uk](http://www.hew.ac.uk)



Christine Chapman AM  
Chair, Petitions Committee  
National Assembly for Wales  
Cardiff Bay  
Cardiff  
CF99 1NA

22 September 2010

Dear Ms Chapman

**Petition: P-03-204 Public Accountability and Consultation in Higher Education**

Aberystwyth University  
Prifysgol Aberystwyth

Bangor University  
Prifysgol Bangor

Cardiff University  
Prifysgol Caerdydd

University of Wales Institute, Cardiff  
Athrofa Prifysgol Cymru, Caerdydd

University of Glamorgan  
Prifysgol Morgannwg

Glyndŵr University  
Prifysgol Glyndŵr

University of Wales, Newport  
Prifysgol Cymru, Casnewydd

The Open University in Wales  
Y Brifysgol Agored yng Nghymru

Swansea University  
Prifysgol Abertawe

Swansea Metropolitan University  
Prifysgol Fetropolitan Abertawe

University of Wales: Trinity Saint David  
Prifysgol Cymru Y Drindod Dewi Sant

University of Wales  
Prifysgol Cymru

Thank you for your letter of 26 July 2010 inviting our views on the issues raised in the above petition.

There many mechanisms in place for ensuring public accountability and the aptness standards of service in higher education.

There are bodies that operate on a UK-wide basis that monitor how well academic standards and quality in higher education are met and in doing so, identify good practice and make strong recommendations as appropriate, for improvement. They include;

- The Quality Assurance Agency which conducts institutional reviews and provides advice to government regarding applications for degree awarding powers and university title, which include elements related to governance, to the operation of proper operational processes and to the public availability, and reliability, of information (<http://www.qaa.ac.uk/>);
- The Office of the Independent Adjudicator for higher education which was established to review individual complaints raised by students against HE institutions (<http://www.oiahe.org.uk/>).

There are also mechanisms in place that come under the role and remit of the Higher Education Funding Council for Wales;

**The Voice of Higher Education in Wales**  
**Llais Addysg Uwch yng Nghymru**

**A National Council of Universities UK**  
**Un o Gyngorau Cenedlaethol Prifysgolion y DU**

Company limited by guarantee, registered in England and Wales No. 2517018. Charity No. 1001127  
Cwmni cyfyngedig trwy warant, a gofrestrwyd yng Nghymru a Lloegr Rhif 2517018. Rhif Elusen 1001127

- Internal and external audit arrangements operated by Welsh HE institutions in accordance with the requirements of the Financial memorandum and Audit Code of Practice between HEFCW and each university in Wales;
- Procedures for investigating allegations of breaches by HE institutions of HEFCW's terms and conditions of funding as set out in the Financial memorandum;
- The institutional assurance framework operated by HEFCW with regard to the appropriateness of governance arrangements;
- HE Data audit arrangements operated to HEFCW specification.

Each university also has an internal complaints procedure and whistleblowing policy to which it adheres.

I hope that the details here will aid you and the Committee.

Yours sincerely

Amanda Wilkinson  
Director

Cyngor Cyllido Addysg  
Uwch Cymru  
Higher Education Funding  
Council for Wales

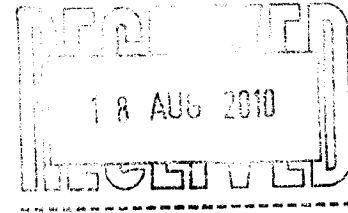
11 August 2010

Cwrt Linden  
Clos Ilex, Llanisien  
Caerdydd, CF14 5DZ  
Ffôn 029 2076 1861  
Ffacs 029 2076 3163  
www.hefcw.ac.uk

Linden Court  
Ilex Close, Llanishen  
Cardiff, CF14 5DZ  
Tel 029 2076 1861  
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www.hefcw.ac.uk

hefcw

Christine Chapman AM  
Chair, Petitions Committee  
National Assembly for Wales  
Cardiff Bay  
Cardiff  
CF99 1NA



Dr. Christine,

**Petition: P-03-204 Public Accountability and Consultation in Higher Education**

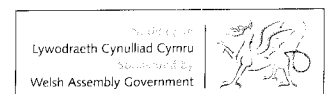
Thank you for your letter of 26 July 2010 inviting me to offer our views on the issues raised by the above petition in the context of our recently published Corporate Strategy.

There is a range of mechanisms for ensuring public accountability and the appropriateness of standards of service in higher education. These include:

- The Quality Assurance Agency which conducts institutional reviews and provides advice to government regarding applications for degree awarding powers and university title, which include elements related to governance, to the operation of proper operational processes and to the public availability, and reliability, of information (<http://www.qaa.ac.uk/>);
- Estyn, which plays a role analogous to the Quality Assurance Agency in respect of Initial Teacher Training (<http://www.estyn.gov.uk/home.asp>);
- The institutional assurance framework operated by the Higher Education Funding Council for Wales through which we secure appropriate governance arrangements in Welsh HE ([http://www.hefcw.ac.uk/working\\_with\\_he\\_providers/institutional\\_assurance/institutional\\_assurance.aspx](http://www.hefcw.ac.uk/working_with_he_providers/institutional_assurance/institutional_assurance.aspx));
- The requirement on us to provide the Welsh Assembly Government with an annual statement of assurance on the adequacy of governance arrangements in Welsh HE;
- HE Data audit arrangements operated in Welsh HE to our specification [http://www.hefcw.ac.uk/working\\_with\\_he\\_providers/data\\_collection/audit\\_he\\_data.aspx](http://www.hefcw.ac.uk/working_with_he_providers/data_collection/audit_he_data.aspx);
- Internal and external audit arrangements operated by Welsh HE institutions in accordance with the requirements of the Financial memorandum and Audit Code of Practice that is in place between HEFCW and each HE institution in Wales;
- Internal complaints processes and whistleblowing procedures which operate in all Welsh HE institutions;
- Procedures for investigating allegations of breaches by HE institutions of HEFCW's terms and conditions of funding as set out in the Financial memorandum ([http://www.hefcw.ac.uk/working\\_with\\_he\\_providers/institutional\\_assurance/allegations\\_concerning\\_institutions.aspx](http://www.hefcw.ac.uk/working_with_he_providers/institutional_assurance/allegations_concerning_institutions.aspx)); and,
- The operation of the Office of the Independent Adjudicator for higher education which is established to review individual complaints raised by students against HE institutions (<http://www.oiahe.org.uk/>).

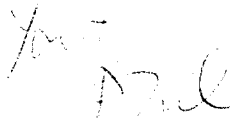
Mr Roger Thomas  
Cadeir/dd/Chairman  
Ffôn/Tel 029 2068 2252

Yr Athro/Professor Philip Gummert  
Prif Weithredwr/Chief Executive  
Ffôn/Tel 029 2068 2251



In addition, the Minister has recently announced a review of higher education governance in Wales (<http://wales.gov.uk/newsroom/educationandskills/2010/100525appointments/?lang=en>), as identified in *For our Future*.

Please do say if we can help further.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Phil Gummatt', written in a cursive style.

Professor Phil Gummatt  
Chief Executive

## **5) P-03-227 Access Road in Llanmaes / P-03-252 Opposing RAF St Athan Northern Access Road (Boverton residents)**

### **P-03-227 Access Road in Llanmaes**

#### **Petition wording**

We the residents of Llanmaes, Milllands Park, and the surrounding rural areas object to:

- The proposed new northern access road for the proposed Defence Technical College
- The proposed new Tremains Farm housing estate

Objections to the above are for the following reasons:

1. it involves the destruction of green field site when brown field sites are available
2. it will create considerable noise, light and dust pollution
3. it will incur substantial ecological damage.

**Link to petition:** <http://www.assemblywales.org/gethome/e-petitions-old/admissible-pet/p-03-227.htm>

**Petition raised by:** Llanmaes Community Council

**Number of signatures:** 416

**Previously considered by the Committee on:** 9 June 2009, 20 October 2009, 19 January 2010, 23 March 2010 and 25 May 2010

### **P-03-252 Opposing RAF St Athan Northern Access Road (Boverton residents)**

#### **Petition wording**

We call upon the National Assembly for Wales to urge the Welsh Government to amend its plans for the proposed Defence Technical Academy at St Athan so that no northern access road is constructed and that the green field sites at Tremain's Farm, Picketston and Eglwys Brewis are preserved.

This would take into account the views of 95% of the 395 individuals consulted in Boverton.

**Link to petition:** <http://www.assemblywales.org/gethome/e-petitions-old/admissible-pet/p-03-252.htm>

**Petition raised by:** Boverton residents

**Number of signatures:** This petition was raised by Boverton residents, and it collected 3 signatures. In addition, the petitioner collected 377 signatures for an associated petition.

**Previously considered by the Committee on:** 20 October 2009, 24 November 2009, 23 March 2010 and 25 May 2010

**Update:** Correspondence has been received from the UK Government Ministry of Defence and is included below.



AM/MS



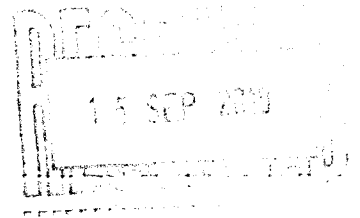
MINISTRY OF DEFENCE  
FLOOR 5 ZONE B MAIN BUILDING  
WHITEHALL LONDON SW1A 2HB

Telephone: 020 7218 9000 (Switchboard)

**NICK HARVEY MP**  
MINISTER OF STATE FOR THE ARMED FORCES

Our ref: D/Min(AF)/NH MC03196/2010  
Your ref: P-03-227

2 September 2010



*Dear Christine,*

Thank you for your letter to Liam Fox of 26 July about the Defence Training Rationalisation (DTR) project. I am replying as the Minister responsible for this subject.

As the Secretary of State said during the debate in the House on the Strategic Defence and Security Review (SDSR) earlier this summer, no area of defence is excluded from consideration. I can therefore confirm that DTR is being looked at within the framework of the review, but I would like to emphasise that work on the DTR project has not stopped but is continuing in parallel.

The SDSR is due to report its findings in the Autumn.

I hope this is helpful.

*Yours,*

*Nick*

**NICK HARVEY MP**

A simple, horizontal, wavy line drawn in black ink, serving as a decorative flourish or underline.

Christine Chapman AM  
National Assembly for Wales  
Cardiff Bay  
Cardiff  
CF99 1NA

## 6) P-03-230 International Conscientious Objectors Day

### **Petition wording**

We call upon the National Assembly for Wales to recognise the strong tradition of conscientious objection in Wales, by marking the occasion of International Conscientious Objectors' Day on 15 May every year with an annual event.

**Link to petition:** <http://www.assemblywales.org/gethome/e-petitions-old/admissible-pet/p-03-230.htm>

**Petition raised by:** Cynefin y Werin / Common Ground

**Number of signatures:** This petition was raised by Cynefin y Werin / Common Ground, and it collected 14 signatures.

**Previously considered by the Committee on:** 6 October 2009 and 23 March 2010

**Update:** Correspondence has been received from the First Minister and from the office of the Presiding Officer, these are included below.

**Carwyn Jones AC/AM**  
Prif Weinidog Cymru/First Minister of Wales



Llywodraeth Cynulliad Cymru  
Welsh Assembly Government

Ein cyf/Our ref FM -/00577/10

Christine Chapman AM  
Chair - Petitions Committee  
National Assembly for Wales  
Cardiff Bay  
Cardiff  
CF99 1NA

20<sup>th</sup> April 2010

*Dear Chris*

I am writing in response to your letter dated 31 March 2010 asking if the Welsh Assembly Government has any plans to mark International Conscientious Objectors Day on 15 May with an annual event.

There are no plans for the Welsh Assembly Government to mark International Conscientious Objectors Day with an annual event.

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to be 'C Jones'.

**Carwyn Jones**



Christine Chapman AM  
Chair of Petitions Committee  
National Assembly for Wales

**PETITION: INTERNATIONAL CONSCIENTIOUS  
OBJECTORS DAY**

6 October 2010

Dear Christine

Thank you very much for your letter to the Presiding Officer, which I have been asked to reply to on behalf of the Presiding Office, regarding International Conscientious Objectors' Day. Please accept my apologies for the delay in responding.

You ask if there is scope for the National Assembly for Wales to mark International Conscientious Objectors Day, or whether this is a matter for individual Assembly Members.

Decisions on such issues do not fall within the remit of the Presiding Office, either in relation to the Business Committee, or the Assembly Commission.

If constituents wish one of their Assembly Members to make arrangements to mark a specific day, other than the customary national and international annually recognised days, they can ask the Assembly Member if they will sponsor an event/exhibition at the Senedd. Members could also gain support for any such request using National Assembly for Wales' procedures such as tabling of and subscribing to Statements of Opinion.

I hope this information is of help.

Yours sincerely

Aled Eirug  
(Constitutional Adviser to the Presiding Officer)

Bae Caerdydd  
Caerdydd  
CF99 1NA  
Cardiff Bay  
Cardiff  
CF99 1NA

## **7) P-03-231 Proximity of wind turbines to residential dwellings**

### **Petition wording**

We ask the Assembly to review the current position on the proximity of wind turbines to homes, which is now 500m. (see para. 3.4, Annex D of TAN8).

We would ask that the minimum distance be 2KMs as in Scotland.

Besides problems of noise, there have been many accidents and the closeness to homes affects the visual amenity of residents.

**Link to the petition:** <http://www.assemblywales.org/gethome/e-petitions-old/admissible-pet/p-03-231.htm>

**Petition raised by:** Glyncorrwg Action Group

**Number of signatures:** 171

**Previously considered by the Committee on:** 7 July 2009, 22 September, 24 November 2009 and 1 February 2010

**Update:** Correspondence has been received from the petitioner and is included below.

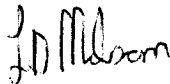


On the last page of her letter however she appears to have calmed down and recognised that ‘where wind power development includes more than two turbines/the hub height of any turbine exceeds 15 metres, an Environmental Impact Assessment will be required-----’

You will be aware that the Pen-y-Cymoed plan calls for 84 turbines each 145m in height.

There are more and more reports in the press which castigates on shore wind farm developments. Truly, it is about time the Welsh Assembly Government kicked TAN 8 into touch. I beseech you on behalf of the people of Glyncorrwg to uphold our petition.

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Lyndsay David Milsom'. The signature is written in a cursive style with a large initial 'L'.

Lyndsay David Milsom

Chairman  
Glyncorrwg Action Group

## **Addenda to Lindsay Milsom's letter concerning petition P-03-231 Proximity of Wind Turbines to Residential Dwellings**

\*We are disappointed with the response from Jane Davidson to the Petitions Committee. Surely, the argument is that if the Welsh Assembly wants wind turbines they should be sited sensitively and the whole process should be seen to be fair. Is it too much to ask for turbines to be 2kms from homes? Let us see some fair play.

The crucial point is the new evidence that is emerging about wind turbines and health. In the information below is supporting evidence of **Wind Turbine Syndrome**.

Research in the USA does say that turbines should be a certain distance because of health risks.

**Could you ask the Minister for Health to investigate the health risks of wind turbines and whether siting them 2kms from homes would help people's physical and mental health?**

It is important that the people of Wales are informed of both sides of the argument with regard to wind energy. Dr Nina Pierpont's research referred to below was given international coverage including the national papers in the UK. *The Independent* even had an editorial on this. As far as I know no coverage was given in Wales which is strange considering that wind farms are an important issue. We ask that you take the following information into account in your deliberations:

### **1) Are wind farms a health risk? US scientist identifies 'wind turbine syndrome'**

**Noise and vibration coming from large turbines are behind an increase in heart disease, migraine, panic attacks and other health problems, according to research by an American doctor.**

Living too close to wind turbines can cause heart disease, tinnitus, vertigo, panic attacks, migraines and sleep deprivation, according to groundbreaking research to be published later this year by an American doctor.

**Dr Nina Pierpont**, a leading New York paediatrician, has been studying the symptoms displayed by people living near wind turbines in the US, the UK, Italy, Ireland and Canada for more than five years. Her findings have led her to confirm what she has identified as a new health risk, wind turbine syndrome (WTS). This is the disruption or abnormal stimulation of the inner ear's vestibular system by turbine infrasound and low-frequency noise, the most distinctive feature of which is a group of symptoms which she calls visceral vibratory vestibular disturbance, or VVVD. They cause problems ranging from internal pulsation, quivering, nervousness, fear, a compulsion to flee, chest tightness and tachycardia – increased heart rate. Turbine noise can also trigger nightmares and other disorders in children as well as harm cognitive development in the young, she claims. However, Dr Pierpont also makes it clear that not all people living close to turbines are susceptible.

Until now, the Government and the wind companies have denied any health risks associated with the powerful noises and vibrations emitted by wind turbines. Acoustic engineers working for the wind energy companies and the Government say that aerodynamic noise produced by turbines pose no risk to health, a view endorsed recently by acousticians at Salford University. They have argued that



earlier claims by Dr Pierpont are “imaginary” and are likely to argue that her latest findings are based on a sample too small to be authoritative.

At the heart of Dr Pierpont’s findings is that humans are affected by low-frequency noise and vibrations from wind turbines through their ear bones, rather like fish and other amphibians. That humans have the same sensitivity as fish is based on new discoveries made by scientists at Manchester University and New South Wales last year. This, she claims, overturns the medical orthodoxy of the past 70 years on which acousticians working for wind farms are using to base their noise measurements. “It has been gospel among acousticians for years that if a person can’t hear a sound, it’s too weak for it to be detected or registered by any other part of the body,” she said. “But this is no longer true. Humans can hear through the bones. This is amazing. It would be heretical if it hadn’t been shown in a well-conducted experiment.”

In the UK, Dr Christopher Hanning, founder of the British Sleep Society, who has also backed her research, said: “Dr Pierpont’s detailed recording of the harm caused by wind turbine noise will lay firm foundations for future research. It should be required reading for all planners considering wind farms. Like so many earlier medical pioneers exposing the weaknesses of current orthodoxy, Dr Pierpont has been subject to much denigration and criticism and ... it is tribute to her strength of character and conviction that this important book is going to reach publication.”

Dr Pierpont’s thesis, which is to be published in October by K-Selected Books, has been peer reviewed and includes an endorsement from Professor Lord May, former chief scientific adviser to the UK government. Lord May describes her research as “impressive, interesting and important”.

Drawing on the early work of Dr Amanda Harry, a British GP in Portsmouth who had been alerted by her patients to the potential health risk, Dr Pierpont gathered together 10 further families from around the world who were living near large wind turbines, giving her a cluster of 38 people, from infants to age 75, to explore the pathophysiology of WTS for the case series. Eight of the 10 families she analysed for the study have now moved away from their homes.

In a rare interview, Dr Pierpont, a fellow of the American Academy of Pediatrics, told The Independent on Sunday: “There is no doubt that my clinical research shows that the infrasonic to ultrasonic noise and vibrations emitted by wind turbines cause the symptoms which I am calling wind turbine syndrome. There are about 12 different health problems associated with WTS and these range from tachycardia, sleep disturbance, headaches, tinnitus, nausea, visual blurring, panic attacks with sensations of internal quivering to more general irritability.

**“The wind industry will try to discredit me and disparage me, but I can cope with that. This is not unlike the tobacco industry dismissing health issues from smoking. The wind industry, however, is not composed of clinicians, nor is it made up of people suffering from wind turbines.”** The IoS has a copy of the confidential manuscript which is exhaustive in its research protocol and detailed

case series, drawing on the work of leading otolaryngologists and neurotologists – ear, nose and throat clinical specialists.

Some of the earliest research into the impact of low-frequency noise and vibrations was undertaken by Portuguese doctors studying the effects on military and civil personnel flying at high altitudes and at supersonic speed. They found that this exposure may also cause the rare illness, vibroacoustic disorder or VAD, which causes changes to the structure of certain organs such as the heart and lungs and may well be caused by vibrations from turbines. Another powerful side effect of turbines is the impact which the light thrown off the blades – known as flicker – has on people who suffer from migraines and epilepsy.

Campaigners have consistently argued that much research hitherto has been based on written complaints to environmental health officers and manufacturers, not on science-based research. But in Denmark, Germany and France, governments are moving towards building new wind farms off-shore because of concern over the potential health and environmental risks. In the UK there are no such controls, and a growing number of lobbyists, noise experts and government officials are also beginning to query the statutory noise levels being given to councils when deciding on planning applications from wind farm manufacturers. Lobbyists claim a new method of measuring is needed.

Dr Pierpont, who has funded all the research herself and is independent of any organisation, recommends at least a 2km set-back distance between potential wind turbines and people's homes, said: "It is irresponsible of the wind turbine companies – and governments – to continue building wind turbines so close to where people live until there has been a proper epidemiological investigation of the full impact on human health.

"What I have shown in my research is that many people – not all – who have been living close to a wind turbine running near their homes display a range of health illnesses and that when they move away, many of these problems also go away."

A breakthrough into understanding more of the impact of vibrations came last year, she said, when scientists at Manchester University and Prince of Wales Clinical School and Medical Research Institute in Sydney showed that the normal human vestibular system has a fish or frog-like sensitivity to low-frequency vibration. This was a turning point in understanding the nature of the problem, Dr Pierpont added, because it overturns the orthodoxy of the current way of measuring noise. "It is clear from the new evidence that the methods being used by acousticians goes back to research first carried out in the 1930s and is now outdated."

Dr Pierpont added that the wind turbine companies constantly argue that the health problems are "imaginary, psychosomatic or malingering". But she said their claims are "rubbish" and that medical evidence supports that the reported symptoms are real.

By Margareta Pagano

## 2) Sleep disturbance and wind turbine noise

*Author:* Hanning, Christopher

Report by Dr Christopher Hanning, (Hospital Consultant)BSc, MB, BS, MRCS, LRCP, FRCA, MD, on behalf of Stop Swinford Wind Farm Action Group (SSWFAG) — June 2009

2.2.4. Noise interferes with sleep in several ways. Firstly, it may be sufficiently loud or annoying to prevent the onset of sleep or the return to sleep following an awakening. It is clear also that some types of noise are more annoying than others. Constant noise is less annoying than irregular noise which varies in frequency and loudness, for example, snoring, particularly if accompanied by the snorts of sleep apnoea (breath holding). The swishing or thumping noise associated with wind turbines seems to be particularly annoying as the frequency and loudness varies with changes in wind speed and local atmospheric conditions. While there is no doubt of the occurrence of these noises and their audibility over long distances, up to 3-4km in some reports, the actual cause has not yet been fully elucidated (Bowdler 2008). Despite recommendations by the Government's own Noise Working Group, UK research in this area has been stopped.

2.2.5. Secondly, noise experienced during sleep may arouse or awaken the sleeper. A sufficiently loud or prolonged noise will result in full awakening which may be long enough to recall. Short awakenings are not recalled as, during the transition from sleep to wakefulness, one of the last functions to recover is memory (strictly, the transfer of information from short term to long term memory). The reverse is true for the transition from wakefulness to sleep. Thus only awakenings of longer than 20-30 seconds are subsequently recalled. Research that relies on recalled awakenings alone may underestimate the effect.

2.2.6. Noise insufficient to cause awakening may cause an arousal. An arousal is brief, often only a few seconds long, with the sleeper moving from a deep level of sleep to a lighter level and back to a deeper level. Because full wakefulness is not reached, the sleeper has no memory of the event but the sleep has been disrupted just as effectively as if wakefulness had occurred. It is possible for several hundred arousals to occur each night without the sufferer being able to recall any of them. The sleep, because it is broken, is unrefreshing resulting in sleepiness, fatigue, headaches and poor memory and concentration (Martin 1997), many of the symptoms of "wind turbine syndrome". Arousals are associated not just with an increase in brain activity but also with physiological changes, an increase in heart rate and blood pressure, which are thought to be responsible for the increase in cardiovascular risk. Arousals occur naturally during sleep and increase with age (Boselli 1998) which may make the elderly more vulnerable to wind turbine noise. Arousals may be caused by sound events as low as 32 dBA and awakenings with events of 42dBA (Muzet and Miedema 2005), well within the measured noise

levels of current “wind farms” and the levels permitted by ETSU-R-97 . Arousals in SWS may trigger a parasomnia (sleep walking, night terrors etc..). Pierpont (2009 and personal communication) notes that parasomnias developed in some of the children in her study group when exposed to turbine noise. ...

2.2.9. Sleep disturbance and impairment of the ability to return to sleep is not trivial as almost all of us can testify. In the short term, the resulting deprivation of sleep results in daytime fatigue and sleepiness, poor concentration and memory function. Accident risks increase. In the longer term, sleep deprivation is linked to depression, weight gain, diabetes, high blood pressure and heart disease. ...

3.8.2. In weighing the evidence, I find that, on the one hand there is a large number of reported cases of sleep disturbance and, in some cases, ill health, as a result of exposure to noise from wind turbines supported by a number of research reports that tend to confirm the validity of the anecdotal reports and provide a reasonable basis for the complaints. On the other, we have badly designed industry and government reports which seek to show that there is no problem. I find the latter unconvincing.

3.8.3. In my expert opinion, from my knowledge of sleep physiology and a review of the available research, I have no doubt that wind turbine noise emissions cause sleep disturbance and ill health. ...

4.4.1. Table 1 (see end of text) shows recommendations for setback distance by a number of authorities. References can be found in the Bibliography. In general, noise engineers recommend lesser setback distances than physicians. The former rely more on measured and/or calculated sound pressures and the latter on clinical reports. It is logical to prefer the actual reports of the humans subjected to the noise rather than abstract calculations, even if the latter accurately measure ambient noise and allow for the low frequency components of wind turbine noise. Calculations can not measure annoyance and sleep disturbance, only humans can do so.

4.4.2. A setback distance of at least 1.5km is necessary to ensure, with a reasonable degree of confidence, that the wind turbine noise will not disturb the sleep of those living in proximity to the proposed Swinford development.

\*Glyncorrwg Action Group, hopes that you will support our petition concerning the distance of a wind turbine to the nearest home.

In Wales under planning laws a turbine can be sited only 500 metres from the nearest home. In Scotland the minimum distance is 2kms. We believe this is totally unfair.

If the Welsh Assembly could change the law, then a minimum distance of 2kms from a turbine to a home would help with some of the problems of turbines such as noise, gross visual intrusion, health issues, danger and accidents from ice throw, turbines breaking, fire etc.

People in Wales deserve equal rights as people in Scotland. If the minimum distance from a turbine to a home becomes 2kms, then villages like Glyncorrwg, threatened by 96 turbines 475 feet high, will be offered some protection from the horrendous impact of such proposed Wind Farms.

This is not a petition against renewable energy, it is about fairness and justice. We hope the Welsh Assembly will respond to this petition by changing the planning laws to help the people of Wales. Our AM Brian Gibbons is very supportive of this idea.

We are working with Hywel Francis MP, Brian Gibbons AM, Derek Vaughan MEP and NPTCBC to have the Upper Afan Valley officially designated as an Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty. Residents and thousands of visitors recognise the beauty of the area. This proposal is totally unacceptable and will ruin our future hopes.

Let's have Fair Play in Wales!

We would also like to place on record our deep concern that:  
The Welsh Assembly policy overemphasises wind energy

There is a close relationship between wind energy companies and organisations and the WA

There is a reluctance in some departments of the WA to take any criticism of wind energy seriously.

It is clear that onshore wind farms in Wales are only producing a disappointing amount of electricity. For example, the Ffynnon Oer wind farm near to Glyncoerrwg promised to generate at a 30% level but is only producing 20-25%. Experts believe that the future lies in large offshore wind farms which are sufficiently far offshore not to destroy the views of local inhabitants and visitors to coastal locations. Also that investment in insulation for homes, factories etc gives a better return on investment than expensive inefficient wind turbines often situated in areas that are not windy!

Bette Slater

Secretary, Glyncoerrwg Action Group

## 8) P-03-239 Lifelong Learning in Welsh Universities

### Petition wording

We call upon the National Assembly for Wales to urge the Welsh Government to require Welsh Universities to provide a full and varied lifelong learning programme by making this a condition of any public funding they receive.

**Link to the petition:** <http://www.assemblywales.org/gethome/e-petitions-old/admissible-pet/p-03-239.htm>

**Petition raised by:** Nick Jones

**Number of signatures:** 10 (In addition, the petitioner collected 3000+ signatures for an associated petition)

**Previously considered by the Committee on:** 22 September and 10 November 2009

**Update:** Correspondence has been received from the Higher Education Funding Council for Wales and Higher Education Wales. These are included below

Cyngor Cyllido Addysg  
Uwch Cymru  
Higher Education Funding  
Council for Wales

Cwrt Linden  
Clos Ilex, Llanisien  
Caerdydd, CF14 5DZ  
Ffôn 029 2076 1861  
Ffacs 029 2076 3163  
www.hefcw.ac.uk

Linden Court  
Ilex Close, Llanishen  
Cardiff, CF14 5DZ  
Tel 029 2076 1861  
Fax 029 2076 3163  
www.hefcw.ac.uk

hefcw

22 December 2009

- 4 JAN 2010

Ms Val Lloyd, AM  
Chair, Petitions Committee  
National Assembly for Wales  
Cardiff Bay  
Cardiff  
CF99 1NA

Dear Ms Lloyd,

**Petition P-03-239 Lifelong Learning in Welsh Universities**

Thank you for your letter of 16 November regarding the above.

In the light of what we understand to be the background to this Petition, and noting also the then Minister's letter to you of 14 October, we need to begin with a word about our understanding of the concept of lifelong learning.

As the Minister's letter says, lifelong learning provision covers a wide range of programmes and achievement levels, and makes a significant contribution to work on widening access and improving social justice and social inclusion. Our sense of what is included under 'lifelong learning' goes well beyond the limited provision made in departments with that or similar titles, such as Continuing Education. It refers, rather, to an overall philosophy of flexible higher education, available to people in variable volumes of provision (rather than, eg, traditional 3-year degrees), at times in their life that suit them (rather than any presumption that the typical entrant is 18 years old), and with a capacity to build over time, in instalments, towards a desired qualification without necessarily completing that qualification in one go.

Consistently with that philosophy, since the launch of the Credit and Qualifications Framework for Wales (CQFW) in 2002 and the decision by this Council to fund higher education institutions on the basis of credit, provision across the higher education sector in Wales has been increasingly provided on a modular basis. Any modular provision already made by universities in the community was 'mainstreamed' into the main HEFCW teaching funding method (ie, was no longer treated as a special case) and learners were enabled to gain academic credits for the work they had completed. Thus the majority of what might be defined as 'lifelong learning' by the petitioners is now credit rated and fully 'mainstreamed' and integrated within HEFCW-funded

higher education provision. Scotland and Wales lead England in taking this approach to funding higher education, though there is debate in England over following suit, in order to achieve the levels of flexibility of provision that a credit-based system allows.

Our funding to support teaching, (about £285m per annum), includes 'premia', that is, extra funding to institutions which recruit non-traditional students, both to recognise the additional costs which can arise from supporting such students and to incentivise institutions to meet Welsh Assembly Government priorities for social justice. In 2009/10, more than £6m was devoted to premia for widening access to higher education. In addition, we provided funding for institutions to take a strategic approach to widening access (£1.9m in 2009/10) and we funded regional widening access partnership working through our 'Reaching Wider' initiative (£2m).

Much provision to support lifelong learning sits outside the scope of departments with this or similar titles. For example, a key area of 'lifelong learning' provision sits within departments with close links to professions such as architecture, business, medicine, and teacher training, which have broad programmes of continuing professional development to meet the lifelong learning needs of practitioners in those areas. These are sometimes located in the community which applies particularly to those practitioners.

A crucial element of the mainstreaming of lifelong learning provision is that learners are able to gain credits for any modules successfully completed. This credit can be built into a qualification and/or can contribute to the needs of practitioners in their professional careers. This approach has facilitated the progression of learners with widening access backgrounds into and through higher education. UK-wide figures show that universities and colleges in Wales continue to perform well in recruiting students from under-represented groups. This includes mature entrants to higher education, where 12.2% of such entrants in Wales had no previous HE experience and were from a low participation neighbourhood, compared to 11.5% for the UK as a whole.


An analysis of the social make up of some courses which might be labelled as 'lifelong learning' by individual universities indicates that their contribution to widening access is variable. Sometimes the courses in these departments or centres are undertaken by those who are already experienced in higher education. Levels of participation by students from a widening access background can be as low as 20% of those studying in a designated lifelong learning centre.

In the light of steers from the Assembly on the need to widen access to higher education and support the Welsh economy, a number of institutions are therefore re-focussing their 'lifelong learning' courses of this type towards provision which, while



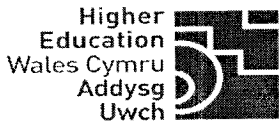
remaining flexible, and available lifelong, is more clearly designed to meet the needs of business and/or widening access cohorts. In this way, we expect that they will be able to use their judgment of market demand, coupled with the flexibility of the CQFW, better to meet the priorities set by the Welsh Assembly Government for economic development and social justice in Wales.

I hope this response sufficiently addresses the issues raised, but I remain at your disposal if we can help further.

Yours Sincerely,  


**Philip Gummatt**

Christine Chapman AM  
Chair, Petitions Committee  
National Assembly for Wales  
Cardiff Bay  
Cardiff  
CF99 1NA



22 September 2010

Aberystwyth University  
Prifysgo: Aberystwyth

Bangor University  
Prifysgol Bangor

Cardiff University  
Prifysgol Caerdydd

University of Wales Institute, Cardiff  
Athrofa Prifysgol Cymru, Caerdydd

University of Glamorgan  
Prifysgol Morgannwg

Glyndŵr University  
Prifysgol Glyndŵr

University of Wales, Newport  
Prifysgol Cymru, Casnewydd

The Open University in Wales  
Y Brifysgol Agored yng Nghymru

Swansea University  
Prifysgol Abertawe

Swansea Metropolitan University  
Prifysgol Fetropolitan Abertawe

University of Wales, Trinity Saint David  
Prifysgol Cymru Y Drindod Dewi Sant

University of Wales  
Prifysgol Cymru

Dear Ms Chapman

### Petition P-03-239 Lifelong Learning in Welsh Universities

I refer to your predecessor's letter of 16 November 2009 regarding the above. Can I apologise for the delay in responding but as discussed with the Committee office, we did not receive the original request for comment and were unaware that you had asked for information until recently.

The phrase 'lifelong learning' covers a wide range of programmes at many different levels at institutions and fundamentality relates to the ethos of widening access to higher education to people from differing backgrounds at various times in their lives. It was one of the driving forces behind the launch of the Credit and Qualifications Framework for Wales (CQFW) in 2002 - the idea of a flexible approach to learning whereby an individual can undertake a credit based course on a modular basis that is built up over a period of time, to suit their needs. The introduction of CQFW allowed institutions to mainstream many of the courses that I understand the petitioners are referring to as lifelong learning which means that they are actually credit rated and therefore form part of the funding mechanism of the Higher Education Funding Council for Wales.

Attracting students onto modular based courses that allows them to build up credits over time, subject to completion, has allowed students from widening access backgrounds to move into and through higher education. Figures for the UK show that universities in Wales continually outperform the rest of the UK when it comes to recruiting students from under-represented groups – These groups include mature students, BME students, disabled students and those with no previous HE experience, from low participation neighbourhoods (Communities First areas).

The Voice of Higher Education in Wales  
Llais Addysg Uwch yng Nghymru

A National Council of Universities UK  
Un o Gyngorau Cenedlaethol Prifysgolion y DU

Universities constantly revisit the courses that they are delivering, paying due regard to the attraction of flexible, accessible, learner centred provision, the impact that decisions would have on their particular regions within which they operate and the priorities set out in *For Our Future* to which all institutions in Wales are working to.

I hope that this helps in your consideration but do let me know if I can be of further assistance.

Yours sincerely

Amanda Wilkinson  
Director

## **9) P-03-272 Equines should not be utilised underground**

### **Petition wording**

We the undersigned, call upon the National Assembly for Wales to urge the Welsh Government to include in the Code of Practice for the Welfare of Equines that equines should not be utilised underground

**Link to the petition:** <http://www.assemblywales.org/gethome/e-petitions-old/admissible-pet/p-03-272.htm>

**Petition raised by:** the Pit Pony Sanctuary

**Number of signatures:** 2852

**Previously considered by the Committee on:** 15 June and 13 July 2010

**Update:** Correspondence has been received from the Minister for Rural Affairs, the Chair of the National Assembly for Wales Cross Party Group on the Horse and the petitioner. These are included below.

AM 19

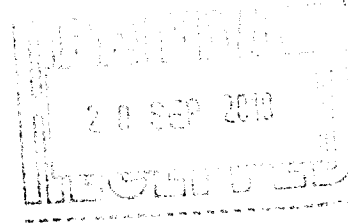
**Elin Jones AM/AC**  
Y Gweinidog dros Faterion Gwledig  
Minister for Rural Affairs



Llywodraeth Cynulliad Cymru  
Welsh Assembly Government

Eich cyf/Your ref P-03-272  
Ein cyf/Our ref EJ/00856/10

Christine Chapman AM  
Chair - Petitions Committee  
National Assembly for Wales  
Cardiff Bay  
Cardiff  
CF99 1NA



16 September 2010

*From Christine*

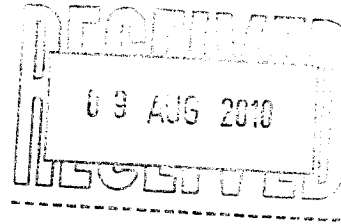
Thank you for your letter of 26<sup>th</sup> July 2010, ref "Petition P-03-272 Equines should not be used underground".

The power to revoke the Coal and Other Mines (Horses) Order 1956 is contained within section 15(3)(a) of the Health and Safety at Work etc Act 1974. Powers under section 15 have not been devolved to the Welsh Ministers and therefore remain exercisable by the Secretary of State.

*Elin Jones*

**Elin Jones AC/AM**  
Y Gweinidog dros Faterion Gwledig  
Minister for Rural Affairs

5 A, 4



Christine Chapman  
Chair, Petitions Committee  
National Assembly for Wales  
Cardiff Bay  
CF99 1NA

4<sup>th</sup> August 2010

Dear Christine,

PETITION: P-03-272 Equines should not be used underground

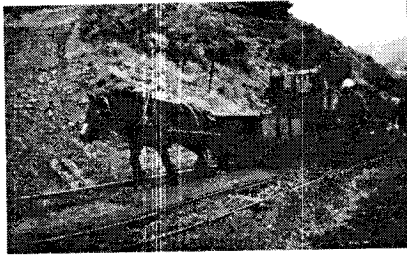
Thank you for your letter of 26 July 2010 concerning the above petition submitted by the Pit Pony Sanctuary.

I have previously written to the Minister for Rural Affairs regarding my concerns over the Code of Practice for the Welfare of Equines and the use of equines underground.

As Chair of the Cross Party Group for the Horse, I am happy to support the calls for the Code of Practice to be amended to include that equines should not be utilised underground.

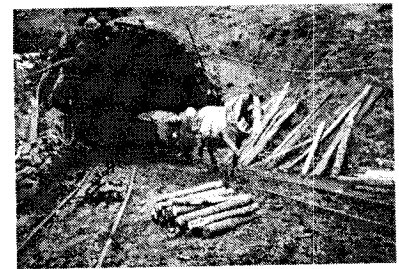
Yours sincerely

Brynle Williams  
Chair, Cross Party Group for the Horse



Blackie at work hauling coal at a small Private coal mine in Wales.

**Fforest Uchaf Horse & Pony Centre  
& The Pit Pony Sanctuary  
Fforest Uchaf Farm  
Penycoedcae  
Pontypridd  
Rhondda Cynon Taff  
CF37 1PS Tel: 01443 480327**



Pit Pony Bob working at Carn Cornel colliery 1997

[www.pitponies.co.uk](http://www.pitponies.co.uk)

[www.sponsorapony.co.uk](http://www.sponsorapony.co.uk)  
e-mail. [info@pitponies.co.uk](mailto:info@pitponies.co.uk)

[www.visitpitponies.co.uk](http://www.visitpitponies.co.uk)

## Public Petitions Committee

Dear Sirs

We are a small Registered Charity Horse & Pony Welfare Centre. We have a huge amount of experience that gives us good reason to be concerned for the plight of Pit Ponies.

We were shocked by the Ministers response in her letter of 11<sup>th</sup> August. We had previously been led to believe the Welsh Assembly Government would take steps to protect them.

If the small private drift mines in Wales re-opened who would visit them? Who would care for the ponies?

Only the protection of robust law can make sure no future use of equines underground takes place and we call upon the Welsh Assembly Government to take all the necessary steps to make using pit ponies is no longer an option.

We fully expect that when a Charity high lights a welfare problem to the Government of the day and organises a petition to gather 45.000 in 1998 and a further 2800 + signatures in 2010 showing public support that action would follow. Being told "it's not appropriate" to use a UK Government initiative and offered no alternative is simply not good enough.

Yours Truly

*Roy. J. Peckham*

Tel Roy Mobile on 07798 584735 or Office on 01443 480327

*One Day there will be a secure home for the Welsh Pit Ponies and other needy Horses & Ponies in Wales. It will be a large grassland farm with a good range of buildings for old bones on cold winter nights, mature trees to shade them from the midday sun, a natural spring feeding a babbling brook to drink long & cool from on long summer days. It will be easily accessible by road and public transport, with good facilities for all people to enjoy meeting the ponies. Here the ponies will come to forget their previous harsh life and enjoy their well-earned retirement for the rest of their days.*

*Visit [www.pitponies.co.uk](http://www.pitponies.co.uk) to find out how **you** can **help us to help them.***



Charity No 1002933

Eich cyf/Your ref  
Ein cyf/Our ref AT/EJ/00834/10



Llywodraeth Cynulliad Cymru  
Welsh Assembly Government

R J Peckham  
Maendy Road  
Penycoedcae  
Pontypridd  
Rhondda Cynon Taf  
CF371PS  
info@pitponies.co.uk

11/08/2010

Dear Mr. Peckham,

Thank you for your letter of 15<sup>th</sup> July 2010 to the Minister for Rural Affairs Elin Jones AM about repealing the Coal and Other Mines (Horses) Order 1959. I have been asked to respond.

The Bill you have referred to is currently called the Freedom (Great Repeals) Bill and the Home Office is the leading government department.

As this is a UK Government Bill, it is not appropriate for the Welsh Assembly Government to get involved in suggesting possible repeals. If you wish for the Coal and Other Mines (Horses) Order 1959 to be considered for repeal, you should contact the Home Secretary at Home Office, 2 Marsham Street, London SW1P 4DF.

Further information about the Bill is available at: <http://www.homeoffice.gov.uk/about-us/your-freedom/>

Yours sincerely,

Siân Jennifer Smith

*Animal Welfare Policy Officer  
Office of the Chief Veterinary Officer*

English Enquiry Line 0845 010 3300  
Llinell Ymholiadau Cymraeg 0845 010 4400

[Address]

Re f



## 10) P-03-284 Brynmawr Social Housing Petition

### Petition wording

We the undersigned ask that the National Assembly for Wales calls on the Welsh Government to reconsider the use of Welsh Government owned land at Factory Road, Brynmawr, for the provision of social housing.

**Link to the petition:** <http://www.assemblywales.org/gethome/e-petitions-old/admissible-pet/p-03-284.htm>

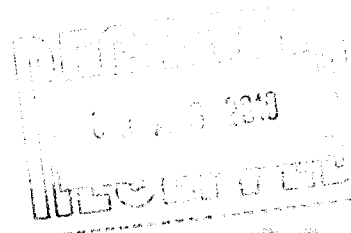
**Petition raised by:** Malcolm Broderick

**Number of signatures:** 10 (166 for a related petition)

**Previously considered by the Committee on:** 27 April and 15 June 2010

**Update:** Correspondence has been received from Melin Homes and the petitioner. These are included below.

AM.



melin

23/07/2010

Christine Chapman AM  
Chair, Petitions Committee  
Cardiff Bay  
Cardiff  
CF99 1NA

Dear Christine

### **P-03-284 Brynmawr Social Housing Petition**

Thank you for your letter of the 21<sup>st</sup> June 2010, requesting information about our community engagement process for this site.

### **Background**

Following the WAG decision to utilise the site at Factory Road specifically for affordable housing, Blaenau Gwent CBC invited all Registered Social Landlords who were zoned for development in the county, to present proposals for its redevelopment.

The invitation included an indicative housing mix to be included on the site. The presentation was attended by the Executive Member for Housing, the three Brynmawr Ward members, two council officers and representatives from WAG.

Melin was successful in being selected to work up detailed proposals and ultimately make a planning application.

### **Consultation and Engagement**

Consultation and Engagement has been carried out at a number of levels;

#### **1. Local Authority**

We have engaged with officers and members on a continuous basis to ascertain requirements and needs.



## 2. Scout Movement

Part of the site is occupied by a scout hall which is in poor condition and constrains development. We have engaged with the Scouts and agreed to provide a new scout hall providing better facilities, at no cost to them, else where on the site.

## 3. Neighbouring Residents

- a. Melin held consultation events on the 24<sup>th</sup> and 25<sup>th</sup> November 2009 in Zion Church Hall near the site, inviting local residents to view and comment on initial draft proposals. We provided large scale plans and staff were available through the afternoon and early evening to explain the proposals and gather feedback. Following this event we amended our proposals in a number of areas as well as increasing the number of bungalows on the site. We also consulted with the Planning Department with regard to the amended proposals.
  - b. Following this, we held another consultation event with the same format at the same venue on the 19<sup>th</sup> March 2010. The proposals were further amended in consultation with the Planning Department before drafting final proposals.
  - c. Melin also held a mobile information event at Asda in Brynmawr on 27<sup>th</sup> May 2010, providing general information about the proposal and about our services. There was a good response with a majority being in favour of our proposals for affordable housing.
- All events were advertised in the local press and letters were sent to local residents.
  - There was a high level of interest in the events. The feedback was that the majority supported redevelopment of the site. Many respondents supported affordable housing being built there, with some expressing support for more bungalows for the elderly.
  - A significant minority were opposed to affordable housing being provided, expressing fears about the effect on their property values, crime, increased traffic and parking issues.

### **Design Changes as a result of consultation**

In view of the comments made by local residents and local councillors we have reduced the number of flats, added more bungalows, increased parking for tenants and visitors, and moved one house to reduce the impact on the adjacent existing house. Overall, the proposal has been reduced in scale from 51 to 41 homes.

## **Planning Application**

This was submitted to Blaenau Gwent on 16<sup>th</sup> June 2010. The application will be subject to a formal consultation process in which interested parties will have the opportunity to comment on the proposals.

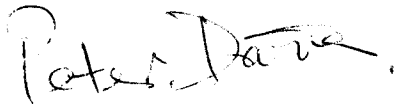
## **Plans for further engagement**

This will be triggered once the planning application is approved. At that time an extensive programme of community engagement will commence with the aim of:-

- Keeping the community informed regarding construction activities and programme
- Improving the quality of the physical environment in the immediate vicinity of the site.
- Increasing life chances for local people through Targeted Recruitment and Training (TRT)
- Extending our existing digital and financial inclusion agenda to encompass the local community
- Liaising with local schools to offer opportunities for pupil engagement to raise awareness of, careers in the construction industry, health and safety and sustainability.

I trust that I have provided sufficient information but should you require anything further I shall be happy to assist.

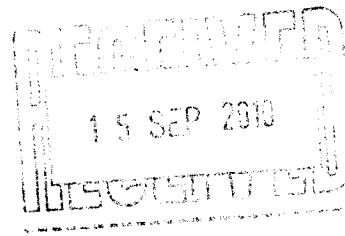
Yours sincerely



Peter Davies  
**Director of Development**  
peter.davies@melinhomes.co.uk

AN

To  
Christine Chapman AM,  
Chair, Petitions Committee,  
Welsh Assembly Government,  
Cardiff Bay.  
CF99 1NA.



06/09/2010

Re: P-03-284.

Dear Christine,

Thank you for your letter dated "21 June 2010" regarding the "Brynmawr Social Housing Petition." I was at the first a little confused when reading the aforementioned letter, as it was dated as mentioned but stated that our petition HAD been considered on the 29 June 2010, i.e. in the past tense so to speak despite the letter being prior dated.

I don't know what's going on here but either way; this is the first letter we have received from the P.C.

Regarding your comment on "The most appropriate way to channel concerns" being through the planning process. I can assure you that we have engaged closely and fully with Mr Steve Smith and directly with Mr Barry Toose both of the BGCBC Planning Dept.

We have lodged several major objections and met directly with Mr Toose. We have also submitted a great deal of evidence to back up our objections and are taking independent professional advice on all matters relating to this process.

I can also assure that both as a group and a local community, we have and will continue to engage fully with the Planning Process and vigorously seek to promote our very serious concerns at every opportunity.

Regarding your later comment about Melin Homes engaging with the local community. This has been a struggle to say the least. Melin were prepared to meet with us at WAG Offices in Merthyr Tydfil but were only happy to see a small group of us. They have declined offers to come and meet with the local residents at a local venue or forum, at which they could have demonstrated the full extent of the proposed development.

The local residents therefore are getting everything second hand and this is just not fair to them. If this development goes ahead it will be have a major impact on the area and as such Melin should make every effort to engage fully.



## 11) P-03-294 Wales Women's National Coalition

### Petition wording

We the undersigned call upon the National Assembly for Wales to urge the Welsh Government to publish firm plans which state how, in the absence of Wales Women's National Coalition, the voice, needs and views, of women in Wales will be reflected into policy and decision-making in Wales, the UK, Europe and the UN.

**Link to the petition:** <http://www.assemblywales.org/gethome/e-petitions-old/admissible-pet/p-03-294.htm>

**Petition raised by:** Wales Women's National Coalition

**Number of signatures:** 51

**Previously considered by the Committee on:** 29 June 2010

**Update:** Correspondence has been received from the Minister for Social Justice and Local Government and the Equality of Opportunity committee. These are included below.

**Carl Sargeant AC/AM**  
Y Gweinidog dros Gyfiawnder Cymdeithasol a Llywodraeth  
Leol  
Minister for Social Justice and Local Government



Llywodraeth Cynulliad Cymru  
Welsh Assembly Government

Eich cyf/Your ref P-03-294 WWNC  
Ein cyf/Our ref CS/00946/10

Christine Chapman AM  
Chair - Petitions Committee  
National Assembly for Wales  
Cardiff Bay  
Cardiff  
CF99 1NA

9 July 2010

*Dear Christine*

Thank you for your letter dated 21 June regarding the petition that has been raised by the Wales Women National Coalition.

Please be assured that I remain committed to ensuring that the voice, needs and views of women in Wales continue to be heard in respect of policy and decision making and I am considering ways in which this can be best achieved.

Once I have fully considered all available options, I will write to you as Chair of the Petitions Committee and publish my decision.

Yours sincerely

*Carl Sargeant*  
**Carl Sargeant AM/AC**

Bae Caerdydd • Cardiff Bay  
Caerdydd • Cardiff  
CF99 1NA

*Wedi'i argraffu ar bapur wedi'i ailgylchu (100%)*

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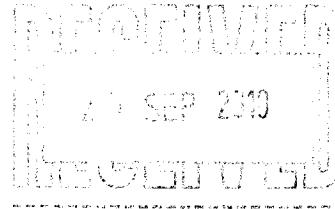


AM 15

**Y Pwyllgor Cyfle Cyfartal**  
**Equality of Opportunity Committee**

Cynulliad  
Cenedlaethol  
Cymru

National  
Assembly for  
Wales



Cardiff Bay  
Cardiff  
CF99 1NA

Christine Chapman AM  
Chair, Petitions Committee  
National Assembly for Wales  
Cardiff Bay  
CF99 1NA

21 September 2010

Dear Chris

Thank you for your letter of 12 July regarding the Wales Women's National Coalition.

As you are aware, the Equality of Opportunity Committee plans to look at gender budgeting in the autumn term. At its meeting on 5 October, we will be taking evidence from the UK Women's Budget Group and the University and College Union. The Committee will then have an opportunity to scrutinise the Minister for Social Justice and Local Government and Minister for Business and Budget at its meeting on 19 October. As part of this scrutiny, I would be happy to raise the issues contained in the petition.

Yours sincerely

**Ann Jones AC / AM**  
**Cadeirydd / Chair**

Croesewir gohebiaeth yn y Gymraeg a'r Saesneg / We welcome correspondence in both English and Welsh

Y Pwyllgor Cyfle Cyfartal / Equality of Opportunity Committee  
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