

Concise Minutes – Petitions Committee

Meeting Venue:

This meeting can be viewed

Video Conference via Zoom

on [Senedd TV](#) at:

Meeting date: Tuesday, 26 January 2021

<http://senedd.tv/en/11070>

Meeting time: 09.07 – 10.47

Attendance

Category	Names
Members of the Senedd:	Janet Finch-Saunders MS (Chair) Michelle Brown MS Neil McEvoy MS Jack Sargeant MS Leanne Wood MS
Witnesses:	
Committee Staff:	Graeme Francis (Clerk) Kayleigh Imperato (Deputy Clerk) Sian Giddins (Deputy Clerk)

1 Introduction, apologies, substitutions and declarations of interest

The Chair welcomed Members to the meeting.



2 New COVID-19 petitions

2.1 P-05-1067 Allow all non-essential retail shops to continue to trade whilst under the 17 day lockdown

The Committee considered the petition for the first time and agreed to await a formal response to the petition from the Government, and seek further views from the petitioner at that time, before considering whether there is any further action it could take.

2.2 P-05-1068 Allow socially distanced meets in private gardens to follow science and avoid isolation

The Committee considered the petition for the first time and agreed to await further comments from the petitioner before considering whether it is able to take any further action on the petition.

2.3 P-05-1082 Allow choirs to rehearse indoors if they produce a full risk assessment to prevent C-19 infection

The Committee considered the petition for the first time and agreed to await further comments from the petitioner before considering whether it is able to take any further action on the petition.

2.4 P-05-1101 Allow fans to attend sporting events in Wales

Jack Sargeant MS declared the following relevant interest under Standing Order 17.24A:

He is a board member of a football club in Wales.

The Committee considered the petition for the first time and agreed to keep a watching brief on the situation in light of the changed position in relation to sporting events across the UK, before considering the petition again at a future meeting.

It was also agreed that when the petition is discussed again it will be considered alongside petition [P-05-1027 Allow Welsh domestic football clubs to play friendlies and allow supporters to attend matches.](#)

2.5 P-05-1102 Allow a minimum of one parent or guardian to watch children's organised football matches

The Committee considered the petition for the first time and agreed to await further comments from the petitioner before considering whether it is able to take any further action on the petition.

2.6 P-05-1117 Give Police Officers the Covid Vaccination as a priority

The Committee considered the petition for the first time and agreed to seek a joint Plenary debate on this petition and [P-05-1119 Prioritise teachers, school and childcare staff for COVID-19 vaccination.](#)

2.7 P-05-1119 Prioritise teachers, school and childcare staff for COVID-19 vaccination

The Committee considered the petition for the first time and agreed to request a joint Plenary debate on this petition and [P-05-1117 Give Police Officers the Covid Vaccination as a priority.](#)

2.8 P-05-1078 Increase funding for mental health services and improve waiting times for people needing help in crisis. We need a change!

The Committee considered the petition for the first time and agreed to:

- request a written response from the Welsh Government again;
- await the Government's response to the Health, Social Care and Sport Committee's report on the impact of Covid-19 on mental health; and
- seek time for a Plenary debate on the petition.

2.9 P-05-1079 Safeguard Kenfig Nature Reserve using compulsory purchase powers

The Committee considered the petition for the first time and agreed to write to Natural Resources Wales and the Kenfig Corporation Trust to seek their views in response to

the petition and ask for further information before considering whether there is any further action that it could take on the petition.

2.10 P-05-1083 Protect leaseholders in Wales from paying for cladding remedial works

The Committee considered the petition for the first time and agreed to:

- write to the Welsh Government to clarify the value of any funding consequential that it has received as a result of spending on this issue by the UK Government, and what this funding has been used for;
- write to the Equality, Local Government and Communities Committee to share details of the petition with them in the context of the work they have been engaged in in relation to fire safety in high rise residential blocks;
- await the views of the petitioner on the detailed response provided by the Minister for Housing and Local Government and to share these views with the Equality, Local Government and Communities Committee.

2.11 P-05-1088 Trigger by-election for members wishing to change party affiliation

Neil McEvoy MS declared the following relevant interest under Standing Order 17.24A:

He has changed party affiliation during this Senedd term.

The Committee considered the petition for the first time and in light of the response received, the proximity of the next Senedd election and the consequent impossibility of enacting such a change in primary legislation at this time, the Committee agreed to close the petition and thank the petitioner.

2.12 P-05-1089 Wales should lead on bringing NHS pay back in line with inflation costs over the last 10 years

The Committee considered the petition for the first time and noted its support for the petition as well as the likelihood of the NHS Pay Review Body reporting its recommendations in early May. The Committee agreed to await a response from the Minister for Health and Social Services to its recent further correspondence on petition

[P-05-1052 Give Nurses a pay rise in line with other frontline staff during COVID-19 pandemic](#) and to consider the petitions together in the future.

2.13 P-05-1091 Remove compulsory Welsh Bac for students looking to go to University

The Committee considered the petition for the first time and agreed to await further views from the petitioner before considering whether it can take any further action on the petition.

2.14 P-05-1093 Establish a Wales wide Environmental and Wildlife Enforcement Service to tackle environmental crime

The Committee considered the petition for the first time and, in light of the petitioner's support of the planned publication of the draft Litter and Fly-tipping Prevention Plan for consultation and the likelihood that it would not be able to make further progress on the matter raised by the petition at this time, it agreed to close the petition and thank the petitioner. The Committee also agreed to share the petitioner's views with the Minister for Environment, Energy and Rural Affairs.

2.15 P-05-1096 Remove RSE from the mandatory element of the Curriculum Bill 2020

The Committee considered the petition for the first time and, in light of the ongoing scrutiny of the Curriculum and Assessment (Wales) Bill by the Children, Young People and Education Committee and in the Stage 1 debate in Plenary, as well as the opportunities currently available to Members to amend the Bill, the Committee agreed to maintain a watching brief on the petition.

2.16 P-05-1097 Ban game bird cages

The Committee considered the petition for the first time and agreed to write back to the Minister for Environment, Energy and Rural Affairs to:

- share the further comments provided by the petitioners;
- seek an update on the review of the Code of Practice commenced in 2019 and any further research being considered on this issue; and

- seek clarification as to why the Minister is not minded to act to move further to prohibit the practice of caging birds for this purpose.

2.17 P-05-1115 Stop giant Solar farm which will destroy ancient meadows near Abergavenny

The Committee considered the petition for the first time and noted that there was likely to be little further practical action that it could take at this time, in light of the formal planning process which controls the consideration of applications for Developments of National Significance having been commenced. Members agreed to maintain a watching brief on the petition until the end of this Senedd term.

3 Updates to previous petitions

3.1 P-04-522 Asbestos in Schools

The Committee considered the further correspondence received and the provision of high-level information relating to the presence of asbestos within school buildings in Wales. The Committee acknowledged that this does not go as far as the petitioner is seeking, however, given the detailed consideration given to this petition since it was first submitted, the Committee agreed that there was little further action that it would usefully be able to take at this time. Members agreed to close the petition and thank the petitioner.

3.2 P-05-812 We call for the Welsh Government to encourage trusts to implement the NICE guidelines for Borderline Personality Disorder or justify why they do not do so

The Committee considered the correspondence received and agreed to write to the Health, Social Care and Sport Committee to ask whether it has undertaken any work regarding the implementation of NICE guidelines during this Senedd, or whether this would be an area it would be considering recommending to its successor committee in the Sixth Senedd. Following this, the Committee agreed to close the petition and thank the petitioner.

3.3 P-05-960 Fund the funeral costs of all NHS staff who die from or with Covid-19

The Committee considered the correspondence received and expressed its disappointment that a scheme of this type is not being taken forward by the Welsh Government. The Committee agreed to write back to Minister for Health and Social Services to seek a more detailed explanation and information about the options that the Welsh Government has considered in relation to the practicalities and costs of establishing a scheme to pay the funeral costs for NHS workers who die from or with COVID-19.

3.4 P-05-943 We call on the Welsh Government to take urgent action to secure improvements to the A487 between Gellilydan and Maentwrog

The Committee considered the correspondence received and agreed write back to the Minister for Economy and Transport to ask for an update on the safety improvement works that were planned to this stretch of the A487 and information on any further measures being considered.

3.5 P-05-993 Make retail in Wales fully accessible to disabled people

The Committee considered the issues raised and, in light of the Welsh Government's response to the recommendations reached by the Equality, Local Government and Communities Committee following its inquiry into inequality during the Covid-19 pandemic, agreed to close the petition and thank the petitioner.

3.6 P-05-895 Rosa's Legacy: Introduce a scheme to help people access veterinary care for their companion animals

The Committee considered the correspondence received and agreed to request a further update from the Minister for Environment, Energy and Rural Affairs on any discussions on these issues held with the Animal Welfare Network Wales and the British Veterinary Association.

3.7 P-05-856 Ban the sale of puppies by pet shops and all commercial 3rd party dealers in Wales

This petition was considered alongside petitions [P-05-915 Call for better enforcement of puppy farms in Wales](#) and [P-05-939 Immediate embargo on new dog breeding licences, licence renewals and planning applications until regulations are fit for purpose and enforceable](#).

The Committee considered the statements issued by the Minister for Environment, Energy and Rural Affairs and agreed to seek clarification as to when such legislation to ban third party sales of puppies and kittens would be introduced.

Nb. Following the meeting the Minister published [The Animal Welfare \(Licensing of Activities Involving Animals\) \(Wales\) Regulations 2021](#) on 27 January 2021.

3.8 P-05-915 Call for better enforcement of puppy farms in Wales

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3.9 P-05-939 Immediate embargo on new dog breeding licences, licence renewals and planning applications until regulations are fit for purpose and enforceable

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The Committee considered the statements issued by the Minister for Environment, Energy and Rural Affairs and agreed to seek clarification as to when such legislation to ban third party sales of puppies and kittens would be introduced.

Nb. Following the meeting the Minister published [The Animal Welfare \(Licensing of Activities Involving Animals\) \(Wales\) Regulations 2021](#) on 27 January 2021.

3.10 P-05-996 To call on the Welsh Government not to remove, damage or destroy any historical symbols in Wales

The Committee considered the correspondence received and, in light of work which is being undertaken on the issue including the Culture, Welsh Language and Communications Committee's inquiry, agreed to close the petition and thank the petitioner.

4 Motion under Standing Order 17.42 to resolve to exclude the public from the meeting for the following business:

The Motion was agreed.

5 Preparations for the end of the 5th Senedd

The Committee discussed a number of issues relating to completing its work ahead of the end of the 5th Senedd and agreed to advise the Llywydd that the petitions process should be closed during dissolution or during any time in which regular Senedd business is not taking place.