

## Agenda – Petitions Committee

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Meeting Venue:

Video Conferencing Via Zoom

Meeting date: 2 March 2021

Meeting time: 09.00

For further information contact:

Graeme Francis – Committee Clerk

Kayleigh Imperato – Deputy Clerk

0300 200 6373

[Petitions@senedd.wales](mailto:Petitions@senedd.wales)

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In accordance with Standing Order 34.19, the Chair has determined that the public are excluded from the Committee's meeting in order to protect public health. This meeting will be broadcast live on [www.senedd.tv](http://www.senedd.tv)

- 1 Introduction, apologies, substitutions and declarations of interest  
(Pages 1 – 43)
- 2 New Covid 19 petitions
  - 2.1 P-05-1118 Allow parents of under 1 year old to form a support bubble in new Tier 4 Covid restrictions  
(Pages 44 – 47)
  - 2.2 P-05-1123 Raise the priority of non-NHS public facing key workers in the roll out of the Covid-19 vaccine  
(Pages 48 – 51)
  - 2.3 P-05-1124 Allow two individuals from two different households to meet for exercise in alert level 4  
(Pages 52 – 53)
  - 2.4 P-05-1127 Reduce the fee limit for all Welsh universities due to COVID-19 requirement of distanced learning  
(Pages 54 – 57)



- 2.5 P-05-1128 Cancel externally set 'assessments' in 2021 for AS and A levels and only use teacher assessed grades  
(Pages 58 – 62)
- 2.6 P-05-1135 Targeted funding for residential outdoor education centres, now unable to operate for 12 months  
(Pages 63 – 70)
- 2.7 P-05-1136 Allow Welsh residents to travel for fishing the same as our counterparts in England  
(Pages 71 – 75)
- 2.8 P-05-1139 Extend stamp duty relief following the announcement of a further lockdown  
(Pages 76 – 80)

### **Other new petitions**

- 2.9 P-05-1111 Put the £7 million back into the Mental Health Transformation fund  
(Pages 81 – 83)
- 2.10 P-05-1125 Petitions with more than 5,000 signatures should be debated not just considered for debate  
(Pages 84 – 86)
- 2.11 P-05-1129 Apply legislative measures now to enact the Law Commission's recommendations to abolish Leasehold  
(Pages 87 – 89)
- 2.12 P-05-1130 The Welsh Government should re-purchase and refurbish Coleg Harlech  
(Pages 90 – 113)
- 2.13 P-05-1131 Immediate cessation of dredging operations off the Gower coast pending evaluation of adverse effects  
(Pages 114 – 118)

- 2.14 P-05-1132 Instigate an Independent Judicial Inquiry into Cwm Taf  
Morgannwg University Health Board  
(Pages 119 – 121)

### **3 Updates to previous petitions**

#### **Economy and Transport**

- 3.1 P-05-934 Public Transport in Blaenau Gwent  
(Pages 122 – 128)
- 3.2 P-05-1067 Allow all non-essential retail shops to continue to trade whilst  
under the 17 day lockdown  
(Pages 129 – 131)

#### **Health and Social Services**

- 3.3 P-05-942 The Golden Hour when Suffering a Stroke – Ambulance Response  
Times to be recategorised from Amber back to Red Status  
(Pages 132 – 135)
- 3.4 P-05-974 Ensure the technology of prosthetic limbs provided within the  
Welsh NHS is equal to the rest of the UK  
(Pages 136 – 139)

#### **The following two items are grouped together for consideration**

- 3.5 P-05-1117 Give Police Officers the Covid Vaccination as a priority  
(Pages 140 – 142)
- 3.6 P-05-1119 Prioritise teachers, school and childcare staff for COVID-19  
vaccination  
(Pages 143 – 145)

#### **The following two items are grouped together for consideration**

3.7 P-05-1052 Give Nurses a pay rise in line with other frontline staff during COVID-19 pandemic

(Pages 146 – 147)

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

(Pages 148 – 149)

## **Housing and Local Government**

3.9 P-05-1032 Legislate to prevent people from changing Welsh house names

(Pages 150 – 153)

3.10 P-05-1081 Ensure owners of second homes & holiday lets in Wales register to vote only at their primary address, in devolved and local elections

(Pages 154 – 160)

## **Culture, Sport and Tourism**

3.11 P-05-949 SAVE COWBRIDGE OLD GIRLS' SCHOOL FROM DEMOLITION

(Pages 161 – 165)

3.12 P-05-1075 Don't impose a 15 person limit on organised indoor activities, such as swimming lessons and fitness classes, after firebreak lockdown

(Pages 166 – 169)

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

Item 5.

**5 Consideration of draft report – P-05-805 Fair Deal For Supply Teachers**

(Pages 170 – 186)

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# Agenda Item 2.1

## **P-05-1118 Allow parents of under 1 year old to form a support bubble in new Tier 4 Covid restrictions**

This petition was submitted by Megan Chhabra, having collected a total of 8,518 signatures.

### **Text of Petition:**

England have introduced rules to allow parents of under 1 year olds to form a support bubble with an additional household which is allowed in all tiers. I would like to petition for Wales to implement the same rules as many parents have been struggling during the restrictions to care for young children alone. The new restrictions coming in place on 28th December place Wales in tier 4 where a parent of a young child will have no support. Please follow England to support parents of young children.

### **Senedd Constituency and Region**

- Cardiff North
- South Wales Central



Janet Finch-Saunders MS  
Chair  
Petitions Committee  
Senedd Cymru  
Cardiff Bay  
Cardiff  
CF99 1SN

[petitions@senedd.wales](mailto:petitions@senedd.wales)

9 February 2021

Dear Chair

I am writing in response to your letter of 18 December regarding the petition on support bubbles for parents of children under one.

The petition calls on the Welsh Government to revise the coronavirus regulations for alert level four to allow parents of children under one to form a support bubble with another household.

In Wales, extended households can be formed while Wales is in alert level 3 but while we are at alert level four these are suspended because we need to do all we can to reduce the number of people we are in contact with to stop the virus from spreading, especially the new variant strain.

But support bubbles are still available as an option for single parents and single households with single responsible adults.

However, even for those people who are not part of a support bubble, our rules allow people to access help and support from others, including family or friends, if they need it and there is no reasonable alternative.

We recognise that parents of babies and young children may sometimes need extra help and support. To help parents with newborn babies and young children, our rules allow for informal childcare arrangements with friends or family to continue. The rules also allow meetings with friends or family if extra support and help are needed, but only if there are no other reasonable methods by which the support and help can be provided.

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CF99 1SN

Canolfan Cyswllt Cyntaf / First Point of Contact Centre:  
0300 0604400  
[YP.PrifWeinidog@llyw.cymru](mailto:YP.PrifWeinidog@llyw.cymru) • [ps.firstminister@gov.wales](mailto:ps.firstminister@gov.wales)

Rydym yn croesawu derbyn gohebiaeth yn Gymraeg. Byddwn yn ateb gohebiaeth a dderbynnir yn Gymraeg yn Gymraeg ac ni fydd gohebu yn Gymraeg yn arwain at oedi.

We welcome receiving correspondence in Welsh. Any correspondence received in Welsh will be answered in Welsh and corresponding in Welsh will not lead to a delay in responding.

More information is available in the FAQs (see in particular the FAQ “I am a parent of a young baby, am I able to form a support bubble?” towards the end of the section on “seeing Other People”): <https://gov.wales/alert-level-4-frequently-asked-questions#section-58320>

We keep the alert level four provisions, and their impact on parents and children, under review as part of the regular three-week cycle for reviewing the regulations.

While this extra support is permitted, we ask everyone to think carefully about what is necessary and reasonable in their situation. We all need to think carefully about what is necessary to protect ourselves, our families and communities, and to protect the NHS.

Best wishes

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Mark Drakeford". The signature is written in a cursive style with a large initial 'M'.

**MARK DRAKEFORD**



**P-05-1118 Allow parents of under 1 year old to form a support bubble in new Tier 4 Covid restrictions, Correspondence – Petitioner to Committee, 22.02.21**

Dear Petitions,

Thank you for the email and apologies for the late reply. I hope my comments will still be considered - I will keep it brief.

I am happy for the petition to close as soon as possible.

I note the first minister's response to my petition, many of the points I was made aware of in December and by way of the updated FAQs by addition of the question "I have a young baby under 1 - can I form a support bubble" on the Wales government website early January.

The comments made do not address the issue parents of children with young children are facing during the lockdown. One of my main concerns regarding not having a dedicated bubble for parents of the youngest children, but allowing only childcare puts a barrier to breastfeeding women, who are unable to leave their child with someone else due to their feeding patterns.

I would like the Welsh government to recognise the need for parents to have support and look at allowing support groups to run for parents in line with England from no later than 29th March outdoors, and 12th April indoors. These were allowed in alert level 3 in Wales, as were extended households (although I have not seen the Welsh government mention following the alert level system in recent press conferences)

Welsh government has not allowed parents to travel to meet someone for exercise so socialising has been almost impossible even since the restrictions have allowed them to meet 1 other. I ask you to look at loosening this to allow parents to travel to meet another individual.

Personally I have a 6 month old who has only been able to meet his extended family on 25th December, because as like many others, they live in England there were restrictions on travelling across the border for much of the later part of last year, even to meet outside. When I return to work I am scared he will be so unfamiliar with other people, having only really seen the same 2 faces his whole life.

It is exhausting having a baby - but you are asking us to do it alone - and putting the onus on parents to realise when they need "support" enough to use the caveats in your rules.

Please reconsider your response and allow support bubbles and additionally support groups for parents.

Thank you

## Agenda Item 2.2

**P-05-1123 Raise the priority of non-NHS public facing key workers in the roll out of the Covid-19 vaccine**

This petition was submitted by Timothy Richard Woods having collected a total of 117 signatures.

### **Text of Petition:**

I am a telecoms engineer and have worked as a key worker throughout the pandemic. As part of my job, I am expected to go into houses under strict guidelines to maintain essential services such as broadband. Some days I can enter three or four customers properties. With the recent recording of the new, more contagious strain of COVID-19 in Wales, other key workers outside the NHS require early vaccination against COVID-19 or run increased risk of infecting the public or contracting the virus.

### **Senedd Constituency and Region**

- Ceredigion
- Mid and West Wales



Ein cyf/Our ref VG/00343/21

Janet Finch-Saunders MS  
Chair  
Petitions Committee

10 February 2021

Dear Janet,

Thank you for your letter of 7 January regarding COVID-19 vaccination prioritisation for non-NHS key workers.

Wales, in line with the other UK nations, is vaccinating people who are most at-risk of catching coronavirus and developing serious illnesses first, according to the recommendations from the Joint Committee on Vaccination and Immunisation (JCVI). They have recommended the vaccine be offered to in the first instance to care home residents, care home staff, frontline health and social care workers, alongside people aged 80 and over.

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/priority-groups-for-coronavirus-covid-19-vaccination-advice-from-the-jcvi-2-december-2020>

Those workers over 50 or with particular health conditions will be captured within this first phase of vaccination, when it is their turn according to the JCVI prioritisation.

The contribution of key workers during the course of the pandemic has been remarkable and I am incredibly grateful for everything that they have done under very difficult circumstances. However, if groups of workers, such as telecoms engineers, were prioritised for vaccination at an earlier point it would mean other groups who are more vulnerable to harm would have to wait longer.

Those under 50 will receive their vaccination as part of the second phase of deployment in due course. Prioritisation for the second phase will be considered by the JCVI who will consider a range of factors including occupational risk.

Canolfan Cyswllt Cyntaf / First Point of Contact Centre:  
0300 0604400

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Caerdydd • Cardiff  
CF99 1SN

[Gohebiaeth.Vaughan.Gething@llyw.cymru](mailto:Gohebiaeth.Vaughan.Gething@llyw.cymru)  
[Correspondence.Vaughan.Gething@gov.wales](mailto:Correspondence.Vaughan.Gething@gov.wales)

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We welcome receiving correspondence in Welsh. Any correspondence received in Welsh will be answered in Welsh and corresponding in Welsh will not lead to a delay in responding.

The Wales Vaccination Strategy, published on 11 January, can be accessed below and offers more information on Welsh Government milestones and roll out of the programme:

[https://gov.wales/sites/default/files/publications/2021-01/vaccination-strategy-for-wales\\_0.pdf](https://gov.wales/sites/default/files/publications/2021-01/vaccination-strategy-for-wales_0.pdf)

The success of the strategy will depend on Wales continuing to receive regular and reliable supplies of vaccine from the manufacturers. The UK Government is in charge of buying and coordinating the supply of vaccines for all the four nations in the UK.

I hope this information is helpful.

Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Vaughan Gething". The signature is written in a cursive style with a large initial 'V' and a long, sweeping tail on the 'g'.

**Vaughan Gething AS/MS**

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

**P-05-1123 Raise the priority of non-NHS public facing key workers in the roll out of the Covid-19 vaccine, Correspondence – Petitioner to Committee, 11.02.21**

As requested, please find below my feelings regarding the attached letter from The Heath Minister.

As such it is just a restatement of the current policy.

The section that implies that promotion in the order of groups receiving the vaccination of non NHS essential workers such as telecommunication engineers would delay at risk people from receiving the vaccination is true in itself but ignores two key points.

First is that Non NHS essential workers, by nature of their jobs interact closely with colleagues and members of the public. This means that they are not only at personal risk but, especially with the new variants, are in danger of becoming potential 'super spreaders' and as such a risk to the public, including the higher risk groups the government are keen to protect.

Secondly front line NHS staff, along with carers and care home staff, have been prioritised for the vaccination primarily to protect themselves and enable the continued provision of medical services. Non NHS essential workers perform a similar role in allowing services deemed essential to society by the Government to continue during the pandemic. Under the circumstances, why shouldn't they be afforded the same level of protection?

Kind regards

# Agenda Item 2.3

**P-05-1124 Allow two individuals from two different households to meet for exercise in alert level 4**

This petition was submitted by Laura Davies, having collected a total of 847 signatures.

**Text of Petition:**

New tier 4 restrictions mean that we have to exercise alone or with members of our own household. As a runner, I tend to do these activities with friends to have a change of scene from the everyday (my partner does not enjoy either of these activities which means I now have to do them alone). Allowing two people to meet from two different households will promote good mental health and well-being during this difficult time.

**Additional Information:**

England Tier 4 restrictions permit this.

**Senedd Constituency and Region**

- Arfon
- North Wales

Vaughan Gething AS/MS  
Y Gweinidog Iechyd a Gwasanaethau Cymdeithasol  
Minister for Health and Social Services



Llywodraeth Cymru  
Welsh Government

Eich cyf/Your ref P-05-1124  
Ein cyf/Our ref VG/00404/21

Janet Finch-Saunders MS  
Chair, Petitions Committee

1 February 2021

Dear Janet,

Thank you for your letter of 7 January regarding allowing two individuals from two different households to meet for exercise in alert level 4.

We have made changes to the regulations to allow a maximum of two people from different households to exercise outdoors together, as long as they maintain social distancing. This must involve exercise starting from and finishing from home – driving for exercise to beauty spots should still not take place.

The updated guidance can be found here: <https://gov.wales/alert-level-4-frequently-askedquestions>

I hope this information is helpful.

Yours sincerely,

**Vaughan Gething AS/MS**  
Y Gweinidog Iechyd a Gwasanaethau Cymdeithasol  
Minister for Health and Social Services

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0300 0604400

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CF99 1SN

[Gohebiaeth.Vaughan.Gething@llyw.cymru](mailto:Gohebiaeth.Vaughan.Gething@llyw.cymru)  
[Correspondence.Vaughan.Gething@gov.wales](mailto:Correspondence.Vaughan.Gething@gov.wales)

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We welcome receiving correspondence in Welsh. Any correspondence received in Welsh will be answered in Welsh and corresponding in Welsh will not lead to a delay in responding.

# Agenda Item 2.4

## **P-05-1127 Reduce the fee limit for all Welsh universities due to COVID-19 requirement of distanced learning**

This petition was submitted by Chris Morgan, having collected a total of 1,157 signatures.

### **Text of Petition:**

Currently full-time Welsh University students are paying £9000 per year to gain full access to all University services.

Due to COVID-19 restrictions most of the learning is being done online. Students are unable to access many of the services and equipment that would have been available prior to COVID-19.

A reduced service should be reflected with reduced fees.

### **Senedd Constituency and Region**

- Caerphilly
- South Wales East



Kirsty Williams AS/MS  
Y Gweinidog Addysg  
Minister for Education



Llywodraeth Cymru  
Welsh Government

Eich cyf/Your ref P-05-1127  
Ein cyf/Our ref KW/00618/21

Janet Finch-Saunders MS  
Chair, Petitions Committee

29 January 2021

Dear Janet,

Thank you for your email of 15 January regarding a petition to reduce tuition fees for Welsh university students as a result of reduced services during the Covid-19 pandemic.

I am aware the situation that students face as a result of the global pandemic is far from ideal and I am very grateful for the responsible way in which the majority of students have acted to ensure that we keep Wales safe. I recognise that education has a positive effect on students' personal development, their wellbeing, and life chances. I am also aware that students and young people have already suffered a lot of disruption to their education at school and university as a result of the pandemic. I am committed to prioritising the reopening of education as soon as it is safe to do so.

I have asked the Higher Education Funding Council for Wales (HEFCW) to ensure that the standard and quality of education this year is not diminished. I have been clear that this year would be different for students. However, I have been equally clear that universities in Wales should ensure that no student should be penalised unfairly at this difficult time and students should be able to leave with qualifications that are a fair reflection of their abilities, whilst maintaining quality and standards. I recognise that universities in Wales have worked hard to maintain those standards whilst successfully implementing approaches such as blended learning for their students. I agree the value of in person education on students' wellbeing, progression and future success must not be underestimated and this is why I have worked closely with the sector to ensure that universities remain Covid-safe with reduced numbers of students on campus.

Unfortunately the current levels of infection, strain on the NHS and the new variant mean that I have had to ask universities to prioritise the return to in-person on campus activity for only essential in-person education, in the same way that the rest of the population is being asked to work from home. I have also asked university students not to move to their term time accommodation until their university lets them know that in-person learning will resume.

Canolfan Cyswllt Cyntaf / First Point of Contact Centre:  
0300 0604400

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Caerdydd • Cardiff  
CF99 1SN

[Gohebiaeth.Kirsty.Williams@llyw.cymru](mailto:Gohebiaeth.Kirsty.Williams@llyw.cymru)  
[Correspondence.Kirsty.Williams@gov.wales](mailto:Correspondence.Kirsty.Williams@gov.wales)

Rydym yn croesawu derbyn gohebiaeth yn Gymraeg. Byddwn yn ateb gohebiaeth a dderbynnir yn Gymraeg yn Gymraeg ac ni fydd gohebu yn Gymraeg yn arwain at oedi.

We welcome receiving correspondence in Welsh. Any correspondence received in Welsh will be answered in Welsh and corresponding in Welsh will not lead to a delay in responding.

This is to reduce the numbers of students travelling across the UK. We know the virus transmits easily when people have contact with others and to help keep students, universities and communities safe we must all do the right thing. This is not because universities are unsafe, but because the risk of transmission and the new variant mean it is safer to limit travel and to ask students to stay at home and work from home if they can. However, essential university services, such as libraries, study spaces, laboratories and studios, can remain open to ensure students who cannot work from home for a specific reason have access to essential facilities in order to continue their education. Universities are working hard to enable essential in person teaching to continue and for facilities to remain open in a Covid-secure environment, whilst also providing online teaching and learning. The development and delivery of blended learning provision has meant institutions have incurred additional costs this academic year and staff have worked hard to support their students.

As a result of this difficult decision and in recognition of the pressure the pandemic is placing on students, staff and universities I have provided an extra £50 million this year to support university students and staff during the pandemic. This includes £40 million for universities to support students facing financial hardship, helping the students most affected by the pandemic with expenses such as accommodation costs as soon as possible.

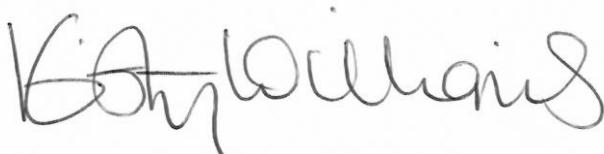
In relation to tuition fees and the petition, universities in Wales are autonomous bodies. The responsibility for the planning and delivery of their provision, therefore, lies with the university themselves. Tuition and accommodation fees are a contractual agreement between the student and institution, and students should discuss any issues they have with their university. The Welsh Government has no role in setting tuition fee rates, other than to establish the maximum that can be charged by Welsh universities if they wish to have their undergraduate courses automatically designed for student support. They do this by submitting a fee and access plans for approval by HEFCW.

A reduction in tuition fees does not address students facing hardship due to the Coronavirus pandemic. Students only begin repaying their student loans when they are earning over £26,575. The repayment rate is currently set at 9% per annum on any income earned above this amount. Further, any unpaid loan will be written off 30 years after the loan is eligible for repayment, this is typically the first April after graduation, this means that only the highest earners will repay their loan in full.

The Welsh Government provides the most generous system of student support in the UK. I am proud that in Wales, we have continued to provide maintenance grants for students. Welsh students are also unique in receiving a maintenance loan write-off of up to £1500 when students begin repaying their student loans.

I hope this response was helpful.

Yours sincerely

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

**Kirsty Williams AS/MS**  
Y Gweinidog Addysg  
Minister for Education

**P-05-1127 Reduce the fee limit for all Welsh universities due to COVID-19 requirement – Petitioner to Committee, 10.02.21**

Dear Sir/Madam

Thank you for your email with enclosed document.

I have no further comment at this stage.

Yours sincerely

# Agenda Item 2.5

## **P-05-1128 Cancel externally set 'assessments' in 2021 for AS and A levels and only use teacher assessed grades**

This petition was submitted by Levi Phillips, having collected a total of 8,728 signatures.

### **Text of Petition:**

Students all across Wales have struggled significantly this year which has led to low self-esteem and negative mental health issues. Students have hardly been in a classroom and yet we are expected to sit externally set assessments that we still haven't had clarity on. We are not learning in our homes, when i go to school i am aware that it is time to learn but learning in our homes is a huge contrast to learning in a classroom where you are face to face with a teacher.

### **Additional Information:**

Last year we were in school for the majority of time and yet exams were still cancelled and when compared to this year where we have been pulled out of school constantly, schools have been closed and then re-opened and students have constantly been in a state of panic due to that feeling of being left in the dark and yet a form of exams which you call 'assessments' are still going ahead. England has now made the decision to use teacher assessed grades which is an amazing decision which shows their appreciation for the students of their country and shows respect and trust for their teachers. I believe that we should follow England's decision to help decrease the worry that all students across Wales are currently feeling. Students are feeling at a disconnect to their government as it feels that we are not cared about, We do not know what to revise for! We do not know what is ahead of us in these "unprecedented times"! And we don't know whether our government is with us or against us!

### **Senedd Constituency and Region**

- Rhondda
- South Wales Central



Eich cyf/Your ref P-05-1128  
Ein cyf/Our ref KW/00703/21

Janet Finch-Saunders MS  
Chair  
Senedd Cymru Petitions Committee  
Ty Hywel  
Cardiff Bay  
Cardiff  
CF99 1NA

2 February 2021

Dear Janet,

Thank you for your letter dated 19 January regarding “Petition P-05-1128 Cancel externally set ‘assessments’ in 2021 for AS and A levels and only use teacher assessed grades” that you have received.

I am sorry to hear of the concerns that Levi Phillips raises in the petition and recognise that this is an extremely stressful time for students, teachers and parents alike. I would like to assure Levi that I understand that the disrupted autumn term meant there were additional pressures for learners, families and school staff. The Welsh Government’s priorities during this pandemic continues to be the safety and welfare of students, school staff and the wider community, and the continuing education of learners.

I appreciate that many young people, particularly those in exam years are finding the current situation both difficult and challenging. Levi has noted that students have had to adapt to learning on their own, remotely. Last month, a package of remote learning design modules was launched on [Hwb](#) to offer practical advice to help practitioners develop resources that will engage learners, enable learning and continue effective provision outside of the classroom. Alongside this, additional guidance outlining [expectations for remote learning](#) specific to learners currently in exam years was launched this month.

I want all learners to be able to use the remote learning system in a fair and effective way. We have established a Blended Learning Working Group who will be addressing issues of equity of access to learning in periods of disruption, as well as making sure that the interests and requirements of learners with wide and additional learning needs are also provided for. To support this work, one of the group’s priorities will be engaging parents and learners to ensure wider views are sought.

Regarding the specific concerns about the alternative assessment arrangements for general qualifications raised in the petition. As you are aware, the public health crisis has worsened

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0300 0604400

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CF99 1SN

[Gohebiaeth.Kirsty.Williams@llyw.cymru](mailto:Gohebiaeth.Kirsty.Williams@llyw.cymru)  
[Correspondence.Kirsty.Williams@gov.wales](mailto:Correspondence.Kirsty.Williams@gov.wales)

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and unless the rates of community transmission reduce significantly, schools and colleges will continue remote learning for most students until the February half term.

In light of this, on 8 January, Qualifications Wales announced the cancellation of the window for internal assessment and confirmed that revised arrangements, adapting the plans announced prior to Christmas, would be made as quickly as possible. Following receipt of advice from the Design and Delivery Advisory Group, I made an [announcement](#) on 20<sup>th</sup> January, setting out these new proposals, to reflect the impact of the continued disruption on learner wellbeing and confidence. I have summarised this announcement below:

Learners undertaking GCSE, AS and A levels approved by Qualifications Wales will have their qualifications awarded through a Centre-Determined Grade model.

Grades will be determined by a learner's school or college based on an assessment of their work. There will be no formal external assessments as per the three pillar approach that was announced before Christmas.

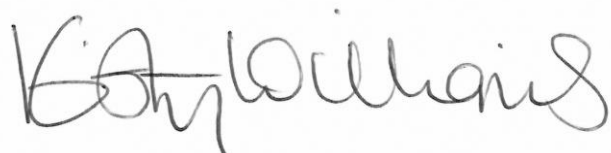
Schools and colleges will be able to use a range of evidence to determine the grades to be awarded to learners, including Non Examination Assessment elements, mock-exams, and classwork. In addition, the WJEC will offer a set of adapted past papers which can enable schools to continue to assess learning within their teaching plans, providing extra support for teachers and learners.

We have sought to make the grading approach as clear as possible in the circumstances, while remaining as simple and responsive as possible. Teaching the core content and aspects of each course remains my absolute priority for learners in exam years, so they are supported to progress with certainty into their next steps, and with confidence in the grades they've been awarded.

I note Levi has also highlighted the mental wellbeing of learners. It is vital that we support our young people in this area so as well as academic support through our [Recruit, Recover, Raise Standards Accelerated Programme](#). Welsh Government has made an additional £1.252m available in the current year to support an expansion of and improvements in the existing schools counselling scheme. There is practical help available on [our website](#) including a link to our Young Person's Mental Health Toolkit. Further resources can be found on WJEC's website, which has a very useful [student wellbeing](#) section and also on the [Student Minds](#) website.

I hope this information has provided clarity regarding the way in which grades will be determined and the steps we are taking to support remote learning for all learners.

Yours sincerely



**Kirsty Williams AS/MS**  
Y Gweinidog Addysg  
Minister for Education

**P-05-1128 Cancel externally set assessments in 2021 for AS & A levels and only use teacher assessed grades – Petitioner to Committee, 18.02.21**

Hi, of course due to recent news I believe there is no need for a debate however I am extremely thankful for the platform provided to voice my opinions

# Agenda Item 2.6

## **P-05-1135 Targeted funding for residential outdoor education centres, now unable to operate for 12 months**

This petition was submitted by Sara Jane Jones, having collected a total of 1,181 signatures.

### **Text of Petition:**

Centres across Wales have had to close their doors to school visits for what will be at least 12 months due to government restrictions. They have received no additional funding to any other businesses yet have lost almost all their income. These centres not only provide vital educational services but large inward investment into rural parts of Wales along with many skilled jobs. Without financial support many will close leaving rural areas, local suppliers, services and trades devastated.

### **Additional Information:**

The Scottish government has announced a £2 million fund for Scottish centres to help their centres survive the pandemic. To achieve the same in Wales a £10 million package would be needed. These centres form a larger part of the economy in Wales than in Scotland. In North Wales alone the annual income of these centres is around £50 million supporting 900 jobs. The figure for Wales nationally will be more than double this.

<https://www.gov.scot/news/residential-outdoor-education-centres-fund-opens/>

### **Senedd Constituency and Region**

- Dwyfor Meirionnydd
- Mid and West Wales



Kirsty Williams AS/MS  
Y Gweinidog Addysg  
Minister for Education



Llywodraeth Cymru  
Welsh Government

Eich cyf/Your ref P-05-1135  
Ein cyf/Our ref KW/00747/21

Janet Finch-Saunders MS  
Chair Senedd Cymru Petitions Committee  
Ty Hywel  
Cardiff Bay  
Cardiff  
CF99 1NA

10 February 2021

Dear Janet,

Thank you for your letter on behalf of the Petitions Committee seeking views on the issues raised in P-05-1135 regarding funding for residential outdoor education centres now unable to operate for 12 months, before your formal consideration.

I appreciate these are incredibly difficult and uncertain times for residential centres and those businesses in the tourism and leisure sector. I recognise the importance of outdoor learning and activities in the education of children and young people, and the value visits and trips impart not just in relation to educational purposes but also to the well-being of children and young people. I have heard first-hand from providers, schools, learners and parents about the positive difference such experiences can make.

The guidance in relation to trips organised by educational settings in Wales is being kept under review. Our current position in relation to such trips remains in line with the UK Governments' advice which continues to advise against all education trips for children under 18 organised by educational settings. You will be aware of the updated guidance in relation to non-overnight domestic visits and residential centres, linked [here](#), and how consideration must be given to operational guidance for schools, [here](#).

I assure you that we are absolutely committed to providing the support and assurance the business community needs. Policy officials have regular contact with representatives to discuss our guidance and additional funding available for the sector.

Further to the range of grants that many centres have previously been eligible for under our Wales-only Economic Resilience Fund and business rates grants, on Friday 29 January, we further enhanced our package of support to businesses affected by alert level four restrictions by £200m to take its total to £650m. The Restrictions Business Fund (RBF) Non-Domestic Rates (NDR) and Discretionary based grants for non-essential retail, hospitality,

Canolfan Cyswllt Cyntaf / First Point of Contact Centre:  
0300 0604400

Bae Caerdydd • Cardiff Bay  
Caerdydd • Cardiff  
CF99 1SN

[Gohebiaeth.Kirsty.Williams@llyw.cymru](mailto:Gohebiaeth.Kirsty.Williams@llyw.cymru)  
[Correspondence.Kirsty.Williams@gov.wales](mailto:Correspondence.Kirsty.Williams@gov.wales)

Rydym yn croesawu derbyn gohebiaeth yn Gymraeg. Byddwn yn ateb gohebiaeth a dderbynnir yn Gymraeg yn Gymraeg ac ni fydd gohebu yn Gymraeg yn arwain at oedi.

We welcome receiving correspondence in Welsh. Any correspondence received in Welsh will be answered in Welsh and corresponding in Welsh will not lead to a delay in responding.

leisure and tourism (NERHLT) sectors (and their supply chain businesses) has been extended to provide a single top up payment to cover the period between the 25 January and end of March 2021 for businesses affected by national restrictions.

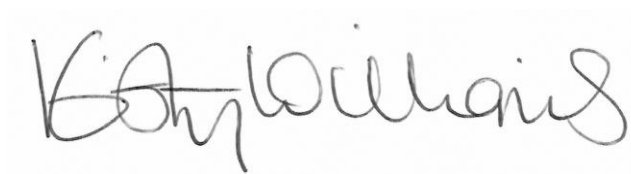
Business will be able to access the registration and application process to access the funding through the Business Wales and Local Authority websites.

<https://businesswales.gov.wales/coronavirus-advice/>

Most businesses should also be able to access certain support available from the UK Government – including the Job Retention Scheme:

<https://www.gov.uk/coronavirus/business-support>

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Kirsty Williams', is centered on the page. The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

**Kirsty Williams AS/MS**

Y Gweinidog Addysg

Minister for Education

**P-05-1135 Targeted funding for residential outdoor education centres, now unable to operate for 12 months, Correspondence – Petitioner to Committee, 16.02.21**

I would like to thank you for taking the time to respond to my concerns and those of many others who work in this key sector in rural areas of Wales.

I am pleased that the Minister recognises the contribution that residential outdoor education plays in the lives of young people. For many children it is the highlight of their educational career, a crucial developmental step, for some a chance to shine, explore localities unlike their own, take on challenge and succeed. It opens their world. The benefits and how they contribute to confidence, enhanced engagement in learning and increased academic success are incomparable. I would suggest it is the forum where children's hopes and dreams in the classroom become a reality in real life. A chance to be inspired. Moving forward and supporting children's mental health, fitness, social skills, reengagement with learning and a much-needed connection to and understanding of nature is a focus need now like never before.

I would also put forward the argument strongly that in addition to the huge educational and environmental impact these centres have. They also form a substantial part of our rural economies, providing skilled careers and supporting many local suppliers and services. The estimated inward investment to Wales from outdoor education centres is around £40m per year with the industry supporting 1500 jobs. It is a sad reflection that 15% of this industry has already been wiped from our landscape since the start of the pandemic.

I note the support that the government has provided for businesses and their commitment to continuing this support. I would highlight one key difference for consideration. **All other businesses receiving these streams of financial support were able to open for a period of 2020 and were able to limit the damage to their businesses in this way. Outdoor education centres have not been able to open for their main purpose since March 2020 resulting in an effective close of business for what will now be at least a year of trading. The damage to these businesses has been far greater.** Further to this it remains unclear as to how long the restrictions will remain in force. We are in a situation where restrictions have not yet been lifted for our sector for a whole year and we are yet to be included in any "roadmap" out of lockdown.

A common rebuttal to the above is the notion that outdoor education centres are open as they are able to provide day visits for schools. This may be the case in some more urban areas of Wales but the vast majority of residential centres it is not. Most have seen a drop in income equivalent to 95% – 99%. This is for the following reasons:

- By nature of what they provide outdoor education centres are often located in national parks and wild rural landscapes far from urban populations. Travel times for day trips are just too far.
- Centres are clustered together in areas of low population. There is not enough "local" population to go around.
- Residential Outdoor Education Centres tend to keep the same customers year on year. Customers come from specific areas. Looking for new "local" customers means taking customers from neighbouring centres who already serve those schools.
- High fixed costs of maintaining large residential sites means that income from day visits just isn't sustainable. Often the costs of bringing operations online are not balanced by what would be recovered by income from day visits. i.e., a further loss would be sustained.

It simply isn't fair to place restrictions on a business that render them unable to trade and not financially compensate them for this or only financially compensate them along with other businesses that have not faced the same harsh restrictions.

The ERF 3 could have been supportive for this sector had it been managed effectively however this was not the case. The closure of the ERF 3 within 30 hours of opening and the lack of priority for those who were more adversely affected has seen some businesses make more money from government support than they would have gained from their normal income. This is so infuriating and frustrating for those honest businesses who are struggling and who are desperately trying to keep staff employed.

I have been informed in response to a letter to Ms Kirsty Williams that £455,000 was distributed in the ERF 1, 2 and 3 to support outdoor education centres in Wales. I can also see that out of the 21 centres receiving this funding that £363,000 was allocated to one organisation. Is this figure part of the £455,000 if so this leaves approximately £4600 each for the remaining 20. A sum which would likely not cover 1 month's fixed costs. Many centres were also ineligible for these rounds of funding. Even if the one organisation getting £363,000 is not included in the £455,000 then there is a large discrepancy here in the support being offered.

Being that Outdoor education is so important to Wales' rural economies and to education. I fail to understand the reticence to support these establishments.

Residential Outdoor centres bring substantial income to the Welsh economy. They also play a large role in promoting Wales to wider parts of the UK, teaching about its history, geography, culture and language. Centres are often custodians of Wales' natural landscapes and protected spaces, taking on the role of maintenance, management and access. They also play a large part in creating a love of Wales with many children and families returning to the area throughout their lifetimes for visits and holidays.

I include a breakdown of the provision across Wales  
(For the breakdown. Please see Appendix 1)

### **Questions:**

The situation for outdoor education centres has been the same throughout the pandemic, whether in lockdown or not they cannot operate due to government restrictions. Being able to open for day activities doesn't sustain us. It is like pubs opening and not serving alcohol. Furthermore, it is simply impossible for most. We would be pleased if you would consider the following:

1. Why was support not given for the months July, Aug, Sept, Nov and only for the firebreak lockdown in October and Dec to Jan, Feb, Mar when residential outdoor Education centres faced continual restrictions? Could these payments be backdated?
2. When business come out of lockdown outdoor education centres will still not be able to operate, due to both Westminster and Welsh restrictions. Will support continue in the form of a lockdown restrictions grant until the restrictions are lifted for our sector?
3. If the job retention scheme is not continued many centres will have to make staff redundant. What provision is there to compensate for this in light of continuing restrictions. I.e. What case are the WG making for the continuation of furlough for businesses still facing restrictions? Or what provision is the WG making to support jobs in those businesses still unable to trade.

4. Will the Business Rates Relief still be available to residential outdoor education centres as long as they face restrictions.

3. After being closed for over a year many centres face “start up costs” along with costs for becoming “Covid secure”. What funding will there be to help with these costs?

4. Looking forward, residential outdoor education centres offer the Welsh Government a unique opportunity to support pupils’ recovery out of lockdown and from this pandemic. With children’s health, fitness and mental wellbeing of utmost concern, along with the need for children to reengage with learning, we suggest a government funded summer residential camp scheme utilising the skills expertise and facilities that are already on our doorstep. An opportunity for the Government to give something back to local Welsh children whilst also protecting these viable businesses and their local supply chains for the future.

## Appendix 1.

### NORTH WALES

Centre Name	Area	Bed capacity
FSC Rhyd-y-Creuau	Aberconwy	80
Lledr Hall	Aberconwy	40
Marle Hall	Aberconwy	100
Nant BH	Aberconwy	55
Oaklands	Aberconwy	40
Plas Y Brenin	Aberconwy	50
Towers OEC	Aberconwy	70
Anglesey Outdoors	Anglesey	100
Conwy Centre	Anglesey	250
Arete Outdoor Centre	Arfon	100
Blue Peris	Arfon	70
Boulder Adventures	Arfon	40
Kent Mountain Centre	Arfon	50
Dolawen/E3 Adventures	Arfon	40
Pentrellyncymer OEC	Clwyd West	55
Bryntysillio	Clwyd South	65
Safe and Sound	Clwyd South	?
Arthog	Dwyfor Meirionnydd	100
CMC Adventure	Dwyfor Meirionnydd	90
Rhos Y Gwailau (RYG)	Dwyfor Meirionnydd	100
Plas Gwynant	Dwyfor Meirionnydd	55
Glan Llyn	Dwyfor Meirionnydd	250
Plas Caerdeon	Dwyfor Meirionnydd	50
Plas Dol y Moch	Dwyfor Meirionnydd	60
Red Ridge	Montgomeryshire	50

### SOUTH WALES

Centre Name	Area	Bed capacity
The Storey Arms OEC	Cardiff North	50
Park Wood Leisure	Merthyr	50
Black Mountain Adventure	Brecon and Radnor	?
Woodlands	Brecon and Radnor	50
Plas Pencelli	Brecon and Radnor	70
Hilston Park	Monmouthshire	50
Gilwern	Monmouthshire	50
Trewern	South Hereford	50
Pendarren House	Brecon and Radnor	50
Hampshire Mountain Centre	Brecon and Radnor	35

Tirabad	Brecon and Radnor	35
Longtown	South Hereford	40
Stackpole Centre	Carmarthen and S. Pembs	140
Kilvrough Manor		50
Tal Y Bont OEC	Powys	30

# Agenda Item 2.7

## **P-05-1136 Allow Welsh residents to travel for fishing the same as our counterparts in England**

This petition was submitted by Matthew Davies, having collected a total of 2,519 signatures.

### **Text of Petition:**

Welsh anglers are fed up with being treated differently to those in England.

Currently we are not allowed to travel locally for exercise. England during tier 4 are allowed to travel and even whilst in tier 5.

We as anglers understand the dangers that are out there with the covid-19 pandemic, however anglers use this time to maintain their mental wellbeing, concentration and to reduce their stress levels. This socially distanced sport should be brought back for all.

### **Additional Information:**

<https://canalrivertrust.org.uk/enjoy-the-waterways/fishing/places-to-fish/seven-reasons-why-fishing-is-good-for-you#:~:text=Fishing%20reduces%20stress,stress%20disorder%20and%20othe%20illnesses>.

### **Senedd Constituency and Region**

- Swansea West
- South Wales West





Eich cyf/Your ref P-05-1136  
Ein cyf/Our ref DET/00157/21

Janet Finch-Saunders MS  
Chair  
Petitions Committee

1 February 2021

Dear Janet,

Thank you for your correspondence regarding a petition to allow Welsh residents to travel for fishing.

As highlighted by the First Minister on [19 December 2020](#), as of 20 December Wales moved to alert level four in our published Control Plan, the highest level of restrictions. Unfortunately, while we fully acknowledge the importance of exercise for our physical and mental well-being, our alert level 4 regulations state that we must all 'stay at home' unless for essential reasons. This means all indoor and outdoor attractions and facilities must close. Doing activities outdoors, while safer, is not risk free and still requires people to leave their homes when it is not essential. As it becomes colder, darker and wetter the conditions for the virus improve. The Welsh approach during 'stay at home' restrictions, based on expert behavioural advice, requires that people should be travelling as little as possible. Every exception to these rules or concession in one area weakens that message and could lead to misunderstandings amongst the population that place lives at risk. Science tells us that the longer we are away from our homes, and the further we travel, the more likely we are to either come into contact with the virus or transmit it. As a government we are taking every possible step to reduce the risks at this critical time, and to ensure we provide a strong and consistent message in order to keep Wales safe. The Welsh Government is unable to comment on any regulations made by the UK government.

The Welsh Government's approach to restrictions is based on the latest data and science relevant to Wales and on the latest advice from our own scientific and medical advisors, in order to reduce the speed of the transmission of the virus. Through these rules, we are trying to balance the importance of people's mental and physical well-being, and our economy, with the need to keep people safe and protect the NHS.

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Caerdydd • Cardiff  
CF99 1SN

Canolfan Cyswllt Cyntaf / First Point of Contact Centre:  
0300 0604400

[Gohebiaeth.Dafydd.Elis-Thomas@llyw.cymru](mailto:Gohebiaeth.Dafydd.Elis-Thomas@llyw.cymru)  
[Correspondence.Dafydd.Elis-Thomas@gov.wales](mailto:Correspondence.Dafydd.Elis-Thomas@gov.wales)

Rydym yn croesawu derbyn gohebiaeth yn Gymraeg. Byddwn yn ateb gohebiaeth a dderbynnir yn Gymraeg yn Gymraeg ac ni fydd gohebu yn Gymraeg yn arwain at oedi.

We welcome receiving correspondence in Welsh. Any correspondence received in Welsh will be answered in Welsh and corresponding in Welsh will not lead to a delay in responding.

At the moment, the situation in Wales is very serious – the virus is present in all our local communities. Our NHS is under pressure. We need strong measures to bring the virus under control and to protect public health. We also need everyone to help, not just by following the rules but by making small changes to their daily routines and lives and reducing the contact they have with other people. This virus thrives on human contact – whenever we spend time with or near others there is a risk we will either catch or pass on coronavirus. We will minimise this risk, and reduce the pressure on our NHS, via the cumulative impact of all the changes we have made. It is the combined impact which makes the difference, not the risk posed by any one activity.

We are already seeing some positive signs from the lockdown, and with the vaccination rollout well underway we are hopeful of allowing people to resume activities such as angling once again - but only when the science and data tells us it is safe to do so.

We fully recognise the enormous efforts and sacrifices the Welsh public and businesses have made to keep Wales safe. The Welsh Government will continue to provide regular updates via its Covid19 Press Conferences over the coming days and weeks.

I hope this clarifies the current position regarding the regulations.

Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'I. Elis-Thomas'.

**Yr Arglwydd Elis-Thomas AS/MS**

Y Dirprwy Weinidog Diwylliant, Chwaraeon a Thwristiaeth  
Deputy Minister for Culture, Sport and Tourism

**P-05-1136 Allow Welsh residents to travel for fishing the same as our counterparts in England – Correspondence – Petitioner to the Committee, 18.02.21**

Good evening,

I am sorry that it has taken me time to get a response back to the committee but I wanted to research a little more before I did this reply.

The main reason for the petition was to bring us inline with our English counterparts for exercise. Even today people are out on the sea fishing in their boats or local waters.

Since the first lockdown in March myself and other fishery owners have been left alone with very very little financial help, absolutely nothing available for us. This of course led to the most recent petition.

We do not understand why the welsh government has taken these decisions based on the same scientific information that the English government receives.

At the time of writing this the petition has been signed by just under 2500 people. If I opened this up to exercise in general then I would guarantee a much broader signature list.

I am not one of these people that do not believe that the pandemic exists, infact the total opposite. I supply staff to the front line through another of my businesses and me myself am ultra cautious just incase I was to bring something back to my life limited son. However saying this fishing is one of the most relaxing, socially distant sport out there. It has the ability to make you focus, lower your stress levels and enhance your mental health.

There are various reports out about this from Angling trust and I have attached one here

<https://canalrivertrust.org.uk/enjoy-the-waterways/fishing/places-to-fish/seven-reasons-why-fishing-is-good-for-you#:~:text=Fishing%20reduces%20stress,stress%20disorder%20and%20other%20illnesses>

As you can see all we want is to be treated the same as our counterparts within England. If the science is there to stop this then please provide this evidence to us and Angling Cymru. Angling Cymru I am told have tried and tried and all they face is harsh criticism and hatred because the English government has allowed it and the

welsh government has not with no official statements showing why we cannot, all we face is a similar letter to the one that was sent in the reply from the committee.

Please help the fishermen/ fisherwomen and children in wales to maintain their mental health, allow fisheries to reopen with a strict covid-19 guidance and let's beat this together!!

Thank you for your time in reading this, if you would like to discuss further then please call me directly and I can explain every side to the story.

# Agenda Item 2.8

## **P-05-1139 Extend stamp duty relief following the announcement of a further lockdown**

This petition was submitted by Andrew Oliver, having collected a total of 79 signatures.

### **Text of Petition:**

With the boost to the economy and increase seen in property transactions since the stamp duty holiday was implemented in Wales, an extension to this relief by tapering the end date would avoid a property cliff edge likely to be seen should we see an abrupt end to the relief support. Maybe the Welsh government could consider that the relief could apply to any transactions where exchange of contracts took place prior to March 31st 2021 to allow any intended transactions to complete and benefit.

### **Senedd Constituency and Region**

- Cardiff Central
- South Wales Central

Rebecca Evans AS/MS  
Y Gweinidog Cyllid a'r Trefnydd  
Minister for Finance and Trefnydd



Llywodraeth Cymru  
Welsh Government

Eich cyf/Your ref P-05-1139  
Ein cyf/Our ref RE/00052/21

Janet Finch-Saunders MS  
Chair of the Petition Committee  
Ty Hywel  
Cardiff Bay  
Cardiff  
CF99 1NA

8 February 2021

Dear Janet,

**Petition P-05-1139 Extend stamp duty relief following the announcement of a further lockdown**

Thank you for your email regarding the petition referenced above.

The petition suggests extending the current temporary Land Transaction Tax (LTT) reduction period applying to main rates beyond the end of March for transactions where exchange of contracts takes place before 31 March 2021.

LTT arises when a relevant property transaction is completed, or in relatively exceptional circumstances when it 'substantially performs'. An exchange of contracts is not an event triggering the payment of LTT. I recognise that the petition proposes a transitional rule similar to that used when rates are changed with immediate effect. I do not consider that such a transitional rule is appropriate in this case as the date on which the temporary tax reduction period is to end was announced on 14 July 2020. In contrast, the transitional rule recently provided ensured that people who had exchanged contracts could pay the rate they expected to at the point they exchanged contracts because the rate change was unknown to them but they had contractually committed to a transaction.

The temporary rules were introduced to help the housing market recover from the first lockdown and to support broader economic activity associated with home purchases. The written statement I issued on devolved taxes alongside my announcement of the draft Budget for next year made clear that in Wales we will revert to the pre-existing rules from 1 April 2021. That clear message, three months ahead of the end date, has provided clarity to both buyers and sellers of property to negotiate their transactions appropriately.

The petition refers to a potential "cliff-edge" when the temporary LTT rules expire on 31 March 2021. I have seen this expression used in many of the calls for an extension or for

Canolfan Cyswllt Cyntaf / First Point of Contact Centre:  
0300 0604400

Bae Caerdydd • Cardiff Bay  
Caerdydd • Cardiff  
CF99 1SN

[Correspondence.Rebecca.Evans@gov.wales](mailto:Correspondence.Rebecca.Evans@gov.wales)  
[Gohebiaeth.Rebecca.Evans@llyw.cymru](mailto:Gohebiaeth.Rebecca.Evans@llyw.cymru)

Rydym yn croesawu derbyn gohebiaeth yn Gymraeg. Byddwn yn ateb gohebiaeth a dderbynnir yn Gymraeg yn Gymraeg ac ni fydd gohebu yn Gymraeg yn arwain at oedi.

We welcome receiving correspondence in Welsh. Any correspondence received in Welsh will be answered in Welsh and corresponding in Welsh will not lead to a delay in responding.

transitional rules in relation to the UK Government's stamp duty land tax (SDLT) 'holiday'. The impacts of the current temporary reductions in SDLT are potentially as large as £15,000 (providing a zero liability to tax on properties costing up to £500,000) compared with £2,450 reductions in LTT (providing a zero liability to tax on properties costing up to £250,000). This means for SDLT, the potential tax saving amounts to up to 3% of the property purchase price, whereas in LTT the maximum saving is just under 1% of the property purchase price. For the situation in Wales with LTT, I do not consider that to amount to a "cliff-edge". Whilst some buyers may be upset to have missed out on a potential tax saving, a position I can understand, I do not consider the property market, or wider economy, will be adversely impacted in the absence of an extension of a change which was announced over 8 months earlier.

In its December 2020 report on Welsh Taxes Outlook, the Office for Budget Responsibility (OBR) says with regards to its property market forecast and its effects on LTT, that there will be a "significant fall in residential transactions this year (2020-21) to be followed by a sharp rebound in 2021-22, followed by modest growth thereafter."

Consequently I do not see a need to introduce a new form of relief for transactions which are still at the exchange of contract stage as at 31 March 2021.

Yours sincerely,



**Rebecca Evans AS/MS**  
Y Gweinidog Cyllid a'r Trefnydd  
Minister for Finance and Trefnydd

## **P-05-1139 Extend stamp duty relief following the announcement of a further lockdown, Correspondence – Petitioner to Committee, 08.02.21**

Thank you for the response received from Rebecca Evan's in respect of the petition.

I think the ministers points are somewhat short sighted and are attempts to skirt the issues rather than actually address them. I would request my comments are passed on for review.

'(1) **An exchange of contracts is not an event triggering the payment of LTT**' - Although technically correct, buyers of new homes (we are an example) are contractually committed to proceed to completion or suffer the loss of 10% deposit. An exchange of contracts is a contractual commitment to purchase and is therefore also, a commitment to pay the tax due on that purchase.

(2) **The end date was announced in July and therefore a transitional period is not appropriate.** Although the end date was announced, what has not been considered is buyers of new homes where the period between exchange of contracts and completion can be lengthy (in our case, 9 months) further delays due to the pandemic has resulted in our timetable being shifted and the losses to us, significant. We are not the only buyers to be affected by the same situation and a continuation of the relief for buyers who contractually committed to a purchase in good time with the belief they may complete within the relief period is not something I would consider inappropriate but rather a reasonable proposal. A tapering of the relief to account for those who contractually committed to purchases well within the relief period should not be dismissed so easily

(3) **'The situation in Wales does not amount to a cliff edge'** - Sales are already falling through in Wales due to the looming deadline. The rush to purchase properties and complete within the relief period has undoubtedly provided a boost to the housing market, however, as sales collapse, that boom to the housing market is likely to be undermined and partially reversed if buyers withdraw. A withdrawal of sales commitments compounded by the end of tax relief which is likely to see the market slow down significantly is the definition of a cliff edge and one that will certainly occur. Although the minister proposes the market will bounce back, one thing is certain, the market will slow significantly. A bounce back is less certain but a tapering of relief may at least, ensure that buyers who have committed to purchasing, continue with those purchases and a slow reintroduction of the LTT may assist avoiding such a dead stop in the market.

It appears from the response that the minister feels enough has been done to forewarn buyers and sellers of the ending of the relief period. What is being ignored are those buyers who in plenty of time, committed to purchases (in our case, October 2020) but due to events outside of our control, we will not complete until June. We will have to find £5,000 to account for that or withdraw and risk losing our entire deposit. As first time buyers, neither option is a palatable one. We either go into further debt to pay the tax or lose many years of saving for a deposit.

Quite real consequences for a family who have worked extremely hard for many years to try and buy our first home. Given we are one of the purchasers that contributed to a buoyant housing market over the past 6 months, we feel somewhat duped and I'm sure there are many buyers like us who feel the same. Let down and paying a heavy price would sum up how we feel and I would encourage the minister to take on board those feelings from constituents, voters, the public, who are ultimately the ones whose lives change significantly based on whether we have supportive policies that focus on families and individuals or not.

Regards.





# Agenda Item 2.9

## **P-05-1111 Put the £7 million back into the Mental Health Transformation fund**

This petition was submitted by Dr Jen Daffin having collected a total of 255 signatures.

### **Text of Petition:**

The Mind over Matter report was the result of a wide-ranging enquiry into emotional and health. It identifies an urgent need to invest in preventative, whole system and early intervention services.

Mental health services are in desperate need for reform and modernisation. The removal of £7 million from this fund will stall this change.

### **Additional Information:**

In 2018, 93 Psychologists, Therapists, Counsellors and people who use mental health services in Wales signed a letter asking Welsh Government to implement the changes the Mind over Matter report recommended – <http://www.psychchange.org/support-the-mind-over-matter-report.html>

The global pandemic has affected everyone. Many of us have experienced and will continue to experience distress due to COVID-19. However, those also facing isolation, job insecurity, food poverty, or living in an abusive or stressful household will be significantly more impacted.

The early years of life are vital, but children live in circumstances that they are powerless to change. They cannot think their way out of their problems, and they are dependent on the adults and the community around them.

The mental health transformational fund is also known as the Mental Health Services Improvement Fund (MHSIF). The reference to the mental health transformational fund in this petition refers to that same fund, the MHSIF.

### **Senedd Constituency and Region**

- Cardiff North
- South Wales Central

**Eluned Morgan AS/MS**  
**Y Gweinidog Iechyd Meddwl, Llesiant a'r Gymraeg**  
**Minister for Mental Health, Wellbeing and Welsh Language**



**Llywodraeth Cymru**  
**Welsh Government**

Eich cyf/Your ref P-05-1111  
Ein cyf/Our ref EM/00926/20

Janet Finch-Saunders MS  
Chair, Petitions Committee

29 January 2021

Dear Janet,

Thank you for your letter of 16 December on behalf of the Petitions Committee regarding mental health services funding in Wales.

The Welsh Government recognises the importance of providing as much flexibility as possible for health boards to respond to the additional pressure on services as a result of the pandemic. In March we released £3.5m funding for the first six months from the Mental Health Service Improvement Fund (£7m in total). This was allocated across all health boards to ensure the continuity and flexibility of service that was required at that time.

The second £3.5m allocation was made in year to the priority areas included within our [Together for Mental Health Delivery Plan](#). This meant funding being made available to CAMHS / support for children and young people, out of hour / crisis services, further support to perinatal services, eating disorder services and to enable increased access to psychological therapies.

All health boards have now received their full allocation against the £7m for mental health services and this funding has been added to the main NHS allocation (within the mental health ring fence) for 2021-22.

I hope this information is helpful.

Yours sincerely,

**Eluned Morgan AS/MS**  
**Y Gweinidog Iechyd Meddwl, Llesiant a'r Gymraeg**  
**Minister for Mental Health, Wellbeing and Welsh Language**

Bae Caerdydd • Cardiff Bay  
Caerdydd • Cardiff  
CF99 1SN

Canolfan Cyswllt Cyntaf / First Point of Contact Centre:  
0300 0604400

[Gohebiaeth.Eluned.Morgan@llyw.cymru](mailto:Gohebiaeth.Eluned.Morgan@llyw.cymru)  
[Correspondence.Eluned.Morgan@gov.wales](mailto:Correspondence.Eluned.Morgan@gov.wales)

Rydym yn croesawu derbyn gohebiaeth yn Gymraeg. Byddwn yn ateb gohebiaeth a dderbynnir yn Gymraeg yn Gymraeg ac ni fydd gohebu yn Gymraeg yn arwain at oedi.

We welcome receiving correspondence in Welsh. Any correspondence received in Welsh will be answered in Welsh and corresponding in Welsh will not lead to a delay in responding.

# Agenda Item 2.10

**P-05-1125 Petitions with more than 5,000 signatures should be debated not just considered for debate**

This petition was submitted by Martin Obbard, having collected a total of 69 signatures.

**Text of Petition:**

If you have a petition which is supported by 5000 or more the Senedd does not have to debate it, it's only 'considered' for debate.

The whole reason for petitions is to put across the public voice. Currently if a petition is strongly supported with more than 5000 it is 'considered' only for debate.

As it's clear a petition with this amount of support is in the public interest, I believe it should always be debated to ensure the view of the people is taken into account.

**Senedd Constituency and Region**

- Montgomeryshire
- Mid and West Wales

Martin Obbard, petitioner

09 February 2021

Dear Mr Obbard

**Petition P-05-1125 Petitions with more than 5,000 signatures should be debated not just considered for debate**

Thank you for submitting the above petition to the Senedd. I am responding as the processes for considering petitions are the responsibility of the Petitions Committee.

The Petitions Committee considers and scrutinises all petitions which collect more than 50 signatures. The upper threshold, above which the Committee considers whether it should request time for a petition to be debated in a full Plenary meeting, was introduced by the current Petitions Committee in March 2017. This was done in consultation with the Business Committee, which is responsible for the scheduling of business in Plenary. Before then, petitions were only debated by the whole Senedd if the Petitions Committee had produced a report on the issue following its own detailed scrutiny.



Our motivation in introducing this mechanism was to provide a more direct and timely route through which petitions demonstrating significant levels of public support could be discussed by the full Senedd, without needing to be scrutinised by a committee first. At the time of writing, 19 petitions have been debated as a result and I am proud that this process has provided these opportunities for a number of important issues to be raised in this way. You can find details of all the petitions debated by this Senedd at the following link:

<https://petitions.senedd.wales/petitions?state=debated>



Nevertheless, I believe it is right that we should take a number of factors into account when deciding whether or not an immediate debate on the issue raised by a petition is an appropriate course of action, and there are several reasons why it is neither practical or appropriate for all petitions achieving the threshold to be debated. For example:



**Senedd Cymru**  
Bae Caerdydd, Caerdydd, CF99 1SN

 [SeneddDeisebau@senedd.cymru](mailto:SeneddDeisebau@senedd.cymru)  
 0300 200 6565

**Welsh Parliament**  
Cardiff Bay, Cardiff, CF99 1SN

 [SeneddPetitions@senedd.wales](mailto:SeneddPetitions@senedd.wales)  
 0300 200 6565

- The issue raised by the petition may have been resolved or have changed significantly since the petition was created;
- The issue may have been debated recently, raised in other ways or be subject to detailed scrutiny by another Senedd committee;
- The issue may be able to be scrutinised more effectively through detailed examination by the Petitions Committee or another Senedd committee; or
- The petition may have collected a significant proportion of its signatures from outside of Wales.

There is also a limit to the Senedd's capacity to schedule debates in Plenary and a number of other competing demands on that capacity, including debates tabled by other committees, political groups and individual Members of the Senedd. We therefore seek to apply our discretion in order to ensure that this mechanism is used to facilitate the most effective and appropriate scrutiny of issues raised through the petitions process.

Finally, as you may already be aware, the Petitions Committee has taken the difficult decision to change the 'debate threshold' since you submitted the petition. Between March 2017 and November 2020 the threshold for considering petitions for a debate was 5,000 signatures however, since 1 December 2020, this has increased to 10,000 signatures.

The Committee is acutely aware of the need to provide clear information and expectations to everyone who uses the petitions process. We took this decision in response to a significant increase in the number of petitions that have collected large numbers of signatures since the middle of last year, because we were increasingly only able to schedule debates on a relatively small number of the petitions achieving the previous threshold. We are keeping this issue under review until the end of this Senedd term with a view to making a recommendation ahead of the next Senedd.

I hope that this response is helpful in explaining the processes and decision-making used by the Petitions Committee, and I look forward to receiving and further views you may have to inform the Committee's consideration of the petition.

Yours sincerely



Janet Finch-Saunders MS  
Chair



**Senedd Cymru**  
Bae Caerdydd, Caerdydd, CF99 1SN

 [SeneddDeisebau@senedd.cymru](mailto:SeneddDeisebau@senedd.cymru)

 0300 200 6565

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**Welsh Parliament**  
Cardiff Bay, Cardiff, CF99 1SN

 [SeneddPetitions@senedd.wales](mailto:SeneddPetitions@senedd.wales)

 0300 200 6565

# Agenda Item 2.11

## **P-05-1129 Apply legislative measures now to enact the Law Commission's recommendations to abolish Leasehold**

This petition was submitted by Mark Habberfield, having collected a total of 425 signatures.

### **Text of Petition:**

On 21st July 2020 all three residential leasehold and commonhold reports were published by the Law Commission (see additional details). We believe the recommendations from these reports should be immediately enacted in Welsh law without delay to protect and improve the lives of nearly 400,000 Welsh leaseholders. It has been over eight years since Scotland lead the way in removing leasehold from their housing and with this report the Senedd now has a clear mandate to apply legislative measures.

### **Additional Information:**

<https://www.lawcom.gov.uk/project/residential-leasehold-and-commonhold/>

The Law Commission published three Reports in which they recommend reforms to three areas of law:

- (1.) leasehold enfranchisement, which is the right for people who own property on a long lease (“leaseholders”) to buy the freehold or extend their lease
- (2.) the right to manage, which is a right for leaseholders to take over the management of their building without buying the freehold
- (3.) commonhold, which allows for the freehold ownership of flats, offering an alternative way of owning property which avoids the shortcomings of leasehold ownership.

### **Senedd Constituency and Region**

- Cardiff South and Penarth
- South Wales Central

Julie James AS/MS  
Y Gweinidog Tai a Llywodraeth Leol  
Minister for Housing and Local Government



Llywodraeth Cymru  
Welsh Government

Ein cyf/Our ref JJ/00274/21

Janet Finch-Saunders MS  
Chair  
Petitions Committee  
Ty Hywel  
Cardiff Bay  
Cardiff  
CF99 1NA  
[Petitions@senedd.wales](mailto:Petitions@senedd.wales)

1 February 2021

Dear Janet,

Thank you for your letter of 20 January regarding Petition P-05-1129 which calls for the Law Commission's proposals for leasehold reform to be enacted in Wales now.

I have previously welcomed [the reports of the Law Commission on leasehold reform in England and Wales](#) as a significant step towards much needed reform and am currently considering how best to take their proposals forward. However, together with the reports of the Law Commission, and the evidence of the [report from the Task and Finish group on leasehold reform](#), I am also awaiting the publication of research into the experience of leasehold in Wales which I anticipate will be published shortly. Once I have the benefit of all of the evidence, I will set out my intentions for making leasehold fairer in Wales.

However, whilst I appreciate the concerns about the petition's call for these reforms to happen immediately, as you know, the current Welsh Parliamentary term will end soon ahead of the upcoming election, and it is not possible under the current legislative programme for such legislation to be brought forward and implemented during the remaining time of this term. Whilst I anticipate setting out my intentions for leasehold reform soon, it will be a matter for the next administration, following the Senedd elections in May, to set out their own legislative agenda, and it would not be appropriate for me to pre-empt that at this stage.

Canolfan Cyswllt Cyntaf / First Point of Contact Centre:  
0300 0604400

Bae Caerdydd • Cardiff Bay  
Caerdydd • Cardiff  
CF99 1SN

[Gohebiaeth.Julie.James@llyw.cymru](mailto:Gohebiaeth.Julie.James@llyw.cymru)  
[Correspondence.Julie.James@gov.Wales](mailto:Correspondence.Julie.James@gov.Wales)

Rydym yn croesawu derbyn gohebiaeth yn Gymraeg. Byddwn yn ateb gohebiaeth a dderbynnir yn Gymraeg yn Gymraeg ac ni fydd gohebu yn Gymraeg yn arwain at oedi.

We welcome receiving correspondence in Welsh. Any correspondence received in Welsh will be answered in Welsh and corresponding in Welsh will not lead to a delay in responding.



I remain committed to taking forward the Law Commission's recommendations and a number of other areas of leasehold reform. The First Minister also made clear our intention to drive forward leasehold and commonhold reform in his [statement on the legislative programme on 16 July](#) , including those requiring legislative measures where necessary.

Yours sincerely,



**Julie James AS/MS**

Y Gweinidog Tai a Llywodraeth Leol  
Minister for Housing and Local Government

# Agenda Item 2.12

## **P-05-1130 The Welsh Government should re-purchase and refurbish Coleg Harlech**

This petition was submitted by Sian Ifan, having collected a total of 6,661 signatures.

### **Text of Petition:**

Coleg Harlech is made up of a characteristic Admin and Theatre complex, a library, conference room, a number of lecture and computer rooms, a gym, a ten floor hall of residence, a dining hall and a clubhouse and sits in a majestic hill position adjacent to Harlech castle in Gwynedd. The college was established in 1927 as a college of further education for those from a working class background. It was sold to a private buyer in recent years, its furnishings stripped and is now up for sale again

### **Additional Information:**

Coleg Harlech is an unique concept with an unique history set in an unique historical setting; it is a Cymric national treasure that is in the process of being dismantled and sold building by building to the highest bidder for development.

A post Covid-19 world is going to be a totally different world to the pre Covid-19 world we were familiar with. Economies will be destroyed – as we are already witnessing in progress, and nations and economies will need to be rebuilt. Common sense will dictate that all employable tools, in both human and constructional terms are going to be needed to rebuild nations and their economies. Coleg Harlech, if renovated to its former glory, has all the necessary requirements needed to train our unemployed in all the practical, technical and professional skills needed to re-build the structure and economy of our nation for the equal benefit and prosperity of all our people.

### **Senedd Constituency and Region**

- Swansea West
- South Wales West

**Kirsty Williams AS/MS**  
**Y Gweinidog Addysg**  
**Minister for Education**



**Llywodraeth Cymru**  
**Welsh Government**

Eich cyf/Your ref P-05-1130  
Ein cyf/Our ref KW/00756/21

Janet Finch-Saunders MS  
Chair  
Senedd Cymru Petitions Committee  
Ty Hywel  
Cardiff Bay  
Cardiff  
CF99 1NA

9 February 2021

Dear Janet,

Thank you for your letter dated 21 January to Rt Hon. the Lord Elis-Thomas MS, Deputy Minister for Culture, Sport and Tourism regarding Petition P-05-1130: 'The Welsh Government should re-purchase and refurbish Coleg Harlech'. I am responding as this matter falls within my portfolio.

Our understanding is that Coleg Harlech has been re-sold. Welsh Government is fully aware of concerns about the condition of the building, and the need to secure a sustainable (and appropriate) future for it. Officials in Tourism, Heritage and Sports - CADW are working closely with Gwynedd County Council and Snowdonia National Park Authority to ensure that the future of the facility is secured. All parties are committed to support and offer advice to new owner.

Yours sincerely

**Kirsty Williams AS/MS**  
**Y Gweinidog Addysg**  
**Minister for Education**

Canolfan Cyswllt Cyntaf / First Point of Contact Centre:  
0300 0604400

Bae Caerdydd • Cardiff Bay  
Caerdydd • Cardiff  
CF99 1SN

[Gohebiaeth.Kirsty.Williams@llyw.cymru](mailto:Gohebiaeth.Kirsty.Williams@llyw.cymru)  
[Correspondence.Kirsty.Williams@gov.wales](mailto:Correspondence.Kirsty.Williams@gov.wales)

Rydym yn croesawu derbyn gohebiaeth yn Gymraeg. Byddwn yn ateb gohebiaeth a dderbynnir yn Gymraeg yn Gymraeg ac ni fydd gohebu yn Gymraeg yn arwain at oedi.

We welcome receiving correspondence in Welsh. Any correspondence received in Welsh will be answered in Welsh and corresponding in Welsh will not lead to a delay in responding.

**P-05-1130 Dylai Llywodraeth Cymru ail-brynu ac adnewyddu Coleg Harlech, Correspondence – Deisebwyr at y Pwyllgor, 17.02.21**

/

**P-05-1130 The Welsh Government should re-purchase and refurbish Coleg Harlech, Correspondence – Petitioners to Committee, 17.02.21**

### **Tystysgrifau yn y Gymraeg i gydfynd a'r ddeiseb**

#### **Sian Ifan:**

Fel y mwyafrif o ieuenctid Blaenau Ffestiniog yn y 1960au, wnes i adael yr ysgol yn bumtheg oed i ddechrau gweithio i gyfrannu tuag at gyllid y cartref. Yn y cyfnod hynny, os oeddech yn blentyn o gartref dosbarth gweithiol, lle roedd y tad yn labrwr yn y chwarel, fel yn fy achos i, doedd dim disgwyl, nac ychwaith unrhyw anogaeth yn y cartref na'r ysgol i chwi gario'n mlaen â'ch addysg. Cael hyd i waith, o unrhyw fath, cyn gynted a phosibl felly oedd y nod - ac yn y cyfnod hynny, roedd modd symud o swydd i swydd yn ddi-drafferth, heb yr orfodaeth i ddarparu tystiolaeth o gymwysterau o unrhyw fath yn y byd. A dyna fu fy hanes, ac yn yr un cyfnod, priodais yn llawer rhy ifanc, bu i fi ysgaru yn nghanol y 1970au a symudais i Ddulyn ac yna i Gaerdydd.

Tra yn byw yn Nghaerdydd, cwrddais a'r Dr Mered Evans, roeddwn yn adnabod Merêd a'i deulu yn dda, cefais fy magwraeth cynnar yn Nhanygrisiau, ar aelwyd oedd yn yr un rhesdai a chartref teulu Merêd, tra'n sgwrsio, awgrymodd Merêd y dylwn fynd i Goleg Harlech i ail gydio yn fy addysg, doeddwn i ddim yn credu bod gen i siawns o gael fy nerbyn yno o gwbl am nad oedd gen i unrhyw gymwysterau o unrhyw fath a wnes i ddim meddwl mwy am dan yr awgrym. Yna, o fewn wythnos, ffoniodd Merêd, roedd wedi gyrru am y ffurflen gais ar fy rhan ac am i ni gwrdd eto er mwyn iddo allu rhoi'r ffurflen gais i fi. Mered oedd y person cyntaf, drwy gydol fy mywyd hyd yna, i fy annog i ail gydio yn fy addysg ac i fynegi ffydd yn fy ngallu i wneud hynny. Llenwais y ffurflen a'i gyrru i'r Coleg, cefais gyfweliad ac yn mis Medi 1977, roeddwn yn fyfyrwr preswyl yn y Coleg lle roeddwn am dreilio'r ddwy mlynedd hapusaf o fy mywyd.

Roeddwn wedi dewis i letya ar y 5ed llawr, y llawr Cymraeg, yn y Neuadd

preswyl o 10 llawr, a phan gyrhaeddais ar y tren yn Harlech roedd yna nifer o fyfyrwyr o'r ail flwyddyn, oedd hefyd yn lletya ar y 5ed llawr, yn aros amdanaf ar y platfform i'm croesawu i'r Coleg. Cydiodd un yn fy nghes a cyn pen chwinciad, roeddwn yn eistedd yn y gegin fach ar llawr 5, paned o goffi yn fy llaw, yn teimlo'n hollol gatrefol yn sgwrsio ac yn chwerthin yn nghwmni'r criw o gyfeillion newydd oedd bellach wedi llenwi'r gegin fach reit at y drws.

Erbyn diwedd y diwrnod cyntaf yna, roeddwn wedi cwrdd a chyfeillgaru a phawb ar y 5ed llawr gan gynnwys y criw o fyfyrwyr newydd fel fi fy hunan, pob un yn fyfyrwr aeddfed gyda oedrannau yn cychwyn yn eu hugeinau ac yn diweddu yn eu chwedegau, a'r cyfan ohonym â phrofiadau bywyd amrywiol o dan ein belt.

Cwrs dwy flynedd oedd y cwrs diploma yn y Coleg ac ar ddiwedd y dwy mlynedd, a chyn belled a bod yr arholiadau terfynol yn cael eu pasio, byddai'r myfyrwyr yn gymwys i gael y Diploma a oedd yn gyfystyr a dwy lefel A. a dyna oedd yr allwedd a fyddai'n agor y drws i allu cario'n mlaen ag addysg uwch mewn prifysgol.

Dewisais Atudiaethau Cymraeg fel pwnc i astudio yn y Coleg, gyda'r annwyl [REDACTED] yn ddarlithydd Llenyddiaeth Cymraeg arnaf, a'r amryddawn [REDACTED] [REDACTED], [REDACTED] a'r [REDACTED] yn ddarlithwyr yn yr amrywiol elfennau o hanes oedd yn berthnasol i'r cwrs.

Wnes fwynhau pob eiliad o'r darlithoedd a'r trafodaethau yn y dosbarth ac fe cefais flas ar ddysgu fel na gefais erioed yn yr ysgol, a doedd y dysgu a'r broses o agor ffiniau ym mhob cornelyn o'r ymennydd ddim yn diweddu yn y dosbarth, roedd cymdeithasu a thrafod pob math o bynciau gyda myfyrwyr o bob rhan o Gymru a thu hwnt. Rhai o Loegr, yr Alban, ac Iwerddon ac o Batagonia hyd yn oed, yn agoriad llygaid ac yn addysg dibrisiadwy yn ei hunan, ac roedd y coleg yn unigryw yn y ffaith iddo fod yn ddigon bach i wneud i ni gyd, boed i ni fod yn fyfyrwyr, darlithwyr neu staff, deimlo i ni gyd fod yn rhan o deulu clos

Daeth y dwy flynedd i ben yn llawer rhy gyflym, cefais fy niploma ac es i'r brifysgol yn Aberystwyth i astudio drama a hanes Cymru. Yn ddiweddarach, enillais ol-radd MBA mewn Rheoli Twristiaeth yn Ngholeg y Drindod Caerfyrddin.

Oni bai am y Dr Merêd Evans, byddwn byth wedi cael y fraint a'r pleser o fod yn fyfyrwr yn Ngholeg Harlech, ac onibai am Coleg Harlech, byddwn byth wedi mynd i'r brifysgol yn aberystwyth ac wedi hynny i ddilyn cwrs ôl-radd yn y Drindod yn Nghaerfyrddin. Doedd petha felna ddim yn digwydd i rhywun fel fi, plentyn o'r dosbarth gweithiol oedd wedi gorfod gadael yr ysgol yn 15 oed heb fawr o addysg i son amdano.

Gelwid Coleg Harlech yn "Goleg yr Ail Gynnig" ond i aelodau o'r dosbarth gweithiol a amddifadwyd o addysg teilwng tra yn yr ysgol, Coleg Harlech, mewn gwirionedd, oedd eu "cyfle cyntaf" am addysg teilwng a fyddai'n gallu cyfoethogi a gwella eu byd. Gan ei fod, ei hunan, yn blentyn i chwarelwr, roedd y Dr Meredydd Evans yn deall yn iawn faint mor bwysic ac unigryw oedd Coleg Harlech ac dwi'n sicr, petai'n gweld y trybeini mae'r Coleg ynddo ar hyn o bryd, byddai'n troi yn ei fedd.

Mae'n anodd credu fod methiant rheolaeth wedi achosi i Goleg Harlech gael ei gau a'i werthu o gwbl - ac am bris afresymol o rhad tra, ar yr un adeg,, roedd £6miliwn o arian cyhoeddus yn cael ei wario ar bont fechan i groesi'r ffôs rhwng y maes parcio a chastell Harlech er mwyn gwella'r profiad o ymweld a'r castell i ymwelwyr! Mae Coleg Harlech a'r difreintiedig yn Nghymru yn haeddu gwell a dylai Llywodraeth Cymru ail brynu'r Coleg a'r theatr yn ô yn ddi-oedl ar gyfer dibenion pobl Cymru.

### **Dewi Prysor (Williams)**

Mae Coleg Harlech yn haeddu Ail-Gyfle!

“Dwi’n nabod cymaint o bobl a fu mor lwcus i gael y cymorth, gwerth, cyfle a’r budd yr oedd Coleg Harlech yn ei gynnig. Dwi’n un o’r bobl hynny. Mi wnaeth Coleg Harlech newid llwybrau cannoedd o fywydau, gan roi ailgyfle i oedolion oedd wedi methu’r trêen academaidd oherwydd cefndir neu amgylchiadau personol a.y.b. – neu jysd erioed wedi meddwl am y peth pan oedd y trêen yn gadael y platfform. Dwi’n un o’r bobl yma hefyd – oedolion oedd eisiau ail-gyfle, eisiau ffordd a ail-fynediad i addysg. Ond heb gymwysterau i gael mynediad i’r sefydliadau addysg, roedd y drysau i gyd ar gau.

Diolch bod Coleg Harlech yno, sefydliad unigryw yng Nghymru, oedd yn cynnig

yr addysg a chymwysterau oedd ei angen i bontio rhwng Ysgol Uwchradd a Prifysgol. Roedd cael Diploma Prifysgol Cymru gan Coleg Harlech yn cyfateb i Lefel A yr ysgolion, ac yn ein caniatâu i ymgeisio i fynd i Brifysgol, a cael ein derbyn, a chael bwrw mlaen yn ein diddordebau academaidd a cael ehangu gorwelion. Sut yn y byd y gellid caeu sefydliad fel hwn?

Roedd pobl yn dod i Coleg Harlech o bob cwr o Gymru ac o ardaloedd gwahanol o Brydain, pob rhan o Iwerddon – ac yn bellach hefyd, o lefydd fel Patagonia a Mozambique. Nid yn unig roedd budd academaidd a phersonol i'w gael yng Ngholeg Harlech, ond roedd pawb yn gwneud ffrindiau o bob cwr o'r byd – llawer ohonynt yn ffrindiau agos sydd yn dal mewn cysylltiad heddiw. Roeddau ni'n deulu mawr lliwgar yng Ngholeg Harlech, pobl o bob lliw a llun a iaith a chefnidir a rhywioldeb a chredoau, yn deulu aml-ddiwylliannol. Mae'r atgofion yn fyw o hyd.

Yn 1997 ro'n i wedi bod yn byw mewn fflats a lojings a soffas ffrindiau am flwyddyn neu ddwy. Gwnaeth hyn i fi feddwl be o'n i isio'i wneud efo fy mywyd. Wedi gweithio yn y diwydiant adeiladu am flynyddoedd yn y gorffennol, roedd fy meddwl yn crwydro mwy a mwy at y byd creadigol. A'r mwya'r o'n i'n meddwl am y peth, y mwya rhwystredig ro'n i'n mynd – achos doeddwn i ddim yn gweld bod unrhyw ffordd i wireddu'r freuddwyd. Roedd y rhwystredigaeth wedi troi yn anobaith, ac mi allai pethau fod wedi troi yn dywyll yn fy myd. Does dim byd gwaeth nag edrych yn ôl a difaru o hyd ac o hyd, yn gofyn yr un hen gwestiwn, lle fyddwn i rwan os fyswn i wedi neidio ar y trê academaidd hwnnw yn holl flynyddoedd yn ôl.

Ac ar ddechrau mis Medi 1997 daeth cnoc ar ddrws fy fflat. [REDACTED] oedd yno, fy ffrind o'r fflat uwchben. Roedd hi'n cynnig dodrefn i fi. Doedd hi ddim eu hangen nhw, gan ei bod hi'n symud allan, wedi cael ei derbyn i Coleg Harlech. Roeddwn i wedi clywed am y Coleg, wrth gwrs, ond rioed wedi meddwl bod modd i rywun fynd iddo heb gymwysterau. Erbyn dallt, roedd siawns i unrhyw un geisio am gael lle yno – unrhyw un rhwng 18 a 55 oed. Ro'n i'n nesu am fy 30 oed, ac er fy mod i'n gwybod fod y tymor ar fin dechrau a byddai dim lle ar ôl, penderfynais fynd i lawr yno i drïo fy lwc. Ges i air efo [REDACTED] yn y Swyddfa, ac mi roddodd alwad i'r hanesydd [REDACTED] – un o diwtoriaid yr adran 'Hanes, Llenyddiaeth a Syniadau'. O fewn pum munud roeddwn yn ei swyddfa fo yn cael sgwrs am be o'n i isio'i wneud. "Hanes, ysgrifennu creadigol, a

gwleidyddiaeth,” medda fi. “I have just the thing for you,” atebodd [REDACTED].  
“History, Literature and Ideas.”

A dyna ni. Does gen i ddim byd ond diolch a pharch anferth tuag at [REDACTED] am fy nerbyn i Coleg Harlech. Roedd y tiwtoriaid i gyd yn ymroddedig, egwyddorol a chyfeillgar, a dwi’n ddiolchgar iawn i’r tîm Hanes, Llenyddiaeth a Syniadau – [REDACTED], [REDACTED], [REDACTED], [REDACTED] – a staff modiwlau eraill, [REDACTED] a [REDACTED], a [REDACTED] ([REDACTED] ddysgodd ni i ddefnyddio cyfrifiadur). A staff y swyddfa a’r cantîn. Diolch i bawb am yr atgofion, yr hwyl a’r agor llenni.

Cyrsiau un flwyddyn o hyd oedd erbyn yr adeg roeddwn i yn y Coleg, ac yn 1998 gefais fy Diploma Prifysgol Cymru yn Hanes, Llenyddiaeth a Syniadau, a cael fy nerbyn i Aberystwyth. Ond ym mis Ebrill 1998 ganwyd y cyntaf o dri o feibion i [REDACTED] a minnau, a gohiriais fynd i Brifysgol Aberystwyth. Gohiriais eto yn 1999 pan anwyd yr ail fab. Ond o’r diwedd, yn 2000 fe gymerais fy lle yn Aberystwyth, ac fe symudon ni i lawr yno fel teulu am dair mlynedd. Wedyn, yn 2003 ges i fy ngradd BA Dosbarth Cyntaf yn ‘Hanes a Hanes Cymru.’ Aeth â’r gradd â fi i sawl swydd yma ac acw, gan hyd yn oed gael job fel cyflwynydd tair cyfres o Darn Bach o Hanes, a cyfres o Stori Pêl-droed Cymru i S4C! Dwi hefyd wedi gneud cyrsiau (rai i Coleg Harlech) a nosweithiau hanes, ac yn sgwennu erthyglau i gyhoeddiadau. Dwi wedi cyhoeddi 6 nofel ac un llyfr travelogue am fy nheithiau yn Ffrainc yn dilyn Cymru adeg yr Ewros. Er mai dosbarthiadau Saesneg oedd rhai [REDACTED], dwi’n siwr imi ddysgu llawer am arddull ac yn y blaen.

Fyddwn i wedi cyflawni’r pethau hyn? “Na,” fyddai fy ateb. Does dim amdani, Coleg Harlech roddodd i mi’r cyfle i astudio Hanes fy ngwlad fy hun – peth sydd yn enwedig o bwysig i ni yma yng Nghymru, lle nad ydan ni’n cael llawer ddim o’n hanes yn yr ysgolion.

Rhoddodd Coleg Harlech obaith i gymaint o bobl. Gobaith ac ailgyfle, a llwybrau newydd i i’w dilyn, a chael ehangu gorwelion. Ac wrth roi i ni’r holl bethau hyn, roedd y Coleg hefyd yn rhoi i ni brofiad arbennig iawn. Dwi’n gobeithio y gall myfyrwyr ddod i Goleg Harlech eto, i gael y gwerth a’r budd, a’r profiad, o fod yn y lle – a’r sefydliad – arbennig hwn. Dwi’n gobeithio y gall Coleg Harlech gael ail-gyfle hefyd.



**Llythyr ar gyfer sylw aelodau o'r Pwyllgor Deisebau parthed y ddeiseb a agorwyd yn gorchymyn i Lywodraeth Cymru brynu Coleg Harlech yn ôl.**

Annwyl Aelodau,

Hoffwn eich atgoffa pan agorwyd y ddeiseb dan sylw, ,mai 5,000 o lofnodion oedd y gofyn os oedd y pwnc dan sylw i'w ystyried ar gyfer trafodaeth yn Siambr y Senedd ond, yn ddiweddarach, newidiwyd y nifer o lofnodion roedd eu hangen ar ddeisebau i 10,000! Beth bynnag oedd y rhesymeg dros y newid, mae'n symudiad hollol anemocrataidd i newid y gofynion ar beth oedd yn gytundeb rhwng y deisebydd a Llywodraeth Cymru.

Gwlad bychan iawn yw Cymru gyda cwta 3 miliwn o ddinasyddion tra bod Lloegr, drws nesa, a dros 56 miliwn o ddinasyddion ond, tydi Llywodraeth San Steffan ond yn gofyn am 10,000 o lofnodion ar ddeisebau os yw pwnc i'w hystyried am drafodaeth yn Senedd San Steffan felly, mae'n amlwg bod Llywodraeth Cymru yn gweithredu'n annheg i fynnu 10,000 o lofnodion ar ddeisebau allan o boblogaeth sy'n llawer llai na phoblogaeth Lloegr.

Mae'r ddeiseb dan sylw wedi dod i ben gyda 6,645 o lofnodion arni ac oherwydd yr anghysondeb ac anhegwch yr amlinellir uchod, rydym yn galw ar y Pwyllgor Deisebau i anrhydeddu'r cytundeb a wnaed pan agorwyd y ddeiseb ac i gytuno i'r pwnc gael ei drafod yn y Siambr fel pwnc sydd, yn amlwg, yn un pwysig i Gymru a'i phobl.

Yn gywir

Sian Ifan

Peter Evans

Padi Phillips.

## Coleg Harlech Regeneration

Some thoughts.

My simple view is that you need a successful mix of:

- Capital & Revenue (aka the budget)
- Vision and Purpose
- Sponsors and political will
- Land assembly
- People and community engagement
- Business case
- Function
- Project management

To pull off a Regeneration project.

If you think about what created the original Coleg Harlech these are the basic elements that combined. Then it was a project, so the first, third and fourth bullets were probably 'relatively' easy. Whilst now it's a would be a regeneration project, which buildings apart, means that to be successful, all the elements need to be in place, some at the outset and some in succession.

**Capital.** A successful regeneration project needs money. It needs both capital to undertake the costly stuff and revenue to pay for the immediate and the future. Too often the capital is the easy bit and the revenue is both the difficult part and the risk.

My view is that a basic regeneration of the current Coleg Site would cost about £10 / £12m.

It's crazy really, but with 'Sponsors and political will', I think that the Capital, say £12m would be relatively easy to get. For a a) Regeneration of the Coleg for learning project I would be looking to a combination of sources which would be WG and the Heritage lottery fund as well as Gwynedd and a potential Educational Institute (say Aber or Bangor for example as partners) and charities like the Theatres Trust. . For a b) Housing Regeneration project substitute a Housing Association for Educational Institute.

Revenue. Is trickier, as ALW found and presumably WEA and Coleg Harlech before it. .It's the life blood / cash flow that keeps the system alive, it can expand and contract, but it needs a minimum to keep the system viable. The greater the asset, the larger the liability and the more need for revenue and cash flow.

Budget. Both pots need to be allocated against a work programme into the relevant budgets of the organisations involved. Over the project life.

Here's a link to some evaluation on community led regeneration projects. It's not the final word, but

it's a good framework to start thinking about regeneration and engagement.

[https://laisygoedwig.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2013/12/Community\\_Planning\\_Approaches\\_July\\_13.pdf](https://laisygoedwig.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2013/12/Community_Planning_Approaches_July_13.pdf)

I've seen some great regeneration projects in Wales fail because they had the capital 'Rhondda life', but not the revenue ...or insufficient capital to create the conditions to generate sufficient revenue. The Red House in Merthyr was a great Regeneration project, but it looks as if recently, because of internal 'management conflicts' it's struggling. Chapter in Cardiff though as we know is a pretty amazing success. But it's Cardiff and how even it will fare post pandemic is moot.

Vision and Purpose. What's it going to do and how's it going to do it. A vital debate and one that it's vital to get right. A successful vision creates the route map to how you might do it. This needs to be debated out with the potential; community who will use, benefit, engage and often operate the asset. It also needs to be either shared with or lined up with the Sponsors and Political Will.

Let's think about what we currently have:

Options as a future for learning. There's is genuine potential (people might not like the vision and purpose) for developing a new generation of 'mini nuclear reactors' at Traws and a Space centre for 'Horizontal Space Take off' at Llanbedr. If the remaining Admin Block, Library, Theatre, Tower Block site and say the St David's site was used, it could be the eco system for a College training people in the relevant skills and qualifications needed to work in these worlds. It could be an FE Centre operating alongside this, or possibly say linked to Coleg Cambria, a residential centre in its own right. It could be a centre for Welsh language, Welsh History, Social Work, Teachers training linked to say Aber or Bangor (who I always hoped would step in and take it on), particularly because of the former ties with Aber. There may be other possibilities that I haven't thought of (Hence the need for a Community voice). Of these above the Traws and Space Centre options appeal to me, because of the link with future operating needs at scale. Airbus at Broughton for example take on 60 apprentices a year for a 5000k operation. And these are high quality, highly sought STEM roles.

Another project might be social housing and a mix of use for learning at the library, admin block and Arts and Learning at the Theatre. For me this is the most plausible future. Why? Basically because Harlech now is a different place to the one we went to in the 70's or 80's. Then, the Coleg assets apart, there was a fairly thriving small (less than 2k pop) town, with a night time economy. Now I believe that the only pub still open is the Queens. It's not I think, a particularly appealing place in the 2020's for a residential type Coleg of any sort. On the other hand Social Housing gives something back to the Community. A development could be also linked to community workshops and community ownership and use of the Library, Admin and Theatre. A social housing partner, whilst needing to be initially incentivised on the capital front, would bring its own capital contribution and also vital project management skills in managing the quality of the regeneration programme whilst the social housing was enabled and the heritage sites were regenerated. Social Housing also helps regenerate Harlech itself and is key to the vision of at least two of the local Housing Associations. Whilst there are varying degrees of quality within Social Housing organisations, basically I trust them as partners, largely because they get their own revenue stream from the relationship. I would hedge bets at the moment and say many people want it to be as it was a residential adult learning centre for the people of Wales, but it may be that there are different viable options and the community needs a clear voice in articulating this. I'd be interested in hearing what possible Senedd sponsors

think is viable and how they would play the process.

#### Sponsors and political will

Juxtapose with the founders of Coleg Harlech, we don't have any – yet! They were vital then, they will be vital now. WE don't have an Irene White (for good or bad), or a Michael Sheen – yet. We do have 6.5k people who signed a petition and probably more out there. Counterbalance this though with the many voices (some loud) in the Senedd and unfortunately the community also who are either passive or don't want to unpick the CH story, or want it to quietly go away.

The 6.5k potentially gives us a voice and hopefully a debate. The debate needs to know what it is looking for which' not discounting the cost on capital and revenue' I would say is largely about connecting Vision and Purpose, with Sponsors and political will, with People and community engagement.

If the potential Senedd 'debate' took us some way on the Vision and Purpose, got us the Sponsors and Political will and led to the third as an outcome, with some commitment to putting the Harlech Regen plan into a Manifesto and someone's work programme (say WG, Gwynedd and a Housing Association) and an initial allocation of the budget funding to start toward creating project milestones and a plan, I would be very happy.

An additional possibility is if 6k people were actively willing to buy into the Vision and willing to give say £100 each to create shares for a community regeneration trust that supported the revenue of operating the library, Admin and Theatre as community assets. Then that's an initial £6m crowd sourced fund. It's bold but it can and has been done.

#### Land assembly

A lot trickier than it was when the initial ALW site was picked up for a song. Crown Lodge and the Wardens House have long gone. Some parts of the second sale (amenity centre) have started development. I think that the debate needs to mandate a process that effectively starts an immediate and long term process of land assembly. I think now it's a compulsory purchase order on the Library, Admin Block, Theatre as well as the St Dai's site and former Block. Compulsory purchase isn't easy and Councils don't like doing them, consequently Political Will is needed. The longer term, depending on the purpose of the site, is then part of the future. Much as the old Coleg itself grew organically as time and opportunity flowed. For example if it was a residential college, would you purchase the former Rum Hole as a Student Amenity site? The current Amenity centre build in the 80's was sold and I believe work has started to transform it into something tangible. Good luck to it, but it might be a future possible asset target too.

#### People and community engagement

You can't untangle vision and purpose, sponsors and political will from people and community engagement. Once you have captured the political will to the initial vision of 'something must be done' and a few ideas that test future viability of purpose, the people in the community must engage to interrogate and be part of the decision around the future.

BUT, the purpose that comes out of this must be viable. If it's a predominantly housing association

play, supporting a community arts centre fine, but is the demand proven in the community and more importantly has the community the skills and stamina to operate management effectively and generate future revenue around purpose. If not it's just an AWL albatross, with no options other than constantly testing the private sector and hoping a commercial solution comes forward. The same applies to a future residential college. There are milestones in developing a regeneration programme and community engagement is a very early part of this process. The link above gives some examples of how this has been tackled.

We mustn't discount community fatigue either. A lot of good smart, people will have been fighting for the initial vision, or some version of it, for Coleg Harlech for 30 years. Many of the voices that have been through these battles will have become cynical or old or tired. The only tangible example of a community response to date has been Sheila Maxwell's 'Arc' of CH at the Old Library and whilst this is a wonderful achievement, it's sadly not a hub of activism around revival and lessons need to be taken from this. There have also been two large and costly examples of studies that look to provide the answers that this petition also seeks. One was the WEA ALW led Coleg Harlech plan: [https://www.adultlearning.wales/UserFiles/Files/Public\\_Documents/Feasibility\\_Study/Coleg\\_Harlech\\_Site\\_Feasibility\\_Study.pdf](https://www.adultlearning.wales/UserFiles/Files/Public_Documents/Feasibility_Study/Coleg_Harlech_Site_Feasibility_Study.pdf)

and the second, the Harlech Regeneration plan.

<https://www.gwynedd.llyw.cymru/en/Businesses/Documents-Busnes/Regeneration/Harlech-Regeneration-Consultation-Panels.pdf>

<https://www.gwynedd.llyw.cymru/en/Businesses/Documents-Busnes/Regeneration/Harlech/Harlech-Strategic-Guide.pdf>

I'm not aware of how these were developed and delivered but nothing feels as if it's been achieved by either and I'm guessing that because of lack of Vision and Purpose and Sponsors and political will and because this is a small town in a low population region, where resource and human capital is in short supply. What's different about us now, to where we were recently? Well really only that 'nothing has been done and we have 6500 signatures on a petition. But the people who don't want to do anything and have the political will to stop anything being done will point to the work, time and money above. We believe that something should be done that honours the past, because it's important to us and hopefully 6.5k people. Not all will feel like this and I the community doesn't it's another failed initiative costing public resource.

This is for me another treason pointing toward a Social Housing solution.

### **Business case**

The business case is essential, but (although you might need to start a 5 case plan early in order to catch budget) it is a process that is dynamic and flows from the combinations above. It proves the viability of the Function that is decided on and provides a route map and milestones in achieving this. Once everything is up and running, then it becomes 'business as usual' and subject to effective management by

the Board and management of the operation. Subject if you want it to and its purpose, future reviews on achieving outcomes and benefits realisation.

Function Simple to say. Form follows function. Difficult to do, However as long as the processes above are effectively determined, managed and evolutionary then you have an entity which should survive for say 20 years.

Project management The glue that sticks it all together, once the process is agreed and the vision underway. There are phase's, first the organisation of the campaign, then the public awareness, transfer to 'project owners', then the build and then the operation. Again another reason I like Housing Associations. Often they are great at this. <http://www.pentan.co.uk/project/bargoed-library/>

And there are companies like: <https://www.themeans.co.uk/contact-us>

<http://www.theurbanists.net/> Who are good at project managing the build elements of regeneration in partnership with a housing association? But all this would be down to tender and future choice.

By virtue of paragraph(s) vi of Standing Order 17.42

Document is Restricted

# Agenda Item 2.13

## **P-05-1131 Immediate cessation of dredging operations off the Gower coast pending evaluation of adverse effects**

This petition was submitted by Kerry Lord, having collected a total of 63 signatures.

### **Text of Petition:**

Subsequent to the start of dredging operations in Rhossili Bay, there has been a substantial and severe depletion of sand on the adjacent Rhossili beach. This internationally-important area includes associated dune systems which will also be adversely affected by sand depletion. We call on the Welsh Government to effect an immediate cessation of dredging operations pending a scientific review of the sand depletion and its possible causes in order to avoid permanent damage and habitat loss.

### **Additional Information:**

Anecdotal evidence shows that despite relatively benign weather conditions over the summer 2020 season thus far, sand levels at Rhossili beach have suffered severe depletion. There also appears to be significantly increased numbers of mollusc shell remains (cockle, mussel, razor clam, oyster, etc.) as well as a vast increase in numbers of starfish casualties. With the impending autumn and winter storm season, the situation may become catastrophic for the extremely fragile ecosystems which depend on the presence of natural sand deposits. Whilst it may be coincidental that dredging operations have occurred at the same time as unusually high sand depletion at Rhossili, it is vital that dredging operations are put on immediate hold in order that an official scientific study has the opportunity to evaluate probable causes.

### **Senedd Constituency and Region**

- Gower
- South Wales West





Eich cyf/Your ref P-05-1131  
Ein cyf/Our ref LG/00129/21

Janet Finch-Saunders MS  
Chair of the petitions committee

11<sup>th</sup> February 2021

Dear Janet,

Thank you for your letter of 20 January regarding a petition stating - "Subsequent to the start of dredging operations in Rhossili Bay, there has been a substantial and severe depletion of sand on the adjacent Rhossili beach." The petition calls for "Welsh Government to effect an immediate cessation of dredging operations pending a scientific review of sand depletion and its possible causes" and states that there appears to be a significant increase in the numbers of mollusc shell remains which "may become catastrophic for the extremely fragile ecosystems".

Marine aggregate dredging is strictly licenced by NRW Marine Licensing Team (MLT) on behalf of Welsh Ministers in accordance with provisions of the Marine and Coastal Access Act 2009. Licences are issued subject to environmental impact assessment (EIA) and also, if appropriate, coastal impact studies. Licence conditions are applied to effect compliance and monitoring and these are enforced by WG marine enforcement officers.

In order to ensure compliance with any licence conditions, aggregate dredging vessels are required to have an Electronic Monitoring Systems (EMS) on board (black boxes) which are monitored daily by The Crown Estate with the results sent to NRW MLT.

The nearest aggregate dredging site is at the Nobel Bank (site A476); some 19km south west where Llanelli Sand Dredging Ltd (LSD) has a marine licence to extract up to 2,000,000m tonnes of sand per year until 2023. The licence was issued as a renewal in 2016 being first issued in 2006 following a Public Inquiry. No marine aggregate dredging takes place near Rhossili beach, although the LSD vessel "Sospan Dau" does anchor in Rhossili bay awaiting the tide to return to its landing berth at Pwll.

Bae Caerdydd • Cardiff Bay  
Caerdydd • Cardiff  
CF99 1SN

Canolfan Cyswllt Cyntaf / First Point of Contact Centre:  
0300 0604400

[Gohebiaeth.Lesley.Griffiths@llyw.cymru](mailto:Gohebiaeth.Lesley.Griffiths@llyw.cymru)  
[Correspondence.Lesley.Griffiths@gov.wales](mailto:Correspondence.Lesley.Griffiths@gov.wales)

Rydym yn croesawu derbyn gohebiaeth yn Gymraeg. Byddwn yn ateb gohebiaeth a dderbynnir yn Gymraeg yn Gymraeg ac ni fydd gohebu yn Gymraeg yn arwain at oedi.

We welcome receiving correspondence in Welsh. Any correspondence received in Welsh will be answered in Welsh and corresponding in Welsh will not lead to a delay in responding.

Considerable work and studies were undertaken associated with a review of aggregates dredging policy in the late 1990's on sand resources, oceanography and biology of the Bristol Channel region. This led to policy supporting more offshore dredging, which is where it takes place now. These and other studies and reports have considered environmental and coastal impacts including a [technical review](#) of aggregate dredging monitoring results undertaken in October 2016.

Current understanding is the hydrodynamics of the Bristol Channel causes a limited west – east movement of sediment in deep waters with some lateral movement in shallower waters nearer the coast. Monitoring of the Nobel bank site, shows only local sediment movement across the area. None of the research or the monitoring shows any causal linkage to the coast, nor would this be expected due to the nature of the physical processes at work.

Accordingly, the petitioners' linkage of aggregate dredging to coastal sand movement is not supported by the available evidence.

The petition also refers to a significant increase in mollusc shell remains and starfish wash up, seemingly associated with storm actions and which could have ecological impact. Often, with storm events, shellfish are washed up - particularly on south westerly exposed beaches from Carmarthen bay eastwards to beyond Porthcawl. The main stranded species are razor clams (*Ensis siliqua* and *E arcuatus*), Egg shell razor (*Pharus legumen*), Sand gaper (*Mya arenaria*), Otter shell (*Iutraria lutraria*), Spiny cockle (*Acanthocardia echinata*), other small clam species, common cockles, blue mussels, burrowing sea urchin (*Echnocardium cordatum*) and in the spring common starfish. The oyster shells are relict – dating to the late 1800's when the species was locally more prolific. All of these species are widely distributed, abundant and the populations live in and are adapted to a mobile marine environment. Stranding following storm events are not considered to represent significant ecological impacts.

The evidence therefore suggests the observations at Rhossili are not related to aggregate dredging but, rather, relate to winter storms.

Yours sincerely,



**Lesley Griffiths AS/MS**

Gweinidog yr Amgylchedd, Ynni a Materion Gwledig  
Minister for Environment, Energy and Rural Affairs

Bae Caerdydd • Cardiff Bay  
Caerdydd • Cardiff  
CF99 1SN

Canolfan Cyswllt Cyntaf / First Point of Contact Centre:  
0300 0604400

[Gohebiaeth.Lesley.Griffiths@llyw.cymru](mailto:Gohebiaeth.Lesley.Griffiths@llyw.cymru)  
[Correspondence.Lesley.Griffiths@gov.wales](mailto:Correspondence.Lesley.Griffiths@gov.wales)

Rydym yn croesawu derbyn gohebiaeth yn Gymraeg. Byddwn yn ateb gohebiaeth a dderbynnir yn Gymraeg yn Gymraeg ac ni fydd gohebu yn Gymraeg yn arwain at oedi.

We welcome receiving correspondence in Welsh. Any correspondence received in Welsh will be answered in Welsh and corresponding in Welsh will not lead to a delay in responding.

**P-05-1131 Immediate cessation of dredging operations off the Gower coast pending evaluation of adverse effects, Correspondence – Petitioner to Committee, 23.02.21**

Thank you very much for your reply and for the inclusion of the Minister's response.

However, we strongly believe that the Minister may have been misled when requesting information for her response. Our family has the benefit of a static caravan directly overlooking Rhossili beach and bay, at Hillend. As occasional stargazers, we also have the use of a powerful telescope and binoculars with which we have observed the vessel "Sospan Dau" on numerous occasions, apparently dredging within the bay. The vessel has frequently been witnessed in position approximately mid-point between Worm's Head and Burry Holmes for many hours, well in excess of the necessary inter-tidal times which are claimed. At these times, significant turbulence has been obvious in the water surrounding the vessel, indicating a high likelihood that the dredging process has been underway. The vessel has also appeared to be lower in the water at the end of its stints in the bay, as deduced from observation of the plimsoll line.

As a qualified skipper, I have a good understanding of tidal streams and vessel movement. I have witnessed Sospan Dau apparently returning from the Nobel Bank and anchoring. We have also noted other occasions when, as stated above, the vessel has emerged from the Loughor estuary and spent many hours in Rhossili Bay before returning. At these times, the same turbulence has been observed around the vessel.

I realise that all commercial vessels are required to be equipped with AIS transponders which record the vessel details, including course, activity, speed, bearing, etc. However, these can easily be programmed with insufficient or incorrect information, or even switched off entirely, although I am not suggesting that the vessel's master has done so. The point is that AIS information cannot, solely, be relied upon as an accurate basis for accountability. I do not have access to historical AIS information regarding the vessel's movements, as this requires an expensive paid subscription, but our family, along with very many other residents and staff at Hillend have been under no illusion that dredging has been taking place in the bay. The concomitant denuding of the beach's sand is such that anecdotal estimates by those with decades of intimate knowledge of the area place the level at the lowest ever witnessed.

Regarding the influence of winter storms, destruction of shellfish and removal of sand does indeed occur during these events. However, the sand is just as likely to be deposited as removed, depending on the nature of the weather event. Our observations of shellfish casualties and devastatingly low sand levels were made during the spring, summer and autumn of 2020, as and when COVID restrictions permitted access to the beach.

I urge the committee to investigate the issues raised with urgency. If our observations of turbulence and load can be proven to be caused by some other factors, then I apologise for taking up the committee's time, but we remain

convinced in the likelihood that dredging has been taking place in Rhossili Bay and that this has led to the severe reduction of sand and destruction of shellfish habitat as originally stated in the petition.

With kind regards,

# Agenda Item 2.14

## **P-05-1132 Instigate an Independent Judicial Inquiry into Cwm Taf Morgannwg University Health Board**

This petition was submitted by Cllr. Mike Powell, having collected a total of XX signatures.

### **Text of Petition:**

On the 15-17 January 2019 a report from both the Royal College of Midwives and Royal College of Obstetricians and Gynaecologists led to the bringing to light of serious and distressing incidences in the maternity provision under the control of the Cwm Taf Morgannwg University Health Board.

We request a Judicial Inquiry as to how the major failure in the Cwm Taf Morgannwg University Health Board maternity services occurred.

We request this Judicial Inquiry as it is not within the remit of the Welsh Parliament requested review by the Independent Maternity Services Oversight Panel to find out what brought about this failure.

### **Additional Information:**

"The assessors found a service working under extreme pressure and under sub-optimal clinical and managerial leadership. The identification by the Health Board of the under-reporting of SIs had resulted in increased internal and external scrutiny, highlighting that basic governance processes were not yet properly in place. The service was also expected to imminently merge two separate consultant led units onto one site with a freestanding midwifery led unit on the other site, with no evidence that clinical teams were engaged and supportive of this decision and process. This was compounded by a shortfall in the midwifery establishment, sub-optimal senior clinical leadership, a significant use of locum medical staff at both junior and consultant level and a lack of established standards of practice."

[https://gov.wales/sites/default/files/publications/2019-04/review-of-maternity-services-at-cwm-taf-health-board\\_0.pdf](https://gov.wales/sites/default/files/publications/2019-04/review-of-maternity-services-at-cwm-taf-health-board_0.pdf)

### **Senedd Constituency and Region**

- Pontypridd
- South Wales Central



Eich cyf/Your ref Petition P-05-1132  
Ein cyf/Our ref VG/01585/21

Janet Finch-Saunders MS  
Chair  
Petitions Committee

10 February 2021

Dear Janet,

Thank you for your letter of 20 January.

While the report from the independent review from the Royal College of Midwives and Royal College of Obstetricians and Gynaecologists into maternity services at the former Cwm Taf University Health Board published in April 2019 identified wide ranging concerns about the quality of care, it also raised significant concerns and questions about the effectiveness of wider board leadership and governance.

I took very seriously the broader concerns about governance highlighted within the report and considered these to be a significant factor in contributing to the failures that had come to light in maternity services. These include concerns in respect of quality governance, data accuracy, serious incident reporting and critically leadership and organisational governance. A similar level of concern was expressed through the tripartite escalation and intervention group, comprising my officials, Audit Wales (AW) and Healthcare Inspectorate Wales (HIW), in relation to the Board's governance arrangements for quality. This included matters highlighted through serious incident reporting and regulator visits. Consequently, I accepted the advice of the tripartite group to increase the organisation's overall escalation to targeted intervention in April 2019, whilst also placing maternity services into special measures.

It is also important to note that prior to this, the then health board was placed into enhanced monitoring (level 2) of the escalation framework in January 2019, following advice from an exceptional meeting of the tripartite group. This was due to a number of issues, including maternity services, but also other emerging areas of concern in respect of organisational governance.

In addition to the specific actions I took following the publication of the Royal Colleges report to seek immediate improvements and assurance about the quality of maternity services and Board governance, the regulators, HIW and AW, confirmed that they would undertake a joint review of quality governance arrangements in place within the health board. This reported in November 2019 and confirmed there were a number of fundamental weaknesses in governance around patient safety and the quality of care. They expressed

Canolfan Cyswllt Cyntaf / First Point of Contact Centre:  
0300 0604400

Bae Caerdydd • Cardiff Bay  
Caerdydd • Cardiff  
CF99 1SN

[Gohebiaeth.Vaughan.Gething@llyw.cymru](mailto:Gohebiaeth.Vaughan.Gething@llyw.cymru)  
[Correspondence.Vaughan.Gething@gov.wales](mailto:Correspondence.Vaughan.Gething@gov.wales)

Rydym yn croesawu derbyn gohebiaeth yn Gymraeg. Byddwn yn ateb gohebiaeth a dderbynnir yn Gymraeg yn Gymraeg ac ni fydd gohebu yn Gymraeg yn arwain at oedi.

We welcome receiving correspondence in Welsh. Any correspondence received in Welsh will be answered in Welsh and corresponding in Welsh will not lead to a delay in responding.

concern that the weaknesses were compromising the health board's ability to identify and respond to quality of care and patient safety problems.

They found that whilst there has been a strong focus on financial balance and meeting key targets, less attention had been paid to the overall quality and safety of its services. They highlighted the need for stronger and broader leadership in respect of quality and patient safety and worryingly, pointed to a culture of fear and blame in some parts of the organisation that had prevented staff from speaking out and raising concerns. This was similar to that identified in maternity services.

More broadly, the review found gaps in key governance arrangements associated with the management and identification of risk, and the provision of information to support effective scrutiny by the board and its committees. The need for improvements in the way incidents were classified and reported was also highlighted.

Whilst the review highlighted a significant number of concerns, it did note that the health board has started to take actions to address them. It also highlighted the impact that the new leadership was starting to have in tackling what was a considerable set of challenges. AW and HIW are currently undertaking a follow up review to assess progress.

All of these issues point to underpinning weaknesses in the governance of the organisation and which in turn enabled problems in maternity services to go unnoticed by the Board and sadly, therefore not addressed before significant concerns in the quality of care had arisen. Our focus now must be on ensuring that sustainable improvements are made to ensure the Board can never again be unsighted on such a level of concern amongst any of its services.

Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Vaughan Gething". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

**Vaughan Gething AS/MS**

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

# Agenda Item 3.1

## **P-05-934 Public Transport in Blaenau Gwent**

This petition was submitted by Ebbw Fawr Business Community having collected a total of 1,332 signatures on paper.

### **Text of Petition**

The people below would like to raise their concern about the poor public transport within Blaenau Gwent. This has led to residents having difficulty travelling to their place of work. They also experience problems attending Hospitals and Doctors for medical attention. The cut backs have also made travelling at best time consuming and arduous and in some cases impossible.

### **Senedd Constituency and Region**

- Blaenau Gwent
- South Wales East



Lee Waters AS/MS  
Dirprwy Weinidog yr Economi a Thrafnidiaeth  
Deputy Minister for Economy and Transport



Llywodraeth Cymru  
Welsh Government

Eich cyf/Your ref P-05-934  
Ein cyf/Our ref LW/00129/21

Janet Finch-Saunders MS  
Chair Petitions Committee

09 February 2021

Dear Janet,

Thank you for your letter of 5 August regarding Petition P-05-934 Public Transport in Blaenau Gwent and subsequent email of 6 January. I apologise for the delay in responding.

I welcome the opportunity to feed into the Committee's work on this petition. Please find below, updates on the issues you requested.

### **Progress on the work undertaken by the Valleys Task Force**

#### Blaenau Gwent Integrated Responsive Transport pilot

The IRT scheme in Blaenau Gwent continues to be led by Transport for Wales (TfW) in collaboration with Blaenau Gwent County Borough Council.

Good progress has been made with the project, vehicles have been procured with grant funding made available by Welsh Government and those vehicles are equipped and branded in line with other fflecsi projects. The planning and design phase of the scheme is complete and finalised along with the proposed service patterns. TfW are in the process of building the required website pages, producing marketing materials and carrying out the procurement activities to select an operator to run the service.

The current pandemic has impacted implementation of the project and decisions about when to start the fflecsi service need to be made in line with current guidelines and restrictions regarding travel on public transport. In the meantime we continue background activities so that when circumstances allow we are ready to roll out the Blaenau Gwent fflecsi service as quickly as possible.

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0300 0604400

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Caerdydd • Cardiff  
CF99 1SN

[Gohebiaeth.Lee.Waters@llyw.cymru](mailto:Gohebiaeth.Lee.Waters@llyw.cymru)  
[Correspondence.Lee.Waters@gov.wales](mailto:Correspondence.Lee.Waters@gov.wales)

Rydym yn croesawu derbyn gohebiaeth yn Gymraeg. Byddwn yn ateb gohebiaeth a dderbynnir yn Gymraeg yn Gymraeg ac ni fydd gohebu yn Gymraeg yn arwain at oedi.

We welcome receiving correspondence in Welsh. Any correspondence received in Welsh will be answered in Welsh and corresponding in Welsh will not lead to a delay in responding.

### Strategic Hubs and A465

Local authorities in each of the Valleys taskforce strategic hub areas have been progressing a range of priority projects – all with different funding packages, delivery models and timescales which the taskforce are closely working with.

The majority of projects have already secured multiple funding sources (including match funding from local authorities) and are delivered through a partnership approach with private, public or third sector.

A thematic approach is being taken to spending the £25m originally allocated to the Strategic hubs. This will ensure we use the £25m to scale up and spread good quality projects and initiatives designed in the Valleys is more in keeping with what we're trying to achieve with the Taskforce, rather than a top down bid into a fund that will not go very far split amongst 7 hubs.

Through our ongoing work with local authorities on the Strategic Hubs, we have provided Caerphilly, Merthyr Tydfil and Rhondda Cynon Taf with £600k of additional revenue funding to commission feasibility and design studies to develop some ambitious integrated transport hubs across the Valleys.

Where appropriate, the transport hubs will replace existing rail and bus interchanges and improve infrastructure, accessibility, safety and connectivity, incorporating key metro development sites. The designs will take into account the wider regeneration ambitions for the areas providing a masterplan and initial investment programme, allowing local authorities to take forward the next phases of physical regeneration and place making.

**The implementation of the delivery plan and what plans the Welsh Government have to update their Strategy for Public Transport for the short, medium and long term in light of Covid-19.**

### Bus reform

Throughout the Covid-19 pandemic, the Welsh Government has continued to fund bus services, firstly through maintaining a skeleton network to support essential journeys, and more recently additional funding to ramp up services to support the re-opening of schools and the wider economy. This is in addition to wider transport measures including support for rail services and additional active travel measures.

On 24 September we announced that the Welsh Government is making available an additional £84.6m of funding to maintain and develop these enhanced levels of service for the rest of the financial year, while reduced demand and capacities significantly affect ticket revenues. This will bring our total support for bus services this year to £140m. A new agreement has been created to manage this funding to maximise value for money and positive outcomes in return for the public sector's increased funding. We are grateful to local authorities and bus operators for their support and flexibility during these challenging times.

The announcement will deliver some longer-term stability for the industry and allow us to continue to work in partnership to move towards the integrated public transport that we all wish to see.

The Welsh Government will continue to work with local authorities, bus operators and other stakeholders to achieve long term reform of bus services in Wales, and it is our intention that a Bus Strategy setting out short, medium and long term proposals will be available later this year.

### Cross Valleys link

To complement the Core Valleys Lines rail modernisation programme, and to help realise our vision to provide a fully integrated public transport network as part of the South East Wales Metro, we are working with local authorities, transport providers and Transport for Wales to look for opportunities to provide improved cross valleys bus links. As part of this work we are actively looking at bringing forward proposals to provide new direct east to west bus links across the south Wales Valleys region linking Rhonda Cynon Taff, Caerphilly, Blaenau Gwent, Torfaen and Newport. These new services will be carefully complement and integrate with existing local bus services, Valley Line train services and Fflecsi services at key hubs

### Update on Valleys Transport Pilot

The Valleys Transport pilot is a two year flexible pilot run in partnership with Village and Valleys Transport Association, Welsh Government and DWP. Currently in its second year, the out of hours mini bus service runs two minibuses in the Rhondda Fach community to get people to and from work in time for their shifts. The pilot is designed to ascertain what works best for those looking for better public transport access to work opportunities, particularly when they are working shift patterns.

The Welsh Government continues to work with the DWP, through Jobcentre Plus in Wales, and with employers and communities in the Valleys, to test whether shift-focused, flexible, small scale transport options would encourage a greater uptake of jobs.

We have acted swiftly to put measures in place on the vehicles to mitigate Covid-19, allowing the service to continue transporting individuals during lockdown, including key workers to their employment, whilst also ensuring their safety is at the forefront.

I trust that you find this information useful.

Yours sincerely,



### **Lee Waters AS/MS**

Dirprwy Weinidog yr Economi a Thrafnidiaeth  
Deputy Minister for Economy and Transport

## **Background Information**

### **Regeneration**

We became interested in Town Centre Regeneration in 2015 as my wife and I had a retail business in Ebbw Vale. Our first action was to contact Blaenau Gwent Council to see what plans they had and what we could do to help. Our attempts to arrange a meeting were unsuccessful as Blaenau Gwent Council refused to meet and discuss. We then became aware of the Ebbw Vale Town Centre Business Forum so we joined. At Ebbw Vale Town Centre Business Forum meetings which were infrequent we asked what contact had been made with Blaenau Gwent Council. There was to our knowledge no dialogue or contact between the Business Forum and the Council. This was really disappointing as we could see the steady decline in the Ebbw Vale Town Centre this decline was also happening in Blaenau Gwent's other Town Centres.

At this point we began looking into what other Groups, Boards, Working parties..... etc were involved in Economic Regeneration:

Blaenau Gwent Council Economic and Regeneration Department.

Blaenau Gwent Enterprise Board.

Enterprise Zone.

Tech Valley.

Valleys Taskforce.

Town Centre Regeneration Taskforce.

City Deal.

South East Wales Metro.

Regeneration Managers

Education and Public Services Welsh Government Merthyr Tydfil

We also held meetings with Business Wales and joined the FSB (Federation of Small Businesses), to see if they could help or advise on how we could engage with Blaenau Gwent Council.

We also contacted out AM Alun Davies, MP Nick Smith and Ken Skates directly.

It was at this point we were advised to create our own Business Forum so we created the Ebbw Fawr Business Community.

We again tried to arrange a meeting as Ebbw Fawr Business Community with Blaenau Gwent Council and again they refused to meet or discuss.

### **Public Transport**

In March 2018 Stagecoach cut 2 Bus Services Ebbw Vale – Cwmbran and Ebbw Vale – Newport they also made other alterations to Bus Service Timetables. These cut backs resulted in a 50% - 60% decrease in footfall as these services brought customers into Ebbw Vale from all towns between Newport and Ebbw Vale and Cwmbran and Ebbw Vale.

We then organised a petition which we presented to Blaenau Gwent Council in June 2018 with Nick Smith MP. The details of this meeting and a subsequent meeting in the Autumn 2018 has been documented in previous correspondence to the Petition Committee.

## **Response from Blaenau Gwent Council**

Can Blaenau Gwent Council elaborate on the statement “*There are difficulties being experienced by the Town Centre Forum which makes it difficult to engage with Business Owners*” as we were members of the Town Centre Forum and were not aware of these difficulties.

Also have any meetings taken place between Blaenau Gwent Council and other Towns representatives.

### **Regional / Local Transport Planning**

I would be interested to see this plan, also who has been involved in developing the plan? What consultation has taken place with the Business Community and the General Public?

### **Buses in Blaenau Gwent**

The statement “*We subsidise many of the commercial services across the County Borough*” as prior to June 2018 as stated in the meeting with Nick Smith MP. Blaenau Gwent Council did not have a transport policy for the preceding 12 years and as far as I know still do not have one. If so what criteria have they used to allocate the bus subsidies.

The statement “*We know that travelling by Bus is not popular with younger people as it tends to have a stigma attached to travelling*” can they identify what data / study they have used to backup this statement.

The general public do not use Public Transport in Blaenau Gwent as it is of poor quality and unreliable. At our meeting in the Autumn 2018 we challenged the Council Officers and Council Members to use Public Transport to see how poor and unreliable it was. This challenge was not taken up.

The only people who use Public Transport are those who have no other option.

### **Active Travel**

Please see my comments concerning Active Travel in previous correspondence.

### **Rail Services**

There is still the problem of Public Transport links to the Train Stations.

Does the proposed increase in Rail Services means that WAG and Blaenau Gwent Council see Blaenau Gwent becoming a Commuter area.

### **Integrated Responsive Transport (IRT)**

I am not aware of this Service running, I assume it has been delayed because of Covid-19.

### **5G Project**

I would be interested in more information on this project. Also what consultation has taken place with the Business Community and the General Public?

### **2019/20 Welsh Government Funding**

Can Blaenau Gwent Council identify how this money has been spent:

Local Transport Fund £150K

Safe Routes in Communities £295K

Active Travel £409K

**In conclusion:** I appreciate we are at present living in difficult times. But since we have raised our initial concerns about Public Transport and Economic Regeneration (Town Centres). Blaenau Gwent Council's response has been poor in not willing to meet to discuss our concerns regarding regeneration and ultimately stating that the problems with Public Transport is to quote them *“This is unfortunately something that is beyond our control”*.

## **Valleys Taskforce Response**

### **Blaenau Gwent Integrated Responsive Transport Pilot**

Could we have more information on how this service will be run. For how long this Pilot will run for, and what criteria will be used to gauge its success or failure.

### **Strategic Hubs and A465**

I would be interested to know what these Priority Projects are, and what projects are specific to Blaenau Gwent?

Can the Valleys Taskforce also identify where these Strategic Hubs are?

I see that £600K is being provided for feasibility studies into Integrated Transport Hubs for Caerphilly, Merthyr Tydfil and Rhondda Cynon Taf not Blaenau Gwent.

Why has Blaenau Gwent not been included?

### **Bus Reform**

When will the Bus Strategy detailing the Short, Medium and Long term proposals be available.

My initial concern that it will not be a plan but a wish list of how they would like Public Transport to look.

### **Cross Valleys Link**

Have Valleys Taskforce a timescale as to when these links will become available?

### **Valleys Transport Pilot**

This looks like an interesting project, could Valleys taskforce publish more information on how this pilot is working and if it is a success or failure.

### **In Conclusion**

I welcome the work that is being done by Valleys Taskforce. I would like to know what consultation there has been between Valleys Taskforce and the Business Community also how the General Public have been consulted, because ultimately the General Public will be the ones using Public Transport.

During my investigation into Economic Regeneration I have uncovered Plans, Strategy Documents, Consultancy Reports dating back over 40 years. All of these documents highlight Infrastructure (Good Road Links, Public Transport) as a major requirement of Economic Regeneration. Will we still be having this conversation in 40 years time!

I offer the same challenge to the Valleys Taskforce as offered to Blaenau Gwent Council. That is to use the Public Transport System that they are developing for the general public.

# Agenda Item 3.2

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

This petition was submitted by Martin Obbard having collected a total of 56 signatures.

### **Text of Petition:**

The Welsh Government, as part of its 17 day "firebreak" lockdown, is banning the selling of non-essential goods.

As a review of supermarkets shops is being undertaken of the sale of non-essential goods then all non-essential retail shops should be allowed to remain open if they choose to. We do not agree that this is a prudent or rational measure, and will create more harm than good.

### **Senedd Constituency and Region**

- Montgomeryshire
- Mid and West Wales



Eich cyf/Your ref P-05-1067  
Ein cyf/Our ref KS/00070/21

Janet Finch-Saunders MS  
Chair, Petitions Committee

26 January 2021

Dear Janet

Thank you for your letter dated 30 October on behalf of the Petitions committee regarding P-05-1067, the sale of non-essential items during lockdown restrictions. May I offer my sincere apologies for the delay in responding. Clearly the position has moved on considerably from the 'firebreak' lockdown referred to in your letter.

Coronavirus rates remain high across Wales, and the new strain of the virus has added a new dimension to the pandemic. This has increased the risk of people catching or spreading the virus whenever they are in close contact with each other. For this reason Wales will remain at Alert Level 4 until infection rates are under control which continues to limit the sale of non-essential items.

The Welsh Government expects that businesses and others understand the severity of the situation we are facing as a society and to respond accordingly. Under Alert Level 4, the default position is that people must stay at home unless they have a reasonable excuse to leave. Leaving home for any reason that is not essential is not allowed. Buying food is considered essential, however we would expect people to understand this and minimise the amount of times they leave home for this purpose and the amount of time they are away. They should also consider whether alternatives such as home delivery are available. In addition if people do not need to buy any particular product they should not leave home to do so. The Welsh Government continues to publish messages to remind the public of their obligations to others and to remind them of these points.

The guidance below sets out which businesses and premises will be required to close at alert level 4. It also describes the limited purposes for which some closed businesses and premises may be accessed.

<https://gov.wales/business-closures-alert-level-4>

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0300 0604400

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Caerdydd • Cardiff  
CF99 1SN

[Gohebiaeth.Ken.Skates@llyw.cymru](mailto:Gohebiaeth.Ken.Skates@llyw.cymru)  
[Correspondence.Ken.Skates@gov.wales](mailto:Correspondence.Ken.Skates@gov.wales)

Rydym yn croesawu derbyn gohebiaeth yn Gymraeg. Byddwn yn ateb gohebiaeth a dderbynnir yn Gymraeg yn Gymraeg ac ni fydd gohebu yn Gymraeg yn arwain at oedi.

We welcome receiving correspondence in Welsh. Any correspondence received in Welsh will be answered in Welsh and corresponding in Welsh will not lead to a delay in responding.



More recently, the greater threat posed by the new strain of the virus has required us to review the Health Protection (Coronavirus Restrictions) (No. 5) (Wales) Regulations 2020. The amendments reflect the Government's determination to do as much as possible to ensure that product retailers are meeting their obligations to minimise the risk to staff and customers of exposure to coronavirus.

All retailers are now required:

- To have signs visible to help people keep their distance and make their way around the store.
- To have sanitiser available for hands and trolleys.
- And to have systems in place to limit the number of people who can be in store at any one time.

I trust you will be reassured by this response.

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Ken', is positioned above the printed name and title.

**Ken Skates AS/MS**

Gweinidog yr Economi, Trafnidiaeth a Gogledd Cymru  
Minister for Economy, Transport and North Wales

# Agenda Item 3.3

## **P-05-942 The Golden Hour when Suffering a Stroke – Ambulance Response Times to be recategorised from Amber back to Red Status**

This petition was submitted by Ralph Rees having collected a total of 117 signatures.

### **Text of Petition**

Current Welsh Assembly Policy has categorised Ambulance Response Times to a Stroke Victim to the "Amber" Category– meaning there is NO SET Response Time Target to meet or achieve.

This Petition requests that the Response Time Target for a person suspected of suffering a stroke be recategorised and return to the "Red" Category, thereby ensuring that any stroke victim has the quickest possible Ambulance Response.

There is a well known fact of the "Golden Hour" which is the most critical 60 minutes in getting the much needed and relevant medical assistance to anyone suffering a stroke. Every single person in Wales should not have this "Golden Hour" jeopardised through having to wait for an "Amber" Category Response Time for an Ambulance.

Give Stroke Victims the Response Times they deserve and require – Make it a Red Response Time Target Today.

### **Assembly Constituency and Region**

- Preseli Pembrokeshire
- Mid and West Wales

Cwestiynau am strôc? Questions about stroke?  
Ffoniwch ein llinell gymorth neu ewch at y wefan:  
Phone our helpline or visit our website:  
0303 3033 100 / [stroke.org.uk](http://stroke.org.uk)  
(Ffôn testun / Textphone 18001 0303 3033 100)



Janet Finch-Saunders MS  
Chair, Petitions Committee  
Welsh Parliament  
Cardiff Bay  
Cardiff  
CF99 1NA

25 February 2021

Dear Ms Finch-Saunders,

**Petition P-05-942 The Golden Hour when Suffering a Stroke - Ambulance Response Times to be recategorised from Amber back to Red Status**

Thank you for your letter dated 20 March 2020 regarding the petition submitted to the committee on ambulance response times for stroke. I apologise for the delay in responding to you. The original letter was sent to a member of staff who left the organisation in 2020.

Ambulance response times is a subject we have expressed significant concerns about over the last couple of years. Ambulance response times in Wales have increased over recent years, particularly within the amber category.

In 2018/19 the average amber category ambulance response time in Wales was 24 minutes and seven seconds. 42% of calls were responded to within 30 minutes<sup>1</sup>. In 2018 ITV Wales conducted an FOI on the number of amber calls which waited over an hour for a response. They found that between October 2016 and August 2017 over 22,500 amber calls waited over an hour for a response, an increase of almost 49% on the previous year<sup>2</sup>. The FOI showed 891

<sup>1</sup> Statistics for Wales, *Ambulance services in Wales, 2018-19*, 26 June 2019. Available:

<https://gov.wales/sites/default/files/statistics-and-research/2019-06/ambulance-services-april-2018-to-march-2019-761.pdf>

<sup>2</sup> ITV Wales, ITV News investigation: Suspected stroke patients waiting up to ten hours for an ambulance in Wales, 4 December 2017, <http://www.itv.com/news/wales/2017-12-04/itv-news-investigation-suspected-stroke-patients-waiting-up-to-ten-hours-for-an-ambulance-in-wales/>

stroke calls waited over an hour for a response during this period, including 43 calls which waited over four hours for a response<sup>3</sup>.

Covid-19 appears to have increased pressure on ambulance waiting times. In December 2020 over 70% of amber category ambulances took longer than 30 minutes to arrive. In Cwm Taf Morgannwg Health Board less than 13% of amber category ambulances arrived within 30 minutes<sup>4</sup>.

Despite these disappointing figures, we do not support the proposal for returning stroke to the 'red' category for ambulance responses. While stroke is a medical emergency and requires an emergency response, the type of response required is substantially different to conditions currently in the red category. The most important element of the response is being able to take stroke patients directly to hospital. Sending a vehicle as quickly as possible means unsuitable vehicles may be sent which are unable to take the patient to hospital.

We believe sending the right vehicle, to take the patient to the right stroke unit, is the most appropriate way of providing an emergency response to stroke.

The Welsh Ambulance Services Committee published a review of the amber category in November 2018. One of the commitments made within the review was to change how ambulance responses in Wales are measured, moving towards a 'whole episode' measurement of care. This would be similar to the approach undertaken in England, where there is a target of the 180 minutes between the initial call for an ambulance and the patient receiving a brain scan, or if appropriate, thrombolysis (clot busting drugs). The Welsh Government have said they do not support the introduction of such a target in Wales.

Prior to the pandemic, we were working with the NHS in Wales to support design of this new measure and believe this is more appropriate way to measure how stroke is responded to by the Welsh Ambulance Service and wider NHS. A whole episode measure allows for the measurement of the speed of treatment once the patient arrives at hospital to be included and monitored. We hope to see a prompt recommencement and implementation of this work after the Covid-19 pandemic.

We strongly believe the Welsh Government should introduce a new national plan for stroke when the current Stroke Delivery Plan expires in 2022. This new plan should include details on how the recent increase in amber response times will be tackled, as well as how other elements

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<sup>3</sup> ITV Wales FOI data provided to the Stroke Association

<sup>4</sup> StatsWales, *Emergency responses: minute-by-minute performance for amber calls, by Local Health Board and month*. Available: <https://statswales.gov.wales/Catalogue/Health-and-Social-Care/NHS-Performance/Ambulance-Services/emergencyresponsesminutebyminuteperformanceambercalls-by-localhealthboard-month>

of the stroke treatment pathway will be prioritised so all patients receive treatment as quickly as possible.

We note the petition mentions the 'golden hour' for stroke treatment. This is no longer a clinically recognised definition. It is the case that treatments for stroke, such as thrombolysis or thrombectomy, are more effective the faster they are delivered. However, treatment windows are longer than an hour. Clinical guidance is that thrombolysis (clot busting drugs) should be delivered within 4.5 hours<sup>5</sup>, and NHS England guidance for thrombectomy is for treatment within 6 hours<sup>6</sup>. It can therefore be misleading for patients to talk about a 'golden hour', when accessing treatment should remain a priority even after the first hour has expired.

If you have any questions or would like any further information then please do not hesitate to contact me.

Matt O'Grady  
Policy, Information and Campaigns Officer, Wales  
Stroke Association

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<sup>5</sup> Royal College of Physicians, *National clinical guideline for stroke*, 2016. Available: [https://www.strokeaudit.org/SupportFiles/Documents/Guidelines/2016-National-Clinical-Guideline-for-Stroke-5t-\(1\).aspx](https://www.strokeaudit.org/SupportFiles/Documents/Guidelines/2016-National-Clinical-Guideline-for-Stroke-5t-(1).aspx)

<sup>6</sup> NHS England, *Clinical Commissioning Policy: Mechanical thrombectomy for acute ischaemic stroke (all ages)*, January 2018. Available: <https://www.england.nhs.uk/wp-content/uploads/2019/05/Mechanical-thrombectomy-for-acute-ischaemic-stroke-ERRATA-29-05-19.pdf>

# Agenda Item 3.4

## **P-05-974 Ensure the technology of prosthetic limbs provided within the Welsh NHS is equal to the rest of the UK**

This petition was submitted by David Bradley having collected a total of 561 signatures.

### **Text of Petition**

We call upon the Senedd to urge the Welsh Government to ensure that funding is in place to enable limb amputees within Wales to have prosthetic technology at least equal to that which is available within the English and Scottish NHS.

We ask for the same level of support to be made available to people living in Wales. NHS Scotland has provided microprocessor prosthetics for several years and NHS England since 2016. The Welsh policy review is outstanding since 2017.

### **Additional Information**

#### **Petitioner's Story**

As a fit nearly 60-year-old, whilst at work one Friday afternoon in March 2018 I suffered an aneurysm in my right leg. During the next 8 days I had three major operations during which a very professional team tried to save my leg, save it below the knee, and then above the knee. The last was successful and I am left with my leg removed just above the knee. Introduced to ALAC at Rookwood my journey back to work started. They designed and fitted a prosthetic limb and through regular physiotherapy I was walking and back in work late summer. Thank you, brilliant service.

For several years there has been a significant discrepancy with the type of prosthetics available to disabled people of Wales.

As I will have to spend the rest of my life using a prosthetic leg I would like to be given, and I would like all amputees in Wales to be given, the same opportunity as residents of the rest of the UK.

Do not discriminate. Equal the standard for Welsh disabled residents.

## **Senedd Constituency and Region**

- Monmouth
- South Wales East

Vaughan Gething AS/MS  
Y Gweinidog Iechyd a Gwasanaethau Cymdeithasol  
Minister for Health and Social Services



Llywodraeth Cymru  
Welsh Government

Eich cyf/Your ref P-05-974  
Ein cyf/Our ref VG/09641/20

Janet Finch-Saunders MS  
Chair  
Petitions Committee

12 January 2021

Dear Janet,

Thank you for your further letter of 08 December on behalf of the Petitions Committee regarding the provision of microprocessor controlled prosthetics in Wales.

At present, microprocessor knee prostheses are not routinely provided for civilians. My officials are currently reviewing this position and I expect to receive advice on the issue within the next few weeks.

I will write again to update you on the outcome.

I hope this information is helpful.

Yours sincerely,

**Vaughan Gething AS/MS**  
Y Gweinidog Iechyd a Gwasanaethau Cymdeithasol  
Minister for Health and Social Services

Canolfan Cyswllt Cyntaf / First Point of Contact Centre:  
0300 0604400

Bae Caerdydd • Cardiff Bay  
Caerdydd • Cardiff  
CF99 1SN

[Gohebiaeth.Vaughan.Gething@llyw.cymru](mailto:Gohebiaeth.Vaughan.Gething@llyw.cymru)  
[Correspondence.Vaughan.Gething@gov.wales](mailto:Correspondence.Vaughan.Gething@gov.wales)

Rydym yn croesawu derbyn gohebiaeth yn Gymraeg. Byddwn yn ateb gohebiaeth a dderbynnir yn Gymraeg yn Gymraeg ac ni fydd gohebu yn Gymraeg yn arwain at oedi.

We welcome receiving correspondence in Welsh. Any correspondence received in Welsh will be answered in Welsh and corresponding in Welsh will not lead to a delay in responding.



**P-05-974 Ensure the technology of prosthetic limbs provided within the Welsh NHS is equal to the rest of the UK, Correspondence – Petitioner to Committee, 14.02.21**

**Petition - Ensure the technology of prosthetic limbs provided within the Welsh NHS is equal to the rest of the UK.**

Response following reply from Welsh Minister dated 12 January – ref VG/09641/20 and from Kate Eden – WHSSC Chair - 17 December 2020

What are your thoughts on the attached document?

Does it adequately address the issues that you raised?

What is the evidenced based prioritisation process? As I have highlighted previously the other three Nations of the UK all provide MPK prosthetics, Scotland for nearly a decade. They have identified the benefits to individuals, the priority importance, and the potential to save costs. All we are asking for is a similar provision within Wales, a provision that has the potential to **save** the Welsh NHS money in the medium term.

It appears in the response from Kate Eden that the WHSSC has limited scope with complex finance allocation, therefore, using this as an excuse by the Minister for the lack of provision or action seems to be a political 'smoke screen'. He should, as requested by the petition, provide policy direction.

The Minister states that he has requested his officials for a review. This is positive and I can only presume that they will review the policy 'Specialised Services Service Specification: CP89 Prosthetic and Amputee Rehabilitation Services' – review outstanding since 1 December 2017.

I like the committee look forward to the update shortly.

Do you have further questions in response?

Currently until the outcome is known there are no further questions.

Additional comment

Again, thank you to the committee on behalf of all the supporters of the petition for the actions to date. I am confident that with persistence we can achieve overdue equality on behalf of the disabled residents of Wales.

David Bradley

# Agenda Item 3.5

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

This petition was submitted by Graham Bishop, having collected a total of 10,879 signatures.

### **Text of Petition:**

Police officers are not on the priority list to receive the Covid-19 vaccination, even though they are in a high risk jobs.

### **Additional Information:**

My son is a police officer who contracted Covid whilst arresting a member of the public. At present he has been off work for 4 weeks and is signed off until the end of December. He passed the virus to his heavily pregnant wife who ended up in the Covid ward in hospital. She had to have an emergency CS with the twins born a month early. Not only are police at high risk to themselves every day, they also risk their families. Additionally the loss of policing time is a great strain on the force when officers are off sick with Covid.

### **Senedd Constituency and Region**

- Vale of Glamorgan
- South Wales Central



Ein cyf/Our ref VG/09915/20

Janet Finch-Saunders MS  
Chair  
Petitions Committee

10 February 2021

Dear Janet,

Thank you for your letter of 16 December on behalf of the Petition Committee regarding COVID-19 vaccine prioritisation for police officers in Wales.

Wales in line with the other UK nations is vaccinating people who are most at-risk of catching coronavirus and developing serious illnesses first, in line with the recommendations from the Joint Committee on Vaccination and Immunisation (JCVI). They have recommended the vaccine be offered to in the first instance to care home residents and health and social care workers, alongside people aged 80 and over. More information on how they reached their conclusions and details on at-risk groups (including those who have been shielding and/or have underlying health conditions) can be found at this link:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/priority-groups-for-coronavirus-covid-19-vaccination-advice-from-the-jcvi-2-december-2020>

Whilst those working in the police force have not been identified as a specific priority group by the JCVI in the first phase of deployment, many individuals working in the sector may fall into the age-based or clinically vulnerable groupings on which roll-out will be based. Therefore, they will be offered the vaccine in line with their relative risk.

The JCVI is currently of the view that the key focus for the second phase of vaccination could be on further preventing hospitalisation. Vaccination of those at increased risk of exposure to the virus due to their occupation could also be a priority in the next phase.

I hope this information is helpful.

Canolfan Cyswllt Cyntaf / First Point of Contact Centre:  
0300 0604400

Bae Caerdydd • Cardiff Bay  
Caerdydd • Cardiff  
CF99 1SN

[Gohebiaeth.Vaughan.Gething@llyw.cymru](mailto:Gohebiaeth.Vaughan.Gething@llyw.cymru)  
[Correspondence.Vaughan.Gething@gov.wales](mailto:Correspondence.Vaughan.Gething@gov.wales)

Rydym yn croesawu derbyn gohebiaeth yn Gymraeg. Byddwn yn ateb gohebiaeth a dderbynnir yn Gymraeg yn Gymraeg ac ni fydd gohebu yn Gymraeg yn arwain at oedi.

We welcome receiving correspondence in Welsh. Any correspondence received in Welsh will be answered in Welsh and corresponding in Welsh will not lead to a delay in responding.

Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Vaughan Gething". The signature is written in a cursive style with a large initial 'V' and a long, sweeping tail.

**Vaughan Gething AS/MS**

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

# Agenda Item 3.6

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

This petition was submitted by Jonathan Môn Hughes having collected a total of 16,288 signatures.

### **Text of Petition:**

Due to many children who contract COVID-19 being asymptomatic, the spread in schools is often unnoticed until a staff member develops symptoms.

NHS staff will be vaccinated as they risk their lives. School and childcare staff are also risking their lives but are not prioritised for a vaccine.

### **Additional Information:**

Since September:

- more than 2,120 members of school staff have tested positive for COVID-19.
- more than 3,030 pupils have tested positive for COVID-19.
- more than 1,570 schools have reported at least one case of coronavirus.

### **Senedd Constituency and Region**

- Ynys Môn
- North Wales



Ein cyf/Our ref VG/10110/20

Janet Finch-Saunders MS  
Chair  
Petitions Committee

Government.Committee.Business@gov.wales

10 February 2021

Dear Janet,

Thank you for your letter of 23 December concerning Petition P-05-1119 about prioritising teachers, school and childcare staff for COVID-19 Vaccinations

Wales, in line with the other UK nations, is vaccinating people who are most at-risk of catching coronavirus and developing serious illnesses first, according to the recommendations from the Joint Committee on Vaccination and Immunisation (JCVI). They have recommended the vaccine be offered to in the first instance to care home residents, care home staff, frontline health and social care workers, alongside people aged 80 and over.

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/priority-groups-for-coronavirus-covid-19-vaccination-advice-from-the-jcvi-2-december-2020>

Those workers over 50 or with particular health conditions will be captured within this first phase of vaccination, when it is their turn according to the JCVI prioritisation.

We expect those under 50 will receive their vaccination as part of the second phase of deployment in due course. However, no UK-level decisions have been made on this yet.

The contribution of key workers during the course of the pandemic has been incredible. It is good that vaccine prioritisation is kept under constant review by the JCVI, especially in planning the next phase of cohorts.

If large groups of workers, such as teachers and childcare staff, were prioritised at an earlier point it would mean other groups who are more vulnerable to harm would have to wait longer.

Canolfan Cyswllt Cyntaf / First Point of Contact Centre:  
0300 0604400

Bae Caerdydd • Cardiff Bay  
Caerdydd • Cardiff  
CF99 1SN

[Gohebiaeth.Vaughan.Gething@llyw.cymru](mailto:Gohebiaeth.Vaughan.Gething@llyw.cymru)  
[Correspondence.Vaughan.Gething@gov.wales](mailto:Correspondence.Vaughan.Gething@gov.wales)

Rydym yn croesawu derbyn gohebiaeth yn Gymraeg. Byddwn yn ateb gohebiaeth a dderbynnir yn Gymraeg yn Gymraeg ac ni fydd gohebu yn Gymraeg yn arwain at oedi.

**Back Page 144**  
We welcome receiving correspondence in Welsh. Any correspondence received in Welsh will be answered in Welsh and corresponding in Welsh will not lead to a delay in responding.

We will continue to review the JCVI advice. The Wales Vaccination Strategy can be found below and offers more information on Welsh Government milestones and roll out of the programme:

[https://gov.wales/sites/default/files/publications/2021-01/vaccination-strategy-for-wales\\_0.pdf](https://gov.wales/sites/default/files/publications/2021-01/vaccination-strategy-for-wales_0.pdf)

The success of the strategy will depend on Wales continuing to receive regular and reliable supplies of vaccine from the manufacturers. The UK Government is in charge of buying and coordinating the supply of vaccines for all the four nations in the UK.

I hope this information is helpful.

Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Vaughan Gething". The signature is written in a cursive style with a large initial 'V' and a long, sweeping tail on the 'g'.

**Vaughan Gething AS/MS**

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

# Agenda Item 3.7

## **P-05-1052 Give Nurses a pay rise in line with other frontline staff during COVID-19 pandemic**

This petition was submitted by Ffion Rees having collected a total of 2,078 signatures.

### **Text of Petition:**

The Welsh Government has announced it would be awarding doctors and dentists a 2.8% pay rise, stating that the pay rise 'reflects the commitment of the people who make sure our NHS is there for you'

Despite this, nursing staff, many of whom contracted the virus while working, were not included in the pay rise.

As a newly qualified mental health nurse, I am asking the Senedd to reconsider this decision and reflect the dedication of nursing staff by giving them the pay rise they deserve.

### **Additional Information:**

Defence of nursing staff not being included in this pay rise is that we are receiving a 6.2% pay rise over 3 years, a pay rise that we would have received anyway and not in recognition of our hard work during these difficult times.

Two thirds of nurses who contracted Covid-19 are still experiencing the after effects of the virus while continuing to carry out their duty as a nurse (Nursing Times, 2020).

At the time of this petition, over 200 NHS staff, including nurses have died from coronavirus in the UK (The Guardian, 2020). This shows the ultimate sacrifice that nursing staff are willing to make to care for our patients, and yet they are not being given a pay rise along with their hard working colleagues.

In the last data analysis conducted by the UK Government in April 2020 of coronavirus infection rates, 16.2% of those infected were key workers who include nursing staff, accounting for nearly a fifth of confirmed cases (CEBM, 2020).



## **Senedd Constituency and Region**

- Llanelli
- Mid and West Wales

# Agenda Item 3.8

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

This petition was submitted by Dyfan Roberts having collected a total of 190 signatures.

**Text of Petition:**

Since April 2010 some NHS staff have had their pay decreased by as much as 20.51% in line with inflation.

It's time the Welsh assembly discuss about forming a new pay deal that will be taking place in 2021 and drastically reduce or eliminate the loss front line workers have been subject to over the last 10 years.

Last time we were given a pay rise it was a replica of Westminster's deal! It's time WAG acted first and gave the NHS a deal it deserves.

**Senedd Constituency and Region**

- Clwyd West
- North Wales

Vaughan Gething AS/MS  
Y Gweinidog Iechyd a Gwasanaethau Cymdeithasol  
Minister for Health and Social Services



Llywodraeth Cymru  
Welsh Government

Ein cyf/Our ref VG/02206/21

Janet Finch-Saunders MS  
Chair  
Petitions Committee

10 February 2021

Dear Janet,

Thank you for your further letter of 27 January regarding petition P-05-1052, asking me to consider further options for the NHS pay review, which might include backdating any pay award due to the pandemic.

As I confirmed in my reply last October, Welsh Government has remitted the independent pay review body process for Agenda for Change and Medical and Dental staff to work with our NHS union and employer partners through the independent process to ensure the best possible reward package. I have asked for the pay review round to be brought forward as soon as possible, but the timelines are set by UK Government and they are due to report in May for pay recommendations from April 2021.

Our health and care workers continue to work incredibly hard to care for people – as they have done throughout the pandemic. We will keep all options for recognising the commitment and contribution of NHS staff and care workers during the pandemic open.

Yours sincerely,

**Vaughan Gething AS/MS**  
Y Gweinidog Iechyd a Gwasanaethau Cymdeithasol  
Minister for Health and Social Services

Canolfan Cyswllt Cyntaf / First Point of Contact Centre:  
0300 0604400

Bae Caerdydd • Cardiff Bay  
Caerdydd • Cardiff  
CF99 1SN

[Gohebiaeth.Vaughan.Gething@llyw.cymru](mailto:Gohebiaeth.Vaughan.Gething@llyw.cymru)  
[Correspondence.Vaughan.Gething@gov.wales](mailto:Correspondence.Vaughan.Gething@gov.wales)

Rydym yn croesawu derbyn gohebiaeth yn Gymraeg. Byddwn yn ateb gohebiaeth a dderbynnir yn Gymraeg yn Gymraeg ac ni fydd gohebu yn Gymraeg yn arwain at oedi.

We welcome receiving correspondence in Welsh. Any correspondence received in Welsh will be answered in Welsh and corresponding in Welsh will not lead to a delay in responding.

# Agenda Item 3.9

## **P-05-1032 Legislate to prevent people from changing Welsh house names**

This petition was submitted by Robin Aled Davies having collected a total of 18,103 signatures.

### **Text of Petition:**

There is a pattern throughout Wales where new owners are changing their house names into English.

### **Additional Information:**

There is no need to go far to find the evidence!

Little by little, the country is losing its heritage.

This must be stopped for the sake of future generations, whatever their language.

### **Senedd Constituency and Region**

- Clwyd West
- North Wales

Janet Finch–Saunders MS  
Chair of the Petitions Committee

10 December 2000

Dear Janet,

**Petition P-05-1032 Legislate to prevent people from changing Welsh house names**

Thank you very much for your letter of 8 December inquiring about further work on our inquiry into Wales' historic environment.

I will be writing to the Deputy Minister for Culture, Sport and Tourism to ask for an update on progress with regards to the recommendations in our report of the inquiry.

The response will be used to inform the Committee's legacy report which will provide a summary of our work during the Fifth Senedd and suggested topics for any future committee with responsibility for heritage. I will ensure the response is sent to you to enable you to update the petitioners.

Yours sincerely,



Helen Mary Jones

Chair of the Culture, Welsh Language and Communications Committee



**P-05-1032 Deddfu i atal newid enwau Cymraeg tai, Gohebiaeth – Deisebydd i'r Pwyllgor, 04.02.21**

Annwyl gyfeillion,

Diolch unwaith eto am y gwahoddiad i fynegi sylwadau ynglyn a'r ddeiseb ar ddeddfu i atal newid enwau tai o'r gymraeg.

Rwyf yn hynod o falch bod y mater bellach wedi ei drafod ar lawr y senedd ac yn diolch i'r holl gyfrannwyr am eu cefnogaeth. Rwyf yn cytuno hefo'r rhan fwyaf o'r pwyntiau a godwyd, ac yn falch y tro hwn bod cefnogaeth ar draws y meinciau.

Fel esboniwyd gan gadeirydd y pwyllgor deisebau (Mrs Janet Finch-Saunders AS), mae'r ddeiseb yn gofyn am rhywbeth eithaf cyfyng, o bwrpas. Y gobaith yw i warchod enwau tai yn neulltuol, er fy mod yn fawr gefnogi gwarchod enwau cymraeg pob lleoliad. Mae hwn yn bwnc sydd tu hwnt i unrhyw wleidyddiaeth, dras neu dafodiaith. Mae'r enwau yma'n drysorau cenedlaethol, yn hanfodol i ddilyniant yr iaith a'r cymunedau y maent yn rhan ohonni. Mae'r nifer a lofnododd y ddeiseb yn brawf i hynny ac yn profi pa mor agos yw'r enwau yma i galonnau ni'r cymru.

Hoffwn ailadrodd beth a ddywedas mewn sylw blaenorol, diolch yn fawr am y cyfle i gychwyn y bleidlais, a wnewch chi os gwelwch yn dda ddefnyddio'r cyfle euraidd hwn i warchod ein hetifeddiaeth i'r cenedlaethau sydd i ddilyn. Mae hiatws yn ein gwlad gyda'r nifer sydd yn mewnfudo, ac os na wnawn ni ddeddfu, cam wrth gam (neu dŷ wrth dŷ), mae Cymru yn colli'r hyn sy'n eu gwneud yn unigryw sydd mor bwysig yn y diwedd i'r economi.

Mae'n siom fawr na chaiff y pwnc ei drafod eto cyn yr etholiad o bosib, ond hoffwn yn wir petai'r llywodraeth nesaf yn parhau hefo'r egni a'r momentwm sydd wedi ei ddangos gan y gwleidyddion presennol.

Diolch i holl aelodau'r pwyllgor am eu gwaith, beth am fynd gam ymhellach a creu deddf y gallwn i gyd fod yn falch ohonni!

Yn gywir,

By virtue of paragraph(s) vi of Standing Order 17.42

Document is Restricted

# Agenda Item 3.10

**P-05-1081 Ensure owners of second homes & holiday lets in Wales register to vote only at their primary address, in devolved and local elections**

This petition was submitted by Gorau i Gymru – Best for Wales having collected a total of 4,896 signatures.

**Text of Petition:**

The Electoral Commission has confirmed there are no systematic checks on whether someone has voted twice. We do not believe that the mere fact that electoral fraud is illegal in itself provides sufficient safeguarding if no systematic checks are made. This is akin to having speeding laws in place but no functioning speed cameras. The serious potential for fraud & the harmful impact of that on our country is immense and should be urgently addressed prior to the 2021 elections.

**Additional Information:**

Reference:

Email received from the Electoral Commission on 3rd November 2020.

**Senedd Constituency and Region**

- Ynys Môn
- North Wales



Janet Finch-Saunders MS  
Chair, Petitions Committee  
Senedd  
Cardiff Bay  
Cardiff

05 February 2021

Dear Janet,

**Reference: P-05-1081**

Many thanks for your letter.

It is an offence under Section 12 of the Government of Wales Act 2006 to vote more than once at the Senedd election. This offence carries an unlimited fine.

Under The Representation of the People Act 1983, Part 1, Section 2(2), people who are lawfully registered to vote in two different local authority areas are entitled to vote in local government elections at each of those addresses.

### **Role of Electoral Registration Officers and the electoral register**

Electoral registers are held and maintained by Electoral Registration Officers (EROs) appointed by each local authority in Wales. There are therefore 22 separate local government registers which include the details of those who can vote in Senedd elections.

We have previously recommended that a single electronic register would make it easier for EROs not only modernise the electoral system but also help ensure that duplicate entries could be identified, thus improving the accuracy of the electoral register.

### **Investigating breaches and the guidance provided to police**

The Electoral Commission does not have a role in investigating allegations of electoral fraud under the RPA 1983 and breaches are a matter for the police. We advise anyone who has evidence that someone may have voted twice in an election to report it to the relevant police force

We have provided advice to UK police forces about how to investigate allegations that an individual may have voted twice, including obtaining from relevant Returning Officers the marked copy of the register. The marked register records those electors who have been issued with and returned a postal ballot pack and those who have been issued with a ballot paper in a polling station. This information can be used by the police to investigate whether someone may have committed the offence of voting twice. Where there are any

allegations involving potential criminal offences, it would be for the relevant local police force to consider and take appropriate steps to investigate any allegations.

We work with the National Police Chiefs' Council to provide guidance to police forces, including developing the Authorised Professional Practice on policing elections, which has been published by the College of Policing on their website at [www.app.college.police.uk/appcontent/policing-elections/](http://www.app.college.police.uk/appcontent/policing-elections/).

**Our statutory duty to report on the Senedd election**

The Commission in Wales has a statutory responsibility to publish a report on all relevant elections and this includes the Senedd election in May 2021. This will look at how well-run the election was and will make recommendations for improvements at future polls. This report will be published and provided to the Senedd as well as to Welsh Government.

Finally, we produce comprehensive guidance on voter registration which can be found here: [Can electors register to vote at more than one address?](#)

We trust that this information is useful and would be glad to answer any further questions, as required.

Yours sincerely,

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

Rhydian Thomas.  
Head of the Electoral Commission, Wales.

**P-05-1081 Ensure owners of second homes & holiday lets in Wales register to vote only at their primary address, in devolved and local elections, Correspondence – Petitioner to Committee, 22.02.21**

The Electoral Commission's response is disappointing as it does not tell us anything new and merely 'passes the buck' or 'kicks the ball around'.

We attach a reminder of the points we raised previously, which remain unaddressed. We were encouraged by Leanne Wood and Jack Sargeant's response though, and sincerely hope that someone takes responsibility for taking up this very serious issue of potential electoral fraud and takes steps to resolve our concerns. We look forward to being able to share positive news on this front with the electorate of Wales.

**P-05-1081 Ensure owners of second homes & holiday lets in Wales register to vote only at their primary address, in devolved and local elections, Correspondence – Petitioner to Committee, 06.01.21**

Dear Julie James & members of the Senedd Petitions Committee,

We thank you for submitting our petition and for Julie James's response to it. In that response, Ms. James states that in order to register to vote in Wales, second homeowners must prove that they are resident in the area and residency is prescribed in the Representation of the People Act 1983 and is well-established in case law and that there are well-established residency criteria. We have asked our local council what specific criteria they use for this purpose and sadly have not received a clear response. We would appreciate it therefore if you could please specify clearly the meaning of residency as defined by case law and to confirm whether or not all EROs across Wales have been made aware of it and given specific guidelines and criteria that must be met before allowing second homeowners to register to vote here in Wales. If yes, please may we have a copy of it?

We do not believe that second homeowners who spend less time in that constituency than at their primary address, and therefore are unfamiliar with local issues and needs, should be allowed to skew democracy and undermine the views, needs and representation of those who live there throughout the year. There are thousands of second homes in Wales and the figure is increasing at a very worrying rate (although we note that you stated in response to a letter to one of our group members that you are unable to confirm the exact numbers, which is in itself a cause for concern).

Why should anyone be able to register to vote more than once in any election simply by virtue of personal wealth? The issue of second homeowner voter registration has been the subject of debate for many years and is said to be “under review”, yet nothing has changed. On 26 January 2011, Lord Teverson asked the UK Government “what plans they have to regulate the ability of second homeowners to register to vote in more than one constituency?” (illustrating the point that this issue is not just an England v Wales issue as Ms. James appears to imply in her response). Lord Taylor of Holbeach replies that “there are no plans to change the current system but that it will be kept under review”. Lord Teverson goes on to say: “...is it not a principle, just as we have for one person one vote, that for a national election an individual should be able to cast their vote where they really are a resident and a stakeholder in the community? Will the Minister make sure that that is clarified for returning officers, and will the Government take steps to ensure that people are able to vote in national elections only where their main residence is located?” We agree with Lord Teverson and believe that the same should apply to all elections, including our Senedd and Local Government elections. Baroness McIntosh of Hudnall makes an important point: “My Lords, the noble Lord has properly reminded the House that it is illegal to vote twice in the same general election. Will he say, under the present arrangements, how it is possible to police that law; and how many people does he think, or does he know, have actually been prosecuted for doing that?” Note Lord Taylor of Holbeach's response: “I can answer the second question by saying that

we are not aware of any prosecutions. As with so many British institutions, **it depends on trust.**”

And there we have it! It depends on trust, which is thin on the ground currently. Note also that Lord Taylor fails to respond to the question of how that law will be policed.

Ms. James states that “Whilst, as the Electoral Commission have stated, there are no systematic checks to ensure a person does not vote twice in the same election, there is no evidence to suggest that this routinely occurs, and if it did, action could be taken where an electoral offence had been committed.” Isn't that the point? How will you find evidence of fraud if no one is systematically looking for it? Even on the rare occasion where electoral fraud is detected (usually at the polling station rather than at registration according to Electoral Commission data) – there is little or no deterrent. According to the Electoral Commission, 592 cases of alleged electoral fraud were investigated by the police. Of these, three led to a conviction and an individual was given a police caution. Hardly a deterrent!?

For the benefit of those who claim that voter fraud doesn't happen or is not encouraged, please find in the references below an article from the Isle of Wight in 2011, describing: “the letter that Ian Ward sent out from the Isle of Wight Conservative Association encouraging second home owners to register to vote on the Island. It's causing quite a stir.” ... “The letter – sent to those registered for postal votes on the Isle of Wight – encourages voters who have two homes to vote both on the Island and mainland – without stating the limited conditions that would apply.”

Here is a selection of comments from our group members:

Cornwall County Council voted in 2011 to prevent holiday home owners from registering to vote there and two of the county's Members of Parliament publicly supported that. Why can the Welsh Government not be as supportive of the democratic processes in Wales? Why is the Welsh Government repeatedly willing to prioritise the interests of wealthy people with complete ignorance of Wales and its problems and institutions, over and above the well-being of local democracy and the well-being of our permanent communities? On what basis do you wish to adhere to English rules when a council in England (Cornwall) does not feel the same necessity at all? Is this the Welsh Government, or a government for the benefit of wealthy people who are already expressing their disrespect for our country, our people and our language? The Welsh Government's decision will reinforce their view that they are above any law of fairness and that they can continue to treat our country as a playground and treat its people as fools whose only value is to serve and to know their place, i.e. second-class citizens.

We would be grateful if you could let us know your intentions with regard to addressing this situation,

Sincerely,

Gorau I Gymru – Best for Wales.

References:

<https://hansard.parliament.uk/Lords/2011-01-26/debates/11012651000355/ElectionsSecondHomeOwners>

[https://onthewight.com/conservatives-urge-second-home-owners-to-register-to-vote-here/?fbclid=IwAR0wxGaC1Z3bpe8iHTwaayrCixdjURwDw0x6\\_rhU0rNKG7eNeXTnqvU4NuY](https://onthewight.com/conservatives-urge-second-home-owners-to-register-to-vote-here/?fbclid=IwAR0wxGaC1Z3bpe8iHTwaayrCixdjURwDw0x6_rhU0rNKG7eNeXTnqvU4NuY)

[https://www.channel4.com/news/cornwall-stops-second-home-owners-from-voting?fbclid=IwAR1O8EMny5OGASzcfO\\_kqedQqA1-mOv3Ridpr-7BwA\\_ObI0wWC7vQyd62hQ](https://www.channel4.com/news/cornwall-stops-second-home-owners-from-voting?fbclid=IwAR1O8EMny5OGASzcfO_kqedQqA1-mOv3Ridpr-7BwA_ObI0wWC7vQyd62hQ)

<https://www.electoralcommission.org.uk/who-we-are-and-what-we-do/our-views-and-research/our-research/electoral-fraud-data/2019-electoral-fraud-data>

# Agenda Item 3.11

## **P-05-949 SAVE COWBRIDGE OLD GIRLS' SCHOOL FROM DEMOLITION**

This petition was submitted by Sara Pedersen having collected 2,080 signatures online and 3,442 on paper (not final), a total of 5,522 signatures.

### **Text of Petition**

We call on the National Assembly for Wales to urge the Welsh Government to protect the former Intermediate School for Girls' in Cowbridge, Vale of Glamorgan. This was the first intermediate school to be built specifically for the education of girls in Wales (and England) and is the subject of a planning application for demolition. Failure to protect it will lead to the loss of a nationally important historic asset.

Opened in 1896, Cowbridge was the first girls' intermediate school to be built in Wales (and England) as a result of the Welsh Intermediate Education Act of 1889, a pivotal moment in Welsh History. Amid its contemporaries, Cowbridge was highly unusual in including accommodation for boarders from the outset and largely funded by a local philanthropist.

The original character of the school survives to a very high degree, both internally and externally, including the original hall and staircase. Only 5 comparable (of 95) schools are listed across Wales. A survey of them all confirms that Cowbridge survives to an equivalent degree to some and a better degree than others.

The architect, Robert Williams, was a pioneer of his time and renowned for being a radical, prominent advocate of building conservation, national pioneer of social housing, promoter of the Welsh School of Architecture and proponent for the publication of building literature in the Welsh language. He later went on to work in London and then Egypt for the Davies Bryan family, where many of his buildings still stand and are nationally protected.

In summary, the former Cowbridge Intermediate School for Girls' survives as a prominent and attractive testimony to a pivotal moment in Welsh history and the equal opportunities afforded to underprivileged girls of the time. We urge the Welsh Government, as custodians of our heritage, to protect this building either through listing or the provision of additional social housing funding to allow its conversion.

**Additional Information**

Reference: Scourfield (2019). FORMER COWBRIDGE COMPREHENSIVE SCHOOL, ABERTHIN ROAD, COWBRIDGE – AN HISTORICAL AND ARCHITECTURAL APPRAISAL.

**Senedd Constituency and Region**

- Vale of Glamorgan
- South Wales Central



[REDACTED]  
[REDACTED]  
[REDACTED]  
[REDACTED]

22<sup>nd</sup> February 2021

Dear Members of the Petitions Committee,

**RE: Petition P-05-949. Save Cowbridge Old Girls' School from Demolition**

We wish to update you on recent developments regarding the proposed demolition of the former Cowbridge High School for Girls. By way of a brief overview, the site of the former school is currently owned by the Sir Thomas Mansel Franklen Trust who have entered into a 'sold subject to planning' agreement with a developer who is seeking to demolish the school buildings in their entirety.

Whilst the community has welcomed the opportunity that this planning application brings to provide more social housing within the town (specifically rental accommodation) it strongly objects to the demolition of this significant historic asset. Through the course of the campaign to preserve the school, substantial new information has come to light regarding the heritage value of this building both at a local and national level. Built in 1895 it was the first school specifically built for the intermediate education of girls following the Welsh Intermediate Education Act of 1889, which in itself was a pivotal moment in Welsh history. The school was also unusual in that it provided accommodation for boarders to allow less privileged girls to be able to attend the school from further afield. The building itself has many unique architectural features and was designed by Robert Williams, an architect who was an early proponent of the Welsh School of Architecture and seen as a pioneer of his time. He was also a proponent of the Welsh language in building literature and later worked for the Davies Bryan family (of Aberystwyth University) in Egypt where he was central to the Welsh community. These are just some of the many reasons why we are campaigning to ensure that this building is protected for years to come so that it can continue to stand proud as a reminder of a pivotal moment in Welsh history and the work of a prominent Welsh architect.

Whilst further information was being gathered for the planning application last year, we took the opportunity to work with SAVE Britain's Heritage to develop an alternative proposal that would provide social housing on the site whilst retaining the existing school buildings. A scheme was developed that would not only provide an increased number of units but also larger units with more residential amenity space and an increased number of units with their own external front doors, all of which would positively impact on the mental health of future residents. This would also realise a higher return on the sale of the site for the current owners, the Sir Thomas Mansel Franklen Trust. It was our aim to work as a community with the current developers to bring this scheme to fruition and thus provide a more beneficial outcome for all parties concerned. Further details of the plans can be found here: [PRESS RELEASE: SAVE unveils alternative plans to retain historic Welsh school \(savebritainsheritage.org\)](https://www.savebritainsheritage.org/press-releases/save-unveils-alternative-plans-to-retain-historic-welsh-school)

Unfortunately, our request to work with the existing developer was declined earlier this year and we learnt last week that the planning application for demolition has been progressed and that it is expected to go before the Vale of Glamorgan Planning Committee in late spring. With this in mind, and the fact that this is a complex case with a significant volume of evidence to be considered, we ask that you consider taking the petition forward as a detailed inquiry rather than being debated by the Senedd in Plenary.

We would also like to raise further concerns regarding the decision-making process by Cadw and the Deputy Minister for Culture, Sport and Tourism which have come to light following a Freedom of Information request submitted last July (ref ATISN 14039). This has revealed the following:

- On 4<sup>th</sup> May 2020, in an email to Gwilym Hughes (Deputy Director and Head of Cadw) the Deputy Minister stated:

“We have not been offered any potential future for the building, have we? You will remember our agreed mantra that historic buildings are not for us to stare at. They are for use as cultural markers of tomorrow! I am not persuaded to give any further consideration to this site.”

We feel that this dismisses the possibility of listing even prior to obtaining professional opinion on the merits of the case and the most recently submitted information regarding the school. Furthermore, the current/future use of a building or the site on which it stands does not come into the listing criteria as detailed in Technical Advice Note (TAN) 24: The historic environment.

- In a memo (ref DET/00488/20) from Matthew Coward of Cadw to the Deputy Minister on 20<sup>th</sup> May 2020, it refers to report written by Cadw in response to further evidence in support of listing submitted by Dr Davies and Mr Scourfield. Matthew Coward writes:

“We feel that sharing the analysis with Dr Davies would have the effect of inviting further unnecessary debate.”

We feel this demonstrates a lack of transparency and willingness to engage in academic discussion and a lack of accountability in their decision making.

- Email correspondence reveals that the selection of Dr Richard Hayman as an independent consultant to review the decision was made by Cadw rather than the Deputy Minister himself. As raised previously, due to Dr Hayman’s employment by Cadw, whilst we do not question his professionalism, we do not feel that he can be considered independent and unbiased in this case. In addition, he reported his findings to Cadw who in turn passed them on to the Deputy Minister with their own interpretation of his report, rather than Dr Hayman reporting directly to the Deputy Minister. This is again at odds with the assertion that this was an independent review.

In addition to the above concerns, we would also like to highlight again that no substantial explanation has been provided as to why an independent peer review will not be granted in this case. Established procedures with Historic England and Historic Scotland exist to peer review decisions where there are contrasting opinions. In this instance we have extreme differences in opinion between Cadw (and a consultant employed by Cadw) and more than 20 highly regarded experts in the fields of history, architecture, heritage and archaeology. Within this group are the President of the Royal Historical Society, Director of the University of Wales Centre for Advanced Welsh and Celtic Studies, former members of Cadw's Historic Building Council, a former President of the British Academy and several Founding Fellows of the Learned Society of Wales. Given their collective expertise and experience their views, as outlined in their letter to the Deputy Minister ([22.03.20 Correspondence - Petitioner to Committee Additional information - Group letter of support .pdf \(senedd.wales\)](#)), should be respectfully taken into consideration.

We ask that you now consider putting the petition forward for a detailed inquiry to scrutinise all of the evidence provided in this case and press for an independent peer review through the established channels so that we can ensure that this important part of Welsh history is not lost.

Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Sara Pedersen". The signature is written in a cursive style and is centered within a light grey rectangular box.

Sara Pedersen  
SAVE Cowbridge Girls' School Campaign Group

# Agenda Item 3.12

**P-05-1075 Don't impose a 15 person limit on organised indoor activities, such as swimming lessons and fitness classes, after firebreak lockdown**

This petition was submitted by Sean McCue having collected a total of 2,394 signatures.

## **Text of Petition:**

Activity and sport is part of the solution to Covid. This country is losing the fight with obesity and increasing potential for wider mental health issues in the population and physical activity needs to be classed as an essential service

Limiting numbers causes sessions to be spread out across a normal timetable of venue availability and limits the number of sessions available to an individual

This also has a financial impact on Community Amateur Sports Clubs.

## **Additional Information:**

Even though the Be Active Grants have been accessed, community amateur sports clubs are under severe financial pressures.

After limiting the indoor clubs to 30, reducing this further to 15 may force CASC to remain closed.

Our financial obligations have remained the same like venue costs, coaches salaries and insurances.

None of these have reduced so our costs per head have increased and will inevitably now at least double once again if this 15 persons limit on indoor sports goes ahead.

## **Senedd Constituency and Region**

- Vale of Clwyd
- North Wales



Eich cyf/Your ref P-05-1075  
Ein cyf/Our ref DET/00202/21

Janet Finch-Saunders MS

Chair, Petitions Committee

11 February 2021

Dear Janet,

Thank you for your correspondence regarding petition P-05-1075.

On 19 December the First Minister announced that Wales moved to alert level four restrictions. Under alert level four restrictions, sport and leisure facilities will be closed to the public and we are all being asked to stay at home.

The coronavirus pandemic has had a profound impact on organised indoor activities such as swimming and fitness classes. That is why, throughout the lockdown, going outdoors for exercise is one of the limited reasons we have permitted people to leave their homes. For many of us the pandemic means that we are staying at home and sitting down more than usual.

The Welsh Government recognises that at present it may be hard for some individuals to do the sort of exercise they would normally enjoy. At a time like this it's important for people of all ages and abilities to be as active as possible. We know that regular physical activity can help give structure to our days and is also good for mental health and well-being.

Increasing opportunities to be physically active is central to ensuring that people across Wales are able to stay healthy and well. That is why, as part of Healthy Weight: Healthy Wales, we invested £500k for Sport Wales to develop a 60 Plus Active Leisure Scheme offer. This will enable Sport Wales to continue to deliver targeted provision of physical activity opportunities, to contribute to a reduction in health inequalities amongst the 60 plus population.

Sport Wales, the Welsh Government's delivery partner for sport in Wales, has also provided useful resources and information to help with exercise and well-being throughout this challenging and unprecedented time. The Sport Wales 'BeActiveWales' Campaign has made it easier for people to find fun and safe ways for children and their families to be active whilst following regulations. Details can be found on the Sport Wales website: <https://www.sport.wales/beactivewales-campaign/>

Bae Caerdydd • Cardiff Bay  
Caerdydd • Cardiff  
CF99 1SN

Canolfan Cyswllt Cyntaf / First Point of Contact Centre:  
0300 0604400

[Gohebiaeth.Dafydd.Elis-Thomas@llyw.cymru](mailto:Gohebiaeth.Dafydd.Elis-Thomas@llyw.cymru)  
[Correspondence.Dafydd.Elis-Thomas@gov.wales](mailto:Correspondence.Dafydd.Elis-Thomas@gov.wales)

Rydym yn croesawu derbyn gohebiaeth yn Gymraeg. Byddwn yn ateb gohebiaeth a dderbynnir yn Gymraeg yn Gymraeg ac ni fydd gohebu yn Gymraeg yn arwain at oedi.

We welcome receiving correspondence in Welsh. Any correspondence received in Welsh will be answered in Welsh and corresponding in Welsh will not lead to a delay in responding.

Within this site there are a number of resources including:

- Being active at home: <https://www.sport.wales/beactivewales-campaign/being-active-at-home-beactivewales/>
- Wellbeing: <https://www.sport.wales/beactivewales-campaign/mental-health-and-wellbeing/>
- Older adults – advice and resources: <https://www.sport.wales/beactivewales-campaign/older-adults-advice-and-resources/>
- Keeping young people active: <https://www.sport.wales/beactivewales-campaign/beactivewales-keeping-young-people-active/>
- Being active – the benefits for all: <https://www.sport.wales/beactivewales-campaign/beactivewales-page-benefits-of-being-active/>
- Taking part in sport and exercise in Wales – the guidance: <https://www.sport.wales/media-centre/latest-news/taking-part-in-sport-and-exercise-in-wales-the-guidance/>

We understand how the pandemic can have a negative effect on children's mental health, and that being active brings many benefits. Our sporting bodies have received very positive feedback from their participants, including how they have helped young children to cope in lockdown and manage their anxiety, by providing focus and a chance for some socialising. Here are some examples:

- Urdd's #ActifAdre programme is offering a range of virtual sport activities in the medium of Welsh, through the #ActifAdref programme. There is a membership fee of £9 per child and family discounts are available, and young people aged 8-25 can get involved;
- Swim Wales is uploading land training sessions to its YouTube page;
- Cricket Wales is hosting a range of online games, skills, and activities to keep children keep fit and to develop skills. The resources include younger children's colouring-in options and a back garden skills challenge;
- The Youth Sport Trust hosts an after-school club on Tuesdays and Thursdays. Focusing on much more than physical fitness, the club helps children develop physical literacy and the confidence to try new sports.

I hope this information is helpful and illustrates some of the support that is being provided.

Yours sincerely,



**Yr Arglwydd Elis-Thomas AS/MS**

Y Dirprwy Weinidog Diwylliant, Chwaraeon a Thwristiaeth  
Deputy Minister for Culture, Sport and Tourism

# Agenda Item 5

By virtue of paragraph(s) vi of Standing Order 17.42

Document is Restricted