

Agenda – Petitions Committee

Meeting Venue: Committee Room 3 –
Senedd

Meeting date: 5 June 2023

Meeting time: 14.00

For further information contact:

Gareth Price

Committee Clerk

0300 200 6565

Petitions@senedd.wales

1 Introductions, apologies and substitutions – Petitions Committee

(Pages 1 – 20)

Attached Documents:

Member's brief

2 New Petitions

2.1 P-06-1331 Consider implementing legal requirements to private businesses to ensure they are accessible to all

(Pages 21 – 29)

Attached Documents:

Research Brief

Correspondence from the Minister for Social Justice, 03 May 2023

Correspondence from the Petitioner, 24 May 2023

2.2 P-06-1333 Stop Natural Resources Wales from tree felling that threatens red squirrel survival

(Pages 30 – 43)

Attached Documents:

Research Brief

Correspondence from the Minister for Climate Change, 15 May 2023

Response from the Petitioner, 24 May 2023



2.3 P-06-1335 Welsh Government should take steps to ensure vulnerable adults without bank cards can pay with cash

(Pages 44 – 52)

Attached Documents:

Research Brief

Correspondence from the Minister for Social Justice, 15 May 2023

Correspondence from the Petitioner, 30 May 2023

2.4 P-06-1336 Free Welsh lessons for everyone who wants to learn the language in Wales

(Pages 53 – 61)

Attached Documents:

Research Brief

Correspondence from the Minister for Education and Welsh Language, 09 May 2023

2.5 P-06-1337 Sycharth, the home of Owain Glyndwr, should be bought to safeguard the site for future generations

(Pages 62 – 70)

Attached Documents:

Research Brief

Correspondence from the Deputy Minister for Arts, Sports and Tourism, 16 May 2023

Correspondence from the Petitioner, 31 May 2023 (Welsh Only)

Correspondence from the Petitioner, 31 May 2023 (Only available to Members)

2.6 P-06-1340 Stop the change of speed limits to 20mph on 17th September

(Pages 71 – 73)

Attached Documents:

Cover Sheet

Correspondence from the Petitioner, 31 May 2023

3 Updates to previous petitions

3.1 P-05-1112 Help Welsh Communities Buy Community Assets: Implement Part 5 Chapter 3 of the Localism Act 2011

(Pages 74 – 76)

Attached Documents:

Cover sheet

Correspondence from the Minister for Social Justice, 19 May 2023

3.2 P-06-1299 Welsh Government 'Freeze on road building" to include a clause for cases that pose a danger to life

(Pages 77 – 81)

Attached Documents:

Cover sheet

Correspondence from Rhondda Cynon Taff Council to Chair, 05 May 2023

Correspondence from the Petitioner, 30 May 2023

3.3 P-06-1269 Don't let the plan run out for dying people in Wales

(Pages 82 – 85)

Attached Documents:

Cover Sheet

Correspondence from the Petitioners, 30 May 2023

3.4 P-06-1304 To review the emergency temporary housing policy which impacts our communities

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Attached Documents:

Cover sheet

3.5 P-06-1307 The Welsh Government should commit to the adoption of the maintenance of new housing estates by local authorities

(Page 87)

Attached Documents:

Cover sheet

4 Motion under Standing Order 17.42(ix) to resolve to exclude the public from the remainder of the meeting

5 Discussion on the draft Annual Report

(Pages 88 – 101)

Attached Documents:

Draft Annual Report

6 Discussion on outputs from the PPM inquiry

(Pages 102 – 104)

Attached Documents:

P-06-1326 Draft Correspondence to Centrica

P-06-1326 Draft Correspondence to Energy UK

P-06-1326 Draft Correspondence to Scottish Power

Document is Restricted

P-06-1331 Consider implementing legal requirements to private businesses to ensure they are accessible to all

Y Pwyllgor Deisebau | 5 Mehefin 2023
Petitions Committee | 5 June 2023

Reference: SR23/5702-5

Petition Number: P-06-1331

Petition title: Consider implementing legal requirements to private businesses to ensure they are accessible to all

Text of petition: Libanus Primary have been looking at the social model and as a result explored our local town to see how accessible and inclusive it is for able and disabled individuals. They wrote to the council who informed them that privately owned premises don't need to follow the stringent standards that government businesses do. Therefore Libanus Primary would like to address this issue to ensure all members of society have a smooth transition through our town and country.

Libanus Primary have been saddened by the reality of living with a disability and would love to make a positive difference to the lives of all of our Welsh citizens. Through listening to the story of an advocate from Disability Wales it is clear there is more that can be done to ensure Wales in an inclusive country for all.



1. Background

The Equality Act 2010

Section 20 of the Equality Act imposes a duty on providers of goods, services and facilities to make **reasonable adjustments to avoid a disabled person being placed at a 'substantial disadvantage'** compared with a non-disabled person when accessing services and facilities.

The duty contains **three** requirements:

- changing **the way things are done**;
- making changes to overcome barriers created by the **physical features** of the service provider's premises; or
- providing **extra aids and services** like providing extra equipment or providing a different or additional service.

The Act **does not prescribe what a reasonable adjustment might be**, as this is to be decided according to the particular circumstances of each individual case.

The Equality and Human Rights Commission's guidance states that **what is reasonable will depend on the size and nature of the business, among other considerations**. So what is considered a reasonable adjustment for a large organisation like a bank, may be different from what is a reasonable adjustment for a small, independent shop.

The Minister's response to the petition refers to the duty to make reasonable adjustments and to guidance for service providers and states that:

The duty is that some people or organisations like employers, shops, local authorities and schools must take positive steps to remove the barriers faced by disabled people. This is to ensure disabled people receive the same services as non-disabled people.

2. Welsh Government Action

The social model of disability

Historically, policymakers and service providers have viewed disabled people through a **medical model**, where a person's impairment is seen to be the thing

which disables them. The aim is to 'fix' the disabled person so that they fit in better with society, rather than society adjusting to accommodate people with impairments. The social model of disability was developed by the disability rights movement and makes an important distinction between 'impairment' and 'disability'.

The Welsh Government has committed to embedding the social model of disability and **removing the barriers that are limiting the independence of disabled people**.

Taking a social model based approach is about **looking at the barriers across society**, these barriers can include physical and organisational barriers and negative attitudes which **act as an obstacle to ensuring the inclusion and participation** of disabled people in their daily lives and throughout their life course.

In her response to petition, the Minister for Social Justice reaffirmed the Welsh Government's commitment to **embedding the social model of disability** and states that:

Since formally adopting the Social Model of Disability in 2002, the Welsh Government has been committed to applying the model throughout everything it does.

The right to independent living

The Welsh Government's 'Action on Disability: The Right to Independent Living' Framework was published in 2019. It sets out several actions to improve access for disabled people that are relevant to businesses including by exploring the use of an accessibility rating which would apply to tourism and to historic sites and monuments in state care.

The Disability Rights Taskforce

In July 2021, the Disability Equality Forum published the report: 'Locked Out: Liberating Disabled People's Lives and Rights in Wales beyond COVID-19'. The Welsh Government set up a Disability Rights Taskforce to address the issues highlighted in the report and to develop actions for a new Disability Rights Action Plan.

In response to the petition, the Minister set out the work of the Taskforce:

It brings together people with lived experience, Welsh Government Policy Leads and representative organisations to identify the issues and barriers that affect the lives of many disabled people. The Taskforce works within the scope of the Welsh Government's legal remit and not in areas that solely fall under the UK Government's responsibilities.

The Taskforce will run until 2024, with a 'Disability Rights Action Plan' expected in March 2024. The Minister said:

I expect the work of the Disability Rights Taskforce to result in a clear and tangible plan of action to advance equality for disabled people in Wales. The plan will be co-produced with disabled people and disabled people's organisations to ensure that Welsh Government is putting measures in place that will have positive impacts in the areas needed to ensure barriers are systematically removed for disabled people.

United Nations Convention of the Rights of Disabled People

The Welsh Government has committed to incorporate the UN Convention on the Rights of Disabled people into Welsh Law (Article 9 recognises the right of disabled people to live independently and participate fully in all aspects of life).

Disability Wales has been advocating the incorporation of the Convention for many years and argues that implementation of the UNCRDP is the best next step to building a fully inclusive Wales. The charity says:

It provides the key to progressing towards a Wales in which all people, especially disabled people, can freely operate in society, where no one is disabled by society's attitudes to their impairments and all can live independent lives, doing whatever it is they want.

3. Welsh Parliament action

On 31 January 2018, there was a short debate led by Suzy Davies AM called Getting in there: Scores on the doors for disability access and defibrillators. The debate discussed the merits of a petition which called for all **'premises in Wales to be awarded with an Access Certificate number similar to the Food Hygiene Certificate'** to encourage business to become more inclusive.

The Welsh Government's 'Action on Disability: The Right to Independent Living' framework included a commitment to take forward recommendations arising

P-06-1331 Consider implementing legal requirements to private businesses to ensure they are accessible to all

from the petition for the **'Scores on the Doors' accessibility rating campaign'** and explore how this could be developed on a Wales wide basis. In correspondence to the Petitions Committee in February 2020, the Deputy Minister and Chief Whip said a **pilot for this project** was planned later in the year.

Following a **debate** led by Mark Isherwood MS in November 2022, the Senedd is calling on the Welsh Government to create a funding mechanism and clear guidance on changing places toilets so that there is equitable provision across the country.

Every effort is made to ensure that the information contained in this briefing is correct at the time of publication. Readers should be aware that these briefings are not necessarily updated or otherwise amended to reflect subsequent changes.



Eich cyf/Your ref P-06-1331
Ein cyf/Our ref JH-/00265/23

Jack Sargeant MS
Chair - Petitions committee
Senedd Cymru
Cardiff Bay
Cardiff
CF99 1SN

03 May 2023

Dear Jack,

Thank you for your recent letter on behalf of the Petitions committee in relation to Petition P-06-1331 requesting consideration to implement legal requirements to private businesses to ensure they are accessible to all as a result of work undertaken by learners at Libanus Primary school who have been looking at the Social Model of Disability.

I am happy to hear that learners at Libanus Primary have taken an interest in this issue and have explored their local town to see how accessible and inclusive it is for disabled people.

The Welsh Government is fully committed in supporting all disabled people in Wales. We have set up the Disability Rights Taskforce which will run until 2024. It brings together people with lived experience, Welsh Government Policy Leads and representative organisations to identify the issues and barriers that affect the lives of many disabled people. The Taskforce works within the scope of the Welsh Government's legal remit and not in areas that solely fall under the UK Government's responsibilities.

The Taskforce established a prioritisation group to identify the key priorities for its programme of work to be addressed through the development of working groups. In February 2022, the following workstreams were identified as priority areas for the programme of work:

- Embedding and Understanding of the Social Model of Disability (across Wales)
- Access to Services (including Communications and Technology)
- Independent Living: Health, Wellbeing and Social Care (*now split into two separate groups*)

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

Bae Caerdydd • Cardiff Bay
Caerdydd • Cardiff
CF99 1SN

Gohebiaeth.Jane.Hutt@llyw.cymru
Correspondence.Jane.Hutt@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.

- Travel
- Employment and Income
- Affordable and Accessible Housing
- Children and Young People

The Working Groups have a range of stakeholders which includes organisations that support disabled people, disabled people with lived experience and Welsh Government policy leads.

Since formally adopting the Social Model of Disability in 2002, the Welsh Government has been committed to applying the model throughout everything it does. The provision of disability equality training has been key to achieving this commitment. All members of the Taskforce and working groups have been offered training on the Social Model of Disability and the delivery of this training will be ongoing for both new Taskforce members and Welsh Government staff in general.

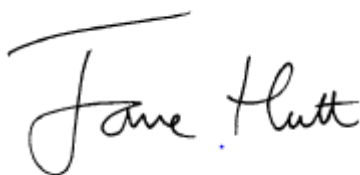
There is a duty in the Equality Act 2010 to make reasonable adjustments. The duty is that some people or organisations like employers, shops, local authorities and schools must take positive steps to remove the barriers faced by disabled people. This is to ensure disabled people receive the same services as non-disabled people.

The Equality and Human Rights Commission provides guidance to service providers about their duties under the Equality Act 2010 and this can be found here:

[Guidance for service providers | Equality and Human Rights Commission \(equalityhumanrights.com\)](https://www.equalityhumanrights.com)

I expect the work of the Disability Rights Taskforce to result in a clear and tangible plan of action to advance equality for disabled people in Wales. The plan will be co-produced with disabled people and disabled people's organisations to ensure that Welsh Government is putting measures in place that will have positive impacts in the areas needed to ensure barriers are systematically removed for disabled people.

Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Jane Hutt". The signature is written in a cursive style with a long horizontal line above the first name.

Jane Hutt AS/MS
Y Gweinidog Cyfiawnder Cymdeithasol
Minister for Social Justice

P-06-1331 Consider implementing legal requirements to private businesses to ensure they are accessible to all, Correspondence – Petitioner to Committee, 24.05.23

Eich cyf/Your ref P-06-1331
Ein cyf/Our ref JH-/00265/23



Libanus Primary School,
Libanus Road,
Blackwood,
Caerphilly,
NP121EH

24th May 2023

Dear Petitions Committee,

In response to your letter regarding our petition being debated in the Senedd on June 5th, myself and pupils have read the inclosed statement document and relevant legislation.

As a result, the pupils of Libanus would like to highlight a few points:

It states in the letter that the Social Model of Disabilities is to be embedded by 2024, and with this drawing ever so close, they believe that this is still not well known within their community and that it is emerging rather than embedded. They believe through attending Blackwood High Street to research the current conditions that the general public are not aware of the Social Model and that more education and enforcement of this is required. One pupil stated "One shop keeper said I don't have a ramp and go away", they believe that this illustrated the lack of awareness and desire to make changes to include all members of society.

Although the letter mentions staff within the Government are required to have disability awareness training, the pupils all questioned how relevant this is when it is the private businesses that have been highlighted as having limited access. Gracie Coles (of Libanus Primary) stated "Staff employed within organisations appeared to have very little, to no knowledge of the disabilities". It is the whole of society that need to be informed, to ensure all members of society feel included, are treated "fairly, with dignity and respect" (Guidance for Service providers - Equality and Human Rights Commision).

It mentions in the Equality and Human Rights document that reasonable adjustments should be made to enable all individuals to use private businesses and suggested ramps were placed near the entrance of the door ways. Although pupils asked about a ramp during their research of Blackwood High street, in those that stated they had a ramp available they weren't brought out for the pupils to see or use. Olly Morris stated, "It was not clear there were any ramps available". Pupils at Libanus believe that having to call for the attention of a shopkeeper, whilst stood outside a shop and for individuals to have to wait for the attendee to retrieve the ramp from the back of the shop isn't inclusive enough. They believe this isn't making reasonable adjustments and can have a detrimental effect on the wellbeing of physically disabled individuals. Pupils were concerned that this could even result in disabled individuals feeling different, disheartened and isolated.

Pupils understood a large proportion of shops were built many years ago, when people weren't so aware of equality rights. However, they did discuss that the Government should ensure there are procedures in place (maybe grants) that would allow shop fronts to be amended to ensure all members of the community are able to freely access all public shops and facilities.

It is clear from the pupils' research that more education is needed amongst the public, businesses and ultimately more access to all shops on our high streets is needed if we are to live in a free and fair society. Pupils of Libanus are concerned that they are learning about the 'Rights of the Child' and how we should treat others with respect, dignity and kindness, yet our world in which we live isn't fair and inclusive. They plead with the government to make the changes needed to ensure all citizens of Wales have equal access to our wonderful Wales and that all citizens are educated well enough to make the reasonable adjustments required.

Libanus pupils thank you for taking the time to read and discuss our concerns and hope their efforts make a positive difference to society.

P-06-1333: Stop Natural Resources Wales from tree felling that threatens red squirrel survival

Y Pwyllgor Deisebau | 05 Mehefin 2023
Petitions Committee | 05 June 2023

Reference: SR23/5996-2

Petition Number: P-06-1333

Petition title: Stop Natural Resources Wales from tree felling that threatens red squirrel survival

Text of petition: In 2021, Petition P-06-1208 was debated by the Senedd to get new laws to protect red squirrel habitat. The petition also highlighted how NRW NW Area had failed to monitor squirrel populations in Newborough and Pentraeth forests on Anglesey. Subsequent research revealed precipitous declines in Newborough forest associated with too much timber cutting.

<https://business.senedd.wales/mgIssueHistoryHome.aspx?Id=37917>

Now in Gwynedd, NRW are once again tree felling without squirrel data; once again suggesting that vague 'internal guidance' can make up for this

More details

It is baffling that in NE Wales, NRW can successfully integrate red squirrel conservation into commercial forest management yet next door in the West it is a relentless shambles.

Red squirrels in Gwynedd have been devastated by Squirrelepox virus. 10,000 people signed Petition to 'Fund vaccine research to protect red squirrels from deadly Squirrelepox virus'.



<https://bylines.cymru/environment/squirrelpox-endangers-red-squirrels-and-livelihoods/>

Now the few surviving red squirrels face the lottery of NRW blindly cutting down their homes. Given the tourism value of red squirrels (£1 Million to the Welsh economy per year), the well-being value of the species and the numerous Government commitments to conserve populations, why is it a constant battle with the NRW NW Area?

Is it any wonder that 1 in 6 species are at risk of extinction?

<https://naturalresources.wales/evidence-and-data/research-and-reports/state-of-natural-resources-interim-report-2019/challenges/?lang=en>

1. Background

Red squirrel populations

Red squirrels were once widespread across Wales. However UK populations have suffered significant declines following the release and spread of the North American grey squirrel in the 19th century. This is due to the spread of disease (predominantly the squirrelepox virus) and competition for resources. Red squirrels have also suffered from habitat loss and fragmentation.

According to the Wildlife Trusts, in about 150 years, red squirrels have declined from around 3.5 million to 140,000 across the UK. In 2020 the Mammal Society released a Red List for British Mammals, highlighting species most at risk. The red squirrel is classified as 'Endangered' and is one of the 19 species considered at risk of extinction in Britain.

The three focal populations of red squirrel in Wales are on Anglesey, in the Clocaenog Forest in north Wales, and Clywedog in mid Wales.

Natural Resources Wales (NRW) only monitors red squirrel populations in the focal areas. The Minister for Climate Change's, Julie James, letter on this petition says NRW has recognised that Gwynedd has become an important area for red squirrels and sightings at Parc y Bwlch have increased over the past few months. NRW is encouraging sightings to be recorded through the UK Squirrel Accord.

Woodland management

NRW manages the Welsh Government Woodland Estates (WGWE). The WGWE accounts for ~40% of the total Welsh Forest Resource and 6% of Wales' total land area.

Under the Environment (Wales) Act 2016, NRW has a statutory duty to 'seek to maintain and enhance biodiversity' so far as is consistent with the proper exercise of its functions. In its publication, the purpose and role of Welsh Government Woodland Estate, NRW states:

One of the roles of the WGWE is to maintain, conserve and appropriately enhance the biological diversity of Wales' woodland ecosystems

Woodland certification

The woodlands managed by NRW are dual-certified to the Forest Stewardship Council ® (FSC®) and the Programme for the Endorsement of Forest Certification (PEFC) certification. These accredited forest certification schemes are based on the UK Woodland Assurance Standard (UKWAS), an independent certification standard for verifying sustainable woodland management in the UK. The UKWAS sets out the need to take appropriate measures to protect identified priority habitats and species in accordance with plans agreed with nature conservation agencies.

Forest Resource Plans

NRW details any protected species or priority habitats that could be affected by its operations in a Forest Resource Plan (FRP). This includes operations within the Woodland Management Unit (WMU) or surrounding area, and the impact at a landscape or connectivity scale. FRPs set out long-term objectives and are the basis for 10-year work programmes.

FRPs are updated every ten years, with information gathered from site surveys and the Local Record Centre, which keeps a record of wildlife sightings in the area.

FRPs are placed on NRW's public register to provide further opportunity for external consultees to feedback and comment on the plans.

The Minister's letter on this petition says the petition appears to follow an NRW liaison meeting which discussed planned felling work at Parc y Bwlch, Mynydd

Llandygai, Gwynedd. The Welsh Government says Parc y Bwlch is part of the Bethesda and Abergwygregyn FRP managed by NRW which was renewed in 2021 following public consultation. Dr Shuttleworth, the petitioner, informed NRW that he disagreed with the FRP and that felling should not take place despite Parc y Bwlch not being part of a red squirrel focal site. The Minister went on to say in her letter:

The felling area is predominantly larch, which is prone to Phytophthora Ramorum or Sudden Oak Death, and is part NRW's larch removal programme. The trees are even aged, have reached their full height and are prone to windblow. However, following the public consultation in 2021, NRW halved the felling coup size, delaying half of the felling until the 2026-32 period.

Felling operations on the remaining half of the coupe will be carried out in a precautionary way to safeguard any red squirrel present and will be undertaken outside of the breeding season. Conservation coupe checks done before felling will identify any dreys present and inform management accordingly. A monitoring methodology being trialled in Anglesey this year will assist NRW in developing a better approach in future.

...

As Parc y Bwlch is not part of a red squirrel focal area, its management should not be compared with Clocaenog where there has been a long history of continuous cover forestry (CCF) management which favours red squirrel. CCF is not possible at Parc y Bwlch where the trees are at risk of blowing over but is included in the wider Forest Resource Plan where feasible. The felling work at Parc y Bwlch will help diversify the age of the trees and this will benefit the red squirrel in the long term.

Tree felling licences and the *Forestry Act 1967*

Tree felling is regulated under the *Forestry Act 1967* which generally requires a person to obtain a felling licence from NRW before felling trees. There are exemptions from the need for a licence, such as felling for disease control, preventing danger, or felling small amounts of timber for personal use. NRW has a 24 hour incident line to report suspected illegal felling.

A licence only gives authority to fell trees where felling would not otherwise be lawful under the *Forestry Act 1967*. It doesn't override the need to comply with other legislation.

The *Forestry Act 1967* currently allows conditions to be added to felling licences, but only to require the area to be restocked and the new trees maintained for a period of time. **It doesn't allow environmental protection conditions to be added, such as ensuring the integrity of protected sites or protected species.**

NRW currently has no powers to amend, suspend or revoke a licence once issued if something about the licensed activity later becomes unacceptable. This could be related to factors identified after the licence was granted, such as the presence of protected species accidentally or deliberately overlooked. Or it could be where a change of ownership results in a change of objectives, or disease affects species choice in restocking.

2. Welsh Government action

The [Agriculture \(Wales\) Bill](#), which is passing through the Senedd, aims to amend the *Forestry Act 1967* so that NRW would have the power to add environmental conditions to tree felling licences, and enable NRW to amend, suspend and revoke licences. NRW has published a [paper on how it intends to implement the powers](#).

[The Explanatory Memorandum](#) to the Agriculture (Wales) Bill says the current situation under the *Forestry Act 1967* could lead to NRW issuing a felling licence that might impact negatively on the environment and could contravene other environmental legislation. It highlights the completed [Senedd petition P-06-1208](#) calling for changes to the *Forestry Act 1967* to protect red squirrel habitat as an example of this disconnect between the Act and other environmental legislation.

The Minister wrote to NRW (in March 2022) following the debate on petition P-06-1208, asking NRW to consider continuous improvement through applying best practice in Clocaenog to the management of woodlands for red squirrel conservation on Anglesey. Her letter goes on to say:

Since then, the work commissioned by NRW to update red squirrel population data and collate best practice for working in red squirrel areas has been completed. The report has been published and NRW are enacting the recommendations. NRW now hold regular liaison meetings

with squirrel groups or directly with the Red Squirrel Trust Wales (RSTW) in each area.

3. Welsh Parliament action

There have been two Senedd petitions to protect red squirrel populations from tree felling in recent years:

- [P-06-1208](#) 'New laws to protect rare red squirrels from habitat loss which causes population decline' (completed in 2022); and
- [P-06-1225](#), 'Make Natural Resources Wales undertake and publish annual wildlife surveys before felling woodland' (completed in 2022).

The Senedd has been [scrutinising the Agriculture \(Wales\) Bill](#) and its tree felling provisions through the legislative process. The Economy Trade and Rural Affairs Committee was responsible for [Stage 1 scrutiny](#). The Committee [supported the forestry provisions](#) but recommended the Welsh Government, NRW and the forestry sector should continue to work together on guidance and mutual understanding around the new powers. It said the Welsh Government and NRW should work at pace to identify the data needed to assess the new provisions' effectiveness.

More recently the [Bill was amended at Stage 3 on 16 May 2023](#). The Senedd passed the various government amendments relating to tree felling (Part 4 of the Bill). The Minister for Rural Affairs, North Wales, and Trefnydd, Lesley Griffiths, who tabled the amendments, said:

The amendments are necessary to ensure the desired policy outcome of the forestry provisions is achieved fairly, whilst providing accessibility to the law for the reader. The amendments focus on the interaction of the forestry provisions with tree preservation orders, provision for the serving of a notice on a subsequent owner of land, and further provision relating to rights of appeal and compensation.

...

These amendments do not change the scope and policy intention of provisions as introduced, which is to better protect wildlife and limit environmental harm during felling operations.

Every effort is made to ensure that the information contained in this briefing is correct at the time of publication. Readers should be aware that these briefings are not necessarily updated or otherwise amended to reflect subsequent changes.

Julie James AS/MS
Y Gweinidog Newid Hinsawdd
Minister for Climate Change



Llywodraeth Cymru
Welsh Government

Eich cyf/Your ref P-06-1333
Ein cyf/Our ref JJ/01084/23

Jack Sargeant MS
Chair - Petitions committee
Senedd Cymru
Cardiff Bay
Cardiff
CF99 1SN

17 May 2023

Dear Jack Sargeant MS,

Thank you for your letter of 25 April regarding Petition P-06-1333 entitled "Stop Natural Resources Wales from tree felling that threatens red squirrel survival".

This petition references issues of a lack of squirrel data and poor stakeholder communication as raised in a previous petition, P-06-1208 regarding new laws to protect red squirrel habitat which was debated in Senedd in December 2021. Following this and at your request, I wrote to Clare Pilman CEO of NRW in March 2022, asking that Natural Resources Wales (NRW) consider continuous improvement through applying best practice in Clocaenog to the management of woodlands for red squirrel conservation on Anglesey.

Since then, the work commissioned by NRW to update red squirrel population data and collate best practice for working in red squirrel areas has been completed. The report has been published and NRW are enacting the recommendations. NRW now hold regular liaison meetings with squirrel groups or directly with the Red Squirrel Trust Wales (RSTW) in each area.

This petition appears to have arisen following NRW's most recent liaison meeting with the representative of the RSTW, Dr Craig Shuttleworth where the planned felling work at Parc y Bwlch, Mynydd Llandygai, Gwynedd was discussed. Parc y Bwlch is part of the Bethesda and Abergwygregyn Forest Resource Plan (FRP) managed by NRW which was renewed in 2021 following public consultation. Dr Shuttleworth informed NRW that he disagreed with the Forest Resource Plan and that felling should not take place despite Parc y Bwlch not being part of a red squirrel focal site.

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

Bae Caerdydd • Cardiff Bay
Caerdydd • Cardiff
CF99 1SN

Gohebiaeth.Julie.James@llyw.cymru
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.

NRW don't carry out any red squirrel monitoring outside the known red squirrel focal areas. However, they have recognised that Gwynedd has become an important area for red squirrel. At the time of the consultation in 2021, there weren't any reports of red squirrel sightings at Parc y Bwlch, but these have increased over the past few months. NRW are encouraging sightings to be recorded through the UK Squirrel Accord.

The felling area is predominantly larch, which is prone to Phytophthora Ramorum or Sudden Oak Death, and is part NRW's larch removal programme. The trees are even aged, have reached their full height and are prone to windblow. However, following the public consultation in 2021, NRW halved the felling coup size, delaying half of the felling until the 2026-32 period.

Felling operations on the remaining half of the coupe will be carried out in a precautionary way to safeguard any red squirrel present and will be undertaken outside of the breeding season. Conservation coupe checks done before felling will identify any dreys present and inform management accordingly. A monitoring methodology being trialled in Anglesey this year will assist NRW in developing a better approach in future.

NRW staff from the northeast and northwest areas meet regularly to discuss issues and share best practice. Staff work to the same NRW guidance that provides consistent and specific direction, although there are understandable differences in approach as squirrel conservation is at a different stage in each place. Red squirrel management is integrated into NRW's commercial forestry management, reflected in the notable increase in red squirrel population on Anglesey. As Parc y Bwlch is not part of a red squirrel focal area, its management should not be compared with Clocaenog where there has been a long history of continuous cover forestry (CCF) management which favours red squirrel. CCF is not possible at Parc y Bwlch where the trees are at risk of blowing over but is included in the wider Forest Resource Plan where feasible. The felling work at Parc y Bwlch will help diversify the age of the trees and this will benefit the red squirrel in the long term.

Yours sincerely,



Julie James AS/MS
Y Gweinidog Newid Hinsawdd
Minister for Climate Change

Dr Craig Shuttleworth
Honorary Visiting Research Fellow
School of Natural Sciences
Bangor University
Bangor

Mr Jack Sargeant MS
Chair - Petitions Committee
Senedd Cymru
Cardiff Bay
Cardiff
CF99 1SN

Date 24/5/23

Dear Mr Sargeant,

P-06-1333: Petitioner's Submission - Petitions Committee Meeting 5/6/23

My petition collected 3625 signatures between 1/4/23 to 11/5/23. It sadly follows P-06-1208 in calling for the Senedd to intervene with regard to Natural Resources Wales (NRW) and red squirrel conservation efforts in NW Wales.

Petition P-06-1333 was launched because NRW failed to tell us about habitat felling to occur this year in Gwynedd. We discovered it from a third party. No felling is timetabled within online public plans which clearly indicate the earliest activity for winter 2024/25. Once again, no red squirrel survey had been undertaken to assess population impacts of habitat loss. This scenario mirrors what we experienced historically on Anglesey, including the felling that resulted in P-06-1208 being launched in early 2021.

Thank you for sending me the letter dated 17th May 2023 you received from Julie James, Minister for Climate Change (Ref: JJ/01084/23). I would like to respond by first addressing P-06-1208 and Anglesey red squirrel habitat monitoring which she mentions, before then addressing specific points made relating to Gwynedd red squirrels.

Senedd and Ministerial Response to P-06-1208

It was clear in December 2021 that there was strong cross party support for red squirrel conservation and several AMs referred to the need for NRW to work better with local conservation groups. Following the debate, Rhun ap Iorwerth AM organised a meeting between Red Squirrels Trust Wales and NRW NW Area Team to overcome the fracture in relations. Significant assurances were made by NRW that they would learn lessons to work with those shouldering almost all of the weight of red squirrel conservation delivery in NW Wales. We attended subsequent '*liaison meetings*' meetings in good faith.

Red squirrel monitoring report: Anglesey

The Minister refers to red squirrel monitoring undertaken on Anglesey [in 2022].

We should not forget that until 2022, NRW had done **no monitoring of red squirrels anywhere in Anglesey**, despite this location defined as a 'known focal site' for the species.

NRW had also **'lost' or not recorded tree planting data** and could not say whether young trees on the Anglesey national forest estate were dead or alive yet NRW alluded to them being future squirrel habitat. They had continually clear-felled red squirrel habitat in the focal site with **no attempted to understand the immediate or forecasted long-term impact on population dynamics**.

In 2021, Bangor University were awarded a contract to design a red squirrel monitoring method for NRW. I undertook the research with two colleagues in 2022. The report has formed the basis of a scientific paper submitted to the journal **'Ecology & Evolution'**.

The research revealed that timber harvesting has led to significant declines in red squirrel numbers in Newborough forest. A lack of adequate under-planting and a reliance on natural regeneration is also changing the forest in a way that will lead to declining food resources for the squirrels. We presented earlier research demonstrating that habitat structure is likely to elevate red squirrel predation and habitat fragmentation leading to elevated energetic expenditure when animals search for food which may reduce breeding rates.

The Minister states, *'Red squirrel management is integrated into NRW's commercial forestry management, reflected in the notable increase in red squirrel population on Anglesey.'* The recovery of red squirrel actually relates to grey removal and the management of habitat across Anglesey. Population increase *per se* from a 1998 near extinction level is in itself, unsurprising and to partition the impact of NRW forest management as a contributory fact needs data. The only available data are the 2022 Bangor University survey. These show worrying comparative population decline as a result of tree felling in state forest.

Forest Management: Anglesey 2023

Recent Freedom of Information requests suggest that NRW have not implemented any management to recreate arboreal canopy connection between fragmented forest blocks. For example, request for 'Method statements' met with an unsatisfactory and woolly reply which the NRW data officer is dealing with.

There has been no tree planting in 2020/21 or 21/22 and the agency was again unable to say how many earlier planted trees were still alive.

In May, a senior NRW manager stated in correspondence with a member of the public that the red squirrels on Anglesey are *'predominantly in NRW managed forest'*. The member of the public wrote back asking for the supporting data. To date, she has received no data despite the surety of NRW comment strongly suggesting they must have had the requested data at their fingertips. I believe the statement is erroneous.

Gwynedd red squirrels: Wales Red Squirrel Plan (2018) states survey of non-focal populations

In 2005, there were twenty 10x10km² squares in Wales with red squirrels. In 2008-2017, this had increased to 32. Four of the new squares were in Gwynedd where previously there had been no red squirrels. Anglesey had increased from 4 to 12 squares. Without these geographical increases the number of occupied squares would have flat-lined at 20.

Grey squirrel control and red squirrel conservation in Gwynedd was funded 2015-2020 via EU LIFE14 NAT/UK/000467 and in 2022-2027 will be through National Lottery Heritage Fund funded 'Magical Mammals' project. Over £600K of funding raised by volunteer groups since 2015 during which time £0 has been contributed by NRW North West. The Gwynedd red squirrel conservation is underpinned by significant private sector resource.

I have perhaps laboured the fact that even in the key Anglesey 'focal area', NRW simply failed to monitor red squirrels until P-06-1208. This is important context as the Minister now states that NRW bizarrely '*don't carry out red squirrel monitoring outside of known focal areas*' even though the national plan indicates they must:

- **The Wales red Squirrel Conservation Plan (2018) p12 Action 8 'Refreshed Red Squirrel Conservation Actions'** states '**Survey non-focal sites where reliable records of red squirrels received**'...
- Page 19 Action 3 'Protect Red Squirrel Populations' states '**Conservation action to protect red squirrels on mainland sites needs to focus on ensuring suitable habitat is present to support viable red squirrel populations**
- This national strategic commitment clearly covers survey of Gwynedd squirrels even though they are not in a focal area'.

If the Welsh Government is serious about reversing biodiversity decline they need to 'encourage' NRW to adhere to the 2018 red squirrel conservation plan. After all, NRW are the forest licensing authority in charge of private sector tree felling licences which soon will often see them impose conditions on others to enhance or protect biodiversity. As a regulator they should be leading on the reversal of the biodiversity crisis.

Parc y Bwlch

In 2020/21 there was a massive squirrelpox outbreak in Gwynedd which devastated red squirrels. One of the few places now containing red squirrel is Parc y Bwlch. The forest plan does not adequately consider this species – remember NRW haven't even surveyed and have no idea where the animals are or how many are there.

The Minister states that, '*At the time of the consultation in 2021, there weren't any reports of red squirrel sightings at Parc y Bwlch, but these have increased over the past few months. NRW are encouraging sightings to be recorded through the UK Squirrel Accord.*' If I may clarify:

- If NRW had spoken to us when they first planned to bring forward clear-felling-to this winter, we would have told them that red squirrels were recorded before 2021 (as reported in EU LIFE14 NAT/UK/000467, later in 2021 and every year since.

- This Welsh project partnership ‘Magical Mammals’ is the correct place for sightings to be reported. If, as the Minister writes, NRW want data to go to Accord UK, perhaps they should explain why they never mentioned this during the three years of development of the Welsh ‘Magical Mammals’ National Lottery Heritage Fund funded initiative? It smacks of an attempt to avoid us being the main holder of data.

Clocaenog (North East NRW) vs Gwynedd (North West NRW)

I was contracted by NRW in 2020 to review red squirrel conservation in Clocaenog forest focal area having been supporting the agency there since 2012 in various professional capacities. I also managed the eradication of grey squirrel from Anglesey and every red squirrel project in Gwynedd/Anglesey since.

I am therefore well placed to comment on the differences between the two regional teams.

In NE Wales, NRW monitor throughout the Clocaenog forest holding and have done since 2012. The agency seeks recommendations and transparently selects which elements they will adopt. The forest management is defined and restocking is monitored. It is fair to say that red squirrel numbers are extremely low and habitat at key hotspots is managed very carefully. Note: **Clocaenog had x2 10x10km² occupied by red squirrels** in 2008-2017 survey.

In the Anglesey focal site, NRW NW did no population monitoring until my petition forced them too, the forest management often lacks even the most fundamental data e.g. tree planting survival and now, after a massive Gwynedd pox outbreak, the agency plans to clearfell without any population monitoring, habitat where some of the last red squirrels are found. Note: **Anglesey /Gwynedd had x16 10x10km² occupied by red squirrels** in 2008-2017 survey.

Concluding points

The 2022 United Nationsⁱⁱ report highlights how the failure to manage forest habitat for species is a major global driver in biodiversity decline often because of a lack of resource, planning, survey, managerial capacity **and crucially ignoring ‘non priority’ habitat areas**. The authors didn’t just conjure up their findings, they relied on peer reviewed science and scrutinised data. Why is a Welsh Government agency ignoring this especially when the 2018 Conservation Plan indicates they should survey red squirrel sites beyond focal areas?

In NW Wales volunteers and communities are the engine driving forward red squirrel conservation. They raised the majority of the regional conservation funding, they monitor for pathogenic disease, they control grey squirrels, they encourage landowners to manage for red squirrels; they regularly sign petitions on red squirrel matters.

The £2.8 million red squirrels united project EU LIFE14 NAT/UK/000467 ⁱⁱⁱ cost/benefit analysis estimated that during four years, 189,000 people came to Anglesey/Gwynedd to see red squirrels and contributed **£10million to the local economy**.

NRW NW stance of ‘not monitoring’ not only contradicts the commitments in the Wales Red Squirrel Plan 2018 but undermines local volunteer efforts, ‘well-being’ and the economic value of the species.

The Minister stated *‘[Dr Shuttleworth] informed NRW that he disagreed with the Forest Resource Plan and that felling should not take place despite Parc y Bwlch not being part of a red squirrel focal site.’* Let me be clear, I never said no tree felling *per se*, nor did Red Squirrels Trust Wales. Instead, after we found out about felling via third parties, we asked for a **delay to felling to winter 2024/5 as was originally timetabled**, and a reduction in the felling area by half and better integration of red squirrel needs in plans by surveying.

We would like the Government to address the petition concerns by objectively reviewing how NRW is approaching red squirrel conservation in the light of 2018 national plans and seek a way to rebuild NGO trust in the authority.

Kind regards

Dr Craig Shuttleworth

ⁱⁱ <https://cdn.naturalresources.wales/media/691092/eng-red-squirrel-conservation-plan-for-wales.pdf>

ⁱⁱ <https://www.fao.org/documents/card/en/c/cc2229en> Mainstreaming biodiversity in forestry

ⁱⁱⁱ <https://www.redsquirrelsunited.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2020/04/RSU-Cost-Benefit-Analysis-FINAL-REPORT.pdf>

P-06-1335 Welsh Government should take steps to ensure vulnerable adults without bank cards can pay with cash

Y Pwyllgor Deisebau | 5 Mehefin 2023
Petitions Committee | 5 June 2023

SR235996-3

Petition Number: P-06-1335

Petition title: Welsh Government should take steps to ensure vulnerable adults without bank cards can pay with cash

Text of petition:

Mencap Cymru is concerned that the move to a cashless society will leave behind disabled people who cannot have access to electronic forms of payment.

In recent months people with a learning disability have been unable to pay for goods and services and have had to leave businesses empty-handed. Support workers are not permitted to use their own cards, and nor should they be.

This means they do not have equal access to goods and services with many businesses and organisations moving to cashless transactions.



1. Background

A recent report by UK Finance, the trade association for the banking and finance industry, found that almost “40 per cent of people use cash to pay for something at least once a week, with 11 per cent saying that they prefer to use cash and only three per cent saying that they never used cash at all”. The report also found that “a third of people that had used cash in the last year said that they had had a cash payment refused”.

2. UK Parliament

On 20 March the House of Commons held a debate on a petition which calls for the UK Government to “require all businesses and public services to accept cash payments”.

The UK Government’s response to the petition states:

“The Government does not intend to mandate cash acceptance. The Government’s view is that as technology and consumer behaviour changes, it should remain the choice of individual organisations as to whether to accept or decline any form of payment, including cash or card based on their consideration of factors such as customer preference and cost.

However, the Government recognises that millions of people continue to transact in cash across the UK, particularly those in vulnerable groups, and engages closely with financial regulators to monitor and assess trends relating to cash. Research undertaken by the Financial Conduct Authority found that 98% of small businesses would never turn away a customer if they needed to pay by cash.”

The response also notes that the UK Government has recently introduced legislation to “protect access to cash as part of the Financial Services and Markets Bill”. The UK Government considers that this legislation will support organisations, including local businesses, to continue accepting cash by ensuring they have reasonable access to deposit facilities.

3. Welsh Government action

The response to the petition from the Minister for Social Justice and Chief Whip (the Minister) sets out that the Welsh Government supports, wherever possible, the need for businesses to accept cash. However, the Minister notes that “our levers are limited in this space as this is entirely a voluntary decision based on commercial considerations”. The Minister also highlights that there may be equality-related aspects to consider:

“The provision of digital only payment routes with no option to use cash as a payment method raises potential equality of treatment issues. Recipients and providers of services in both the public and private sectors are impacted. There are risks that a cashless requirement could indirectly discriminate against persons from certain protected characteristics. Officials are looking to explore this in more detail.”

The Minister’s response also points to the work of the Disability Rights Taskforce which it established in order to develop a new Disability Rights Action Plan:

“The Welsh Government is fully committed in supporting all disabled people in Wales and has set up the Disability Rights Taskforce which will run until 2024. It brings together people with lived experience, Welsh Government Policy Leads and representative organisations to identify the issues and barriers that affect the lives of many disabled people. The Taskforce works within the scope of the Welsh Government’s legal remit and not in areas that solely fall under the UK Government’s responsibilities.”

The Welsh Government’s new Disability Rights Action Plan is expected to be published in March 2024.

4. Welsh Parliament action

In April 2019, the Economy, Infrastructure and Skills Committee of the Fifth Senedd published its report on “Access to Banking”.

The Committee found overwhelming evidence of the negative impact of bank closures and reduction in free-to-use ATMs in Wales and voiced concern that “Wales is certainly not ready to go cashless”.

In relation to access to cash, LINK, the not-for-profit organisation which manages the LINK ATM network, told the Committee that although cash use has declined rapidly in the last decade and this is expected to continue, free access to cash for consumers is a “vital national service”. LINK said over 47% of consumers still rely on cash and for 17% a cashless society would present real challenges. The consumer organisation Which? told the Committee it was concerned that the rate at which access to cash is declining is “at odds with consumer attitudes and demand”, and is being driven by industry. It warned that Welsh communities could be stripped of their choice to use cash before they are ready and if cash disappears, re-introducing it can be complex.

The reduction in cash usage also affects how businesses choose to accept payments, as the costs of handling cash and accepting electronic payments change over time. The Committee noted that “a particular issue here is the ability for businesses to deposit cash takings, and the associated cost of that”.

The Committee made a number of recommendations, including:

“Recommendation 3. The Welsh Government should explore how regional hubs, and cooperation and collaboration between different agencies can improve the access to cash in Welsh communities (recognising that cash-handling is an expensive business).”

The Welsh Government accepted the recommendation in principle.

The Committee received strong evidence about the impact of branch closures on older people and disabled people in particular, and the problems of digital exclusion for those already disadvantaged. As such, the Committee also recommended:

“Recommendation 10. The Welsh Government’s support for digital inclusion should prioritise a) maintaining support for existing digital skills training, b) consulting stakeholders on how to further address barriers to older and vulnerable people safely accessing online banking, and c) providing additional support to teachers to deliver financial education within the school curriculum.”

The Welsh Government accepted this recommendation.

Title:

Every effort is made to ensure that the information contained in this briefing is correct at the time of publication. Readers should be aware that these briefings are not necessarily updated or otherwise amended to reflect subsequent changes.

Jane Hutt AS/MS
Y Gweinidog Cyfiawnder Cymdeithasol
Minister for Social Justice



Llywodraeth Cymru
Welsh Government

Your ref P-06-1335
Our ref JH-/00391/23

Jack Sargeant MS
Chair - Petitions committee
Senedd Cymru
Cardiff Bay
Cardiff
CF99 1SN

15 May 2023

Dear Jack,

Thank you for raising this important issue which is complex, and in terms of banking and access to cash, is a non-devolved matter. The issue is exacerbated by bank closures which are presenting real challenges for many retailers, particularly smaller businesses, when needing to deposit cash locally.

Welsh Government supports, wherever possible, the need businesses to accept cash, however our levers are limited in this space as this is entirely a voluntary decision based on commercial considerations.

The Minister for Economy has recently been made aware of this issue and will discuss it with social partners, stakeholders / business representative groups and associated retail and hospitality sector to encourage them to retain cash systems to ensure vulnerable groups are not disadvantaged in any way.

The provision of digital only payment routes with no option to use cash as a payment method raises potential equality of treatment issues. Recipients and providers of services in both the public and private sectors are impacted. There are risks that a cashless requirement could indirectly discriminate against persons from certain protected characteristics. Officials are looking to explore this in more detail.

There is significant overlap between those who rely on cash and those who need face to face support for their banking needs. This population will often be the most vulnerable, including elderly and disabled people and those who are digitally excluded.

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

Bae Caerdydd • Cardiff Bay
Caerdydd • Cardiff
CF99 1SN

Gohebiaeth.Jane.Hutt@llyw.cymru
Correspondence.Jane.Hutt@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 recognise that it is inevitable that payments and banking systems will continue to innovate and that is positive, but we need to ensure that digital advancements do not further deepen exclusion for some groups. This will require protecting cash-based services and pressing the banking sector to have effective strategies for digital exclusion.

I am aware the FCA will be monitoring cash acceptance, tracking the accessibility of cash use. I understand the FCA have started this work by surveying retailers on whether they would turn away customers who can only pay in cash.

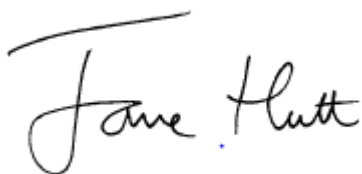
In terms of wider cash access, through the UK Government Financial Services and Markets Bill I understand there will be statutory protection for access to cash and depositing cash. Whilst this will go some way to protect the continued use of cash, the new powers provided to the FCA do not extend to cash acceptance.

I am concerned about the discriminatory concerns of the examples raised in the petition. The Welsh Government is committed to creating a fairer society, where diversity is valued and respected, where people do not face discrimination and prejudice and a society where everyone can participate, flourish and have the opportunity to fulfil their potential.

The Welsh Government is fully committed in supporting all disabled people in Wales and has set up the Disability Rights Taskforce which will run until 2024. It brings together people with lived experience, Welsh Government Policy Leads and representative organisations to identify the issues and barriers that affect the lives of many disabled people. The Taskforce works within the scope of the Welsh Government's legal remit and not in areas that solely fall under the UK Government's responsibilities.

In February 2022, a number of workstreams were identified as priority areas for the Taskforce, which included Access to Services (including Communications and Technology). I recommend that Mencap Cymru engages with this group so this issue can be fed into the appropriate forums.

Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Jane Hutt". The signature is written in a cursive style with a horizontal line above the first name.

Jane Hutt AS/MS
Minister for Social Justice and Chief Whip



Mencap Cymru
G2/G3 Tŷ Menter
Navigation Park
Abercynon
Rhondda Cynon Taff
CF45 4SN

01443 565655
wales.mencap.org.uk

Tuesday 30th May 2023

Mencap Cymru's Response to Minister for Social Justice Letter to Petitions Committee dated 15th May 2023.

We recognise the Welsh Government's limitations in being able to influence private companies beyond raising this issue and the on disabled people. It is also important to highlight that this issue does not only affect people with a learning disability, but it could also impact those with dementia and unhoused people.

There are two areas which we feel Welsh Government needs to focus on in the short and long term.

1. Long-term - creating ways in which people with a learning disability and other vulnerable adults can use cashless forms of payment if they lack capacity to have a bank accounts.

As part of the CIW (Care Inspectorate Wales) inspection of regulated services and Section 73 RI visits, there should be scope for inspectors & RIs to assess how as providers they are enabling people with a learning disability to access their money, build their capacity to manage their own money, and exploring ways in which they can take part in a cashless society.

Welsh Government should also work with UK Government and the FCA to develop ways in which vulnerable adults can participate in the purchase of goods and services in a cashless society. Without such means we risk permanently excluding people with a learning disability from having the independence, control, and choice to pay for goods and services themselves.

We also would ask Welsh Government to consider what impact the move to cashless transactions and exclusion of a wide range of Welsh citizens has on the outcomes of the Wellbeing of Future Generations Act?

2. Short term – Ensuring that venues and organisations in receipt of public funds allow people the choice to pay with cash.

Access to adequate, community-based banking services is an issue that faces people with a learning disability, and small businesses alike. We are of course sympathetic to this issue and

recognise that Welsh Government's influence in this area will be limited.

However, during the time that our petition was live, we ran a survey where people could tell us where they were unable to pay for things with cash. The survey revealed a number of venues either part-funded by Welsh Government, part owned by local authorities or in receipt of Welsh Government grants that do not accept cash.

These include Wales Millennium Centre; Pontio Arts Centre; Aberystwyth Arts Centre; several leisure centres; Cardiff International Swimming Pool, and Bluestone Holiday Park.

As a society we would expect that at a minimum the above venues have accessible toilet facilities for disabled customers, otherwise they breach the Equality Act. A venue without these facilities is exclusionary and impact the right of disabled people to participate.

Not accepting cash has the same impact on the ability of a disabled person to access goods or services. We have heard from several people who have been unable to participate in cultural events, leisure facilities, buy refreshments and other items because they have a learning disability, cannot access a bank account and are unable to pay with cash.

We feel very strongly that as part of grant/funding conditions, any organisation in receipt of public funds directly from Welsh Government, Local Authorities or any other statutory agency bound by the Equality Act must provide people with the ability to pay using cash.

In conclusion, we welcome the acknowledgement by the Minister that the current situation is discriminating against disabled people and this runs contrary to the Equality Act and welcome the opportunity to engage with the disability taskforce, however we feel that only Welsh Government can fund the level of research needed to understand the potential impact of the move to cashless transactions on its citizens.

Free Welsh lessons for everyone who wants to learn the language in Wales

Y Pwyllgor Deisebau | 05 Mehefin 2023
Petitions Committee | 05 June 2023

Reference: SR235996-1

Petition Number: P-06-1336

Petition title: Free Welsh lessons for everyone who wants to learn the language in Wales.

Text of petition:

Many people in Wales are very keen to learn Welsh, and people who live here and people who move to our country want to see the language flourish and grow. But a great many people also find it difficult to afford Welsh lessons, and using Duolingo is not a suitable learning method for everyone. Therefore, we need to ensure that everyone has a fair opportunity to learn Welsh without having to worry about the cost, and that there is also an appropriate method for people to learn.

In order to achieve a million Welsh speakers, we need to ensure that everyone has the opportunity to learn the language

1. Background

The Welsh Government's ambition is to see the number of Welsh speakers in Wales increase to 1 million by 2050, which would almost double the current



number of Welsh speakers in Wales. The 2021 Census results showed that 538,300 people in Wales aged 3 or over reported they could speak Welsh. This is a decrease of around 23,700 people since Census 2011.

Expanding Welsh-medium provision and opportunities to learn and use the language are key themes in the Cymraeg 2050 Welsh language strategy. It notes that the:

Welsh for Adults sector has an important contribution to make to our aim of achieving a million Welsh speakers. It will do so by enabling adults of all ages and abilities to improve their skills, resume their study of Welsh or learn afresh to give them the confidence to be able to use Welsh in the workplace, socially or within the family.

The Welsh Government, through its funding of the National Centre for Learning Welsh, has been developing Welsh courses to support the development of adult Welsh language skills.

2. Welsh Government action

The Welsh Government directly funds the National Centre for Learning Welsh. The Centre (which runs its programmes under the banner – Learn Welsh) distributes funding to 11 course providers across Wales.

During 2021-22, a total of £8.7 million was distributed to Learn Welsh course providers.

| Funding | | |
|--|--------------------------------|----------------------------------|
| Funding summary for each course provider for the academic year 2021-2022: | | |
| Learn Welsh Provider | Organisation | Total Grant for Provision |
| Learn Welsh Swansea Bay Region | Swansea University | £858,110 |
| Learn Welsh Cardiff | Cardiff University | £966,347 |
| Learn Welsh Ceredigion - Powys - Carmarthenshire | Aberystwyth University | £1,178,616 |
| Learn Welsh North East | Coleg Cambria | £1,062,808 |
| Learn Welsh North West | Bangor University | £1,430,539 |
| Learn Welsh Gwent | Coleg Gwent | £1,136,387 |
| Learn Welsh Glamorgan | University of South Wales | £996,067 |
| Learn Welsh Nant Gwrtheyrn | Nant Gwrtheyrn | £190,000 |
| Learn Welsh Pembrokeshire | Pembrokeshire County Council | £365,252 |
| Learn Welsh Carmarthenshire | Carmarthenshire County Council | £172,396 |
| Learn Welsh The Vale | Vale of Glamorgan Council | £303,478 |
| TOTAL | | £8,660,000 |

The Learn Welsh website notes that its Welsh courses are available during the daytime and evening, face-to-face or in virtual classrooms. It also notes that individuals can study independently, online.

The Minister's paper to the Committee notes that while offering free Learn Welsh courses is not part of the Cymraeg 2050 strategy, the Welsh Government's:

continued investment in the Learn Welsh sector means that fees for courses are kept to a minimal, with many learners accessing free tuition or paying discounted fees.

The National Centre for Learning Welsh

The National Centre for Learning Welsh, established in 2016, is responsible for all aspects of the Learn Welsh sector - from curriculum and course development to resources for tutors, marketing and e-learning.

The Centre not only develops provision for adults wishing to learn Welsh, but works with partners and employers to ensure proactive and flexible learning programmes are readily available to new speakers in the workplace.

The Minister for Education and the Welsh Language notes in his paper that the Centre has a "formal partnership in place with Say Something in Welsh and Duolingo", which provides learners with a wide range of learning provision and choice whilst ensuring resources are aligned. This, the Minister notes makes it "easier to move from one provider to another to suit the level of the learner and how they wish to learn".

Among its varied provision, the Centre offers online taster courses for anyone wishing to access them. These introduce everyday words and phrases and are available to everyone for free. People can also access free Learn Welsh videos on YouTube.

Cymraeg Gwaith | Work Welsh

The National Centre for Learning Welsh also receives funding to develop the Welsh language skills of workers across a range of sectors. These courses are often tailored to support the specific industry or service they're working in, and are free to access. Examples include Welsh for the Healthcare Sector, Social Care, Retail and the Tourism sector.

The Minister's paper highlights that 319 employers were involved in the Scheme in 2021-22, with over 6,000 individual employees undertaking a course.

Funding allocated to the National Centre for Learning Welsh will also deliver access to free Welsh language lessons to all education practitioners. This includes self-study courses through to higher level intensive courses. Education practitioners can also register to undertake an immersive 12 month Sabbatical Scheme course, funded by the Welsh Government.

Camau

Learn Welsh also delivers the 'Camau' scheme, which is an online self-study course at entry level (suitable for beginners, and those who have completed the taster courses) for practitioners in early-years settings. The course is fully funded, providing approximately 60 hours of independent learning. Among its aims is to assist early years practitioners to develop their Welsh language skills to use with children; learning the time; pronouncing the alphabet, colours, days of the week and numbering; and learn commands.

Through its partnership with Mudiad Meithrin, new parents or parents to be can register for Clwb Cwtsh, a free taster programme focussing on speaking Welsh with young children.

16 to 25 year olds

The Welsh Government, through its Co-operation Agreement with Plaid Cymru included a commitment to invest in the Coleg Cymraeg Cenedlaethol and the National Centre for Learning Welsh. The aim was to increase the amount of Welsh-medium delivery in the apprenticeship and further education sector, and to provide free Welsh language learning for 16 to 25-year-olds.

Of an additional £4.5 million allocated for 2023-24 to support this programme, £2.8 million will be provided to the Coleg Cymraeg and £1.7 million to the National Centre for Learning Welsh.

Fees and financial support

While there is significant free Learn Welsh provision available, many of the mainstream courses do carry a fee. The Minister in his paper notes that a "generous fee policy is in operation across all providers". It notes that since 2019:

A single course fee of £90 has been in place for all courses, regardless of location, level or mode of delivery. Operating alongside this is a fee remission policy, which offers discounted fees for learners in priority groups or on priority courses. This includes a 40% discount for individuals in receipt of benefits, and a discount of up to 100% (i.e. offering courses free of charge) for refugees and asylum seekers.

The Minister's paper notes that current data shows that around 43% of learners on mainstream courses currently receive some discount on their fees.

There is also a specific Financial Contingency Fund to support those who wish to learn Welsh but are experiencing financial hardship. This funding can be used to help with costs associated with childcare, travel or buying resources for example.

3. Welsh Parliament action

In 2019, a petition was submitted calling for Free Welsh Lessons for the People of Wales. At the time, it collected 95 signatures, and was referred to the Petitions Committee.

On closing the petition, Leanne Wood AM stated at the time that

I'm not sure where we can take this further now, but I do still accept the point that, if the Government wants to increase the number of Welsh speakers to 1 million by 2050, they've got to do a lot more than they're doing now in terms of adult education. This petitioner shows that the financing of lessons is a barrier. I think some of us who feel strongly about this can put pressure elsewhere on this question, but I can't see where we can take this petition now. So, perhaps we can thank the petitioner for raising it, and undertake as individual Members to keep pressing the case for free classes in other aspects of our Assembly work.

The Culture, Communications, Welsh Language, Sport and International Relations Committee recently completed an inquiry looking at the legislative framework that supports Welsh-Medium education provision. While the focus of the inquiry was on supporting the development of Welsh language education provision, it did recommend that the Welsh Government:

- invests substantially in upskilling the current teaching workforce, providing greater numbers of teachers, teaching assistants and lecturers with the

- opportunity to undertake the Sabbatical Scheme [Welsh language immersion training course]; and
- that the Welsh Government considers whether the Sabbatical Scheme could be expanded to some early-years practitioners in Wales supporting Welsh-medium provision in the sector, or to promote and expand the Learn Welsh Scheme for Early Years Education and Childcare through Dysgu Cymraeg.

Laura Anne Jones MS tabled a written question on 16 March 2022 asking the Minister for Education and the Welsh Language whether the Welsh Government “have a target for the number of 18 to 25 year olds enrolling on free-of-charge courses with the National Centre for Learning Welsh”. The Minister responded noting that:

The Centre have set a target of attracting 2,500 learners aged 18-25 during 2022-23, and will revise this target annually as they plan the provision with their providers.

The National Centre for Learning Welsh are currently planning a marketing campaign over the summer to attract learners aged 18-25 to take advantage of the offer of free lessons. Learners in this age group will be able to enrol on any community course across the range of levels available, or will be able to join in specific courses which are being created for this age group.

Delivering free Welsh lessons to 18-25 year olds is being carried out in collaboration with Cefin Campbell MS, the Plaid Cymru designated member, as part of the Co-operation Agreement between the Welsh Government and Plaid Cymru.

A similar written question was asked by James Evans MS on 26 September 2022 with the same response provided by the Minister.

Every effort is made to ensure that the information contained in this briefing is correct at the time of publication. Readers should be aware that these briefings are not necessarily updated or otherwise amended to reflect subsequent changes.



Eich cyf/Your ref P-06-1336
Ein cyf/Our ref JMEWL/00751/23

Llywodraeth Cymru
Welsh Government

Jack Sargeant MS
Chair - Petitions Committee
Senedd Cymru
Cardiff Bay
Cardiff
CF99 1SN

9 May 2023

Dear Jack,

Thank you for your letter of 25 April 2023 regarding petition P-06-1336 - Free Welsh lessons for everyone who wants to learn the language in Wales.

Having an effective and affordable system in place for adults and young people to learn Welsh is vitally important if we want increase both the number of Welsh speakers and the numbers using the language in their everyday lives.

The National Centre for Learning Welsh, established in 2016, is responsible for all aspects of the Learn Welsh sector. It provides strategic leadership for the sector, including curriculum and course development, providing resources and training for practitioners, marketing, and e-learning as well as working with partners to expand opportunities for learners to develop and use their Welsh language skills.

The Centre currently works with 11 providers to offer Welsh lessons for adults and young people across Wales. Details of the courses available can be found via the Centre's website: <https://learnwelsh.cymru/learning/find-a-course/>.

The Centre offers practical support to learners in the form of free print and digital materials to go along with its courses. The Centre has also developed online courses, which provide a wider range of opportunities for learners to develop their Welsh language skills. Further details of the Centre's work can be found at www.learnwelsh.cymru.

In addition to working with providers, the Centre also has formal partnerships in place with Say Something in Welsh and Duolingo. This provides learners with more choice and flexibility and ensures that different providers' resources are aligned; making it easier to move from one provider to another to suit the level of the learner and how they wish to learn.

Bae Caerdydd • Cardiff Bay
Caerdydd • Cardiff
CF99 1SN

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

Gohebiaeth.Jeremy.Miles@llyw.cymru
Correspondence.Jeremy.Miles@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.

The Centre's Cymraeg Gwaith scheme also continues to go from strength to strength. Cymraeg Gwaith offers a range of flexible training opportunities, with the aim of strengthening Welsh language skills in workplaces across Wales. There were 319 employers involved in the Scheme in 2021-22, with over 6,000 individual employees undertaking a course. The scheme has recently been extended to offer courses tailored for the education workforce and the Health and Social Care and Childcare sectors.

Offering free Learn Welsh courses is not one of the changes set out in Cymraeg 2050. Our continued investment in the Learn Welsh sector means that fees for courses are kept to a minimal, with many learners accessing free tuition or paying discounted fees.

Under the Co-operation Agreement we have committed to offering free Welsh language learning provision to 16 to 25-year-olds and workers in the education sector. Learners on the Cymraeg Gwaith scheme also benefit from free tuition as do Clwb Cwtsh learners, which offers courses for parents/carers and extended family members of young children.

For learners on mainstream Learn Welsh courses, a generous fee policy is in operation across all providers. Since 2019 a single course fee of £90 has been in place for all courses, regardless of location, level or mode of delivery. Operating alongside this is a fee remission policy, which offers discounted fees for learners in priority groups or on priority courses. This includes a 40% discount for individuals in receipt of benefits, and a discount of up to 100% (i.e. offering courses free of charge) for refugees and asylum seekers.

The latest data we have from the Centre shows that around 43% of learners on mainstream courses currently receive a discount on their fees. In addition, complementary activities such as 'Sadwrn Siarad' sessions or revision sessions are often provided free of charge and all learners have access to free taster sessions and self-study resources through the Centre's digital learning platform.

The Centre's Financial Contingency Fund offers financial support for learners. It offers support for a range of course-related costs, including childcare and travel costs, to ensure these are not a barrier to learning.

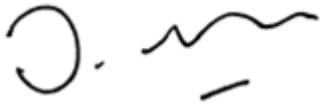
I trust the information above explains steps being taken to ensure that we have an effective and affordable system in place for adults and young people to learn Welsh. I would be more than happy to provide further information to the Committee, or Dona Lewis, the National Centre for Learning Welsh's Chief Executive, may be contacted directly by emailing dona.lewis@dysgucymraeg.cymru should you wish to gather further evidence regarding the Centre's work.

You will also be aware that we are currently consulting on proposals for a Welsh Language Education Bill, which includes the following question in relation to Learn Welsh provision:

- Do you agree with the principle that sufficient Welsh language learning provision should be guaranteed, and that suitable structures should be in place to support learners of all ages?

The consultation closes on 16 June and, after analysing the responses, we'll consider how to move forward in this area.

Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, consisting of a large 'J' followed by a series of wavy lines and a short horizontal stroke at the end.

Jeremy Miles AS/MS

Gweinidog y Gymraeg ac Addysg
Minister for Education and Welsh Language

Sycharth, the home of Owain Glyndŵr, should be bought to safeguard the site for future generations

Y Pwyllgor Deisebau | 5 Mehefin 2023
Petitions Committee | 5 June 2023

Reference: SR23/5996-5

Petition Number: P-06-1337

Petition title: Sycharth, the home of Owain Glyndŵr, should be bought to safeguard the site for future generations.

Text of petition:

History is such a key subject for us here in Wales. Stories from our nation show us how we have developed over the centuries to become what we are today. Notable characters have steered this interesting history, with none more prominent than Owain Glyndŵr, who has contributed so much to our identity, and for many, he is a symbol of the nation. It is very disheartening to see that Sycharth, Glyndŵr's home, is almost forgotten deep in the heart of rural Powys, and the place is not very accessible for people to visit.

It is time for the Government to ensure that this vital site is safeguarded for the next generation, by purchasing it and ensuring that it is more accessible to enable people to visit and appreciate this wonderful site.

It is disappointing to see that all our castles throughout Wales are protected, but that this site is hardly advertised, not to mention celebrated.

It's time to change the way we view the history of Wales, and Sycharth would be a good starting point.



1. Background

The main tools the Welsh Government uses for protecting the historic environment are listing buildings and scheduling monuments. Scheduled monuments are protected archaeological sites and unoccupied historic ruins. They are selected to represent all human activities from earliest times to today.

There are around 4,200 scheduled monuments in Wales. Of these, only about 129 are owned and looked after by Cadw (the Welsh Government's historic environment division).

The aim of scheduling is to preserve the archaeological evidence that survives within sites and monuments. This includes the physical fabric of the monument and any associated artefacts and environmental evidence, such as pollen or seeds.

This means that if the landowner wants to carry out work that would physically alter a scheduled monument they will probably need to apply to Cadw for permission known as scheduled monument consent. The scheduled monument consent process is intended to protect the monument, its setting and its features from unsympathetic works that could damage its national importance.

Cadw officers also visit scheduled monuments and their owners periodically to check the condition of the site and to offer advice on managing the monument.

2. Welsh Government action

The Welsh Government's response to this petition notes that Sycarth is scheduled and that:

Cadw regularly monitors the condition of the monument and has worked proactively with the owners of the site, the Llangedwyn Estate, to implement conservation works to protect the integrity of the earthworks by improving drainage and repairing erosion caused by natural weathering.

Cadw also continues to work with the owners and the tenant farmer to ensure that the site is fully accessible to the public. There is a small on-

Title:

site car park and access via path and stile, which have been recently upgraded with financial grant support from Cadw. The present interpretation panel was installed by Cadw in 2018 and includes an artist's depiction of the site as it might have looked at the time of Owain Glyndŵr. The interpretation draws on the results of Cadw's geophysical investigation work carried out to support the conservation of the motte and is our most up-to-date understanding of Sycharth.

Cadw has an Ancient monument grant. The accompanying guidance notes:

We consider applications for grant for works of preservation, maintenance and management of ancient monuments. Schemes which assist in public access and interpretation of ancient monuments will also be considered.

Every effort is made to ensure that the information contained in this briefing is correct at the time of publication. Readers should be aware that these briefings are not necessarily updated or otherwise amended to reflect subsequent changes.

Dawn Bowden AS/MS
Dirprwy Weinidog y Celfyddydau a Chwaraeon, a'r Prif Chwip
Deputy Minister for Arts and Sport, and Chief Whip



Llywodraeth Cymru
Welsh Government

Ein cyf/Our ref DB/00277/23
Jack Sargeant MS
Chair - Petitions committee
Senedd Cymru
Cardiff Bay
Cardiff
CF99 1SN

16 May 2023

Dear Jack,

Thank you for your letter providing me with an opportunity to comment on the petition received by the Committee requesting that "Sycharth, the home of Owain Glyndŵr should be bought to safeguard the site for future generations".

Owain Glyndŵr is undoubtedly an important figure who played a key role in shaping Welsh history. His estates were in north-east Wales, with his main residences being at Sycharth and Glyndyfrdwy. Both properties were deliberately destroyed by the English forces in the 15th century and never reoccupied. At the height of his rebellion Glyndŵr established his court at Harlech Castle, which he had captured from the English, and held parliaments there and at Machynlleth.

At Sycharth, Glyndŵr's residence was situated within an older earthwork motte-and-bailey castle. The earthen banks are still imposing to this day but there is no upstanding evidence for the internal buildings which were so eloquently described by the Welsh poet, Iolo Goch (1320-1398).

Sycharth is a Scheduled Monument, and so is already legally protected under the 1979 Ancient Monuments and Archaeological Areas Act (soon to be replaced by protection under the new Consolidated Historic Environment Act (Wales)). The legislation safeguards the archaeological remains of the site for future generations. Cadw regularly monitors the condition of the monument and has worked proactively with the owners of the site, the Llangedwyn Estate, to implement conservation works to protect the integrity of the earthworks by improving drainage and repairing erosion caused by natural weathering.

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

Bae Caerdydd • Cardiff Bay
Caerdydd • Cardiff
CF99 1SN

Gohebiaeth.Dawn.Bowden@llyw.cymru
Correspondence.Dawn.Bowden@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.

Cadw also continues to work with the owners and the tenant farmer to ensure that the site is fully accessible to the public. There is a small on-site car park and access via path and stile, which have been recently upgraded with financial grant support from Cadw. The present interpretation panel was installed by Cadw in 2018 and includes an artist's depiction of the site as it might have looked at the time of Owain Glyndŵr. The interpretation draws on the results of Cadw's geophysical investigation work carried out to support the conservation of the motte and is our most up-to-date understanding of Sycharth.

Sycharth is privately-owned. Putting it up for sale would be the owner's decision and I am not aware that there is any desire to sell the property. There have also been no requests from the owner of Sycharth for the monument to be taken into Guardianship Care. However, I am satisfied that appropriate legal protection is in place to ensure the safeguarding of this historic site for future generations. By continuing to work collaboratively with the owners of Sycharth, there is and will continue to be public access and opportunities for visitors to appreciate the special qualities of the site.

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Dawn Bowden'. The signature is fluid and cursive, with a prominent initial 'D' and 'B'.

Dawn Bowden AS/MS

Dirprwy Weinidog y Celfyddydau, Chwaraeon a Thwristiaeth
Deputy Minister for Arts, Sport and Tourism

P-06-1337 Prynu Sycharth, Cartref Owain Glyndŵr, er mwyn cadw'r safle yn safu i genedlaethau'r dyfodol, Gohebiaeth - Deisebydd i'r Pwyllgor, 31.05.23

Annwyl aelodau o'r pwyllgor deisebau,

Rwy'n falch iawn bod y ddeiseb yma wedi cyrraedd 10,000 - mae'n dangos bod Sycharth, hanes Glyndŵr, a hanes Cymru mor agos at galonnau bobl.

Mae dros 6 mlynedd wedi bod bellach ers i fy neiseb ar ddysgu hanes Cymru mewn ysgolion gyrraedd y trothwy (5,000 adeg yno), a deiseb arall wedyn yn 2020 yn gofyn i'r Gweinidog addysg ar y pryd, Kirsty Williams, i ddefnyddio'r wybodaeth oedd pwyllgor oedd yn edrych ar y mater wedi ei gasglu, i wneud y pwnc yn ofynnol mewn ysgolion yn y wlad - a falch yw gweld bod newid wedi dechrau gyda dysgu hanes Cymru yn y cwricwlwm newydd.

Credaf fod hi'n allweddol rŵan i blethu'r safleoedd allweddol yma gyda hanes Cymru, gyda'r addysg yma, a dyna pam y gwnes i ddeiseb ar achub Sycharth.

Byddai achub a datblygu'r safle ddim yn unig yn dod a'r safle yn fwy at sylw bobl yn y genedl (llawer o bobl sydd nai llai ddim yn gwybod bod y safle yn bodoli ar hyn o bryd, neu lle mae ei leoliad) ond hefyd yn dod a balchder at bethau fel yr iaith a'r diwylliant, a heb os byddai defnyddio'r safle yma'n galluogi'r person, yn enwedig disgyblion a phlant, i ddechmygu'r hanes, ac yn plethu'r holl beth mewn i'r tirlun.

Digalon felly oedd gweld y safle yn ei stad bresennol - Dyma sut y disgrifiais fy mhrofiad wrth ymweld â'r safle dipyn o fisoedd yn ôl:

'Prin bod arwydd i'w weld wrth fynd yno yn cyfeirio at y lle ar y ffordd drwy Llangedwyn. Er bod y maes parcio wedi'i darmacio, a camfa newydd i fynd dros y ffens, does dim arwydd na teimlad o werthfawrogiad hefo'r safle yma a'i bwysigrwydd i Gymru, mae fel ryw lecyn wedi ei guddio i ffwrdd, tra bod cestyll mawreddog Caernarfon a Chonwy yn cael ei ddathlu yn ddiidiwedd.

Fel gwelir yn y lluniau, roedd o'n dipyn o gamp i gael ni'n pedwar drosodd, ac yn sicr bysa rhywun sydd isio dod â Cadair olwyn ar y cae a hefo anghenion arbennig yn cael trafferth mawr. Er diwrnod mor braf oedd hi, dwi'n credu bysa'r llwybr dros y gamfa yn troi yn boetsh gwlyb mwyaf sydyn!

Un o'r pethau mwyaf rhwystredig oedd y ffyrdd i fynd ato, yn troi a throelli, a gyda tyllau a phyllau ar y rhannau ger y maes parcio.

Y teimlad o'r castell ei hun yw does ddim llawer o eglurhad o'r safle, gyda dau plac gwybodaeth ger y fynedfa, a dim arall wedyn - a bechod oedd gweld erydiad a mieri ar twmpath y castell.'

Gwallgof felly ydi gweld nad ydi Sycharth dan berchnogaeth y genedl - tra bod llefydd eraill gyda'r un pwysigrwydd cenedlaethol yn cael y fraint yma.

Wrth i ni ddathlu ac edrych yn ôl ar ein hanes, mae'n bwysig i ddefnyddio'r safle yma, yn ogystal â safleoedd eraill dros Gymru, i ddehongli'r gorffennol, a gan fod Sycharth, a hanes Glyndŵr yn rhan annatod o hanes ein Cenedl, mae'n allweddol i gynnal trafodaeth ar ddyfodol a phwysigrwydd Sycharth ar lawr y Senedd.

--
Elfed wyn ap Elwyn

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

Document is Restricted

Agenda Item 2.6

P-06-1340 Stop the change of speed limits to 20mph on 17th September

This petition was submitted by Benjamin James Watkins, having collected a total of 21,919 signatures.

Text of Petition:

This decision is not representative of the broader public opinion and as such, it is not democratic to implement the changes. An alteration to road laws on this scale should be subject to much more extensive polling or possibly as part of a Welsh referendum on the matter.

Additional Information:

The use of speed bumps and 20mph zones in built-up areas and near schools is a generally accepted practice for the safety of children and adults. The widening of these measures could lead to an increase in "road rage" incidents and currently appears to be nothing more than a revenue stream for people to pay fines when they are caught speeding (when they are traveling at a safe speed).

I am yet to see an opinion supporting the changes, I have asked multiple people locally and read the comments left by many people online. It was the negative response to the changes that prompted the creation of this petition.

The new speed changes will disproportionately affect the commute times of people traveling by road for work, especially in areas where most roads are currently 30mph and have no bypass roads with higher speed limits.

Senedd Constituency and Region

- Rhondda
- South Wales Central

**P-06-1340 Stop the change of speed limits to 20mph on 17th September,
Correspondence – Petitioner to Committee 31.05.23**

**Supporting points, comments, and views to accompany petition of
changes to speed limit in Wales.**

Prior to presenting any other views, I would like to direct the committee to these website links.

The first link is a petition started before mine on change.org with almost 56,000 signatures (as of the time of writing this):

<https://www.change.org/p/stop-the-welsh-govt-imposing-blanket-20mph-speed-limits-across-the-whole-of-wales-by-2023>

The second link is to a WalesOnline article discussing the matter and ending with a public poll asking, “Do you support the default speed limit changing from 30mph to 20mph in Wales?” showing 89% against the changes:

<https://www.walesonline.co.uk/news/politics/wales-speed-limit-change-30mph-26679967>

I would like to state that I am aware the evidence taken from both links is not to the same standard as an official government poll, but I felt both cases were relevant to the ongoing discourse regarding these matters.

Some other online discussions to consider would be the comments on most of the Facebook posts regarding the changes, which are normally negative and critical of the proposed changes.

It has recently come to my attention that there has been poor feedback from several the pilot towns for the changes, which has to my knowledge been ignored by the Welsh government. The legitimacy of these claims cannot be verified without proper polling which I am unable to carry out as an individual and so I must take the evidence I am able to collect from reading the comments and thoughts of people living in these areas as being representative of the communities as a whole.

I have lived and commuted from the Rhondda valley for many years and have spoken to people from many neighbouring valleys and the consensus is clear, these changes will heavily impact these areas. The lack of job availability in the valleys has meant that many of them have become commuter communities, with very poor transport links. It takes a long time to get in and out of the valleys travelling at 30mph, let alone 20mph. To speak more personally about my area, the train line from Treherbert to Pontypridd has been closed for what is likely to be the next year, adding insult to injury, the government would like to slow people down even more getting to and from work. The government points rarely speak of the changes to the commuting times having an impact on the mental health of the commuters. The South Wales valleys are already a poorer and often forgotten area by the government and this attitude seems to be unwavering. We are in the midst of a cost-of-living crisis, hurting the poorest areas (like the valleys) the most and the government sees more fit spending their budget on changing the speed limit rather than moving that funding into helping struggling families and small local businesses with their bills. Putting food on the tables of starving children should be the priority over changing speed limits. It quite simply leans more to complacency than real action, they change something across the country without addressing the real problems facing its people.

The petition I wrote has gained over 20,000 signatures in the short time it has been available. This number is still not truly representative of the total number of supporters as it has had no advertising outside of sharing the link through social media channels and word of mouth. If the Welsh government were to run a proper referendum on the matter, then they would have a real understanding

of the Welsh opinion and be a truly representative government. My original petition speaks on this matter.

Agenda Item 3.1

P-05-1112 Help Welsh Communities Buy Community Assets: Implement Part 5 Chapter 3 of the Localism Act 2011

This petition was submitted by Daniel Evans having collected a total of 655 signatures.

Text of Petition:

Welsh communities continue to lose community assets such as pubs and sports grounds at an alarming rate. Unlike England & Scotland, Welsh communities still do not have the statutory right to bid for assets.

We urgently require new legislation relating specifically to Assets of Community Value. We call on the next Welsh Government to immediately introduce the provisions of Part 5 Chapter 3 of the Localism Act 2011 to ensure groups in Wales have the legal right to buy & manage community assets.

Additional Information:

Community assets build social capital, health and wellbeing. Losing community assets leads to weaker, more disconnected & unhappier communities

Part 5, Ch. 3 of The Localism Act 2011 granted the legal right for community groups to bid for & run assets of community value (ACV) under threat/for sale. It also requires local authorities to keep lists of such community assets. In Scotland, community groups have first refusal on these assets (<https://commonslibrary.parliament.uk/research-briefings/sn06366/>).

In Wales, however, the Welsh Government decided to not apply the relevant parts of the act that would facilitate this. Our communities are therefore being placed in a hugely disadvantaged position relative to England & Scotland.

In 2015, the minister stated that action would be taken on ACV during the 2016-21 Welsh Government, but nothing happened.

Implementing the relevant provisos of the Localism Act would hugely benefit Welsh communities desperate to save valuable local assets.

Senedd Constituency and Region

- Bridgend
- South Wales West

Jane Hutt AS/MS
Y Gweinidog Cyfiawnder Cymdeithasol
Minister for Social Justice



Llywodraeth Cymru
Welsh Government

Eich cyf/Your ref P-05-1112
Ein cyf/Our ref JH-/00340/23

Jack Sargeant MS
Chair - Petitions committee

19 May 2023

Dear Jack,

| | |
|--|--|
| <p>Thank you for your email dated 18 April 23 concerning the timetable for the establishment of a Commission on Community Assets.</p> <p>The establishment of the Commission is being taken forward by the Minister for Climate Change and her officials.</p> <p>I understand that work to develop the scope of the Commission is currently underway. I also understand that officials are currently taking steps to appoint a Chair.</p> <p>There is presently no fixed timeline for this appointment</p> | <p>Diolch am eich e-bost o 18 Ebrill 23 yn ymwneud â'r amserlen ar gyfer sefydlu Comisiwn ar Asedau Cymunedol.</p> <p>Mae sefydlu'r Comisiwn yn cael ei weithredu gan y Gweinidog Newid Hinsawdd a'i swyddogion.</p> <p>Rwy'n deall bod gwaith i ddatblygu cwmpas y Comisiwn ar y gweill ar hyn o bryd. Rwyf hefyd yn deall bod swyddogion yn cymryd camau i benodi Cadair.</p> <p>Ar hyn o bryd nid oes llinell amser sefydlog ar gyfer y penodiad hwn.</p> |
|--|--|

Yours sincerely,

Jane Hutt AS/MS
Y Gweinidog Cyfiawnder Cymdeithasol
Minister for Social Justice

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

Bae Caerdydd • Cardiff Bay
Caerdydd • Cardiff
CF99 1SN

Gohebiaeth.Jane.Hutt@llyw.cymru
Correspondence.Jane.Hutt@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 3.2

P-06-1299 Welsh Government 'Freeze on road building" to include a clause for cases that pose a danger to life

This petition was submitted by Susan Blaney, having collected a total of XXX signatures.

Text of Petition:

The recent fire at Tylorstown Working Mens' Club proved that the infrastructure in the Rhondda Fach needs urgent updating. With the main road blocked for several days, all traffic was diverted through side streets causing blockages and congestion. Schools had to be shut, public transport halted, school transport cancelled, people were unable to get to work and there was no accessible route for emergency vehicles.

Additional Information:

The relief road from Tylorstown to Maerdy has been in the Local Authority's Local Development Plan for years, it's time the people of the Fach see some swift action. This can't happen with the Welsh Government's "freeze" on new roads as stands.

Senedd Constituency and Region

- Rhondda
- South Wales Central

Dyddiad/Date: 10 May 2023

Dear Jack Sargeant MS,

Re; Petition-P06-1299 Welsh Government “Freeze on road building” to include a clause for cases that pose a danger to life.

I refer to your letter of 18th April 2023 regarding the above petition which was considered in your meeting of 27 March 2023, where you resolved to write to me to ask what action, if any, my Council is taking to ameliorate the issue raised. The petitioner makes the case for the Relief Road, highlighting the disruption which occurred during a fire at Tylorstown Workingmens’ Club. It was indeed a particularly disruptive event for the communities of the Rhondda Fach and for those that travel through, fortunately issues of this scale are thankfully quite rare.

The Club was located in a terrace that fronts on to East Road. East Road is part of the A4233 which runs the length of the Rhondda Fach connecting Porth with Aberdare. It is part of the Strategic Highway Network in Rhondda Cynon Taf and is the only classified route that runs the length of the Rhondda Fach.

Whilst the lower section of the valley was bypassed during the mid 2000’s, providing a modern alternative to the original route through the terraced streets, the route from Pontygwaith up the valley reverts to the traditional terraced streets for over six kilometres. This runs through the ribbon settlements of Pontygwaith, Tylorstown, Ferndale and Maerdy before rising over Maerdy Mountain towards Aberdare.

Where the route travels through these communities it is hemmed in by terraced streets, interspersed with the focal points of the community with larger buildings, such as the former Working Men’s Club and other places for social and religious gathering, retail and business premises. As with the fire at the Club, there are a range of emergencies that may lead to the need to close the road. The only option in these circumstances is to re-route traffic through residential side streets. However, these side streets are narrower than the main route and are even more heavily congested with parked vehicles. These routes are completely unsuitable for larger vehicles such as buses, coaches and delivery vehicles. Inevitably traffic moves much more slowly and conflicting movements, not just between vehicles, but also between vehicles and pedestrians and cyclists, will bring traffic to a standstill.

In the absence of a relief road or another suitable alternative route there is little that the Council can do to ameliorate the issues raised beyond diverting traffic or closing the route entirely.

Yours sincerely

A. Morgan

Y Cyngorydd Andrew Morgan
Arweinydd Cyngor Bwrdeistref Sirol Rhondda Cynon Taf
Councillor Andrew Morgan
Leader of Rhondda Cynon Taf County Borough Council

Swyddfa'r Cabinet
Cabinet Office

Y Pafiliynau, Cwm Clydach, Tonypany, CF40 2XX
The Pavilions, Clydach Vale, Tonypany CF40 2XX

Ffôn/Tel: 01443 424065
E-bost/Email: Cabinet@rctcbc.gov.uk
Rhyngwladol/International: +441443424065/6

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We welcome correspondence in Welsh and corresponding with us in Welsh will not lead to a delay. Let us know your language choice if Welsh or bilingual.



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P-06-1299 Welsh Government 'Freeze on road building" to include a clause for cases that pose a danger to life, Correspondence – Petitioner to Committee, 30.05.22

Firstly, I would like to thank Joel James MS and the committee for taking our petition and concerns seriously and for the committee in contacting RCTCBC for a response.

Councillor Andrew Morgan is of course, right about diverting traffic through unsuitable side streets as it is the only alternative when accidents accidents/incidents occur (which there are many) but on the stretch of road from the top of North Road Ferndale to Maerdy Square, there are no side streets to divert through. It's a complete standstill.

The list below outlines, the benefits of an alternative route would make from Tylorstown to the top of the Rhondda Fach and outlines the risks we continually face by not having one:

- 1) Emergency services attending call outs and risk to life
- 2) Less traffic travelling on roads that were not built for today's vehicles.
- 3) Buses and lorries not mounting pavements in Maerdy, Ferndale and Tylorstown, due to the roads not being fit for purpose.
- 4) Jobs. Easier access for commuting - takes 1.5 hrs travel to Pontypridd from Maerdy on public transport
- 5) Reduction in pollution.
- 6) Speed restrictions on our roads, more likely to be adhered to.
- 7) Safer school routes for our children
- 8) Small businesses would benefit as parking would be more accessible.
- 9) Maerdy mountain closures:

repairs, accidents including overturned lorries - which occurred again last week, closing Maerdy Mountain for 11 hours with traffic diverting to Llanwanno from Cynon to Rhondda Fach and vice versa, causing chaos in Blaenllechau and Ferndale.

10) Reduction in traffic where the new Welsh language school is being built in Ferndale.

There will be an increase of buses and cars during school runs (an accident - one of many - occurred at the time RCTCBC held their public consultation)

Thank you again

Kind Regards

Sue Blaney

Agenda Item 3.3

P-06-1269 Don't let the plan run out for dying people in Wales

This petition was submitted by Marie Curie & MNDA, having collected a total of 2,195 signatures.

Text of Petition:

Every year, thousands of people die in Wales having missed out on palliative and end of life care.

The end of life care plan for Wales was working towards fixing this, but in March it'll come to an end. Right now, there's no new plan ready to take its place.

We urgently need a timeline, funding and staff to deliver a new plan.

Don't let the plan run out with no replacement. Please sign today and help us make sure families in Wales aren't left in the lurch.

Additional Information:

We are grateful for Welsh Government's prioritisation of palliative and end of life care (EOLC) in the Programme for Government 2021-2026, but more must be done to ensure we see appropriate action.

The clinical governance structures of health and social care systems in Wales will soon be undergoing reorganisation. In March 2021, Welsh Government launched proposals for a new clinical framework and a new NHS Wales Executive; the clinical framework includes plans to develop a dedicated EOLC Programme and an EOLC Quality Statement. These new arrangements are set to replace the current End of Life Care Delivery Plan, which comes to an end 31 March 2022.

An EOLC Programme is welcome news, but poorly resourced infrastructure and limited programme personnel, combined with the pandemic, has impacted the ability to deliver the new programme at pace. With the end of March fast approaching and no EOLC Programme in sight, Wales looks to be without an EOLC plan for the first time in a decade.

Senedd Constituency and Region

- Cardiff Central
- South Wales Central

Don't let the plan run out for dying people in Wales

Marie Curie & Motor Neurone Disease Association: Briefing for Petitions Committee, June 2023.

RE: Marie Curie Cymru and MND Association are seeking assurance from the Minister for Health and Social Services that the National Palliative and End of Life Care Programme is being supported and sufficiently equipped to begin work on a longer-term End of Life Care workplan, beyond that of the Phase 3 Review.

We are grateful to the Petitions Committee for agreeing to defer discussion on the above petition until now. We had previously asked that actions be paused in light of ongoing changes in the health and social care environment, including developments with regards to the NHS Wales Executive. We can confirm that the NHS Wales Executive has now been formally established and we have seen some recent movement in the National Palliative and End of Life Care Programme.

We would welcome the further support of the Committee to write to the Minister for Health & Social Services to:

- Seek assurances that the National Palliative and End of Life Care Programme will receive the appropriate resources to be able to undertake the ambitious programme of work as set out under the Palliative Care and End of Life Quality Statement.
- Seek clarification on the development of 'enabling plans' to take forward the Palliative and End of Life Quality Statement as set out in the Minister's correspondence to the Committee in August 2022.
- Receive an update on timescales for delivery of the Palliative and End of Life Quality Statement.

As of March 2023, Marie Curie has been a key member of the Programme Board on an interim basis as a representative of third sector organisations. We are pleased that we have maintained our position on the Programme, despite concerns that third sector engagement had been omitted from its future work initially. In addition, we secured a formal third sector sub-group focused on policy development within the Programme infrastructure, to work in collaboration with the Board. Its first meeting is due to take place 9 June.

We hold some concerns around the delayed progress that has been made over the past few months with regards to setting up the various workstreams of the Programme and the publication of a workplan or implementation plan that can allow us to see how the Welsh Government Palliative and End of Life Care Quality Statement will be implemented. We understand that the Programme has been operating in a constantly shifting environment with the creation of the NHS Wales Executive, which has led to a substantial delay on the establishment of the programme in its current form. Nonetheless, demand for palliative and end of life care will be increasing dramatically in the near future and we must start planning for this, with the Programme playing a central role in leading change across the system.

We recognise the Phase 3 Palliative and End of Life Care Funding Review is a significant undertaking as part of Welsh Government's Programme for Government, we are therefore eager to receive assurance from the Minister for Health and Social Services that the Programme is being supported with the necessary resources and capacity to continue establishing workstreams and its workplan alongside this important review.

We wish to highlight to the Petitions Committee and the Minister for Health and Social Services that Marie Curie, MND Association, and the third sector sub-group of the Programme are ready to start tackling the challenges facing palliative and end of life care and to ensure more people in Wales have the best end of life experience possible.

Kind regards,

Marie Curie Cymru & Motor Neurone Disease Association

Agenda Item 3.4

P-06-1304 To review the emergency temporary housing policy which impacts our communities

This petition was submitted by Richard Grabham, having collected a total of 306 signatures.

Text of Petition:

The community of Thomastown in Tonyrefail have suffered due to a B&B in the heart of their community being used by the local authority as emergency temporary accommodation. Although the local authority has maintained that the persons placed here are risk assessed, the community has suffered from anti social behaviour, threats, violence and drug dealing. The community feels let down by the local authority and would like a review of the procedures that are in place to stop this happening again.

Additional Information:

The local authority has placed homeless people there who have just been released from prison. The community has fought for many years for the council to stop using the B&B for ex prisoners. Local people have witnessed many incidents of anti social behaviour over the years, which deeply concern the community and impact negatively on their lives.

There is also no appropriate security in place and no support network for the residents.

The community does not want this to happen again and call for a full review on the procedures and policies of placing homeless people into emergency temporary accommodation in communities without the proper support being put in place to support the residents placed there by the local authority.

Senedd Constituency and Region

- Pontypridd
- South Wales Central

Agenda Item 3.5

P-06-1307 The Welsh Government should commit to the adoption of the maintenance of new housing estates by local authorities

This petition was submitted by Eleri Lewis, having collected a total of 267 signatures.

Text of Petition:

The residents of the Mill, a new estate in Canton, Cardiff are having to pay an annual fee of £102 for the maintenance of a park bordering the estate. This payment must be made alongside other maintenance payments covering the unadopted highways, green spaces etc. Residents also must pay the full council tax required. Residents are not provided with a detailed breakdown of the costs of the park, just a notice to say they must pay the fee.

Additional Information:

The Mill was regarded as a good example of Welsh Government policy due to its status as a mixed tenure estate including affordable housing alongside freehold purchasing – therefore with the current cost of living crisis we believe that the Welsh Government should support residents on estates like The Mill by encouraging and facilitating the adoption of maintenance by local authorities and to remove these punitive charges.

Senedd Constituency and Region

- Cardiff West
- South Wales Central

Agenda Item 5

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

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Agenda Item 6

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

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