

Concise Minutes – Petitions Committee

Meeting Venue:

Committee room 1

Meeting date: Monday, 4 November
2024

Meeting time: 14.00 – 15.15

This meeting can be viewed

on [Senedd TV](#) at:

<http://senedd.tv/en/14175>

Hybrid

Attendance

Category	Names
Members of the Senedd:	Carolyn Thomas MS (Chair) Rhys ab Owen MS Luke Fletcher MS Peter Fox MS Vaughan Gething MS
Witnesses:	
Committee Staff:	Gareth Price (Clerk) Katherine Wheeler (Deputy Clerk) Lara Date (Second Clerk)



1 Introductions, apologies, substitutions and declarations of interest

2 New Petitions

2.1 P-06-1430 Support deaf children by making a financial commitment to restoring Teacher of the Deaf numbers

The Committee met with petitioners prior to the meeting and thanked them for sharing their experiences. Members relayed petitioners' concern that deaf children receive support as early as possible and that Teacher of the Deaf (TOD) training be made available in Wales as well as England.

The Committee agreed to write to the Cabinet Secretary for Education to ask her to reflect on and reconsider the Welsh Government's rejection of recommendation 32 of the Children, Young People and Education Committee's 'Access to Education' report. The Chair agreed that she would speak during the debate on the report to highlight the petition. Members agreed to keep the petition open as they believed further work can be done on the issue.

2.2 P-06-1460 Explore options for transferring ownership of historical assets from Crown Estate to Welsh Government

Members discussed the petition. There were differences of opinion on devolution of the Crown Estate to Wales, and it was noted that the day-to-day management of the castles (by Cadw) would not change even if the petition was successful. It was also noted that the historic assets were tangible matters quite different from devolution in areas such as energy. However, the majority decision was to thank the petitioner and close the petition, as the matter was being debated on a regular basis in the Senedd – the petition did not need to be left open for those discussions to continue – and Members would be keeping a watching brief to see what happened.

2.3 P-06-1464 Allow Welsh families who have experienced Baby loss before 24 weeks to obtain baby loss certificate

Members acknowledged the sensitivity of the issue and it was noted that the ability to request a certificate was very important, as some, but not necessarily all, parents would find such a certificate helpful. Members agreed to write to the Cabinet Secretary for Health and Social Care to ask when a decision will be made on making baby loss certificates available in Wales. Members also agreed to write to the Health and Social Care Committee to highlight the petition.

2.4 P-06-1465 Make Pet Abduction a Specific Criminal Offence in Wales

When discussing the petition, Members noted that the Welsh Government already has a busy programme of planned legislation and limited time before the end of the Senedd. The possibility of the Welsh Government being able to support a Bill on this issue proposed by a backbench MS was raised in discussion. The Committee agreed that there was scope for raising awareness of the issue, but that there was little more the Committee could do. In light of this, the Committee decided to close the petition and thank the petitioner.

2.5 P-06-1471 Outlaw Ambulances from being used as extra beds for Hospitals

The Committee agreed the issue was in the remit of the Health and Social Care Committee and already something they were monitoring. Members decided to write to that Committee to highlight the petition to consider as part of their scrutiny. In light of that, the Committee agreed to thank the petitioner and close the petition.

2.6 P-06-1472 Protect our wildlife...ban plastic grass in Wales!

The Committee considered the petition and noted that the environmental impacts of artificial grass are greatly concerning and thanked the petitioners for highlighting the problem. The Cabinet Secretary for Climate Change's response highlights that the issue is on the Welsh Government's agenda and that a microplastics event will be held in March 2025.

The Committee agreed to keep the petition open and to write back to the Cabinet Secretary to seek an update on the outcome of the microplastics event. It was also agreed that the Chair would write to the petitioner to inform them of the 'It's For Them' project.

3 Updates to previous petitions

3.1 P-06-1329 Set an ambition and a clear timetable to give every child in the country Welsh-medium education

Members noted that since the last consideration of this petition, the Welsh Government has set out legislative proposals for Welsh medium education, which have been widely consulted on, and are now subject to detailed scrutiny. In light of this development, the Committee agreed to thank the petitioner and close the petition.

3.2 P-06-1387 Provide humanitarian aid to Gaza

The Committee agreed to write to the First Minister to ask if there is anything further that could be done to help with humanitarian assistance by working with aid agencies, and to copy in the Cabinet Secretary for Social Justice, Trefnydd and Chief Whip for information as they had previously corresponded with the Committee on this issue.

3.3 P-06-1395 Halt significant new development on the Gwent Levels SSSIs

Throughout all correspondence on this issue, the Welsh Government has reiterated that it believes current protections for SSSIs are sufficient. The Committee agreed that there was therefore little more that it could do on the issue and in light of this, decided to close the petition and thank the petitioner.

3.4 P-06-1474 Stop Natural Resources Wales closing Bwlch Nant yr Arian, Coed y Brenin & Ynyslas visitor centres

This petition and 'P-06-1447 Stop Natural Resources Wales closing the visitor centre at Ynyslas National Nature Reserve' were considered together.

The Committee considered the petition and noted that there remained uncertainty over the future of the centres and that the issue was a matter of concern for Members across the chamber. Members agreed to write to NRW with the petitioner's request: to ask them to share the financial records of the three centres, their visitor management plans, and an impact assessment on what closure would mean for access.

Members also agreed to write to the Cabinet Secretary for Climate Change regarding concerns raised with the Committee by the petitioners about what they were hearing on the ground, including concerns about possible mothballing of the centres prior to new operators taking over.

3.5 P-05-1447 Stop Natural Resources Wales closing the visitor centre at Ynyslas National Nature Reserve

This petition and 'P-06-1474 Stop Natural Resources Wales closing Bwlch Nant yr Arian, Coed y Brenin & Ynyslas visitor centres' were considered together.

The Committee considered the petitions and noted that there remained uncertainty over the future of the centres and that the issue was a matter of concern for Members across the chamber. Members agreed to write to NRW with the petitioner's request: to ask them to share the financial record of the centre, their visitor management plan and an impact assessment on what closure would mean for public access.

Members also agreed to write to the Cabinet Secretary for Climate Change regarding concerns raised with the Committee by the petitioners, including about NRW board meetings being held and possible mothballing of the centres prior to new operators taking over.

3.6 P-06-1346 Provide free and accessible public transport for under 18s in Wales to lower carbon emissions and boost growth

The Committee considered the petition and noted from the Cabinet Secretary for Transport and North Wales' response that work was ongoing and that the Bus Services (Wales) Bill would be passing through the Senedd. The Chair agreed to highlight this petition and other relevant petitions in the upcoming debate on the Children, Young People and Education Committee's report. As significant work has been done on the issue, Members agreed that there was little more they could do and to close the petition.

3.7 P-06-1264 For school transport guaranteed for all comprehensive children

The Committee considered the petition and noted that it was an issue of funding and was the responsibility of schools and local government to work together on safe routes to school. Members were sympathetic of the issues for children who had to travel long distances in poor conditions and noted that significant activity has taken place in relation to learner travel since the petition was first considered in April 2022, including reports from Welsh Government and a Senedd Committee.

The Committee noted that work on bus transport for under 18s was ongoing and that the Bus Services (Wales) Bill would be passing through the Senedd. The Chair agreed to highlight this petition and other relevant petitions in the upcoming debate on the Children, Young People and Education Committee's report. In light of this, and the response to the Committee's inquiry recommendations regarding ongoing work, the Committee agreed to close the petition.

3.8 P-06-1343 Provide free public transport for all secondary school pupils

The Committee noted that work on bus transport for under 18s was ongoing and that the Bus Services (Wales) Bill would be passing through the Senedd. The Chair agreed to highlight this petition and other relevant petitions in the upcoming debate on the Children, Young People and Education Committee's report. In light of this, and the

response to the Committee's inquiry recommendations regarding ongoing work, the Committee agreed to close the petition and thank the petitioner.

3.9 P-06-1372 Save our fflecsi bwcabus service

The Committee noted that work on bus transport was ongoing and that the Bus Services (Wales) Bill would be passing through the Senedd. The Chair agreed to highlight this petition and other relevant petitions in the upcoming debate on the Children, Young People and Education Committee's report. In light of this, the Committee agreed to close the petition and thank the petitioner.

4 Motion under Standing Order 17.42(ix) to resolve to exclude the public from the meeting for the remainder of today's business: