

Petitions Committee

Meeting Venue:
Committee Room 1 – Senedd

Meeting date:
28 April 2015

Meeting time:
09.00

Cynulliad
Cenedlaethol
Cymru

National
Assembly for
Wales



For further information please contact:

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Agenda

- 1 Introduction, apologies and substitutions** (Pages 1 – 26)
- 2 New petitions**
 - 2.1 P-04-613 AMs Should Reject Recommendation for a 18% payrise (Pages 27 – 30)
 - 2.2 P-04-623 Improve the Provision of Disabled-friendly Housing in Wales (Pages 31 – 40)
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Public Services

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Item 5.

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Document is Restricted

Agenda Item 2.1

P-04-613 AMs Should Reject Recommendation for a 18% payrise

Petition wording

With those working on the frontline in the public sector having pay cuts in real terms, I urge AM's to reject recommendations to increase their pay by 18%. By accepting this or any pay rise whilst the vast majority of public sector workers are faced with pay cuts and redundancies AM's would be communicating to those that they represent a message of "'We're alright Jack, keep your hands off my stack' (Money, Pink Floyd), with their "stack" being paid for by public sector cuts, pay freezes and redundancies. I would propose that AM's pay rise, freeze and cuts mirror those working in education, NHS, Police and social services.

Petitioner : David Swain

First considered by the Committee:

Number of Signatures: 12

William Powell AM
Chair
Petitions Committee
National Assembly for Wales
Cardiff Bay
CF99 1NA

Your ref:
Our ref: PO975/RB

18 March 2015

Dear William

Thank you for your letter dated 12 January received 10 March.

The issue to which you refer is a decision made by a Board that was set up to be independent of the National Assembly for Wales, and me as Chair of the Assembly Commission. I would therefore refer you to Sandy Blair, Chair of the Remuneration Board, at Remuneration.Board@assembly.wales.

Rosemary

Dame Rosemary Butler AM
Presiding Officer

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

William Powell AM
Chair
Petitions Committee
National Assembly for Wales

17 April 2015

Dear William,

Thank you for informing me of the committee's interest in the petition relating to the Board's proposals for Assembly Members' salaries in the Fifth Assembly (Ref: P-04-613). I confirm the petition has already been discussed by the Board as part of its decision-making process, and will be considered again when we meet to finalise our decisions in April.

The Board has undertaken a consultation on salaries, and recently on the whole package of remuneration and support for AMs (including salaries), which would come in to effect after the Assembly Election in 2016. We intend to publish our final Determination for the Fifth Assembly and an accompanying report in May 2015.

On the specific issue of salary we reached our judgement of what was appropriate after considering a wide range of evidence on pay and remuneration in Wales and in other Parliaments. A number of responses to our consultation on AM salaries, which was issued in November 2014, said that our proposed base salary was too high and/or that it was not the right time to set higher salaries for AMs, given the economic context. We took in to account the petition, media coverage and a variety of social media reaction to our proposal.

We also considered:

- the extent to which the powers and responsibilities of AMs are increasing substantially and merit a full revaluation;
- the burden on Members in a small single chamber legislature of effective law-making and efficient scrutiny of government;
- □the impact of the proposed increase in MPs salaries on existing and future comparability;
- □the reduced cost to the taxpayer – and increased cost to AMs – of changes in the AM pension scheme;
- □the pay differentials between London and Cardiff.

Bae Caerdydd
Caerdydd
CF99 1NA

Cardiff Bay
Cardiff
CF99 1NA

e-bost/Email: Remuneration@assembly.wales

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

After a thorough review, we felt that the salary that we proposed was the right figure for the role and responsibilities that Assembly Members will have in the Fifth Assembly. Consequently, we retained our proposal for the consultation on the whole package. We also agreed that AM salaries should be annually adjusted to reflect the changes in average wages in Wales (whether up or down).

The Board will now review all our decisions at our April meeting, in the light of our consultation on the Draft Determination. We intend to publish the final Determination in May.

Regards,

A handwritten signature in dark ink, appearing to read 'Sandy Blair', is written over a light blue horizontal line. The signature is fluid and cursive, with a long horizontal stroke extending to the right.

Sandy Blair CBE DL
Cadeirydd / Chair
Bwrdd Taliadau/Remuneration Board

Agenda Item 2.2

P-04-623 Improve the Provision of Disabled-friendly Housing in Wales'

Petition wording

We the undersigned call upon the National Assembly for Wales to urge the Welsh Government to take action to ensure that all new homes in Wales are built to fully meet all the Welsh Housing Quality Standards ensuring they are as comprehensive as Lifetime Home Standards, with at least 10 per cent of new homes built to full wheelchair accessibility standards.

Organisation: Leonard Cheshire Disability

Lead petitioner: Rhian Stangroom-Teel

First considered by the Committee:

Number of signatures: 788 online signatures.



Eich cyf/Your ref P-04-623
Ein cyf/Our ref CS/00337/15

William Powell AM
Chair Petitions Committee
Ty Hywel
Cardiff Bay
Cardiff
CF99 1NA

1212

March 2015

Dear Bill,

Thank you for your letter to Lesley Griffiths AM Minister for Communities and Tackling Poverty dated 23 February, regarding the petition from Leonard Cheshire Disability to improve the provision of disabled friendly housing in Wales. As my portfolio includes Planning and Building Regulations I am responding accordingly.

Our national planning policy statement, Planning Policy Wales (PPW), encourages local planning authorities to facilitate sustainable residential environments by promoting 'barrier free' housing developments and refers to the Lifetime Homes standards as an example of this (paragraph 9.1.2 refers). Our Technical Advice Note (TAN) 12: Design also highlights the importance of meeting existing and future needs of house occupants and uses lifetime homes to illustrate the importance of foresight and flexibility in design. PPW states that policies in Local Development Plans (LDPs) should cover the physical scale and design of new buildings, access, density, and off-street parking taking account of particular residential areas and of changing needs. This local need should be clearly articulated in the evidence base created as part of the formulation of an LDP.

I am aware that some local planning authorities in Wales reference the Lifetime Home standards in their Local Development Plan policies or Supplementary Planning Guidance (SPG) on design. I consider this flexible approach, which is based on locally identified need, enables local planning authorities to determine the right provision for their areas.

The Building Regulations through the requirements of Part M take into consideration the design considerations for access to and use of a dwelling from the external boundary to the internal areas of circulation. This ensures that both horizontal and vertical movement is provided for, including with provision for accessible ground floor WC facilities.

In relation to social housing all schemes funded through Welsh Government have for a number of years been required to meet Lifetime Homes standards.

In my view our current planning policy and guidance provides Local Planning Authorities with the flexibility to respond to identified need and I would need to be convinced as to how the quota system for wheelchair dwellings the petition calls for would match provision with demand.

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in black ink, consisting of a large, stylized 'C' followed by a vertical line.

Carl Sargeant AC / AM
Y Gweinidog Cyfoeth Naturiol
Minister for Natural Resources

Leonard Cheshire Petition:



1. Leonard Cheshire Disability is very grateful for the opportunity to provide evidence in relation to its petition:

'We the undersigned call upon the National Assembly for Wales to urge the Welsh Government to take action to ensure that all new homes in Wales are built to fully meet all the Welsh Housing Quality Standards ensuring they are as comprehensive as Lifetime Home Standards, with at least 10 per cent of new homes built to full wheelchair accessibility standards.'

About Leonard Cheshire Disability

2. At Leonard Cheshire Disability we work for a society in which everyone is equally valued. We believe that disabled people should have the freedom to live their lives the way they choose - with the opportunity and support to live independently, to contribute economically and to participate fully in society.
3. We are one of the UK's largest voluntary sector providers of services for disabled people with over 250 services across the UK including care homes, care homes with nursing and homecare services. We aim to maximise personal choice and independence for people with disabilities and all of our services are designed to meet the needs and priorities of the people who use them.
4. Our UK-wide [Home Truths Campaign](https://www.leonardcheshire.org/who-we-are/publications/latest-publications-download/long-wait-home) was launched in July 2014, highlighting the very real housing crisis facing disabled people and their families. Our most recent report (the Long Wait for a Home) is accessible at: <https://www.leonardcheshire.org/who-we-are/publications/latest-publications-download/long-wait-home>.

Why have we submitted this petition?

5. There is a hidden housing crisis in Wales: a lack of disabled friendly housing.
6. There are some things none of us should have to endure in twenty-first century Britain. That includes washing every day in your kitchen, at the sink where you peel your potatoes and wash your plates, being unable to get to your child's bedroom to tuck them in, or using a toilet that has no privacy because a door prevents someone using a wheelchair from entering. But our nation's shortage of disabled-friendly homes is forcing thousands of people to live in these Victorian conditions every day.
7. Anyone can become disabled, which means our homes need to be adaptable: so that at some point in the future they can include grab rails and wet rooms, stair lifts or hoists. But while some homes in Wales are

fully accessible, or ready to be adapted, many more are simply not disabled-friendly.

8. A significant proportion of Welsh homes can only be adapted to include features such as stair lifts, grab rails or a wet room at significant cost, while for hundreds of thousands of others these adaptations are simply impossible. Critically:
 - Almost three quarters (72%¹) of people in Wales report that they live in a home without an accessible front door. This means that of the hundreds of thousands of people who acquire a mobility impairment every year, most will have to move house or risk becoming trapped in their own home;
 - More than half (54%) of people in Wales say they do not have stairs big enough for a stair-lift to be fitted;
 - In 2008, the 'Living in Wales' survey found that 22% of households including someone with a long-term illness, disability, or infirmity, had adaptation needs that had not been met.²
9. The severe shortage of adaptable and accessible homes is placing enormous stress and pressure on thousands of disabled and older people, as well as the care system and the health service. In a recent survey 96% of occupational therapists across the UK agreed that adaptations reduce the need for social care: further emphasising the need to act.³
10. Living in suitable accommodation is crucial to our wellbeing. The Building Research Establishment reported in 2010 that 45⁴% of all injuries occur in the home - and that the less accessible someone's home is, the more likely they are to suffer an injury. In total, the cost of poor housing to the NHS alone amounts to more than £1.4bn (across the UK) every year.⁵
11. As a result of their homes not being disabled-friendly, far too many people are forced into care or hospital when they would rather continue to live at home. This has a severe impact both on individuals and Welsh taxpayers as a whole, because a single trip to hospital (for someone who slips on the stairs because they can't install a stair-lift or a grab rail) costs an average of almost £1,800.⁶ This is 60% more than the average cost of building a new home to Lifetime Homes standards.

¹ The Hidden Housing Crisis – Leonard Cheshire Disability

² The Living in Wales Survey 2008

³ The College of Occupational Therapists carried out a survey with occupational therapists (OT) with a specialism in housing in March 2015, which received 104 responses.

⁴ Roys, M. Davidson, M. Nicol, S. Ormandy, D. and Ambrose, P. (2010) The real cost of poor housing. BRE

⁵ Simon Nicol, Mike Roys, Helen Garrett (2015) The cost of poor housing to the NHS. BRE

⁶ Source: Cabinet Office unit cost database (2011/12)

12. Further, every hip fracture costs the NHS over £28,000⁷ - and brings no end of pain and upset to families across the country - but many could easily be prevented by the installation of grab bars in halls and bathrooms, for less than a fifteenth of the price.⁸ These unnecessary accidents and hospital admissions place extraordinary resource pressures on care services, paramedics and hospital wards. It also contributes to preventing a large and growing section of society from living independently with dignity and being afforded the same rights as non-disabled people.
13. Currently, 1 in 10 people in Great Britain report some kind of mobility problem⁹ - that's approximate 310,000 people in Wales who are likely to need a disabled-friendly home.¹⁰ As the number of disabled and older people grows, this hidden crisis is only going to get worse.
14. Ultimately, the current shortage of disabled-friendly homes is not conducive to community or individuals' wellbeing. Nor is it in line with the aims and intentions of the 'Framework for Action on Independent Living' launched by the Welsh Government in September 2013.

What is the solution?

15. Building a home to disabled-friendly standards - called Lifetime Homes Standards¹¹ (broadly equivalent to Welsh Housing Quality Standards) - involves, among other things, building it with wider doors and walls strong enough for grab-rails to be installed in case the owners need them in the future. It is estimated that building homes to such standards costs an average of only £1,100¹² extra per property.
16. Wheelchair accessible homes, specifically designed for those who use wheelchairs, cost more¹³ but are essential to ensuring that disabled people can live comfortably and safely.
17. Building more of these homes is not only the right thing to do: it's also the sustainable thing to do. It's something that both actively secures the well-being of future generations, and meets the needs of the current

⁷ Better outcomes, lower costs: Implications for health and social care budgets of investment in housing adaptations, improvements and equipment: a review of the evidence

⁸ Calculation based on £1800 / £28000 – Source: Cabinet Office unit cost database (2011/12)

⁹ The Hidden Housing Crisis -Leonard Cheshire Disability

¹⁰ The Office of National Statistics' June 2014 population estimate for Wales was 3.1 million. 3.1 million / 10 = 310,000

¹¹ Full details available here:

http://www.lifetimehomes.org.uk/data/files/For_Professionals/accessible_revisedlthstandard_final.pdf

¹² Estimates vary. The CLG Housing Standards Review Consultation Impact Assessment estimated the average cost as £1,100. A previous CLG estimate put the average cost at £547. DCLG The Future of the Code for Sustainable Homes, 2007

¹³ Around £13,000 for all sizes of home, according to CLG, Housing Standards Review Consultation: Impact Assessment

disabled population. Table 1 compares the costs of adaptations between a lifetime home and a standard home:

Adaptations	Cost of adaptation in a standard home	Cost of adaptation in a Lifetime Home*
Installing a ramp	£450	£0 (comes as standard in a Lifetime Home)
Widening entrance door	£2,500	£0 (comes as standard in a Lifetime Home)
Widening internal doors	£2,000 (estimate assumes there to be four internal doors)	£0 (comes as standard in a Lifetime Home)
Installing a stair-lift	£9,600	£2400
Installing ten grab bars	£2,500	£500
Wet-room conversion of bathroom	£3,500	£0 (an accessible bathroom comes as standard in a Lifetime Home)
Initial building costs	£0	£1100
Total cost of adaptations	£20,550	£4000

(Table 1: Comparison of costs of adaptations between a standard and Lifetime home)

18. Clearly, adapting a property after it has been built is much more expensive and less effective. Not adapting a property at all condemns people to the misery of Victorian strip washes, forces them to sleep in their living room rather than their bedroom, or exposes them to nasty and costly slips, trips and falls caused by lack of grab rails, hoists or stair-lifts.

The need for national direction

19. We are grateful to the Committee for raising the issue of disabled housing with the Minister for Natural Resources. We do not dispute the Minister's statement that the Welsh Government's current planning policy and guidance provides Local Planning Authorities with flexibility. The problem is that flexibility is not the quality required to address this issue: it is direction.

20. Currently, local planning authorities are encouraged to facilitate sustainable residential environments by promoting barrier free housing developments. But we know that encouragement is not getting the job done. The Welsh Government's Technical Advice Note 12: Design highlights the importance of meeting existing and future needs and refers to Lifetime Home standards as an example of such, but it does not explicitly direct planning authorities to normally require that homes are built to such standards.

Planning Ahead: Austria

21. There are already international examples of a proactive, nation-wide approach being successfully applied to improve the provision of disabled

housing. In Austria, which is among Europe's highest spenders on health and care,¹⁴ building homes which disabled and older people can live in for as long as possible is already considered best practice, and key to efforts to manage the cost of an ageing population.

22. Since 2008, Austria's municipal government has required most new homes to be built to the equivalent of Lifetime Homes standard, and has introduced measures to retrofit existing homes to ensure disabled and older people can live in them for longer. We think this approach should be replicated across the UK.¹⁵

The human impact of this hidden housing crisis

23. In the worst circumstances, people like Ruby and Laura (below) lose invaluable time with their disabled children due to the inaccessibility of their homes. This is a disgrace, and one which needs to be addressed immediately.

Case study 1: Ruby and Cody

Ruby lives in Barry in South Wales with her son Cody, who has the degenerative muscle condition Duchenne muscular dystrophy. Cody currently finds it difficult getting up the stairs on his own, and this will only get worse as time goes on and his illness progresses. Ruby told us:

"I'm very worried about what will happen if we have to stay here once Cody has to use a wheelchair. He won't be able to sleep in his bedroom, or use the bathroom privately, and the impact on his life, our lives, will be enormous.

"There are new developments being built in Barry, but neither the council nor private developers are building enough homes to cater for families like us who need them. We are gold priority on the Homes 4U list (the local housing association), but there's not a single available home in the area which is suitable.

"The life expectancy for someone living with Duchenne is only 27 years. Our precious time together shouldn't be wasted struggling to get out of the front door, or get down the stairs, we should be able to enjoy our lives together while we can."

In 2014, Ruby launched her own Change.org petition, asking that the Vale of Glamorgan to build her a home suitable to meet needs of her disabled son. Her petition is accessible at: <https://www.change.org/p/correspondence-carl-sargeant-vale-council-help-us-find-a-home-suitable-for-our-son-cody-create-more-homes-for-families-with-disabled-children> The petition has almost 65,000 signatures and was recently handed into 10 Downing Street.

¹⁴ For Future Living: Innovative Approaches to Joining Up Housing and Health, IPPR, 2014

¹⁵ Klenovec M (2013) Independent living in Austria & review of European Access Awards, Centre for Inclusive Design

Case study 2: Laura and Blisse

Laura's daughter Blisse is a 5 year old girl who was born with Periventricular nodular heterotopia and polymicrogyria. Her conditions mean that she is life limited and the family have access to the local children's hospice for children who are not expected to live past 19. Blisse suffers with severe epilepsy, having almost constant mini-seizures and breathing difficulties. She requires 24hr constant care, including medication being administered during the night, and therefore one of Blisse's parents must sleep in the same room as her.

The room in which Blisse and Laura spend their lives is small, and crowded by the equipment that Blisse requires. It is not suitable for house visitors as there is nowhere for anyone to sit comfortably, and results in the family effectively not living together.

Laura told us "Currently we exist at home, it's a living hell. Blisse is trapped in one room. We have no space in the house to spend time as a family, so we exist separately. My own health is failing and I am unable to lift Blisse safely: as she grows it will get to a point where I will not be able to lift her at all. As our bathroom is upstairs I have to carry Blisse for her to be bathed, and as she is peg fed it is vital for her to be washed daily. We have been on the Vale of Glamorgan's accessible housing list for almost five years, because the house we need doesn't exist. I am desperate, our family's situation is desperate and we need action now, not in another five years from now.'

The home they are living in was built to WHQS. However, it was not built to full wheelchair accessibility standards. As such, they require a ground level extension, track hoisting throughout an open plan style living area, and a specially adapted bathroom with a full size bath that can accommodate two people working either side of the bath (as Blisse has fits if she is placed in a shower).

Conclusion

24. We believe that the Welsh Government should make a public commitment to:

- **Ensure every new home in Wales is built to fully meet all Welsh Housing Quality Standards (ensuring they are as comprehensive as Lifetime Homes standards); and**
- **Ensure at least ten percent of all new homes are built to full wheelchair accessibility standards.**

Rhian Stangroom-Teel
Policy and Public Affairs Officer (Wales), Leonard Cheshire Disability

P-04-598 Disability Awareness Training

Petition wording:

We want to make disability awareness training compulsory across any organisation providing face to face customer service. So that staff know how to assist and support a disabled person confidently, safely, effectively and equally. The Equality Act 2010 states that all organisations should make a reasonable adjustment for a disabled person, however there are many organisations that are unsure how to do this correctly and reasonably. Therefore we would like to see a more inclusive society and a law put into place so that people are aware of disability and raise the quality of customers experiences for disabled people or currently know how to support disabled people.

The training should incorporate adequate time of each element of disability separately. Mental health, visual impairment, learning, hearing and physical. I recommend half day training per element. This training should be renewed every 3 years to keep up to date.

Petitioner: Visualise Training and Consultancy

First considered by the Committee: 23 September 2014

Number of Signatures: 62

Agenda Item 3.2

P-04-511 Support for children and young people participation standards

Petition wording:

We call upon the National Assembly for Wales to urge the Welsh Government to provide support for the National Children and Young People's Participation Standards for Wales self-assessment process.

Additional Information:

The Participation standards were launched in 2007 after being developed by the Participation Unit. There are seven participation standards which are Information, It's your choice, No Discrimination, Respect, You get something out of it, Feedback and Improving how we work. The participation unit then developed a national standards kite – mark scheme based around the standards. The aim of the kite-mark was that the organisations would complete a self assessment and once it was complete a team of young inspectors would come and inspect the evidence the organisation had to see if they were up to the national standards. If they were seen as achieving they would be awarded the National Participation Standards Kit-mark. However the participation unit now no longer exists which means that's any organisation which does a self assessment now can only achieve a county level kite-mark which means that there is no national recognition and also there is no team co-coordinating the young inspectors.

Petition raised by: Powys Youth Forum

Date petition first considered by Committee: 11 November 2013

Number of signatures: 39

**P-04-511 Support for children and young people participation standards –
Correspondence from the Petitioner to the Committee, 15.04.2015**

Dear Petitions Committee,

Please find powys youth forum response below.

Kind regards

Jack Gillum

Powys Youth Forum response to the Petitions Committee

Thank you for the correspondence but from the correspondence we have a number of points which we would like to raise.

1) We are aware that Children in Wales held a meeting to look at the National Standards and the Kitemarking process. While we are pleased that this meeting took place we are disappointed that we (young people – particularly those young people who are currently trained as young inspectors) were not invited to be involved in this process. Due to timings and location of the meeting unfortunately Powys Participation workers were unable to attend the meeting, though they have shared the minutes of the meeting with Youth Forum members. The minutes do not seem to have a very clear picture of the next steps or a timeline on when things should be happening.

2) The Children in Wales letter dated 17th November 2014 to William Powell AM states that their work will include

- A process of updating the Standards and kite marking tool in collaboration with participation workers and young people through face to face and electronic means by February 2015...

To our knowledge no work has been done with any young people in relation to this point. The letter also mentions training the trainer's events on the standards, training for workers on the self-assessment and a National good practice exchange event in June 2015. Other than viewing a copy of this letter we have heard no further information regarding these commitments.

We would ask that Children in Wales and Welsh Government provide a clear time table as to when this work will be done. We are concerned that there is the potential

with this topic for the Welsh Government and partners to loose focus on the topic and it to become another area which is forgotten about.

P-04-535 Save our Fire Stations

Petition wording:

We call upon the Welsh Government to ensure fire services throughout the country are protected from severe budget cuts which inevitably impact upon the service and response times.

Additional information: Due to severe budget cuts from the Welsh Government to local government, fire authorities are facing significant financial pressures and are being forced to reduce their budgets. We believe this will directly impact upon response times and potentially put people's lives at risk. As the Welsh Government has ultimate responsibility for the fire service, we believe the Welsh Government should make a financial intervention in the same way it has done for the NHS to protect the fire service from budget cuts.

Petition raised by: Jonathan Edwards

Date Petition first considered by Committee: 18 February 2014

Number of signatures: 698

Agenda Item 3.4

P-04-563 the Provision of Services at Pontypridd Fire Station

Petition wording:

PLEASE HELP SAVE OUR FIRE ENGINE! Due to public sector cut backs and a recent review carried out by the South Wales Fire and Rescue Service, we are faced with the prospect of only having one fire engine for the whole of the Pontypridd area.

The proposal is to get rid of a fire engine and the team that serve the growing population of Pontypridd

Petition raised by: Ben Croxall

Date Petition first considered by Committee: 17 June 2014

Number of signatures : Over 9000

P-04-596 Save Porth Fire Station – SECONDS COST LIVES!

Petition wording:

We call on the National Assembly for Wales to urge the Welsh Government to review the proposal to close Porth fire station leaving the communities of Porth 10 – 15 minutes away from the nearest fire engine located at either Tonypandy or Treforest.

Due to the public sector cuts and the fire review cover being carried out, South Wales Fire and Rescue Service has made a proposal to permanently close Porth fire station. This will leave no fire cover within the Porth community

Petitioner : Gerwyn James

First considered by the Committee: 23 September 2014

Number of Signatures: 5 electronic signatures and in excess of 9,000 paper signatures.

Agenda Item 3.6

P-04- 592 Democratically Binding Plebiscites at Local Government Level

Petition Wording:

We, the undersigned, call upon the Welsh Government to legislate to allow for Welsh citizens to call plebiscites on issues at the level of Local Government, and for such votes to have the effect of, either [1] calling-in decisions made by Councils for reconsideration, or [2] allowing votes above a two-thirds majority to be democratically binding.

Additional Information:

Plebeian Laboratories is aware of an endless number of decisions made at Local Government Level, which negatively affect the lives of citizens, but over which they have very little direct control. In recent years, Direct Democracy has gained in popularity in many countries throughout the world, not least as a means to increase civic participation and Democratic Rights. Although we do not anticipate Assembly Members voting to enact direct democracy at Welsh national level any more than turkeys would vote for Christmas, a degree of limited direct democracy at Local Government level would bring Welsh democracy to life.

The creation of the National Assembly for Wales has permitted Welsh citizens a limited democratic voice over decisions affecting their lives, however Plebeian Laboratories is aware of an endless number of decisions made at Local Government Level, which negatively affect the lives of citizens, but over which they have very little direct control. In recent years, Direct Democracy has gained in popularity in many countries throughout the world, not least as a means to increase civic participation and Democratic Rights. Although we do not anticipate Assembly Members voting to enact direct democracy at Welsh national level any more than turkeys would vote for Christmas, a

degree of limited direct democracy at Local Government level would bring Welsh democracy to life.

Petition raised by: Plebeian Laboratories

Date Petition first considered by Committee: 23 September 2014

Number of signatures: 38

Agenda Item 3.7

P-04-525 Funding for CREST Awards in Wales

Petition wording:

We, the undersigned, call on the Welsh Government to reinstate the required funding for the Crest Awards in Wales, and want the National Science Academy to recognise the value of the Crest Awards to primary and secondary education, and the requirement of funding for the Crest Awards to continue.

Additional information:

CREST is a project-based awards scheme for the STEM subjects (science, technology, engineering and maths). It links students to curriculum-based learning. Last year over 30,000 CREST Awards were undertaken in the UK giving 5-19yr olds opportunities to explore real-world projects in an exciting way. Over 10% of the Awards in the UK were awarded to pupils in Wales. The success of the increase in number of CREST Awards in Wales has been achieved with funding from the Welsh Government (NSA) to coordinate and increase activities in Welsh schools. This has enabled the scheme to be offered bilingually, subsidised the pupils' registration fee, provided grants and other supportive structures provided through See Science. CREST Awards have brought considerable benefit schools and the implications of the withdrawal of funding will be felt directly by the pupils and teaching staff. CREST Awards are recognised by all Universities in the UK and provides strong evidence of contextual data

Petition raised by: See Science – British Science Association

Date Petition first considered by Committee: 21 January 2014

Number of signatures: 210



Eich cyf/Your ref : P-04-525
Ein cyf/Our ref: EH/01329/15

William Powell AM
committeebusiness@Wales.gsi.gov.uk

30 March 2015

Dear William,

I am writing to update you regarding your letter of 30 April 2014 in respect of Petition P-04-525 Funding for CREST Awards in Wales.

We recognise the value of STEM inspirational enrichment activities including activities delivered through the CREST Awards programme. Consequently, we awarded the British Science Association funding to deliver the CREST Awards pan Wales over a 12 month period commencing April 2014.

I am pleased to report that as a result of our support, a higher percentage of students in Wales are now awarded a CREST Award compared to the rest of the UK. In addition, an expert assessor, together with officials, is currently reviewing a further funding proposal regarding potentially funding CREST Awards over a 3 year period commencing April 2015.

Edwina Hart

**P-04-525 Funding for CREST Awards in Wales – Correspondence from the
Petitioner to the Clerking Team, 21.04.2015**

Dear Kayleigh

My apologies that I have not responded earlier but I have been on sick leave for the last month due to operation.

Following up from the letter from Mrs Hart I believe that this issue which was submitted via petition has been resolved for 2014-15 and believe that funding for the future is under discussion with the British Science Association

Best wishes

Cerian Angharad

Agenda Item 3.8

P-04-585 Changes to A494/A470 Junction Dolgellau

Petition Wording

In the six weeks since the completion of changes to the junction of the A494/A470 at Dolgellau there have been three serious road traffic collisions, two fatalities, two seriously injured and two “minor injuries”. Many people have expressed concerns locally and with the coming summer holidays and an increase to the traffic at this junction there are likely to be more such incidents. We call on the Welsh Government to consider, urgently, changes to this junction before more lives are lost or changed for the worse.

Additional Information:

This junction has always caused concern but in the six weeks of the changes people are very wary of using it and ‘locals’ change their routes to avoid it when possible. The deaths and injuries are a needless waste of life and lives will be saved if a clearer system is in place, maybe a small roundabout or at least, in the short term, additional signage.

Petition raised by: Kathryn White

Date Petition first considered by Committee: 23 September 2014

Number of signatures: 1,288 electronic signatures and 1,581 paper signatures collected. Total 2,869.



Eich cyf/Your ref P-04-585
Ein cyf/Our ref EH/05284/14

William Powell AM
Petitions Committee
Chair

12 March 2015

Dear William,

I am writing to provide you with an update regarding our plans for two junctions on the A470 near Dolgellau.

Following observation of CCTV footage from the A493 and A494 junctions, I have decided that installation of roundabouts at both junctions will provide the most appropriate solution for road users and the local community.

We will need to identify appropriate mitigation of the ecological impact of the works, and these studies will begin in the spring when species such as lesser horseshoe bats become more active. Studies and design will be completed through the summer and construction should then start early in 2016, to be completed in early spring 2017. I have made funding available in both 2015/16 and 2016/17.

In the meantime, I have asked officials to carry out any improvements possible to the temporary traffic signal installations at the junctions, to reduce disruption through the summer months. For major events such as the Royal Welsh Show it may be necessary to manually control the signals at peak times.

Edwina Hart

Agenda Item 3.9

P-04-594 Cilmeri Community Council Appeal for The Prince Llywelyn Monument

Petition wording:

Due to the National importance of our Prince Llywelyn Monument we, the Community of Cilmeri call, on the National Assembly for Wales to urge the Welsh Government to:

- Install locational signage boards, incorporating a brown signage battlefield icon, to denote the historical significance of our village, on the A483 at both main road entrances to the village;
- Work in partnership with Powys County Council, Cilmeri Community Council and CADW to help maintain the famous monument, so that visitors can enjoy our national historical amenity in a safe and befitting environment;
- Help identify resources to implement, in a phased manner, the Lloyd Brown Interpretation Plan (January 2013), commissioned by CADW.

Additional Information:

The interpretation plan highlights the fact that Llywelyn was the last native Welsh Prince to fall in battle, marking the effective end of the powerful dynasty of Gwynedd, which played an important role in forging a sense of Welsh nationhood and identity.

Petitioner: Cilmeri Community Council

First considered by the Committee: 23 September 2014

Number of Signatures: 305

CILMERI COMMUNITY COUNCIL

Tawelfan

37 Parc-yr-Irfon

Builth Wells

Powys

LD2 3NG

cilmericommunitycouncil@gmail.com

22

March 2015

Dear Kayleigh

Many thanks for your recent mail/letter regarding the Cilmeri Monument.

The enhancements that Welsh Government have contributed towards to date (including the study) have been greatly appreciated and have added much to this historic site.

Having discussed the next steps for the site with the Cilmeri Community Council, we very much feel that providing road signage to identify the location of the monument is much needed to help with promotion of the site.

We therefore request assistance from Welsh Government with the provision of signs along the A483 in order to encourage the number of visitors and to spread awareness of the historic value of this site. Also looking to the future to provide funding for the long term enjoyment, conservation and management of the site.

Yours sincerely

Councillor Peter Blower

Agenda Item 3.10

P-04-542 Practical Opportunities for Young People

Petition wording:

We call on the National Assembly for Wales to urge the Welsh Government to provide more opportunities for unemployed young people to undertake voluntary work to help them develop new skills, particularly skills that are more practical in nature.

Petition raised by: George Colville

Date Petition first considered by Committee: 29 April 2014

Number of signatures: 32

P-04-551 Basic First Aid To Be Taught In Schools

Petition wording:

We, the undersigned, hereby call upon the Welsh Government to make it compulsory for all pupils in their GCSE years to undergo basic First Aid training.

We believe that first aid is an essential life saving skill that every young person has the right to have and as such should become a compulsory part of secondary education. Being trained in first aid can carry a lot of responsibility but has a lot of benefits. In dangerous situations first aid training can make the difference between life or death. So just knowing how to put someone in the recovery position or even by calling an ambulance effectively can save lives.

Petition raised by: Tim Clarke

Date Petition first considered by Committee: 13 May 2014

Number of signatures: 11

Agenda Item 3.12

P-04-569 Stop National Tests for Primary School Children:

Petition Wording

We call upon the National Assembly for Wales to urge the Welsh Government to remove national tests for primary school children.

Additional Information: I believe that National Tests for Primary School children cause unnecessary stress and anxiety in young children. Children should feel nurtured and positive in their attitude to school, not pressured and anxious about doing well in an unrealistic exam environment that only rewards those who perform well under such conditions, and punishes those who do not. To set children against one another and force them to consider the consequences of 'failure' at such a young age is cruel. The National Tests are also widely condemned by teaching professionals as an ineffective motivating and measurement tool that does not work in determining a young child's potential and current state of knowledge.

Petition raised by: Alexander Roberts

Date Petition first considered by Committee: 15 July 2014

Number of signatures :123

P-04-576 Allow Children in Wales to Have a Family Holiday During Term Time

Petition Wording

We call on the National Assembly for Wales to urge the Welsh Government to review the guidance to Local Authorities on head teachers being able to authorise absence for family holidays during term time. Many families from poor backgrounds can only afford to go on holiday during term time, as holidays are about 60% more expensive during the holiday period. Also, many families where parents work are unable to take time off during the school holidays. Holidays can be extremely educational, giving the children awareness of the world in which we live.

Petition raised by: Bethany Walpole-Wroe

Date Petition first considered by Committee: 15 July 2014

Number of signatures: 1008 – An associated e-petition has collected over 10,300 signatures.

Y Pwyllgor Plant, Pobl Ifanc ac Addysg
Children, Young People and Education Committee

Cynulliad
Cenedlaethol
Cymru

National
Assembly for
Wales



William Powell AM
Chair of the Petitions Committee
National Assembly for Wales

Bae Caerdydd / Cardiff Bay
Caerdydd / Cardiff
CF99 1NA

27 November 2014

Dear William

I refer to our earlier correspondence regarding petitions received by your Committee relating to pupil absence during term time for family holidays.

As set out in my letter to you on 24 October, the Committee had agreed to consider whether to include this matter within its future work programme. The Committee considered this on 19 November.

Unfortunately, due to the weight of legislation before, and due to come before, the Committee and commitments already given to future inquiries, we are unable at this time to include this matter within our work programme. We will, of course, keep our work programme under review, and should a suitable slot arise, we could consider this matter again.

Regards

Ann Jones AC / AM
Cadeirydd / Chair

Croesewir gohebiaeth yn y Gymraeg a'r Saesneg / We welcome correspondence in both English and Welsh
Y Pwyllgor Plant, Pobl Ifanc ac Addysg / Children, Young People and Education Committee
Gwasanaeth y Pwyllgorau / Committee Service
Ffôn / Tel : 029 2089 8429
Ebst / Email : CYPCommittee@wales.gov.uk

William Powell AM
Chair
Petitions Committee
National Assembly for Wales
Cardiff Bay
CF99 1NA

20 January 2015

Dear Mr Powell

Petition: P-04-576 Allow Children in Wales to Have a Family Holiday During Term Time

I am writing in response to your request for information on how attendance is considered within inspection.

Pupils' attendance is an area that all inspection teams consider. The Welsh Government provides Estyn with data about pupils' attendance through the All Wales Core Data sets. The Welsh Government is responsible for the definitions used for producing this data.

Prior to inspection the lead inspector analyses the attendance data and makes a decision about whether attendance should be a line of inquiry for the inspection team. The data is a starting point for the inspection team and inspectors judge each school on an individual basis, taking into account any contextual factors. However, if a school has been continuously in the lowest 50% of similar schools over the past few years and there is a weak trend of improvement, the team may come to the judgement that attendance is an area requiring significant improvement. If the team judges that attendance requires significant improvement, the overall judgement for wellbeing can be no higher than adequate.

The school's attendance figure is calculated in terms of pupils' actual attendance against possible attendance and is expressed as a percentage. Inspection teams also consider the percentage of attendance that is unauthorised. However, it is the school's overall attendance figure that is the most important. Where schools feel that there are significant factors that affect their overall attendance rate they have opportunities to present this to the inspection team both before and during the

inspection. Currently, headteachers have discretionary powers to authorise holidays, of up to ten school days in term time, in exceptional circumstances. However, many local authorities or regional consortia have instructed schools to record any holiday as unauthorised absence.

Estyn expects schools to be proactive in improving pupils' attendance rates and making parents aware of the importance of good attendance. Poor attendance, for whatever reason, can have a significant impact on pupils' attainment.

I hope this answers your query.

Yours sincerely



Ann Keane

Her Majesty's Chief Inspector of
Education and Training in Wales

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

Document is Restricted

P-04-576 Allow Children in Wales to Have a Family Holiday During Term Time – Correspondence from the Petitioner to the Clerking Team, 15.04.2015

In September 2014 we (parents) were informed by our head teachers across Wales, that in response to Welsh Assembly legislation, the education Authorities of Wales had removed the right of Head teachers, to authorise absence from school during term time for the purpose of family leisure or family educational trips. We believe this to be unfair and socially divisive as it brings more children into the 'have not' section of society with all its attendant ills of low self esteem and lack of motivation to better oneself.

There are many families, that are affected by this ruling; parents that work in the tourism industry (60% in Ceredigion), those on very low wages, or that work for small businesses that cannot work the rota to allow every employee time of over the summer holiday period, to name but a few. We are not talking about having a better holiday, but about having a holiday at all, this can depend on a variety of circumstances not only financial, although this is of course a large consideration, with holidays costing almost twice as much during the school holidays, even at half term or Easter. We set up a petition on '38 degrees' and quickly amassed 9'000 signatures of voters who agreed with us that this legislation is being used unfairly. We started a similar petition on the Welsh Assembly website and gained over 1000 Welsh voter's signatures in 48 hours, showing that we are far from being alone in our opinion.

In response to a question from Russell George, Huw Lewis (Welsh Assembly Education Minister) said "I think that we do need the discretion of headteachers to be taking the lead here in terms of the decision making around absence." He also claimed in a radio programme on BBC Wales, that "Head Teachers still have the right to allow up to ten days off per year for the purpose of a family holiday", this is not the case. If this is indeed the Welsh Assembly's intent, then Education Authorities are in need of further guidance, in the way they implement this legislation, as they clearly believe it is in place not to penalise the uncaring parents of truanting children, but responsible parents that care deeply about their children's educational and emotional wellbeing. The proof of this can be seen in these extracts of letters sent by schools to parents 'schools **will not authorise family holidays or routine appointments** taken during term time', also '**if you take holidays during term time [...] you could be fined**' (ERW 6th October 2014) . This is being passed on by schools

in their attendance policy with comments such as 'Head teachers do have the discretionary power to grant leave for the purpose of family holiday or trips. However the ERW Consortium is strongly advising that any holiday or day trips in term time should be unauthorised, and that there should be no exceptions to this policy.' This clearly shows interference in the way head teachers are running their schools regardless of the educational standards achieved.

Anne Keene's letter in response to the petitions committee states "Currently, headteachers have discretionary **[legal]** powers to authorise holidays, of up to ten school days in term time, in exceptional circumstances. However, many local authorities or regional consortia have instructed schools to record any holiday as unauthorised absence". This "instruction" (essentially a blanket ban on term time holidays) is unlawful, in my view, as it flies in the face of the legislation and the Framework which states that requests for leave must be assessed on an individual basis and can be authorised.

The relevant law is contained in the Education (Pupil Registration) (Wales) Regulations 2010 (<http://legislation.gov.uk/wsi/2010/1954/regulation/7/made>) which bestows upon the school a discretionary power to grant a leave of absence during term time (Regulation 7). This discretion can be exercised for a variety of reasons, including a leave of absence for the child to go on holiday (Reg. 7(3)). Apart from "in exceptional circumstances", a pupil must not be granted more than ten school days leave for a holiday in any school year (Reg. 7(4)).

Further legislative guidance on the Regulations can be found in The All Wales Attendance Framework (<http://wales.gov.uk/docs/dcells/publications/110308section1en.pdf>) paragraphs 316 to 320, which state that parents do not have an automatic right to withdraw pupils from school for a holiday and, in law, have to apply for permission in advance (para. 316). However, when assessing a request for leave for a family holiday, school staff should treat each request individually and the following factors should be considered (para. 317):

- time of year of proposed trip;
- length and purpose of the holiday;
- duration of the holiday and its impact on continuity of learning;
- circumstances of the family and the wishes of parents;
- the overall attendance pattern of the child

The Framework states that, where such absences are sanctioned, they should be counted as an **authorised** absence.

Huw Lewis, Minister for Education and Skills, has made a number of statements setting out that he expects schools, local authorities and consortia to have due regard to the Regulations. His latest comment on the issue was at National Government level in the Assembly on 14th January 2015, when he said that he "would be concerned" if Local Authorities/Education Consortia were bringing to bear pressure on Heads meaning that unauthorised absence in term time was rarely granted.

Governors and other public bodies are required to act within the law. It would seem that in ERW recommending to Heads not to authorise leave for any holidays, they are preventing a Head from both exercising his or her discretion set out in the primary legislation and also precluding him or her from assessing each request individually and taking into consideration the factors set out in the Framework.

We consider that any school attendance policy should include the wording "In Wales, the Education (Pupil Registration) (Wales) Regulations 2010 gives schools discretionary powers to authorise up to 10 days absence per year for a family holiday during term time. Parents may apply to the head teacher for permission in advance. This does not, however, give parents an automatic right to remove their children from school for a holiday during term-time". This is to quote the Minister on the issue from his letter of 4th November 2014 (to Angela Burns AM).

In conclusion, we do not expect the right to remove our children from school during term time without question, as education is of paramount importance. We do however want to be given back the right to ask permission to do so, from the Head Teacher of our children's school, a person that knows us and our personal circumstances and our children's educational achievements, standards and abilities. Also for that Head Teacher to have the unfettered right to allow that time off, provided they think is appropriate to the child's best interests, without fear of reprimand, from higher authorities, who often have little or no educational qualifications or experience.

Hi Kathryn,

I think it is important that the attachments above are also printed out for the petitions committee as they clearly show the kind of pressure being put on the Head teachers by the Education Authorities in Wales, these are copies of actual letters sent to them.

Thanks Beth

Sorry I meant these are the letters being sent to parents, this is what is actually happening, not what the education authorities are claiming is happening

6th October 2014

Dear Parent,

SCHOOL ATTENDANCE

I write to thank you for supporting our efforts to improve school attendance in **Carmarthenshire** and to ask for your cooperation in continuing to improve attendance in the interest of our children and young people. School attendance is a priority for us in **Carmarthenshire** and the ERW regional school improvement serviceⁱ and a common approach to improve school attendance is being used. This includes the decision not to authorise holidays in term time.

Having looked at school attendance in **Carmarthenshire** for 2013/14 we have seen improvement.

	2013/2014 Attendance
Primary Schools	95.0%

As you can see there has been marked improvement in school attendance with a reduction in the number of holidays taken during term time. Thank you very much for helping us achieve this result.

All of us are working hard to improve standards and outcomes for our children and young people and I know you're aware that there is a clear and direct relationship between regular school attendance and pupil achievement. We have seen improvements in standards across the region this year, and I know that some of this is due to improved school attendance.

Although there has been improvement this year we need to continue to address this issue in the interests of our children and young people. To ensure further improvement I would like to remind you of the following-

- The Welsh Government and ERW expects all pupils to attend school at least 95% of the time.
- Missing school jeopardises the learner's chances of fulfilling his/her potential as regular attendance improves the chances of being successful at school.
- Schools **will not authorise family holidays** or ***routine appointments***ⁱⁱ taken during term time.
- If you take your child out of school for non-authorised activities we are obliged to consider legal measures under the 1996 Education Act and you may be subject to a fine or prosecution.
- If your child is absent for a period of four weeks or longer they will be removed from the school roll in accordance with admission guidance. Please note that we cannot guarantee that a place will be available for your child in the school of your choice on their return and a place will be offered at the nearest school with a vacancy.
- **If you take holidays during term time or your child is consistently late you could be fined.**

I would like your continued support to ensure that your child's attendance is the best it can be. You can do this by making sure your child is in school on time and by not arranging family holidays or routine appointments during term times. However, if you are having difficulties with your child's attendance, please talk to your school who can arrange support for you.

I am confident that we can work together to further improve school attendance and ensure that our children reach their full potential.

Yours sincerely



Eifion Evans
Lead Director, ERW
South West and Mid Wales Consortium

ⁱ ERW is the regional education consortium comprising Carmarthenshire, Ceredigion, Neath Port Talbot, Pembrokeshire, Powys and Swansea.

ⁱⁱ By routine appointments we refer to periodic assessments such as dental check-ups, occasional optical examinations, non-urgent doctor consultations, etc, where parents/ guardians are able to influence the timing of appointments.

14th October 2014

Dear Parent,

SCHOOL ATTENDANCE

I write to thank you for supporting our efforts to improve school attendance in **Carmarthenshire** and to ask for your cooperation in continuing to improve attendance in the interest of our children and young people.

School attendance is a priority for us in Carmarthenshire and the ERW regional school improvement serviceⁱ and a common approach to improve school attendance is being used. This includes the decision not to authorise holidays in term time.

Having looked at school attendance in Carmarthenshire for 2013/14 we have seen improvement.

	2013/2014 Attendance
Secondary Schools	93.9%

As you can see there has been marked improvement in school attendance with a reduction in the number of holidays taken during term time. Thank you very much for helping us achieve this result.

All of us are working hard to improve standards and outcomes for our children and young people and I know you're aware that there is a clear and direct relationship between regular school attendance and pupil achievement. We have seen improvements in standards across the region this year, and I know that some of this is due to improved school attendance.

Although there has been improvement this year we need to continue to address this issue in the interests of our children and young people. To ensure further improvement I would like to remind you of the following:

- The Welsh Government and ERW expects all pupils to attend school at least 95% of the time.
- Missing school jeopardises the learner's chances of fulfilling his/her potential as regular attendance improves the chances of being successful at school.
- Schools will not authorise family holidays or routine appointmentsⁱⁱ taken during term time.
- If you take your child out of school for non-authorised activities we are obliged to consider legal measures under the 1996 Education Act and you may be subject to a fine or prosecution.
- If you take holidays during term time or your child is consistently late you could be fined.

I would like your continued support to ensure that your child's attendance is the best it can be. You can do this by making sure your child is in school on time and by not arranging family holidays or routine appointments during term times. However, if you are having difficulties with your child's attendance, please talk to your school who can arrange support for you.

I am confident that we can work together to further improve school attendance and ensure that our children reach their full potential.

Yours sincerely



Eifion Evans
Lead Director, ERW
South West and Mid Wales Consortium

ⁱ ERW is the regional education consortium comprising Carmarthenshire, Ceredigion, Neath Port Talbot, Pembrokeshire, Powys and Swansea.

ⁱⁱ By routine appointments we refer to periodic assessments such as dental check-ups, occasional optical examinations, non-urgent doctor consultations, etc, where parents/ guardians are able to influence the timing of appointments.

Hi Kathryn,

I really am sorry to be a pain but this came today as a response to an email I sent to Huw Lewis, on the link provided there is a table of advice to head teachers one of the headings is a document called 'declining permission' where the Head Teachers have a pre written form declining permission for a term time holiday, without addressing any of the reasons why, other than the fact that ERW has banned them. I think it would be very useful for the committee to have a copy of this form (below) as well .

Many thanks Beth

OR School Heading

Parents name and address:

Date:

Dear Parent/Guardian/or full name,

I note that you have applied to take <name of pupil> out of school during the school term.

The Education (School Day School Year) (Wales) Regulations 2006 states pupils are expected to attend school for 190 days a year. Moreover, there is a strong correlation between good attendance and high achievement as set out below:

95–100% attendance	Best chance of success	Your child is taking full advantage of every learning opportunity.
90–95% attendance	At least 2 weeks of learning missed	Satisfactory. Your child may have to spend time catching up with work.
85–90% attendance	At least 4 weeks of learning missed	Your child may be at risk of underachieving and may need extra support from you to catch up with work.
80–85% attendance	At least 5½ weeks of learning missed	Your child's poor attendance has a significant impact on learning.

Below 80% attendance	At least 7½ weeks of learning missed	Your child is missing out on a broad and balanced education. You are at risk of prosecution.
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The decision was taken by ERW, our regional education consortium, to strongly recommend to headteachers and governing bodies that they do not authorise any absences due to holidays during term times. This recommendation would mean that any absences that are due to pupils being taken on holiday during term time would be recorded as unauthorised.

As a school we actively encourage parents not to take holidays during term time so that children can fully benefit from the opportunities their school provides. If children are not in school, they cannot learn.

For the reasons outlined above the school will not be authorising the requested absence from school.

Yours faithfully / or sincerely,

Head-teacher



Llywodraeth Cymru
Welsh Government

Eich cyf/Your ref
Ein cyf/Our ref TO/HL/00646/15

B Walpole-Wroe

bethwalpole@btinternet.com

16 April 2015

Dear Ms Walpole-Wroe

Thank you for your email to the Minister for Education and Skills dated 25 March about parents who wish to take their children on holiday during term-time. I have been asked to reply.

Thank you for attaching the letters from ERW on school attendance dated 14 October 2014. These letters had previously been brought to our attention and as a result officials from the Welsh Government have discussed their content with representatives from ERW. The latest information for parents can be found by clicking on the "Attendance: Explanatory Letter" Word link on the ERW website from the following link
<http://www.erw.org.uk/attendance/>

This states that ERW recommends head teachers and governing bodies do not to authorise holiday requests during term time. Legally head teachers have the discretionary power to authorise leave for a family holiday during term time where parents seek permission. A head teacher should consider the time of year of the proposed trip, length and purpose of the holiday, impact on continuity of learning, circumstances of the family and the wishes of parents as well as the overall attendance pattern of the child.

Yours sincerely

Emyr Foxhall

Emyr Foxhall
Support for Learners Division

Support for Learners Division,
Department for Education and Skills
Welsh Government, CARDIFF

Page 79

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

TO/HL/00646/15

Agenda Item 3.14

P-04-479 Tywyn Memorial Hospital X-ray & Minor Injuries Unit Petition

Petition wording:

We call upon the National Assembly for Wales to urge the Welsh Government to stop the withdrawal of X-ray facilities & the reduction in provision of services by the Minor Injuries Unit as a matter of urgency.

Petition raised by: Tywyn & District Health Care Action Group

Date petition first considered by Committee: 14 May 2013

Number of signatures: 4486

P-04-466 Medical Emergency – Preventing the introduction of a poorer Health Service for North Wales

Petition wording:

We the undersigned call on the National Assembly for Wales to urge the Welsh Government to ensure that the proposals contained within the Betsi Cadwalader University Health Board consultation– *Health Care in North Wales is Changing* does not result in poorer health provision and unnecessary deaths and suffering.

The proposals will have a detrimental effect on most areas of health provision and emergency services and in no way can the proposals be an improvement as is intimated. Already experiencing meltdown, the Health Service in Wales will head towards collapse, if these proposals are implemented in their present form

The current BCUHB consultation proposals in relation to Health Care in North Wales appear to be detrimental to general health provision and the safety of our communities. Accessibility, X-ray provision, Minor Injuries ,Mental Health, the Ambulance Services, the Out of Hours service and the ability of GPs to deliver an integrated service are going to be particularly hard hit by the proposals – as they are diametrically at odds with the Welsh Govt’s vision in relation to the documents *Together for Health*, *Setting the Direction*, and *Delivering Emergency Care Services* – it appears also to be at odds with the *Compact* announced by the Health Minister on the 25th of September 2012.

Petition raised by: Mike Parry

Petition first considered by Committee: 19 March 2013

Number of signatures: 306



GIG
CYMRU
NHS
WALES

Bwrdd Iechyd Prifysgol
Betsi Cadwaladr
University Health Board

Mr William Powell AC / AM
Chair
Petitions Committee
National Assembly for Wales
Cardiff Bay
CARDIFF CF99 1NA

Ein cyf / Our ref: TP/SB/3360/294

Eich cyf / Your ref:

☎: 01248 384910

Gofynnwch am / Ask for: Linda Hughes

E-bost / Email: linda.hughes@wales.nhs.uk

Dyddiad / Date: 31 March 2015

Dear Mr Powell

Petition P 04-479 Tywyn Memorial X-ray and Minor Injuries Unit
Petition P-04-466 Medical Emergency – Preventing the Introduction of a Poorer Health Service for North Wales

I am writing to follow up on your letter of December 2014 requesting an update after a further three months on progress on service development and delivery following the publication of the Mid Wales Healthcare Study.

Firstly, I would like to acknowledge the Petitioner's concerns as expressed in the correspondence. I understand that there remain concerns in the area regarding the opening hours of the Minor Injuries Unit and there has been significant previous correspondence with yourselves and others regarding this matter. I will give an update below on current activity at the Minor Injuries Unit but also on some other developments which may offer further reassurance that we are seeking to address the needs of the local community better.

We continue to monitor the extent of demand for the minor injuries service and also attendances at other nearby hospitals in the area. Data for the calendar year 2014 shows that there were 1,028 attendances at Tywyn MIU by Tywyn residents during the year, or an average of just under 20 a week. During the same year there were 128 attendances at Dolgellau MIU, which is the next nearest, equivalent to 2 or 3 a week. There are small numbers of attendances at other hospitals in North Wales for Tywyn residents. The level of demand therefore remains relatively low. Numbers attending during evenings and weekends are a small proportion of these (evening attendances: Dolgellau – 28, Tywyn - 18, for the year; weekends in winter months: Dolgellau – 27, with 22 attendances showing as attending Tywyn during weekends, which may relate to ad hoc calls at Tywyn).

Patients have, over recent months been supported on a couple of occasions with video conferencing to the hub at Llandudno Hospital which is supporting minor injury care across the Health Board using VC technology. This enables the Emergency Medicine Consultant and Advanced Nurse Practitioner at Llandudno to support care and reduce unnecessary journeys.



GIG
CYMRU
NHS
WALES

Bwrdd Iechyd Prifysgol
Betsi Cadwaladr
University Health Board

The Health Board has used Healthcare Technology Funding to purchase telehealth equipment for Tywyn Hospital which is being installed as part of the redevelopment and will further improve remote support. The Health Board's CARTREF project (CARE delivered with Telemedicine to support Rural Elderly and Frail patients), working with the HTTF, will roll out remote teleconsultation outpatient clinics; remote support of inpatients; some GP out of hours consultations and pharmacists supply of drugs following video consultation.

We believe that these developments will prove extremely helpful to local residents and also sustain the local service model. The use of telemedicine and telehealth is one of the areas flagged by the Mid Wales Healthcare Study.

With regard to the Study, in February the Health Board held an open public meeting in Tywyn to share the findings of the report and to hear local people's views. The meeting was supported also by the Medical Director of Hywel Dda Health Board. Those attending welcomed the approach of the two Health Boards in working together to address the issues. The notes of this meeting will be shared widely once translated. We have committed to holding a further update meeting in six months' time.

The Mid Wales Healthcare Collaborative has since been formally launched at the Conference held in Newtown in March at which senior Health Board representatives were present. The Collaborative will be establishing an Implementation Group and we will support the work of both the Implementation Group and the Collaborative in moving forward.

Finally, I am attaching a brief note of the progress on the Tywyn Hospital redevelopment which may be of help.

Yours sincerely



Prof Trevor Purt
Chief Executive

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TYWYN HOSPITAL REDEVELOPMENT

In August 2013 Welsh Government approved funding of £5million for the development of services at Tywyn Hospital. The scheme is designed to integrate primary care and community hospital services through the provision of a new build primary care centre and a sixteen bed ward on the site.

The new ward will provide vast improvements in patient dignity, privacy and comfort. It is also designed to allow greater flexibility in terms of use so it can provide palliative care, rehabilitation and assessment plus take transfers from other hospitals, thus reducing delayed transfers of care. The existing ward area will be refurbished to house community clinics and other services displaced by the demolition of the existing wing.

Delivery of this scheme will ensure that the Health Board will achieve the following:

- Ensure that primary and community services are developed to meet the needs of the local population and ensure that services are provided as close to the patient's home as possible
- Fully utilise the community hospital and bring new services to the site, which will enhance the service provided for the local population
- Bring, where clinically appropriate and possible, as many services into the community, to be delivered within the hospital, GP Surgery and people's own homes
- Modernise and innovate, and where possible, relocate specialist services within primary and community based settings
- Improve the management of long term chronic illness and conditions
- Facilitate the General Practitioners to practice effectively across a whole range of diseases ensuring integrated care close to the patient's home
- Provide modern facilities to undertake more local diagnostic investigation of patients, reducing the need for multiple acute hospital visits
- Provide flexible space which may be used by other key partners such as Social Services. This would ensure effective planning of community services and identify options for multidisciplinary working

Demolition and site enabling works commenced in April 2014 and the subsequent construction work has made good progress. Following completion of the steel frame, the stairs have been installed and the first and second floor slabs are in place. The roof is now over 70% complete and external cladding of the building is progressing. Currently the scheme is scheduled for completion in November 2015.

As part of the implementation of the Health Technology Fund, new VC technologies will be introduced into the site.

Separately, the Tywyn and District Memorial Hospital Appeal Fund has generously supported new X-ray equipment for the site, and this scheme is scheduled to start on site at the end of March 2015.



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AILDDATBLYGU YSBYTY TYWYN

Ym mis Awst 2013, cymeradwyodd Llywodraeth Cymru gyllid o £5miliwn ar gyfer datblygu gwasanaethau yn Ysbyty Tywyn. Bwriad y cynllun yw cyfuno gwasanaethau gofal cychwynnol ac ysbyty cymuned drwy ddarparu canolfan gofal cychwynnol a ward 16 gwely newydd ar y safle.

Bydd y ward newydd yn cynnig gwelliannau sylweddol o ran urddas, preifatrwydd a chyfforddusrwydd cleifion. Bydd hefyd wedi'i gynllunio i fod yn fwy hyblyg o ran defnydd, fel y gellir darparu gofal lliniarol, gwasanaethau adsefydlu ac asesu a derbyn cleifion o ysbytai eraill, fydd yn golygu y bydd llai o oedi wrth drosglwyddo gofal. Bydd y ward bresennol yn cael ei hailwampio i gynnwys clinigau cymuned a gwasanaethau eraill o'r adran fydd yn cael ei dymchwel.

Bydd darparu'r cynllun hwn yn golygu y bydd y Bwrdd Iechyd yn cyflawni'r canlynol:

- Sicrhau bod gwasanaethau cychwynnol a chymuned yn cael eu datblygu i fodloni anghenion y boblogaeth leol a sicrhau bod gwasanaethau'n cael eu darparu mor agos a phosibl at gartrefi cleifion
- Gwneud defnydd llawn o'r ysbyty cymuned a dod a gwasanaethau newydd i'r safle, fydd yn gwella'r gwasanaeth a gynigir i'r boblogaeth leol
- Pan fo hynny'n briodol ac yn bosibl yn glinigol, dod a chymaint o wasanaethau a phosibl i'r gymuned - i'w darparu yn yr ysbyty, y feddygfa a chartrefi pobl
- Moderneiddio ac arloesi, a phan fo hynny'n bosibl, symud gwasanaethau arbenigol i leoliadau cychwynnol a chymuned
- Gwella'r ffordd o reoli salwch a chyflyrau hir dymor
- Hwyluso'r Meddygon Teulu i weithio'n effeithiol ar draws ystod eang o glefydau, gan sicrhau gofal integredig yn agos at gartref y claf. Darparu cyfleusterau modern i gynnal mwy o archwiliadau diagnostig yn lleol, fel nad oes raid i gleifion ymweld a'r ysbyty llym lawer gwaith
- Darparu ystafelloedd hyblyg y gellir eu defnyddio gan bartneriaid allweddol eraill, fel Gwasanaethau Cymdeithasol. Byddai hyn yn sicrhau bod gwasanaethau cymuned yn cael eu cynllunio'n effeithiol ac yn dynodi opsiynau ar gyfer gwaith amlddisgyblaethol

Dechreuodd gwaith dymchwel a gwaith hwyluso'r safle ym mis Ebrill 2014 ac mae'r gwaith adeiladu dilynol wedi mynd rhagddo'n dda. Ers i'r ffrâm ddur gael ei chwblhau, mae'r grisiau wedi'u gosod ac mae slabiau'r ail lawr yn eu lle. Mae dros 70% o'r to wedi'i gwblhau bellach ac mae cladin allanol yr adeilad yn symud ymlaen yn dda. Ar hyn o bryd, disgwylir i'r cynllun gael ei gwblhau ym mis Tachwedd 2015.

Fel rhan o roi Cronfa Technoleg Iechyd ar waith, caiff technolegau fideo-gynadledda newydd eu cyflwyno ar y safle.

Ar wahân i hyn, mae Cronfa Apêl Ysbyty Coffa Tywyn wedi cefnogi'n hael offer Pelydr-x newydd i'r safle, ac mae'r cynllun hwn i ddechrau ar y safle ddiwedd mis Mawrth 2015.

Agenda Item 3.16

P-04-534 A campaign to secure CARDIGAN HOSPITAL

Petition wording:

We sign this petition to show our support for CARDIGAN TOWN COUNCIL and CARDIGAN

HOSPITAL & COMMUNITY LEAGUE OF FRIENDS who are calling on Hywel Dda Health Board to:

- (a) overturn the recent decision to close all in-patient beds in Cardigan Community Hospital;
- (b) provide a clear timetable regarding future health provision in the Cardigan area;
- (c) proceed with plans to provide a new Cardigan Hospital, with beds, as soon as possible.

Petition raised by: Cardigan Hospital and Community League of Friends

Date Petition first considered by Committee: 4 February 2014

Number of signatures: TBC

P-04-552 Child Protection

Petition wording:

We call on the National Assembly for Wales to urge the Welsh Government to review and strengthen child protection criteria and consider establishing a regulatory body for Wales. This should aim to ensure that those who have charge of children, whether that's in schools, youth clubs, charities where children are the main focus, or people coming into contact or being invited in as patrons, governors, ambassadors, public servants or anybody appointed by children's charities are assessed as to their suitability to work with and around children.

Additional information: As it stands, local and county councillors and people appointed as ambassadors or Chairs of children's charities do not undergo DBS checks. Most of these people get open door access to children because of their position. In the light of the Jimmy Saville affair and the Ian Watkins affair, will the Welsh Assembly now recognise that we can no longer blindly accept people on the basis of their celebrity or social position and allow them access to children.

Petition raised by: Montessori Centre Wales

Date Petition first considered by Committee: 13 May 2014

Number of signatures: 40

P-04-552 Child Protection – Correspondence from the Petitioner to the Committee, 14.04.2015

Many thanks for your correspondence regarding my petition. I have read the comments. I would like to draw your attention to an article in the Llanelli Herald pg 4 (April 10).

The Llanelli Labour Party is calling for all county and community councillors to undergo DBS checks. They go on to say that councillors are not subject to DBS checks.

Labour County Councillor for Llwynhendy and Pemberton is leading the campaign and she has presented a motion to Carmarthenshire County Council, which has been referred to the executive. Councillor Sharen Davies also points out that the DBS checks on councillors would not only safeguard children but also check for any history of fraud or financial irregularity.

The petition address is <https://www.change.org/p/carmarthenshire-county-council-introduce-criminal-checks-dbs-for-county-and-community-councillors>

Alan Evans

P-04-514 A Welsh clean coal and/or renewable energy power station instead of the proposed Wylfa B nuclear plant at Anglesey

Petition wording:

We call on the National Assembly for Wales to urge the Welsh Government to work with the new owners of Wylfa B, Hitachi, to encourage the use of clean Welsh coal or our other plentiful supplies of viable technologies/resources instead of a dangerous nuclear power plant.

In a report on clean coal technology from the 2010 XXI World Energy Congress in Montreal Canada, Hitachi state that they are developing a full portfolio of new clean coal technologies aimed at further efficiency improvement, 90% CO2 reduction, and near-zero emissions of other pollutants. As world leaders in clean coal technology, why don't Hitachi work alongside the Welsh Government to implement this technology at Wylfa B instead of an archaic and poisonous nuclear plant station like the failed Fukushima plants they helped to build?

Additional information:

Nuclear plants are a dangerous and uneconomical method of producing electricity, with a short unviable operational time span which costs tax payers tens of billions in development, subsidies and decommissioning costs. As well as being vulnerable to attack and natural disasters as seen in Fukushima, nuclear power has known health risks. A major German government report showed increased rates of childhood cancers and leukaemia around nuclear sites. With no known method of disposing of the nuclear waste, it will also contaminate the planet for thousands of years.

Welsh clean coal, gas, hydrogen, solar, wave, tidal, hydro, Maglev wind, geo thermal, refuse incineration, anaerobic digestion, biomass or a combination of all of these could be implemented at Anglesey and elsewhere instead of nuclear power. Ynys Mon's PAWB manifesto states that, whilst the current Wylfa only has up to 600 workers, up to 3650 new jobs could be found by developing local renewable energy projects alone.

Petition raised by: Sovereign Wales

Date petition first considered by Committee: 26 November 2013

Number of signatures: 104

P-04-547 Ban Polystyrene(EPS) Fast Food and Drinks Packaging

Petition wording:

The time has come to halt the sight of millions of polystyrene food and drinks cartons littering the beaches and countryside of Wales.

Polystyrene(EPS) is a major component of urban litter and marine debris. It is detrimental to wildlife that ingests it and costs millions for Welsh Councils to remove from our streets. Polystyrene takes hundreds of years to degrade.

Over 100 US (including New York),Canadian, and also European cities have banned polystyrene food packaging as a result of the negative impacts of the Environment. We hope that wales will have the vision to join that list.

Therefore, with so many alternatives to polystyrene(EPS) packaging now available which has significantly less impact on the environment and human health and also to save Welsh taxpayers millions of pounds in street cleansing costs we, the undersigned, request that the Welsh Government introduces a ban on all polystyrene fast food and drink packaging.

Petition raised by: Friends of Barry Beaches

Date Petition first considered by Committee: 29 April 2014

Number of signatures: 295



Eich cyf/Your ref P-04-547
Ein cyf/Our ref MB/CS/1351/15

Williams Powell AM
Chair Petitions Committee
Ty Hywel
Cardiff Bay
Cardiff
CF99 1NA

30th March 2015

Dear Bill

Thank you for your invitation to give oral evidence on the petition brought forward by Friends of Barry Beaches to ban polystyrene fast food and drinks packaging.

Litter, in all its forms, is a matter that I take very seriously and it is a problem that the Welsh Government is committed to tackling. I recognise that the littering and disposal of polystyrene fast food and drinks packaging, or any type of fast food packaging is a problem that can have a detrimental impact on the local environment and, in particular, the marine environment. My officials have been pro-active in working with a wide range of stakeholders including local authorities to address this problem through awareness raising, education and engagement, and to understand how well the current legislative regime is being used.

There is currently a suite of enforcement tools in place to enable local authorities to tackle the issue of littering in their area. For example, the *Environmental Protection Act* (EPA) 1990 provides a range of powers to allow local authorities to deal with those who undertake an environmental crime. Amongst these are powers to issue *Fixed Penalty Notices* of £75 to people who are caught littering.

In addition, the more recent *Anti-social Behaviour, Crime and Policing Act* (ASBCP) 2014 introduced a range of new powers for local authorities to design more effective solutions to address problems such as litter that are encountered locally. From October 2014 local authorities have been able to issue *Community Protection Notices* (CPNs) to both individuals and owners or occupiers of premises, where they are satisfied that an individual or body is behaving in a way that has a persistent or continuing detrimental effect on the quality of life of those in the locality. These wide reaching powers allow local authorities to require the person to whom a CPN is issued, to stop doing specified things, to do specified things, or to take reasonable steps to achieve specified results. Failure to comply with a CPN is an offence, and a fixed penalty notice may be issued where there is non compliance.

Furthermore the ASBCP Act 2014 also provides local authorities with the power to make a *Public Spaces Protection Order* (PSPOs). PSPOs are intended to deal with a particular nuisance or problem in a particular area that is detrimental to the local community's quality of life; and therefore local authorities could use this power to impose conditions on the use of that area, which apply to everyone.

In terms of managing and reducing waste packaging, the *Packaging (Essential Requirements) Regulations* place responsibility on those packing or filling products to meet specific requirements. This includes minimising the volume and weight of packaging to permit reuse or recovery. The trading standards departments of local authorities are responsible for enforcing the regulations within their areas.

In considering whether the Welsh Government could tackle this problem by bringing forward primary legislation to ban polystyrene packaging, consideration does need to be given as to whether better use of the current legislation would in fact achieve this aim.

It is by no means certain that an outright ban of polystyrene packaging would resolve this issue alone, nor is it certain that such a course of action would be within the legislative competence of the National Assembly. Measures to protect the environment and combat the effects of waste and litter are ostensibly within the legislative competence of the National Assembly, under *paragraph 6 (Environment) of Schedule 7 to the Government of Wales Act 2006* ("GoWA 2006"). However, depending on the detailed policy intentions behind the ban, and on other factors, including likely impact, there is an argument that an outright ban affecting economic interests of businesses in Wales, could amount to a violation of *Article 1 of the First Protocol to the European Convention on Human Rights*, on grounds of proportionality. There is also a possibility that such a proposal could have the effect of interfering with the free movement of goods, which is one of the fundamental freedoms of the internal market, thus contravening provisions of the *Treaty on the Functioning of the European Union*. If either of these hurdles could not be overcome, it would put the provision outside Assembly competence by virtue of s.108(6)(c) of GoWA 2006.

Consequently, a comprehensive and detailed legal analysis of any proposal to bring forward such legislation would be required before a decision could be reached as to whether or not such a proposal was within Assembly competence. Part of that analysis, particularly in relation to the EU dimension, would be a consideration of domestic powers that are already available to tackle the problem.

For this reason I feel that it is important for the Welsh Government to consider alternative interventions other than banning one specific type of packaging, and in order to determine the most appropriate methods of intervention further research and evidence is required.

Therefore, in addition to the ongoing initiatives and programmes currently supported by the Welsh Government to reduce the impacts of littering, we have commissioned *Keep Wales Tidy* (KWT) to produce a research paper specifically on polystyrene litter and its effect on the environment. Furthermore, we have also provided funding to KWT to undertake a 'Coast Care' pilot to gather information on all types of coastal littering in Wales, to identify priority areas for improvement, and to work with community groups to understand and create lasting behaviour change around littering, whilst promoting good practices in beach management.

I expect to receive the findings of both this research paper and the Coast Care pilot shortly and this evidence will be used to inform further practical actions that can be taken to

complement the current suite of legislative and non legislative interventions that are already in place across Wales to tackle this problem.

Until I have seen the wider evidence in this matter I do not feel that I will be in a position to provide further comment on the petition to ban polystyrene. I therefore decline your invitation to give evidence at the Petitions Committee.

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in cursive script, appearing to read 'Carl', written in a light grey or blue ink.

Carl Sargeant AC / AM
Y Gweinidog Cyfoeth Naturiol
Minister for Natural Resources

P-04-550 Planning Powers

Petition wording:

We call upon the National Assembly for Wales to urge the Welsh Government to investigate how devolved planning powers could be used to bring vacant or derelict sites of land into beneficial use".

We are especially concerned that vacant or derelict sites like the former Kwik Save site in St Mellons, Cardiff can become a blight upon communities and attract anti-social behaviour.

We wish the investigation to consider whether current powers to take action against landowners of vacant or derelict land are adequate, including the potential to compel owners to take action at their own expense to remove eyesores or derelict structures.

We call for an investigation to take place before the proposed Planning Bill is passed by the Assembly.

Petition raised by: St Mellons Action Group

Date Petition first considered by Committee: 13 May 2014

Number of signatures: 41

P-04-550 Planning Powers – Correspondence from the Petitioner to the Clerking Team, 14.04.2015

Dear Jessica

With reference to the Petition submitted in the name of the St Mellons action Group, i would just like to make a brief response to the ministers letter to the Chair of the Pettitions Committee.

The current planning powers to deal with buildings that have fallen into disrepair, and as a consequence attract Anti Social Behaviour, affect the price of properties in an area in the view of our Action group is not sufficient. Owners of these properties, completely ignore requests for improvements to be undertaken, and in some case prefer to accept fines and improvement orders because they are the cheaper option for them. We believe that a much more robust approach is needed to the Wales Planning Bill, with the threat of compulsory purchase/land confiscation being one of a number of sanctions that should be available.

The community of St Mellons, has attempted to get the owner of the former Kwik Save Site to improve things, but despite promises and a planning application nothing has been done. The site remains a mess, it attracts anti social behaviour/graffiti etc and we can do nothing because the current planning application agreed by Cardiff Council planning department in August 2014 gives the owner approximately three years to get the promised work done.

This is simply not acceptable.

I would be more than happy to attend the committee along with colleagues from our Action Group if the Committee Chair and his colleagues would wish.

Many Thanks, Diolch Yn Fawr

Mike Payne

Member of the St Mellons Action Group.

Dear Jessica

Just a short comment in reply to your email regarding the above petition in the name of St Mellons Action Group.

We do not agree with the Minister that the current planning legislation has sufficient powers to deal with Derelict buildings etc.

In our opinion, owners like the owner of the former Kwik Save Site in St Mellons, ignore requests by planning departments to make improvements, rather having to pay fines and face improvement orders as the cheaper option for them, rather than undertaking the work.

We believe that tougher sanctions are needed such as compulsory purchase and confiscation of property where buildings have remained empty for a considerable period.

In St Mellons this site has laid empty for over 10 years it is a draw for anti social behaviour, it has devalued the price of property around the site and has led to considerable littering and unnecessary usage of Fire & Rescue and Police resources because they have to respond when things go wrong.

Despite assurances that work would start last November after a planning application was granted by Cardiff Council Planning Department, nothing has happened. This application simply gives the owner a further three years to sit upon this decision before he has to do anything. Meanwhile the community has to suffer. This is simply not acceptable.

We would be more than happy to appear before the committee if the Chair of the Committee and his colleagues would wish.

Many Thanks/Diolch Yn Fawr

Mike Payne
Regional Political Officer

Agenda Item 5

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

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