

Concise Minutes – Petitions Committee

Meeting Venue:

Committee Room 4 – Tŷ Hywel

Meeting date: Tuesday, 17 November
2020

Meeting time: 09.01 – 10.00

This meeting can be viewed

on [Senedd TV](#) at:

<http://senedd.tv/en/6480>

Attendance

Category	Names
Assembly Members:	Janet Finch–Saunders MS (Chair) Neil McEvoy MS Jack Sargeant MS Leanne Wood MS
Witnesses:	
Committee Staff:	Graeme Francis (Clerk) Mared Llwyd (Second Clerk) Steffan Lewis (Deputy Clerk) Samiwel Davies (Legal Adviser)

1 Introduction, apologies, substitutions and declarations of interest

The Chair welcomed Members to the meeting.

Apologies were received from Michelle Brown MS.



2 New petitions

2.1 P-05-1038 Adapt Local Lockdown message to "Stay Local" instead of by county borders

The Committee considered the petition for the first time and agreed to note the petition and the correspondence received. The Committee agreed to take no further action on the basis that a national set of restrictions have been implemented since the petition was submitted, with no local travel restrictions currently applying within Wales. In doing so it agreed to thank the petitioner and close the petition.

2.2 P-05-1039 Allow amateur athletes within a lockdown area to continue to train and be coached outside of the area

The Committee considered the petition for the first time and agreed to note the correspondence received. In light of the fact that a national set of restrictions have been implemented since the petition was submitted, with no local travel restrictions applying within Wales, and because the specific facility referred to by the petition is covered by rules made by the UK Government. The Committee agreed to thank the petitioner and close the petition.

In doing so, the Committee agreed to write back to the Deputy Minister to ask that consideration is given for allowing amateur athletes to travel outside of their immediate area for training if suitable facilities are not available locally during any potential future lockdown.

2.3 P-05-1042 Support SMEs in hair and beauty industry during local lockdowns

The Committee considered the petition for the first time and agreed to note the correspondence received. In light of the fact that a national set of restrictions have been implemented since the petition was submitted, with no local travel restrictions currently applying within Wales, and because hair and beauty businesses have been able to reopen following the firebreak, the Committee agreed to close the petition

2.4 P-05-1055 Cancel GCSE and A level examinations

The Committee considered the petition for the first time and concluded that the aim of the petition has now been achieved following the Minister for Education's announcement that the 2021 exam series have been cancelled and replaced by teacher assessment. This Committee agreed to congratulate the petitioner and supporters and close the petition.

2.5 P-05-1065 Re-opening schools for year 11 pupils rather than year 8, from 2nd November onwards

The Committee considered the petition for the first time and agreed to take no further action on the basis that pupils in all year groups have now returned to school following the firebreak lockdown. Therefore the Committee agreed to note and close the petition and thank the petitioner.

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

The Committee considered the petition for the first time and agreed to note the petition and to enquire with the Culture Welsh Language and Communications Committee whether it intends to do any further work to follow up progress against the recommendations reached as part of its Historic Environment inquiry. The Committee also agreed to seek time for a plenary debate on the issue.

2.7 P-05-1040 Introduce a moratorium on the approval any new large scale waste incinerators in Wales

The Committee considered the petition for the first time and agreed to write back to the Minister to ask:

- whether non-recyclable waste could be transported into Wales to support the viability of incinerators, as waste in Wales reduces and, if so, whether this would impact on the efforts to meet recycling targets;
- whether the Welsh Government has seen any impact arising from the decision made by China to no longer accept the import of plastic waste for recycling; and

- for a full reasoning as to why the Minister feels that a moratorium on the development of new incinerators would not be appropriate at this time.

2.8 P-05-1044 Set up a Natural History GCSE to help prepare future generations to tackle the threats facing nature

The Committee considered the petition for the first time and in light of the ongoing legislative scrutiny of the Curriculum and Assessment (Wales) Bill and the associated work led by Qualifications Wales on proposals for future GCSE qualifications, the Committee agreed to write to Qualifications Wales to bring the petition to their attention, to thank the petitioner and close the petition.

3 Updates to previous petitions

3.1 P-05-941 Biodiversity Remit for NRW

The Committee considered an update on the petition and agreed to write to the Climate Change, Environment and Rural Affairs Committee to draw attention to the petition and the evidence received to date in the context of their inquiry into Biodiversity and Rewilding in Wales and, in doing so, close the petition and thank the petitioner.

3.2 P-05-945 The Climate Emergency and a National Forest for Wales

The Committee considered an update on the petition and, in light of the further information received about the ongoing development of the National Forest in Wales concept and the petitioners' involvement in the Woodland Strategy Advisory Panel, agreed to thank the petitioner and close the petition.

3.3 P-05-868 Water Safety/Drowning Prevention and the effects of Cold Water Shock to be taught in all Schools in Wales

The Committee considered an update on the petition and, in light of the planned launch of a Wales Water Safety Strategy and because the Welsh Government's position

on the non-prescriptive nature of the new Curriculum for Wales is clear, the Committee agreed that there is likely to be little further which could be achieved on the petition at this time. The Committee agreed to close the petition and thank the petitioner.

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

The Committee considered an update on the petition and agreed to write back to the Minister to ask why the position in relation to access to micro processor controlled prosthetics is different in Wales.

The Committee also agreed to write directly to the Welsh Health Specialised Services Committee to ask for:

- the reasoning as to why microprocessor knee (MPK) prostheses are not available through the current service specification; and
- the timetable for a review of the current service specification, noting that it appears to have been last updated in 2014, and the interaction between a full review and the annual evidence-based prioritisation process outlined by the Minister.

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

The Committee considered an update on the petition and agreed to write back to the Minister to thank him for the consideration given to this issue and ask whether the option to administer the scheme through funeral homes and to pay a fixed sum representing the average cost of a funeral was considered as part of this, as proposed by the petitioners.

3.6 P-05-1006 Release the £59 million to the arts to prevent local grassroots music venues from closure

The Committee considered an update on the petition and agree to close the petition on the basis that there is little further that it could do at this time, in light of the financial

support that has been made available to support live music venues and the ongoing oversight of the COVID-19 music stakeholder group in this area.

3.7 P-05-1013 Provide financial support for self-employed individuals within the Welsh live music industry

The Committee considered an update on the petition and agreed to write back to the Deputy Minister to seek information on the numbers of people supported by the Freelancer Fund and ask whether the Welsh Government will now consider providing further prioritised support to people who are not eligible for the Self-Employed Income Support Scheme. In doing so, Committee Members noted that they are interested in the support available to people working as freelancers across the events and creative industries sectors.

3.8 P-05-1007 Merge Hope and Caergwrle into a two-member ward in the County of Flintshire

The Committee considered an update on the petition and agreed, in light of the petitioner's acceptance of the reason why the boundary review process has not been paused and the Committee's previous agreement that it would not be appropriate for it to scrutinise specific recommendations made by the Boundary Commission alongside the statutory process, to close the petition and thank the petitioner.

3.9 P-05-1021 Do not make face masks or face coverings mandatory in ANY (inc secondary) schools

The Committee considered an update on the petition and, in recognition of the fact that face coverings are not currently mandatory in schools and the absence of further contact from the petitioner, the Committee agreed to close the petition.

3.10 P-05-1008 Teach mental health first aid in schools in Wales

The Committee considered an update on the petition and, in light of the further comments received from the petitioner and the work of the Welsh Youth Parliament and the Children, Young People and Education Committee on this subject, the Committee agreed to close the petition and thank him for raising this issue.

3.11 P-05-951 Impose a legal limit on the maximum number of breeding bitches in licensed dog breeding establishments in Wales

The Committee considered an update on the petition and, in light of all correspondence received to date and the absence of further recent contact from the petitioner, agreed to close the petition.

3.12 P-05-952 Revert to Welsh language spelling of place-names

The Committee considered an update on the petition and, in light of all correspondence received to date and the absence of further recent contact from the petitioner, agreed to close the petition.

3.13 P-05-953 Ban Single Use Plastic Milk Bottles in schools

The Committee considered an update on the petition and, in light of all correspondence received to date and the absence of further recent contact from the petitioner, agreed to close the petition.

3.14 P-05-961 Lower the age for breast cancer screening in Wales from 50 to 30

The Committee considered an update on the petition and, in light of all correspondence received to date and the absence of further recent contact from the petitioner, agreed to close the petition.

3.15 P-05-999 Implement a minimum of 1 metre social distancing in all Primary Schools in September 2020

The Committee considered an update on the petition and, in light of all correspondence received to date and the absence of further recent contact from the petitioner, agreed to close the petition.

3.16 P-05-1012 Oxygen chamber therapy for fibromyalgia patients on the NHS

The Committee considered an update on the petition and, in light of all correspondence received to date and the absence of further recent contact from the petitioner, agreed to close the petition.

3.17 P-05-1016 Extend the new Green Homes Grant to Wales

The Committee considered an update on the petition and, in light of all correspondence received to date and the absence of further recent contact from the petitioner, agreed to close the petition.

3.18 P-05-1020 Introduce an Appeals process in Wales for all Centre Assessed Grades for 2020 public exam programme

The Committee considered an update on the petition and, in light of all correspondence received to date and the absence of further recent contact from the petitioner, agreed to close the petition.

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

5 Committee working practices

The Committee considered a further analysis on the recent increase in the usage of the Senedd's petitions process. In response to a significant increase in the number of petitions reaching the 5000 signature threshold for consideration of a debate, which means that the demand for potential debates on petitions is now far exceeding the Senedd's ability to schedule them, the Committee agreed to change the threshold to 10,000 signatures, with effect from 1 December 2020 for all petitions collecting signatures after that date. The Committee agreed to review the threshold again at the end of this Senedd with a view to making appropriate recommendations for the sixth Senedd.