



Eich cyf/Your ref P-05-952
Ein cyf/Our ref EM/00207/20

Janet Finch-Saunders MS
Chair
Petitions Committee
Welsh Parliament

17 June 2020

Dear Janet,

Thank you for your correspondence to the Minister for Housing and Local Government concerning the call to the Petitions Committee for reverting to Welsh language spellings of place names. I am responding as this issue falls within my portfolio. I apologise for not responding sooner.

The Welsh Language Commissioner is responsible for providing advice to individuals and organisations on the standardised forms of place names in Wales. The Commissioner's List of *Standardised Welsh Place-names* is a useful online resource, which can be searched or downloaded to find the standardised names of villages, towns and cities in Wales. The list is available at the following link:

<http://www.comisiynyddygydraeg.cymru/english/commissioner/placenames/pages/search.aspx>

However, the Commissioner's role is to suggest forms and spellings for place-names, rather than to enforce them.

I am aware that protecting place-names has previously been considered by the Petitions Committee. For instance "P-05-819 Welsh Place Names - Protection & Promotion Bill" was considered by the Committee in 2018. The link below to the Committee proceedings includes the response sent to the Committee by the Minister for Culture, Tourism and Sport, which outlines the requirements in the Historic Environment (Wales) Act 2016.

<https://business.senedd.wales/ielssueDetails.aspx?Id=21901&PlanId=0&Opt=3>

In terms of efforts at Local Government level, the Local Government (Democracy) (Wales) Act 2013 places a duty on the Local Democracy and Boundary Commission for Wales (the Commission) to keep local government arrangements under review. Proposed changes may include changes to the names of Welsh administrative units. Any proposed changes to the names of these units does not impact on the name of the town, village or city within those administrative units.

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

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

As part of the review process the Commission will seek the views of the Welsh Language Commissioner about the proposed names of the administrative units. If there are areas where the Commission and the Commissioner do not agree on one or more of the proposed names, it is for Welsh Ministers to make a decision on the name.

The Historic Environment (Wales) Act 2019 also places a duty upon the Welsh Ministers to 'compile and maintain a list of historic place names in Wales'. The List of Historic Place Names of Wales is maintained on our behalf by the Royal Commission on the Ancient and Historical Monuments of Wales. It now contains nearly 700,000 entries, but it is a dynamic resource and will continue to grow. It is a valuable resource for tracing the changing forms of Welsh settlement names for it aims to record any historic place names that can be confidently geo-located prior to 1919. The list can be found here:

<https://historicplacenames.rcahmw.gov.uk/>

I hope this information will assist you and the Committee in your consideration of the Petition.

Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read 'M. E. Morgan'.

Eluned Morgan AS/MS

Gweinidog y Gymraeg a Chysylltiadau Rhyngwladol
Minister for International Relations and the Welsh Language