

Lesley Griffiths AS/MS
Gweinidog yr Amgylchedd, Ynni a Materion Gwledig
Minister for Environment, Energy and Rural Affairs



Llywodraeth Cymru
Welsh Government

Eich cyf/Your ref P-05-970
Ein cyf/Our ref LG/01400/20

Janet Finch-Saunders MS
Chair of the Petitions Committee

Government.Committee.Business@gov.wales

29 June 2020

Dear Janet

Thank you for your letter of 1 June regarding Petition P-05-970 requesting the Welsh Government reconsider its decision not to support Zoos & Aquariums with emergency funding.

The petition is misleading in stating Welsh Government has decided not to provide emergency funding to support Zoos and Aquariums in light of Covid-19. This is not the case.

I am unable to share details of individual cases, however, a large number of our zoos and aquarium have received funding from the Welsh Government's £500 million Economic Resilience Fund (ERF), which is unique to Wales.

From the outset, we have provided all licenced zoos in Wales with details of the existing schemes from which they would be eligible for funding. We are in regular contact with the zoos and most of those that have liaised with us have indicated they have been able to access the funding avenues available to them and have either received or applied for the funding various schemes.

The ERF fund aims to support the Welsh economy, businesses and charities experiencing a sharp drop in trading as a result of the Coronavirus and through this scheme, many zoos have been able to access a generous package of support to help them with animal welfare issues and their economic viability.

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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.

Due to the existence of the ERF in Wales, we were able to provide emergency funding to Zoos and Aquariums without the need to set up a zoo sector specific scheme. This ensured greater expediency of funding and allowed higher amounts of funding to be provided than would otherwise be the case under a sector specific scheme which only focused on animal welfare needs and did not take account of the overheads and additional costs we are aware zoos and aquarium need to continue to fund to ensure the economic viability of the business.

It is worth clarifying the £14 million Zoo Fund in England does include Barnett formula allocations to the Devolved Administrations, with the Welsh allocation being managed centrally. Based on the amount of funding the Welsh Government received, and assuming all 30 licensed zoos in Wales applied for support, the funding already awarded via the ERF to the zoos which applied is significantly higher than what could have been expected under a Welsh sector-specific scheme.

We are, however, continuously reviewing the support on offer to respond to the needs of Welsh zoos and aquaria.

Regards

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Lesley Griffiths". The signature is written in a cursive style with a large, sweeping flourish at the end of the name.

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