

P-06-1196 The inauguration of an Honorary National System of Awards; The Cymru Knighthood Award

Y Pwyllgor Deisebau | 4 Hydref 2021
Petitions Committee | 4 October 2021

Reference: SR21-0837-8

Petition Number: P-06-1196

Petition title: The inauguration of an Honorary National System of Awards; The Cymru Knighthood Award

Text of petition:

We the Welsh public dearly wish to bring Dignity to our Nation's Achievers
It is a sheer tragedy that so many of our Nations' achievers lie buried, forgotten and uncelebrated in graves around the World... throughout our proud and long history

Long it has been my wish to honour these beautiful souls, here in Cymru who have passed into history and who's hearts must have been broken knowing that they did not get their true recognition in..... "The Land of Our Mothers & Fathers"



1. The UK honours system

1.1. Background

Honours are granted by the monarch. Most honours given today are part of the Order of the British Empire. This was founded by King George V in 1917 to reward non-combat service in the First World War.

Schedule 7A to the Government of Wales Act 2006 makes the Crown a reserved matter. This includes the UK honours system.

1.2. Selection

Anybody can nominate someone to receive an honour. The UK Government publishes guidance on what honours can be awarded for.

Ten independent subject committees consider nominations for honours and advise the Prime Minister. The Prime Minister submits a lists of recommendations for honours to the Queen. The Defence Secretary and Foreign Secretary also submit lists.

Honours lists are published at New Year and for the Queen's Official Birthday in June.

1.3. Awards

The Queen can award different types of honour, including making someone:

- a Companion of Honour (CH);
- a Knight or a Dame;
- a Commander of the Order of the British Empire (CBE), Officer of the Order of the British Empire (OBE), or Member of the Order of the British Empire (MBE).

The Queen may also remove honours, on the advice of Ministers and a Forfeiture Committee. Under the Honours (Prevention of Abuses) Act 1925, it is illegal to deal in honours.

2. The St David awards

2.1. Background

In February 2013, the Welsh Conservatives proposed a motion that the (then) National Assembly for Wales:

1. Notes the importance of recognising and celebrating Welsh cultural identity; and
2. Believes consideration should be given to the introduction of a Welsh Honours System to acknowledge and reward those who have made valuable contributions to Welsh life. [...]

The Assembly approved the motion. The Welsh Government announced the inauguration of the St David Awards in July that year and the first awards were given in March 2014. Since then, the awards have been given annually.

2.2. Selection

There are ten St David awards, each in a different category. In the first nine categories, anyone can nominate individuals or groups. The independent St David Awards Advisory Committee selects finalists and the First Minister chooses the winners. The last award is the First Minister's Special Award; the First Minister chooses the winner directly.

2.3. Awards

Winners of St David awards receive a trophy, while finalists receive a certificate and silver badge.

3. Welsh Government action

The Minister for Social Justice responded to this petition in September 2021, confirming that the Welsh Government does not plan to introduce a Wales-specific honours system.

In the letter, the Minister said:

I believe consideration should be given to how the UK Honours System is made more inclusive, not just in terms of its processes but also in relation to its historical cultural context.

The Minister indicated that she would be willing to provide input into any review of how the honours system could be made more inclusive, and that the Welsh Government was working with stakeholders to help increase the diversity of people nominated for honours.

Every effort is made to ensure that the information contained in this briefing is correct at the time of publication. Readers should be aware that these briefings are not necessarily updated or otherwise amended to reflect subsequent changes.