

**Pwyllgor Diwylliant, Cyfathrebu, y Gymraeg,
Chwaraeon, a Chysylltiadau Rhyngwladol**

**Culture, Communications, Welsh Language,
Sport, and International Relations
Committee**

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Closure of The National Wales

Dear Henry and Julia

I am writing to express the Committee's grave concerns regarding your sudden announcement on Wednesday 24 August 2022 about the closure of the National Wales news website. We are disappointed that the announcement has been made at such short notice, both for what it means for media plurality in Wales, as well as for those journalists who may lose their jobs.

We are of the view that media pluralism is an essential part of any healthy democracy. As you will be aware, the media plays an important role in not only holding those in power to account, but also as a communication tool to discuss other matters of interest in a free and civil society; culture, economics and sport but to name a few. Unlike Scotland or Northern Ireland, there is a very limited number of pan-Wales media titles. Therefore the impact of those titles we have, like National Wales, is ever more so important. Like Scotland, Wales is a country with its own law-making and tax-raising Parliament. Ensuring that the people of Wales have access to, and are able to consume, a range of media from different outlets to inform them of decisions that affect their lives is incredibly important. The loss of another news website is both very disappointing and worrying.

We are also disheartened to hear to that there will be two journalists who may be unemployed as a result of your decision. Newsquest Media Group has a range of titles based in Wales, including the recently launched Welsh-medium news site, Corgi Cymru. We would welcome confirmation from you as to what can be done to ensure that talented Welsh-based journalists are able to continue their work here reporting on the important issues of the day.

It is widely known that newspaper sales have been declining for a decade or more as people seek different, sometimes free, media outlets for their news consumption. We also appreciate that the current economic situation may well have played a role in your decision to discontinue running the National Wales. The impact of the current cost of living crisis is impacting on all impacts of our lives. Unfortunately, if people are counting every penny, the first thing to go is dispensable items, such as

subscriptions. Netflix's recently reported loss of subscribers is testament to this. However we are also aware that running an online news site means it doesn't have the same exposure to costs such as printing and distribution that print titles will be.

In light of the points we have raised in this letter, we would like to ask you:

- To provide a fuller explanation (than what has already been reported) as to your reasons for closing down the National Wales news website.
- What will happen to those journalists employed by National Wales? Are they eligible for re-deployment across other Welsh titles owned by Newsquest?
- What other business models have been explored to ensure the survival of the National Wales?
- Given your role in the running of Corgi Cymru, and the potential for joint working for that title with National Wales, what consideration have you given to the establishment of a bilingual newsroom for Wales within Newsquest Media?

While we appreciate that Newsquest Media Group is a private business, we would implore you to consider the role that the company has in the Welsh media landscape. We hope that you will consider the points raised in this letter carefully and we would welcome an on-going dialogue with you on this matter over the coming weeks.

Yours sincerely



Delyth Jewell MS

Chair

Culture, Communications, Welsh Language, Sport and International Relations Committee

Croesewir gohebiaeth yn Gymraeg neu Saesneg.

We welcome correspondence in Welsh or English.