

# Cross-Party Group Minutes

## Meeting Minutes:

<b>Cross Party Group Title:</b>	<b>Cross Party Group on Wales International:</b>  <b>How has Wales' participation in the FIFA World Cup Qatar 2022 impacted its position on the world stage?</b>  <b>Wales' response to the Iran situation.</b>
<b>Date of Meeting:</b>	Wednesday 08 March 2023, from 10.00-11.00
<b>Location:</b>	Hybrid - Conference Room A

## In attendance:

<b>Name:</b>	<b>Title:</b>
Heledd Fychan MS	Chair
Rhun ap Iorweth MS	
Huw Irranca Davies MS	
Jane Dodds MS	
Ruth Cocks	British Council
Rebecca Gould	British Council
James Hampson	British Council
Ian Gwyn Hughes	FAW
Mali Thomas	Urdd
Haleema Khan	Plaid Cymru Support Staff
Brooke Webb	Heledd Fychan Support Staff
Mathilda Manley	British Council
Tracey Marengi	Global Wales
Matt Eades	Welsh Conservatives
Brian Davies	Sport Wales
Owen Hathaway	Sport Wales



Lleucu Siencyn	Arts Council of Wales
Nick Davies	Producer of Gwyl Cymru
Eluned Haf	Wales Arts International
Susie Ventris-Field	Welsh Centre for International Affairs
Susana Galván	Taith

**This list may not reflect the full attendance of the meeting as some joined online and were unable to be noted down – Please contact [Brooke.webb@senedd.cymru](mailto:Brooke.webb@senedd.cymru) with any corrections.**

### Apologies:

Name:	Title:

### Summary of Meeting:

#### 1. Welcome from the Chair

The chair welcomed everyone and congratulated Wales's men's football team on their performance in the FIFA World cup in Qatar, highlighting what an incredible experience it was for Wales not just for football but through the cultural and art sectors as well. Before opening the meeting up for comments and questions, the chair invited James Hampson, Ian Gwyn Hughes and Eluned Hâf to make brief presentations and updates of the work done to showcase Wales during the FIFA world Cup. Before inviting Jane Dodds MS to provide and update about the ongoing situation in Iran.

#### 2. Presentation from James Hampson, Director UK & External Relations, British Council Wales

James Hampson filling in on behalf of Scott McDonald. shared the experiences and involvement of the British Council in Qatar during the FIFA world cup. He noted British Council's has had a presence in Qatar since 1972 and good relationship with the government and its people. British Council along with other partners were involved in the planning of a number of events, including the festival. He stated the importance of Sport and the opportunity to develop soft power diplomacy the world cup was as an opportunity to drive trust and

deliver economic benefits for Wales. He recognised that soft power is a competitive space and through sport the British council were able to deliver opportunities to bring together the cultural and art sectors from Wales as well as provide opportunities to promote other positive values from Wales such as the Future Generations act. Looking ahead he noted the focus will be on realising Wales' ambitions through strategic partnerships, investments, and collaboration with organizations and the UK government.

### **3. Presentation from Ian Gwyn Hughes, Head of Public Relations, Football Association Wales (FAW)**

Ian Gwyn Hughes, filled in on behalf on Noel Mooney shared the experiences of the FIFA world cup from the FAW perspective noting that a lot was able to be achieved in a short amount of time. The FIFA world Cup allowed for Collaboration and cooperation among different stakeholders which led to the success of the tournament beyond the pitch. The connection between football, art, and literature, and has allowed the opportunity for mutual learning and building partnerships that go beyond the world Cup. Ian Gwyn Hughes noted that this tournament was unlike any other with the World Cup bringing attention to various issues, including political matters. The FAW's was able to work with players to raise awareness about human rights and LGBTQ+ rights in Qatar Iran and the rest of the world. The spotlight on Wales during the World Cup was a huge success with Team Cymru able to showcase more than football but bring positive attention to the Welsh language, Wales and its culture building a foundation for future opportunities such as Euros in 2024.

### **4. Presentation from Eluned Hâf, Head of Wales Arts International**

Eluned Hâf from Wales Arts International discussed the Team Cymru cultural program, which aimed to promote Welsh culture and values internationally. The program included various events and initiatives, such as the Urdd choir's success in Doha, mural work in Doha connected to Wales, fan photography capturing the work of the fans, and events held in Dublin, Brussels, New York, and Dubai. The partnership between Arts Council Wales and the Football Association of Wales (FAW) was instrumental in creating Gwyl Cymru, a series of international events held across the world and Wales. The Lleisiau Cymru ambassadorial program, featuring individuals like Laura McAllister and Jess Finchlock, had a significant impact on promoting Welsh values internationally. The program achieved a reach of 854 million people worldwide through various activities. The aims of the program were to project Welsh values, promote Wales domestically and internationally, and ensure a safe and enjoyable experience for fans during the World Cup in Qatar. The program faced challenges, with some artists not feeling it was the right fit for them. Efforts were made to support artists and young people who participated and to deliver a lasting legacy in Wales. A report is being prepared by the Welsh government to capture feedback from the 45 artists involved in the program. The report will be released in the spring.

**Recommendations:** for the future include nurturing the Team Cymru model, developing a solid values statement, exploring research opportunities on the power of sports and arts in international diplomacy, and collaborating with Gwyl Cymru and artists beyond specific programs.

## 5. Discussion and comments

During the meeting, various topics were discussed regarding the international strategy and what lessons can be learned from the World Cup. It was noted that there was disappointment at the lack of a plan at the beginning for when Wales qualified but a lot was able to be achieved in a short amount of time. Members emphasised the need for legacy planning and future preparation. It was noted that there should be targeted interventions for other sports teams and individuals that qualify for major international events. The importance of a values-led approach was highlighted by all members, and the need to ensure its continuation beyond the World Cup and ensure that the future generations act, and young people are central to this.

**The actions identified include re-evaluating the international strategy, investing in future projects, and having a plan in place for future World Cup qualifications and major sporting events.**

## 6. Update from Jane Dodds MS about the ongoing situation in Iran

The chair welcomed Jane Dodds MS to provide an update on the ongoing political situation in Iran. During the discussion, Jane Dodds provided an update on the situation of women and girls in Iran. She highlighted the death of Mahsa Amini, who was murdered by the morality police, leading to countrywide protests. Furthermore, she mentioned that on December 4 last year, several individuals involved in demonstrations were executed, which deterred further protests. Women in Iran are increasingly resisting against the mistreatment of women and girls. Demonstrations have been held outside the Senedd over the past years, where individuals who have been exiled from Iran continue to meet with elected members and bring attention to the treatment of citizens in Iran.

**The chair and cross-party group members expressed their concern and emphasised the need to continue to bring attention to these issues in Wales.**

## 7. Chair Round Up and meeting actions

The chair thanked everyone for their contribution and stated it was clear that there were many positives to learn from the achievements of the FIFA World Cup. Focus now will be to ensure that these achievements are not forgotten are continued to be built upon and reflected within the international strategy. The next cross party group meeting will be held on the Wednesday 17 May 2023, from 11.30-12.30.

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