

P-06-1524 Erect a statue of Rachel Williams to commemorate her impact on Welsh language education in the Vale of Glamorgan

Y Pwyllgor Deisebau | 16 Mehefin 2025
Petitions Committee | 16 June 2025

Reference: RS25/11287/6

Introduction

Petition Number: P-06-1524

Petition title: Erect a statue of Rachel Williams to commemorate her impact on Welsh language education in the Vale of Glamorgan

Text of petition: Rachel Williams started her career as a teacher in an English-medium school. She received a phone call, asking her to start work the following day as a teacher at a Welsh-medium nursery.

Upon starting the role, she learned that an education officer called Mr Angel would be visiting the school in order to test the children's Welsh. Some of the children came from English-speaking homes, and so they could not speak Welsh. Rachel taught these children a little Welsh, so that they could pass the test and would not have to leave the school.



Years later, she was awarded an MBE to thank her for her work in supporting the Welsh language in Barry and the Vale of Glamorgan.

Without the work of Rachel Williams, the Welsh language would not have grown so much in Barry and the Vale of Glamorgan.

By now, there are seven Welsh primary schools in the Vale of Glamorgan, as well as one Welsh secondary school, and this would not have been possible without Rachel Williams, because only the children of Welsh-speaking families would have been allowed to attend Welsh schools.

In addition, for many children at Ysgol Gymraeg Sant Baruc, our identities would be different because we would not have been able to learn Welsh.

A statue of Rachel Williams should be erected in Barry to celebrate, commemorate and share her history and the tremendous impact that she had on the Welsh language. Did you know that there are only four statues of women in the whole of Wales? A statue of Rachel Williams would inspire children and young people to stand up for what is right and for the Welsh language.

The text provided above is submitted by the petitioner. The petitions team make every effort to ensure it preserves their authentic voice. This text has not been verified for accuracy, or errors, and may contain unverified opinions or assertions.

Mae'r testun uchod yn cael ei gyflwyno gan y deisebydd. Mae'r tîm deisebau yn gwneud pob ymdrech i sicrhau ei fod yn cadw ei lais dilys. Nid yw'r testun hwn wedi'i wirio am gywirdeb, neu wallau, a gall gynnwys barn neu honiadau heb eu gwirio.

1. Background

A number of sources of funding could be pursued for a statue such as this. Senedd Research has produced a number of guides for constituents, signposting sources of funding and advice. The following may be relevant to this petition:

- [Assistance for the arts](#)
- [Community buildings, places of worship and faith groups](#)

The petitioners may find it useful to consider the work of [Monumental Welsh Women](#), a group that are campaigning to erect five statues of Welsh women in five years. The group was motivated by the fact that, when their campaign started, there were not any statues to named Welsh women in Wales.

Information about the four statues they have erected, and funding sources involved, is available on [the group's website](#).

2. Welsh Government action

The Welsh Government response to this petition notes:

The Welsh Government does not normally commission statues and does not have a specific budget to do so. Usually, erecting commemorative statues is initiated by local authorities, sometimes in partnership with non-profit organisations or community groups.

Although the Welsh Government does not normally commission statues, it has contributed to the erection of statues, including the following:

- [Bett Campbell statue, Cardiff](#)
- [Elaine Morgan statue, Mountain Ash](#)
- [Elizabeth Andrews, Penderyn](#)
- [Lady Rhondda, Newport](#)
- [Fred Keenor, Cardiff](#)

3. Commemoration audit

The Welsh Government commissioned an audit of statues, street and building names to address Wales' connections with the slave trade, led by Gaynor Legall. In November 2020 the [Legall audit](#) identified 209 monuments, buildings or street names, located in all parts of Wales, which commemorate people who were directly involved with slavery and the slave trade or opposed its abolition.

The report noted a number of groups are under-represented in public commemoration in Wales:

The general absence noted of the commemoration of people of colour is remarkable, as is the lack of commemoration of women, disabled people and significant world figures.

In an [accompanying statement](#), the First Minister said that “the audit has shown the slave trade and colonial exploitation were embedded in our nation’s economy and society” and that:

This is the first stage of a much bigger piece of work, which must now, collectively, consider how we move forward with this information as we seek to honour and celebrate our diverse communities.

The Welsh Government published [guidance on public commemoration](#) in 2024.

4. Welsh Parliament action

In 2020, the previous Senedd’s Culture, Welsh Language and Culture Committee carried out an [inquiry](#) into public acts of commemoration, in the wake of the toppling of Colston’s statue in Bristol and widespread discussion about the appropriateness of historic monuments.

The [report’s](#) recommendations included:

The Welsh Government should work in partnership with local authorities, charities, and the heritage sector to identify ways in which the current under-representation of particular groups can be addressed with a view to commissioning new statues or commemorative art works in Wales.

The Welsh Government accepted this recommendation.

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.

5. Contact

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