

Ken Skates AC / AM
Y Dirprwy Weinidog Diwylliant, Chwaraeon a Thwristiaeth
Deputy Minister for Culture, Sport and Tourism



Llywodraeth Cymru
Welsh Government

Eich cyf/Your ref P-04-632
Ein cyf/Our ref KS/00450/15

William Powell AM
Chair - Petitions Committee
Ty Hywel
Cardiff Bay
Cardiff
CF99 1NA

SeneddPetitions@Assembly.Wales

22 April 2015

Dear William Powell AM,

Thank you for your letter received on 10 April regarding petition P-04-632 from Mynyddoedd Pawb regarding the protection of Welsh-language place-names.

I read the petition with interest. Indigenous Welsh-language place-names and Welsh-language names for geographic features are an important part of our history and culture and are valuable as evidence of past land-use and culture that can deepen our understanding and appreciation of historic places and sites.

To provide some context, the Welsh Government does not have direct responsibility for place-names or for the names of geographic features in Wales. Various public bodies, including local authorities and national park authorities, have a role in determining the official form and spelling of place-names and the names of geographic features in both languages. I note that the petition refers to the planning system in Wales, but I do not have responsibility for this within my portfolio and I understand there is a separate petition on this aspect.

The Welsh Language Commissioner provides advice on the standard forms of Welsh-language place-names in Wales. I should emphasise, however, that no public body has the power to enforce the use of one form of a name by others.

There are, however, other ways of encouraging respect and protection of Welsh-language place names. For example, the Royal Commission on the Ancient and Historical Monuments of Wales is jointly running Cymru 1900 Wales.org which asks for volunteers to record all the place-names of Wales as they appeared on Ordnance Survey maps at the end of the Victorian period. This is a ground-breaking, crowd-sourcing project which has been developed jointly by the Royal Commission, the National Library of Wales, the University of Wales and the People's Collection Wales. This new initiative will hopefully pave the way for further collaborative research and online volunteering projects in the future which will help address the concerns that lie behind this petition.

Yours ever,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Ken Skates', with a stylized flourish at the end.

Ken Skates AC / AM

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