



Cynulliad
Cenedlaethol
Cymru

National
Assembly for
Wales

Cofnod y Trafodion The Record of Proceedings

[Y Pwyllgor Amgylchedd a Chynaliadwyedd](#)

[Environment and Sustainability Committee](#)

02/03/2016

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Motion under Standing Order 17.42 to Resolve to Exclude the Public
from the Remainder of the Meeting and the Meeting on 10 March

Cofnodir y trafodion yn yr iaith y llefarwyd hwy ynnddi yn y pwyllgor. Yn
ogystal, cynhwysir trawsgrifiad o'r cyfieithu ar y pryd.

The proceedings are reported in the language in which they were spoken in
the committee. In addition, a transcription of the simultaneous interpretation
is included.

Aelodau'r pwyllgor yn bresennol
Committee members in attendance

Mick Antoniw Bywgraffiad Biography	Llafur Labour
Jeff Cuthbert Bywgraffiad Biography	Llafur Labour
Russell George Bywgraffiad Biography	Ceidwadwyr Cymreig Welsh Conservatives
Llyr Gruffydd Bywgraffiad Biography	Plaid Cymru The Party of Wales
Janet Haworth Bywgraffiad Biography	Ceidwadwyr Cymreig Welsh Conservatives
Alun Ffred Jones Bywgraffiad Biography	Plaid Cymru (Cadeirydd y Pwyllgor) The Party of Wales (Committee Chair)
Julie Morgan Bywgraffiad Biography	Llafur Labour
William Powell Bywgraffiad Biography	Democratiaid Rhyddfrydol Cymru Welsh Liberal Democrats
Jenny Rathbone Bywgraffiad Biography	Llafur Labour
Joyce Watson Bywgraffiad Biography	Llafur Labour

Eraill yn bresennol
Others in attendance

Rebecca Evans Bywgraffiad Biography	Aelod Cynulliad, Llafur (y Dirprwy Weinidog Ffermio a Bwyd) Assembly Member, Labour (Deputy Minister for Farming and Food)
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Dr Christianne Glossop	Prif Swyddog Milfeddygol, Llywodraeth Cymru Chief Veterinary Officer, Welsh Government
Matthew Quinn	Cyfarwyddwr, Amgylchedd a Datblygu Cynaliadwy, Llywodraeth Cymru Director, Environment and Sustainable Development, Welsh Government
Carl Sargeant Bywgraffiad Biography	Aelod Cynulliad, Llafur (y Gweinidog Cyfoeth Naturiol) Assembly Member, Labour (Minister for Natural Resources)
Andrew Slade	Cyfarwyddwr, Amaethyddiaeth, Bwyd a Morol, Llywodraeth Cymru Director, Agriculture, Food and Marine, Welsh Government

Swyddogion Cynulliad Cenedlaethol Cymru yn bresennol
National Assembly for Wales officials in attendance

Alun Davidson	Clerc Clerk
Nia Seaton	Gwasanaeth Ymchwil Research Service
Adam Vaughan	Dirprwy Clerc Deputy Clerk

Dechreuodd y cyfarfod am 09:32.
The meeting began at 09:32.

Cyflwyniadau, Ymddiheuriadau a Dirprwyon
Introductions, Apologies and Substitutions

[1] **Alun Ffred Jones:** A gaf i'ch croesawu chi i'r pwyllgor yma? Rydych chi'n gwybod y rheolau ynglŷn â tân: os bydd larwm tân, yna dilynwch yr ystlyswyr. **Alun Ffred Jones:** May I welcome you all to this meeting? You will be aware of the rules surrounding fire: should you hear a fire alarm, then please follow the instructions of the ushers.

eich ffonau symudol ar ‘dawel’, ac Please switch your mobiles to ‘silent’,
rydym yn gweithredu’n ddwyieithog. and we operate bilingually.

[2] We are bilingual, so please use headsets if you need them.

[3] A oes yna unrhyw Aelod sydd Does any Member have a declaration
eisiau datgan buddiant dan Reolau of interest under Standing Orders?
Sefydlog? Na. Nid oes unrhyw No. We’ve received no apologies this
ymddiheuriadau. morning.

09:33

Sesiwn gyda'r Gweinidogion ar Etifeddiaeth y Pedwerydd Cynulliad Ministerial Session on Fourth Assembly Legacy

[4] **Alun Ffred Jones:** Fe symudwn **Alun Ffred Jones:** We will therefore
ymlaen, felly, i’r ail eitem, sef sesiwn move on to item 2 on our agenda,
graffu ar y Gweinidog ar ei where we have a scrutiny session
etifeddiaeth o’r bedwerydd Cynulliad. with the Ministers on their fourth
A gaf i groesawu’r ddau Weinidog Assembly legacy. May I welcome both
atom ni—y Gweinidog a’r Dirprwy Ministers joining us this morning—
Weinidog, wrth gwrs, a’u the Minister and the Deputy Minister,
swyddogion? Felly, fe wnaif ofyn ichi, as well as their officials? Can I ask
Weinidog, gyflwyno’ch hunain a’ch you to introduce yourself, Minister,
swyddogion er mwyn y cofnodion. and your officials for the record?

[5] **The Minister for Natural Resources (Carl Sargeant):** Thank you. Good
morning, Chair. Carl Sargeant, Minister for Natural Resources.

[6] **The Deputy Minister for Farming and Food (Rebecca Evans):** Rebecca
Evans, Deputy Minister for Farming and Food.

[7] **Mr Quinn:** Matthew Quinn, director, environment and sustainable
development.

[8] **Mr Slade:** Andrew Slade, director, agriculture, food and marine.

[9] **Dr Glossop:** Christianne Glossop, chief veterinary officer for Wales.

[10] **Alun Ffred Jones:** Diolch yn **Alun Ffred Jones:** Thank you very
fawr iawn i chi am ddod. Dyma much for your attendance. This is the

gyfarfod olaf cyhoeddus y pwyllgor yma, ac mi fuaswn i'n dymuno diolch i'r Gweinidog a'r Dirprwy Weinidog am eu cydweithrediad ar hyd y cyfnod prysur diweddar yma i'r pwyllgor, ac i'ch swyddogion hefyd am eu help nhw. Heddiw, rydym ni'n edrych yn ôl, ond hefyd yn edrych ymlaen. O'r sesiwn heddiw, mi fyddem ni'n defnyddio'r adborth ar gyfer ein hadroddiad ni—ein hadroddiad etifeddiaeth ni.

final public meeting of this committee, and I would like to thank the Minister and the Deputy Minister for their collaboration throughout this very busy recent period for the committee, and I'd also like to thank officials for their assistance. Today, we will be looking back, but also looking forward. Following today's session, we will use the feedback for our legacy report as a committee.

[11] A gaf i ofyn yn gyntaf ichi, Weinidog a Dirprwy Weinidog, wrth edrych ymlaen, beth ydych chi'n ystyried yw'r heriau mawr i'r portffolios yr ydych chi'n gyfrifol amdanynt? Can ddechrau gyda'r Gweinidog, efallai.

May I first of all just ask you, Minister and Deputy Minister, in looking forward, what do you consider to be the greatest challenges for the portfolios that you're responsible for? If we could start with the Minister perhaps.

[12] **Carl Sargeant:** Thank you, Chair. Can I just place on record as well my thanks to the committee for the help you've given us in creating the legislation profile that we've managed through Government this year? The question you ask in regard to challenges moving forward: I think one of the largest challenges that face any Government is climate change. I think it has certainly come to the forefront in many people's views now, globally, that it has significant impact. We're seeing that in localised effects in Janet Haworth's constituency and many others, in small areas or pockets of flooding, but, actually, the bigger question around climate change, the way we use energy, the way we manage carbon, the impact of global impact, is going to be a huge challenge for any Government moving forward.

[13] **Alun Ffred Jones:** A gaf i jest gofyn ichi, Weinidog, sut ydych chi'n meddwl y mae'r ddeddfwriaeth ddiweddar—yr ydych wedi pasio tri darn o ddeddfwriaeth—yn mynd i fod o help i'r Llywodraeth yn y dyfodol, pa bynnag Lywodraeth y bydd o, i fynd i'r afael â'r heriau yma?

Alun Ffred Jones: May I just ask you, Minister, how do you think the recent legislation that you've passed—the three pieces of legislation—is going to assist future Governments, whoever is in Government, to tackle these challenges?

[14] **Carl Sargeant:** Well, our plan right from the start of Government was to have a suite of tools in order for this Government and future Governments to use that would protect and enhance our wellbeing across Wales, and beyond our boundaries too. The three pieces of legislation we took through around the Planning (Wales) Act 2015, the Well-being of Future Generations (Wales) Act 2015, and now the environment Act, which will, hopefully, receive Royal Assent towards the end of next month, will be the suite of tools that we'll be able to use effectively in the wellbeing of our nation. So, the wellbeing of future generations Act: the commissioner has been appointed last month, and has already started her work in shaping the way she sees 44 public bodies, including Government, changing the direction of operation, looking at the long term, the consultation aspect of individuals and what the impacts are on communities, and starting to create a different narrative about what we do and why we would do that.

[15] The environment Bill, or the environment Act as it will be, will also enhance the actions taken by bodies, including Government again—the first Government, we understand, to legislate for carbon budgeting—taking responsibility at the heart of decision making. They are small things, but will have big impacts long term about our impact and shaping the way the environment operates from Wales in a global context.

[16] **Alun Ffred Jones:** Jenny, do you want to come in on this?

[17] **Jenny Rathbone:** As you've already said, Minister, this is a very complicated area. What do you think of the idea that has been put forward by stakeholders that there should be some sort of cross-sector strategic action plan to ensure that all sectors—private, public and voluntary—are working on this?

[18] **Carl Sargeant:** Of course, stakeholders have offered a view right the way through the legislation process. I would share the view that we can't stop here just because we've got legislation now. We have to enable that; make sure it works in operation. When I talk to bodies beyond the 44 that are covered by the wellbeing Act—. I talk to the private sector on a regular basis—the big six, or the big eight energy companies that come to see us—and they talk about the wellbeing of future generations Act too and say, 'How can we help?' They're doing business in Wales. Why wouldn't we do this? I think the wellbeing of future generations Act, that Bill, that legislation, had a few names on the journey of creation. If I had one last chance at this, I'd

probably call it the common sense Act, because, actually, this is about just doing things in common sense. I should pay tribute to my colleague Jeff Cuthbert as well in the framing of that. But, you know, the job's never done, as we say. I really do believe the opportunity for the wellbeing Act to be spread amongst others—. Tomorrow, we hold a green growth summit, with global leaders coming in, post Paris. Sir David King is coming tomorrow. He'll be speaking at the event. He's saying that, post Paris, the Wales event tomorrow is one of the most important things that's happened since Paris. We're holding it in Wales because green growth and transition into that economy is something that this Government believes in. So, there are huge opportunities in transition, but embedding the legislation will be now the key point in making sure we can do that.

[19] **Jenny Rathbone:** Well, congratulations on the conference. I know that there are some local made-in-Wales solutions that are also being involved in that conference. Just to go on one specific in terms of how we join up government, which is around transport, because vehicle emissions are one of the biggest contributors to carbon emissions, as well as huge impact on people's life expectancy, even though there's a link now with diabetes. So, how do you think the future government, in the next Assembly, will join up the need for good public transport links to encourage people to use public transport for going to work and school, and how will that impact on the planning process and local housing providers and understanding the need to incorporate those transport links into the built environment?

[20] **Carl Sargeant:** Your starting point was around transport. I think transport is one element that has an impact on the environment. Some of the larger other sectors—the agricultural sector has a huge impact on the climate, too. So, this isn't about managing one—it's about managing all. As I said earlier, the three pieces of legislation we've put in place—. It's a huge challenge for Government, too, embedding the Well-being of Future Generations (Wales) Act 2015. I've pushed very hard on the Permanent Secretary and he's appointed now his Deputy Permanent secretary to lead on this across Government. Where we're starting to—. Well, we've never worked in silos—I should start like that—but we can always get better at what we do, and I think what we're doing now is we're operating in a much more holistic way across departments. Health and my department are working very closely on the impact around what this can mean for the future.

[21] I think, on your question around the links between transport and planning, the suite of tools—the planning Act, the environment Act and the

wellbeing Act—working around the goals and the principles applied in wellbeing, we have to be able to demonstrate that we're doing things for the right reason. I've always said you can have economic and also green growth at the same time. It's not one or the other; you can do both. There is a balancing act here about how we determine that, and what we've got to do as a Government, public bodies will have to do the same. The private sector is getting involved in this and actually some of the companies are much better than governments and public bodies at demonstrating the reason why they do this. So, it's applying the principles of the Act, but we can do that, and the commissioner and the auditor general will be looking very carefully at what we do and why we do that for the future.

[22] One point I would just add to that: across the public sector there is a view that some bodies are already applying the principles of the Act. I don't agree with them at all. They're creating a tick-box exercise. This is about embedding the difference between what we did before to a new way of working, and I think if we get it right—. There are lots of people looking at Wales, with sustainable development at the heart of decision making. Across the globe people are saying that Wales is leading the way, and we should be very proud of that. We just need to make sure now that we can actually deliver on those.

[23] **Jenny Rathbone:** On a scale of nought to 10, how well do you think local authorities have grasped the importance of understanding all this? Obviously, with local development plans and local planning decisions they play a crucial role.

[24] **Carl Sargeant:** It's really early days for those, too. There are 11 early adopters of the Act and they're all doing very different things, but certainly there is a very good understanding about the Act. It's just about making sure we enable that, now.

[25] **Jenny Rathbone:** Thank you.

[26] **Alun Ffred Jones:** Cyn i Llyr ddod i mewn, a gaf i jest fanteisio ar y cyfle i groesawu Mr Einar Guðfinnsson, Llywydd, neu Lefarydd, senedd Gwlad yr Iâ, sydd yn cael ei adnabod fel yr Althingi? Rwy'n gobeithio fy mod i wedi cael yr **Alun Ffred Jones:** Before Llyr comes in, can I just take this opportunity to welcome Mr Einar Guðfinnsson, who is the Speaker of the Icelandic parliament, which is known as the Althingi? I hope my pronunciation is correct there. His visit, along with a

ynganiad yn gywir. Mae ei ymweliad number of other officials, follows a o, a nifer o swyddogion eraill, yn visit to Iceland by our Presiding dilyn ymweliad â Gwlad yr Iâ gan y Officer and a number of Assembly Llywydd a nifer o Aelodau, hefyd, yn Members in 2014. A very warm 2014. Croeso mawr i chi. welcome to you.

[27] A very warm welcome to you. Diolch yn fawr. Llyr.

[28] **Llyr Gruffydd:** Thank you. In our legacy workshops with stakeholders, there was a feeling that not enough progress has been made in moving towards a low-carbon economy. The rhetoric is good. A lot of the key planks that maybe need to be in place are in place, but that's not translating into action on the ground, or hasn't to the extent that people would like to see. So, what would your advice be to the incoming Government in terms of where the key early actions and the focus should fall?

09:45

[29] **Carl Sargeant:** Well, I would probably challenge the fact that we haven't moved forward in Government, and I would expect external stakeholders to say that. 'We need to be more challenging; we need to do more.' Of course that's what they should say, and that's what they do say. With regard to the Government's performance, I think we're doing relatively well. We're on target to meet our carbon emissions reduction. As I said on the opening question from the Chair, one of the biggest challenges we face is climate change, and we've got to reassess what our impacts are on communities. It's not an exact science, this, and I think we have to be flexible in what we do and the approaches we take to delivering public services.

[30] One thing that I notice from public sector bodies now, with the reduction in funding that they've received, due to significant reductions from the Westminster Government—. We have to redefine what we deliver and how we deliver that. I think there have actually been some helpful solutions, some different solutions, to the delivery of public services. So, better options, rather than continuing what we always used to do because the finance was there. So, I think we have to form a new relationship with the public, with the delivery sectors, about what we're going to do and why we're going to do that, and we can evidence that based on the principles of the wellbeing Act. Fourteen months ago, when I came into this portfolio, as you're aware—as it's public knowledge—I was a bit of a doubter on the basis of what the

wellbeing Act could deliver. I'm absolutely transformed. I think that is the key document to embed Government and public bodies on the delivery of better services, which will have a positive impact on issues around climate change and many other things as well.

[31] **Llyr Gruffydd:** So, where exactly—? What would be the main area that you would like to see being grappled with, then? That's what I'm trying to get at. It's such a broad remit, isn't it? Where do you think the quick wins are for some of these carbon reduction targets?

[32] **Carl Sargeant:** I think one aspect is our commitment to energy efficiency on properties—it's significant. That has a big impact. I think the Government's vision around the metro concept, about integrated travel plans—not just new, hard rolling stock, but new, innovation of transport methods; so, integrating bus and train, walk-to-work and cycle routes, and a much more holistic view of transport. That will have a big impact. I think our public sector stock as well, our buildings, and we've seen examples recently of our invest-to-save programme. I visited the Heath hospital with Julie Morgan only this week, where we made a relatively small investment—I think it was about £0.25 million for new LED lighting—which has had a major impact on the hospital, not just on lighting, but efficiency savings and carbon reduction. So, clever solutions to public sector investment. They are three examples of what I think we could do.

[33] **Alun Ffred Jones:** Er tegwch, **Alun Ffred Jones:** In fairness, I did ask mi ofynnais i gwestiwn ynglŷn â'r a question on future challenges to heriau i'r dyfodol i'r Gweinidog. the Minister, and I think it's only fair Rwy'n meddwl y byddai'n deg i mi that I ask the same question of the ofyn yr un cwestiwn i'r Dirprwy Deputy Minister so that she can Weinidog, iddi hi gael mynegi beth outline the challenges that she yw'r heriau y mae hi'n gweld sy'n believes are facing the sector that wynebu'r sector y mae hi'n gyfrifol she's responsible for. amdano fo.

[34] **Rebecca Evans:** Thank you. I think the main challenges that I identified on coming into post back in July 2014 remain the main challenges, but I do feel that, since then, we have come to a place with the industry where we're better placed to meet those future challenges. Those future challenges are really about making the industry more profitable, more resilient, professionally managed and to modernise the industry. In order to take us to that place, we've come up with a joint piece of work, the strategic framework

for agriculture, which was developed in partnership with the unions and other bodies in agriculture to share a common vision and a commitment, really, to work together in partnership to achieve those goals. So, the strategic framework is moving ahead, and we've got our partnership group now in place, which takes ownership of that and will lead on taking us forward to that place of achieving that vision. But, alongside that, we also have the food and drink action plan. That's a plan to 2020 to grow the sector by 30 per cent, to the value of £7 billion. So, for the next Government—

[35] **Alun Ffred Jones:** The question was about challenges.

[36] **Rebecca Evans:** Well, the challenge will be there for the next Government in order to see that plan through to 2020 and to achieve that ambitious target. Likewise, we have the animal health and welfare framework, which is the third key part of the portfolio, if you like—

[37] **Alun Ffred Jones:** That's the programme for government. What I'm asking is about the challenges that are facing the industry, and the Government as well. What areas do you think will be difficult and challenging for the industry itself?

[38] **Rebecca Evans:** Prices, I imagine, will remain a big challenge for the industry, which is why we need to support the industry to become more resilient and more professionally managed and so on. There are aspects there that Welsh Government just isn't in control of, such as global supply and demand, prices on the world market, exchange rates and so on. But what we can do is support businesses through things like Farming Connect and the RDP, using basic payments and so on to support businesses to meet those challenges. Another key challenge, obviously, will be the issue of Europe. Were we to leave Europe, that would clearly be extremely damaging and concerning for the agriculture industry in Wales.

[39] **Alun Ffred Jones:** Okay, diolch. Do you want come in on this?

[40] **Jenny Rathbone:** I want to just ask you about carbon emissions and whether the Government has a strategy for reducing carbon emissions in agriculture that could be taken forward by the next Government.

[41] **Rebecca Evans:** The land use climate change group has provided us with a really valuable report that looks specifically at emissions from agriculture and comes with recommendations for us, in order to reduce

emissions within agriculture and tackle those wider environmental issues as well. We're using the RDP very much in order to drive that agenda forward. So, for example, to obtain a grant, it'll have to be demonstrated how the beneficiary will be using that to help us meet our climate change targets and other targets as well.

[42] **Jenny Rathbone:** Okay. So, are you saying that, unless they can show that, they're not likely to be eligible for a grant—unless they can show how they're reducing carbon emissions?

[43] **Rebecca Evans:** Showing how it will help us meet our climate change targets is part of the scoring system for our grants.

[44] **Alun Ffred Jones:** On the future challenges—. We'll come back to agriculture afterwards, but, on future challenges, did you want to come in on this, Joyce?

[45] **Joyce Watson:** [*Inaudible.*]

[46] **Alun Ffred Jones:** Oh, you'll wait then. Janet, was it on future challenges?

[47] **Janet Haworth:** Well, you may not agree, Chairman, but I think it is. I think moving forward into a new Assembly, we are taking some baggage with us because there are still problems, as you're well aware, Minister, with payments to farmers. There is a lot of discomfort around the penalties that have been levied on some farmers and whether they're getting information quickly enough about the rationale for that and the process of going through appeals. All this is a backlog, and one would hope that, when these things happen in the discharge of governmental duties, lessons are learned and reforms and changes are put in place, into processes and systems, and that, moving forward into a fifth Assembly, we don't compound an already difficult situation for our farmers. You mentioned the things we haven't got control of—the global markets and so on. We have got control of how fast we do the forms and how clear the forms are and how fair we are with managing penalties and appeals. So, I'm very interested in how that's going and how that's going to move forward.

[48] **Rebecca Evans:** Okay. I'm also very interested in these magic reforms that you might suggest that would have helped us do any better than we have. I am confident, Chair, that we have done the best possible job that we

could have possibly done in terms of getting payments out to farmers. I can tell you that, as of today, we have paid 13,717 of our farmers—or part paid, I should say. That's 88.18 per cent of farmers. So, we have paid double the number of farmers Scotland have paid and we're still outperforming England as well. Of course, we've managed to pay more than half of our farmers within the first week of the opening of the window. There are no late payments. The payment window, as you know, runs until the end of June of this year. As we said we would, all farmers who weren't paid by the end of January were written to on 4 February to let them know why their payments were still outstanding.

[49] This is a new year of a complex CAP system. It's required the mapping of 175,000 land parcels, which explains why payments have taken longer this year. And this isn't news; it shouldn't be news. I've been saying the same thing since July 2014. I've repeated it ad infinitum in the Chamber, in committee and in articles in the press; we've had articles from bankers in 'Gwlad' magazine, for example, encouraging readers and farmers to come forward and discuss their situations with the banks in order to secure a loan, should that be necessary. I've met with the banks myself and banks have told me that they have been proactive, in fact, in contacting their farming customers—

[50] **Alun Ffred Jones:** Well, we're straying into, unfortunately—. I should have stopped you, but we've strayed into another—. But since we're on this now, Mick and Llyr—.

[51] **Mick Antoniw:** One of the challenges in agriculture is obviously the recruitment and the retention of workers within the industry and, of course, you now have the advantage of the advisory panel. And, of course, we've begun to see what's happening in England, which doesn't have the benefit of that. How would you see that panel actually operating, or what are the areas you would want it to particularly focus on, and what particular benefits for the promotion of the agriculture industry do you think can be achieved from the use of that panel and the Act?

[52] **Rebecca Evans:** Well, I'm glad, actually, that the panel isn't starting from scratch with regard to skills in the industry, because a huge amount of work has taken place for some time. We had Professor Wynne Jones's report, which looked at the further education sector, and explored whether or not FE was offering the kind of skills and opportunities for training that the industry wanted, and that people entering the industry felt that they wanted and

needed. That's led to the development of the more networked approach of our colleges that deal with agriculture in Wales, which is a much more focused way of delivering the skills for the future. So, that's a really positive step forward.

[53] I was pleased to announce at the Royal Welsh Show a new scheme called Mentro or Venture. That comes under our Farming Connect banner, and that's specifically about encouraging farmers who want to come into the industry to—it's almost like a dating agency, if you like—meet up with farmers who'd like to leave the industry, and it's to work out share-farming arrangements and so on, in order to facilitate the movement into and out of the industry. So, there's been a huge amount of work going on, not least, of course, Malcolm Thomas's report on supporting young people into farming as well.

[54] So, the panel will be taking forward a critically important role. I would hope that it would link in with the partnership that I described earlier on as well, but, obviously, it's a huge task for them, but they're certainly starting from a good place.

[55] **Alun Ffred Jones:** Llyr, wedyn **Alun Ffred Jones:** Llyr, then William. William.

[56] **Llyr Gruffydd:** I just want to come back to the basic payments, because I've had considerable representations from farmers and representative bodies about the number of over-declaration penalties, and very often it boils down to trees and shadows of trees and clusters of trees, and those kinds of issues. It's been suggested to me that the process is a little bit subjective in that you could ask two or three people to look at it, and they could well come up with two or three different conclusions. That element of ambiguity clearly is potentially a weakness in the system, and I'm just wondering, moving forward, how your department is looking to address that so that we avoid maybe similar cases in future.

[57] **Rebecca Evans:** Well, Rural Payments Wales and the farmers use the same data on which to fill in the forms, and that was based on the Ordnance Survey map. As you know, I'm aware of this issue, so I introduced a simplified appeal system. So, I'd encourage any farmers who do believe that there's a discrepancy to make use of that appeal system. And I hope to have the vast majority of those responded to by the fifteenth, so within two weeks of today.

[58] **Llyr Gruffydd:** So, are you just accepting that if this happens in future that, you know, the appeal system will deal with it? Is that the approach or—?

[59] **Rebecca Evans:** Well, in future, we shouldn't have so many difficulties—

[60] **Llyr Gruffydd:** Because it's been addressed this time.

[61] **Rebecca Evans:** —because this is the first year of the new system. So, forms will already be pre-populated with the information we've had.

[62] **Llyr Gruffydd:** Okay, because I've had people expressing concern as well that if they are going to appeal and things aren't sorted out by the time they are looking to submit for the next year, and clearly, if they do include land that's in appeal, if it's lost then clearly they're declaring land that isn't eligible, but if it's won they may not have included it if they don't—. So, that's a bit of a concern.

[63] **Mr Slade:** That's an entirely legitimate concern, which is why we're trying to get all of the stage 1 appeals done before the next integrated administration and control system deadline. You are quite right that some of those issues are a matter of judgment ultimately, but it's a judgment that the paying agency must make in order to ensure that we're compliant with the EU rules. But the appeals mechanism is there to allow people to come back and say, 'No, I think I want you to look at that again.'

10:00

[64] **Llyr Gruffydd:** Just another practical one, really: I'm told as well that you send out two pieces of communication to farmers. They receive a general BPS payment statement through the post, and then there's a more detailed statement available online. I've been asked why you don't include the detailed statement in the envelope, if you're sending it out, because, you know, some people either don't have access or might not be fully aware that the detailed statement is online.

[65] **Mr Slade:** I don't know the direct answer to that, but we are trying to encourage everybody to go online, because this is the first year that we're going to be fully online for—. The one to come is going to be the first year we're fully online for BPS. So, I think the whole emphasis is now getting

people to accept that we should be looking to use the new system, for provision of information and for completion of the forms.

[66] **Llyr Gruffydd:** Okay.

[67] **Alun Ffred Jones:** Bill, lastly on this.

[68] **William Powell:** Diolch, Gadeirydd. Good morning, all. Firstly, I should declare that, given the nature of my question to follow, my two sons are active in the young farmers' movement, and that I'm a vice-president of our local Young farmers' branch. And I was just going to say, Minister, that you have won considerable plaudits in your time in office for the amount of time you've dedicated to listening to young farmers at the Royal Welsh winter fair and other events that they hold throughout the year. And I believe, yesterday, you met some veteran young farmers, in their 30s, from the farming futures group as well. A major concern to them, I think, is the rising age profile of Welsh farmers, and we've analysed that over time. What can we do to address that particular issue? Succession planning you've referred to in part.

[69] A particular question is around what role you think local authority farms can play in giving young people who aspire to farm access to the land. This is particularly in the context of issues that are arising just the other side of Offa's Dyke at the moment, where the *Farmers Guardian* has been covering the events in Herefordshire, where the Conservative-led council has been giving younger farmers, and others, on local authority holdings notice to quit, and this has not been well received, because they've got nowhere to go. I wonder what you could do, what reassurance you could give, that you will be working, in a future time, with your public services Minister, to engage around safeguarding this vital resource for the farming future.

[70] **Rebecca Evans:** Thank you for that question. Of course, local authority smallholdings are really important in terms of helping young people, particularly, and being an entry into farming for people who have perhaps not had a background in farming as well. The last two winners of our Brynle Williams memorial award have actually been tenant farmers in that situation, so it does show the kind of quality of people who can come through in that way. The responsibility of this really does lie with local authorities themselves. However, they do have responsibilities under the Agriculture Act 1970, in order to make it their general aim to provide opportunities for persons with experience to be farmers in their own account, by letting smallholdings that are capable of sustaining, you know, a sustainable living

on that smallholding. So, there is that responsibility there.

[71] **William Powell:** One final additional question, if I may, Chair, and that relates to some of the innovative work that's being done in Wrexham, where some local authority holdings have been adapted to being, at least in part, solar farms, while retaining grazing opportunity for the tenants. Is that an area that you would like to see developed by other local authorities across Wales, to make the holdings more sustainable and, therefore, to safeguard them against being sold off with the family furniture?

[72] **Rebecca Evans:** It's certainly welcome news of renewable energy being invested in by local authorities. I'd be interested, really, to find out more about that particular scheme, and how the farmers involved took up that opportunity—

[73] **William Powell:** I'm sure that could be arranged.

[74] **Rebecca Evans:** —because, certainly, I'm keen to find out more.

[75] **Alun Ffred Jones:** Minister, did you want to come in on this?

[76] **Carl Sargeant:** Only on a point of the leading question that Janet started this debate on, in regards to performance around payments et cetera. I think it is an important process for us to indicate to you: we are outperforming any other part of the country on delivery of farming payments, and I hope that will be reflected in your report, as you make fit.

[77] **Alun Ffred Jones:** Thank you. Joyce, did you want to go on to the environment and land use?

[78] **Joyce Watson:** Yes, on the final one, linking land use, farm use and environmental changes, I'm going to talk about flooding, and the impact that flooding has, obviously, in washing water from land, to river, to sea, and what, moving forward—and we're talking really about nitrate vulnerable zones mostly and tree planting as well—. What thoughts do you have, moving forward, in terms of dealing with run-off from land that either causes flooding or causes flooding and also pollution?

[79] **Carl Sargeant:** Thank you for your question, Joyce. It's a very broad and technical question because there are many actions that we have to consider when we think about the issues you raise. I'll start with the planning

system first of all. We have technical advice note 15, which bases our decision on allowing development in a flood plain at the category 1 or category 2 processes. It's a very robust process, but it would be wrong for any planning Minister, I believe, to suggest that we just should not be developing a flood plain. You are able to mitigate the risk of flooding in flood areas sometimes and if you can demonstrate that, then it may be appropriate to have some sort of development.

[80] I did watch a BBC programme the other night, which I thought was ill-informed at best. There was a lot of English footage in there and four-year-old footage and questions and answers that were not as accurate as I would have liked to have seen reported by the BBC in particular.

[81] The other element of dealing with flooding is around the Bill that you've helped us develop in terms of the Environment (Wales) Bill: the whole management of landscape and how we look at water courses, as a whole. The example that we often use—and I know that it's very close to Alun Ffred's constituency—is Snowdonia and the national park, where we are investing in peat bog restoration, which leads to water retention in the uplands, which prevents low-land flooding longer term. These are the longer-term solutions that we have to think about. So, building concrete barriers everywhere is not the answer in all cases to mitigate the effects of flooding. We have to do things differently. I think we have got the innovation in Wales and we have got the opportunity to do things, as we are, and to build on that into the future. So, the planning system has to deal with the here and now, but actually the environment Act will give us the long-term vision, along with the Well-being of Future Generations (Wales) Act 2015, to develop a better way of dealing with risks to our communities. This goes back to the very first question that the Chair posed to me: what's our biggest risk? It's climate change.

[82] **Joyce Watson:** Absolutely. And on farming—the land—

[83] **Rebecca Evans:** Could I just add something on the point that Joyce raised about the importance of tree planting? That's very much reflected in our new rural development programme. I've made £2.3 million available for Glastir woodland creation and that window will open on 30 March, and a further £1 million for Glastir woodland restoration and that will open on 30 April. So, I think it's really important to reflect that Welsh woodlands, in line with our 'Woodlands for Wales' strategy, are very much being delivered on in partnership through the RDP.

[84] **Alun Ffred Jones:** I find it ironic that, of course, basic payments to farmers are being cut because of shadows of trees on land, but of course then, on the other hand, you are encouraging farmers to plant trees. There seems to be something peculiar about that. The Government seems to be going in two directions at the same time almost—encouraging farmers to plant and yet penalising them for having trees on land.

[85] **Rebecca Evans:** It's not our intention to penalise farmers; we're just simply interpreting the European Commission rules in the correct way to avoid disallowance, because over recent years, 2006 to 2014, England has paid £812 million back to Europe through disallowance alone through, for example, misinterpreting—

[86] **Matthew Quinn:** Euros.

[87] **Rebecca Evans:** —sorry, €812 million through misinterpreting European rules and regulations around the common agricultural policy, whereas our payments have been less than 1 per cent of that.

[88] **Alun Ffred Jones:** Okay. Russell, did you want to come in?

[89] **Russell George:** Yes. Most of my questions are for the Deputy Minister. In terms of the stakeholder group that I was with, there was a feeling that their work on the current CAP should have started much earlier. I appreciate that you weren't the Deputy Minister at the time when that could have taken place, but what would be your advice to the next Minister responsible for agriculture, in terms of work on the CAP post 2021? When should that work start and what work should take place, and how do you prioritise it?

[90] **Rebecca Evans:** I'll ask Andrew to talk about the work that took place in preparation before I came into post. I would obviously advise early engagement with the European Commission. We haven't really any idea as to what the future of CAP might look like yet. There might have been a mid-term review, and that perhaps would have given us some clues as to what the future would be, but it doesn't seem that that will take place, to the best of my knowledge anyway. So, early discussion with Europe would obviously be a priority, and engaging, as we are currently, through the priority that the Commission has identified of the simplification of CAP, which is an agenda we are extremely supportive of. However, we'd like to see it go further and faster than it is going at the moment. So, continued engagement with that

European agenda and early engagement then with plans for the next step—

[91] **Russell George:** I'm more interested perhaps in the future rather than the past. Assuming, of course, that we are still in the European Union after June—we'll make the assumption that we are—what specific pieces of work need to take place, early in the new Government? What specifically needs to take place in work on the CAP for post 2021?

[92] **Rebecca Evans:** Well, it's very difficult to say until we have an understanding or some kind of steer from the Commission as to what the plans are for CAP at that level.

[93] **Mr Slade:** Our first priority at the moment is to make sure that we're fully engaged in the mid-term review, which will mainly be about simplification of the current system, rather than a fundamental revisiting of the policies underpinning that CAP, and then work will start in earnest towards the latter part of the 20-teens on the next reform period.

[94] Just going back, and accepting that your question was mainly around the future, I joined Welsh Government in 2012. Work had already been under way for two to three years on CAP reform at that point, including with two stakeholder groups. So, I think it's a bit odd to say that we hadn't been doing lots of work in advance of CAP reform. I suspect that many of those comments come from people who don't feel that the current payment model best suits their particular circumstances, and I can understand that from an individual's perspective, but that isn't necessarily the position for Wales as a whole. But the fundamental point of your question, about getting in early, as the Deputy Minister has said, is absolutely right and we are regularly in touch with colleagues in Brussels to help shape that, and I've said it here before, and I'll say it again: I think Wales punches above its weight in terms of its engagement with the European institutions, and our voice is very well heard in Brussels and Strasbourg, and elsewhere where decisions are made.

[95] **Russell George:** From memory, some of the witnesses were talking around land mapping—that was, some of the issues where there could have been preparation work.

[96] **Mr Slade:** I rest my case: [*Laughter.*]

[97] **Russell George:** Could I—

[98] **Alun Ffred Jones:** I'm sorry, I think we're maxed out on this one in terms of time, so I want to move on to other areas. Mick.

[99] **Mick Antoniw:** Minister, a couple of rubbish questions. [*Laughter.*] You know we've had a certain amount of engagement with stakeholders in terms of waste recycling and so on, and certainly there've been very, very positive responses in terms of the progress that's been made and the achievements that have been made. Two of the areas—two questions—that I'd particularly like to ask you about are really to respond to the views of stakeholders that the tonnage-based targets for municipal waste should be reviewed and we should have a look at other options.

[100] **Carl Sargeant:** I agree.

[101] **Mick Antoniw:** Would you like to expand on what you think might be the key challenges as to how we should move forward?

[102] **Carl Sargeant:** The EU waste targets are weight based. We have to look at where we are in the recycling league table: we're the best in the UK and the fourth best in Europe. Again, we should be very proud as citizens. It's not Government telling people what to do; actually, engagement with the public in the delivery of this has proved its worth, and we're doing very well. We are, however, at the top end of our targets, and they are becoming increasingly challenging. Therefore, I think we have to start thinking very carefully about actions by local authorities, about how they collect their waste, about that renegotiation with the public, and about moving to the next level. We've sort of picked the low-hanging fruit. We've delivered on that, and now we're starting to get to the tough end of recycling.

10:15

[103] Therefore, we have to think about how we measure that: is it weight based or not? Is it the blueprint or not? I think these are some questions that the incoming Government will have to tackle very quickly to ensure that we remain the best in the UK and increase our stakes in terms of where we sit in the European context.

[104] **Mick Antoniw:** Do you think this might lead on to also perhaps the challenge of a review of the way in which waste management is actually funded?

[105] **Carl Sargeant:** The public sector—we have to renegotiate what we do, I think, and I think because of the financial constraints that we find ourselves under, both as Government and as public sector bodies. We've got 22 authorities and the majority of them collect waste differently in some different vehicles or using different methods. We need to streamline that. We are moving some way to delivery. I'm very pro the blueprint, but there are some authorities that aren't using the blueprint at all who've got very good recycling rates. So, we've got to balance that and understand what works best for particular areas and how we model that for the future. So, I think the original question from the Chair was, 'What are the challenges for the future?' and I think waste will be one of the challenges, but we are leading the way. We can get better, but it will mean changes to the way we deliver services as well.

[106] **Alun Ffred Jones:** Julie Morgan.

[107] **Julie Morgan:** Thank you. In the group I chaired about this issue, it was brought up as a bone of great contention that some local authorities actually use garden waste to be part of their tonnage. This provoked a very lively discussion and the conclusion was reached that we should be having more of a strategy to prevent stuff actually getting to the stage where it's going for tonnage. So, I wondered what your views were about that.

[108] **Carl Sargeant:** I think it goes back to Mick's original question. Local authorities know exactly what their target methods of collection are and what their targets to achieve are, and I have had some interesting discussions with them. I'm very pleased with what we're delivering at the moment, but I think there are some anomalies that we need to sort out for the future. If I'm the Minister in the new Government, or if any one of you is to be the new Minister, that will be a fundamental question early on about, 'What is it that we do collectively to make sure that we can increase our targets, increase our collection rates?' But more fundamentally, this isn't just about collecting more waste; actually this has a massive reduction on carbon emissions and tackling the issues around climate change. There is also a huge economic benefit from the collection of waste as well. So, I think we're doing very well, but we could do better. I think we just need to start thinking about how we move to the next level now.

[109] **Alun Ffred Jones:** Both those points about garden waste and the method of collection, of course, were made by this committee back in 2005 in a report we did. But, there we are. Janet Haworth.

[110] **Janet Haworth:** Moving forward, Minister, thinking about the next Assembly, there are a couple of initiatives that I think Government could make some impact on. I think one is on marine waste. A lot of plastic and other forms of litter end up in our coastal waters. I know that Scotland has a scheme working with the mariners who bring that waste ashore, then local authorities are tasked with disposing of it. I know that gives a problem, because it might not be sorted and could be ending up in landfill, but I think this is an area of waste where we're kind of shrugging our shoulders because it's out there at sea, but it is causing a significant problem to our fisheries.

[111] The other area is around the vehicles that are used for discharging these waste services. It's good to hear that you think there's a need to have a look at good practice and see if there's some rationalisation. Because it seems to me there is a real opportunity here to use electric vehicles, because local authorities will know the distances that these vehicles travel, so they will know where the charge points need to be. So, I think there's a huge opportunity to drive that forward in all local authorities.

[112] **Alun Ffred Jones:** Well, those are two suggestions. Do you wish to respond, Minister?

[113] **Carl Sargeant:** Very briefly, marine waste, I agree with the Member. It's a huge problem, and it's not just a Wales-based issue. I remember Joyce Watson raising this with me. We do have responsible fishermen who do pick up waste and bring it to shore already. I think it's global action that's needed to tackle our waste services, particularly plastic—plastic cups, et cetera. It is something that I've asked my team to look at, but I don't know how we influence that in a more global context; it's something that we need to think about.

[114] The procurement of electric vehicles, I read an article this morning about one of the leading finance companies saying that electric vehicles in 10 years' time will be cheaper than conventional vehicles. It certainly makes sense to move in that direction. In Ontario, they are looking at delivering electric service points in all parts of the city. Again, I think we can learn lots from other countries, too, and the green growth event—I mentioned it earlier on—tomorrow. In parts of the states and regions—. We have a population base of states and regions and if we brought them all together—the membership of that group—we'd have the largest collection of value in gross domestic product between the states and regions, and, actually, we can do

so much more than just one entity as a country. The states and regions are very powerful, and we're learning lots from each other as member states; Ontario is just one of the examples.

[115] **Janet Haworth:** Thank you.

[116] **Alun Ffred Jones:** William.

[117] **William Powell:** Diolch, Gadeirydd. If I could move, with your indulgence, Chair, to the issue of agricultural waste and by-products, which I think is part of the wider situation, there have been some fairly high-profile prosecutions of farmers around dead stock and their management, or otherwise, of that in recent times. I wonder whether the Deputy Minister has any update on the recent research that was undertaken by Bangor University, I think with support from Hybu Cig Cymru, on on-farm burial, which would help to alleviate the potential environmental risk as well as easing the burden on farmers when, at certain peak points in the year, it can become a very serious issue indeed, with environmental consequences.

[118] **Rebecca Evans:** We know there are several derogations that we can use in these situations: for example, in bad weather, they were used back in 2013. But, in terms of that specific piece of research you referred to, I'll ask Christianne to address that.

[119] **Dr Glossop:** Thank you, Deputy Minister. That was partly funded by the Welsh Government as well. This was a project to look at the feasibility of not on-farm burial, but the long-term storage of carcasses in a structure that would cause them to reduce in quantity over time—it's a kind of biodigester equipment. The notion would be that farmers could then gather their dead stock, keep them over time and then have that tank emptied.

[120] **William Powell:** Would that be in collection points locally?

[121] **Dr Glossop:** No, the notion was that farmers would have their own, because there are, obviously, biosecurity issues around moving dead stock around to different farms. So, Bangor were looking at that. The specific question we were interested in was whether or not, for example, prions that are related to BSE and TSE might survive that process. The European Commission is very interested in all of that. We took that evidence to the Commission several years ago. They were not satisfied, and we had to do more work. It's now back in the hands of Bangor University. So, just to make

sure that we're clear, this wasn't about trying to enable the widespread burial of fallen stock; it was more a different method of managing fallen stock, and that work continues.

[122] **Alun Ffred Jones:** Well, the Minister has turned colour there, so I'm going to move on, I think. [*Laughter.*] So, can we move on to marine matters? Joyce, did you want to—?

[123] **Joyce Watson:** Yes. Minister, there has been some concern that's been raised about progress when we look at the marine environment, particularly about managing marine protected areas or even producing some plans that might protect marine areas. So, that being the case, and I'm sure there are reasons that you will tell us for it being the case, could I ask what your priorities are, moving forward, in terms of looking at marine and fisheries for the future?

[124] **Carl Sargeant:** As with other sectors, the marine sector has a loud base of individuals with a huge interest in this, and rightly so. We caught part of that process during the scallop consultation process, which has just finished now. I think it's really important that we make sure that we get these processes right, engaging with people who understand about sectors that they want to see protected, and I do too, and my department works very hard to ensure that. But we do sometimes get it wrong and the consultation process we started was flawed on the web page. There was no malice in that; it was just a technical hitch, but we restarted that process. Hopefully, we were able to capture the interests of stakeholders accurately.

[125] In terms of our marine policy, we work very carefully across Governments and across other agencies and Natural Resources Wales and other bodies. Our progress on the delivery of a strategic action plan was set out in an oral statement back in May 2014. It was published with an updated action table, and further progress was then set out in a written statement of April 2015. Since then, my officials have been working to deliver the marine transition programme in partnership with stakeholders.

[126] We continue to build on the aims of the Wales marine and fisheries strategic action plan. The four pillars of that are: marine energy, tourism, transport and social inclusion. Those are the main pillars, and the initial draft of the Welsh national marine plan was developed in November of 2015. The draft plan is being developed to provide clarity to optimise the opportunities for sustainable development of our seas and marine life. It is a very complex

process. We are supported by many European regulations that we have to embed in our operation within Wales and within the UK. Both I and the Deputy Minister look at this very carefully in terms of the food sector and the fisheries element that are involved in this. Ultimately, we have to make sure that we make the right decisions for the long-term protection of our natural resources as we move forward.

[127] **Joyce Watson:** If I can bring you back to managing the marine environment but also managing the rubbish that finds its way there, there are two parts to this. There is evidence that demonstrates quite clearly that the majority of litter that finds its way into the sea starts on land. It's not the other way round. With that, I know that the Government's invested in—because you mentioned tourism and the marine environment—. So, there's potential large-scale littering of our coasts by holidaymakers. Even with their best efforts to put the rubbish in the bin, the seagulls and everybody else, including the wind, will take it back out because the bins are not adequate for the purpose. I know that the Assembly Government has actually invested in bins that don't allow that to happen. So, moving forward, Minister—and these have had good results—are you going to look at expanding that or working with partners to expand it so that, at least in the first case, some of that litter doesn't find itself on the land and then in the sea and then all the damage that happens as a consequence of that?

[128] **Carl Sargeant:** Yes, I think there are two elements to your question. The land-based waste finding its way to the coastal areas is part of the problem, and local authorities have a duty locally to make sure that they prevent that to the best of their ability with the use of proper receptacles. We see some of the urban aspects of gull infestation as well, actually. Part of the problem is not that there are too many gulls but that the food is available for the gulls and the gulls come in and stay, and they can be quite horrendous in the nesting period as well.

[129] The other aspect of that is that a lot of the waste that appears on our coastline is also derived from land but not here in Wales. It comes through the oceans and lands itself on our beaches because of the jet stream—the flow of the water. Pembrokeshire particularly suffers from that.

10:30

[130] What we can do, and we continue to do, is make significant investments in third sector organisations, as well as local authorities. Keep

Wales Tidy is an organisation that we fund and that does a fantastic job the length and breadth of Wales. We also support other third sector organisations who do community projects around waste collection and waste management as well. So, there is a much broader approach. It does trouble me—the question that Janet and you raised about marine waste, about where it comes from originally and how, collectively, we could try to resolve that. It's not an easy fix, this one.

[131] **Alun Ffred Jones:** Right. We've got a number of areas that we need to cover as well, so can we keep questions short and answers as brief as possible? Jeff, did you want to come in?

[132] **Jeff Cuthbert:** Yes, on the issue of marine environment and now that we're all at sea, just to copy Mick's style, look, do you think that you have access to suitable skill sets in terms of dealing with the marine environment, whether that's Natural Resources Wales or other agencies, including the third sector? Could there be more done to make sure that the right skills needed for the marine environment are being developed by learning institutions, for example?

[133] **Carl Sargeant:** I am confident that we have the skills, and we do work with other organisations too. Bangor University has been mentioned here today on several occasions. We work with them, and they've got one of the most successful marine ecology departments anywhere in Europe. We use them a lot. We also use NRW, and I've got a fantastic team working on marine fisheries, both in terms of creating legislation but also managing the fisheries as well. I have an enforcement team who put themselves, sometimes, at risk in terms of doing their day-to-day job, which should go on the record too. I am very grateful for the work that they do out in the field—or out on the sand—doing their job on a daily basis, which sometimes puts them at risk.

[134] **Jeff Cuthbert:** Okay, thank you.

[135] **Alun Ffred Jones:** Janet, did you want to come in on this question?

[136] **Janet Haworth:** Yes, a couple of points.

[137] **Alun Ffred Jones:** No; questions, please.

[138] **Janet Haworth:** Well, I do have to say this, Chair: seagull-proof bins

have been used in Conwy to great effect. They do work. Seagulls can't get into them as long as they're emptied, you know, by the local authority. My other area that I want to talk about, going back to the marine and the skill sets, one of the suggestions that came forward in the stakeholder sessions was that we already have a workforce out there on the boats who have gone through significant vocational training in order to captain and take a boat and be responsible for a crew, or tourists, offshore. They also have a vested interest in the sea being in good condition, and in the fisheries being in good condition. So, it may be worth while talking to the colleges that deliver this very specific ladder of vocational qualifications that mariners take to incorporate the opportunity to also do some marine work. Now, it might not be suitable for all mariners, but we could develop a sort of second force out there who are at sea a lot of the week, who know it very well and have a clear vested interest in keeping it to a good standard.

[139] **Carl Sargeant:** Well, I think there's a key word that you used there, about vested interest. I have to be very careful in terms of what I procure and who I procure business with. I think there is a great opportunity for the sector to work together. We already work with those on working groups. I think I understood you in suggesting that they were able to do work on behalf of Government or on behalf of the third sector about those issues.

[140] **Janet Haworth:** I think they're in a position to do some of the data collection—

[141] **Alun Ffred Jones:** Can I remind the committee that we're not here to suggest to the Government what they should be doing. We're trying to find out what the Government has been doing, and challenges for the future. So, you know, keep the question—

[142] **Janet Haworth:** So, they are in a position to do some basic data collection, aren't they?

[143] **Alun Ffred Jones:** That's a point. We'll accept the point. Joyce, you wanted to come back on—

[144] **Joyce Watson:** I want to come back on managing marine protected areas and ask you, Minister, first of all, to welcome that there was a focus on extending the protection of porpoises and also seabirds. But, moving on from that, how, in the future, do you intend—as has been highlighted to us it must be—to manage the existing sites for the next five years? Because

they're protected now, and that's great, but they need that protection for the next five years because most of those are currently in unfavourable condition, which is, of course, why you protected them in the first place. So, moving forward, as a priority, Minister, can you give some guarantees, like we've been asked to seek, that they will be monitored for the next five years?

[145] **Carl Sargeant:** I'm confident that my team can do that, but I suppose it strays into the question that Janet raised as well. It's about how we, as a sector and an industry, manage our natural resources well. Most people in the sector have the interest of the seas at heart. There are some who don't, and that's where we have to have a resilient enforcement team, moving forward. We will seek to maintain a good quality environment, but where we have to enforce, then, we will continue to do that in the future as well.

[146] **Joyce Watson:** Thank you.

[147] **Alun Ffred Jones:** How have you promoted and expanded inshore fishing over the past five years?

[148] **Carl Sargeant:** The past five years? I thought we were going forward. What we've been keen to do is look at the open access. We've just done a consultation on access where we had lots of fishermen who responded to that consultation. You would not be surprised that we also had a lot of canoeists who responded to that consultation too. We've looked, with NRW, at issues around the charging and licensing regime that NRW applies to make sure that we have a much more long-term strategic view on fisheries and how we manage those better. And, also, looking at the market as well, we're trying to ensure that, if we look at what the worth of the fisheries are in Wales, how we can make sure that there's a sector that we can support, not just for the fishing industry, but also the food sector as well. I know Rebecca has done some work on the food side of that as well. So, we see this as a very sustainable industry, but we've got to make sure that our interventions are well placed.

[149] **Alun Ffred Jones:** Diolch yn fawr. Llyr—sori; William. **Alun Ffred Jones:** Thank you very much. Llyr—sorry; William.

[150] **William Powell:** Just a brief one, Chair, if I may.

[151] **Alun Ffred Jones:** On this?

[152] **William Powell:** On this topic, yes, developing on your own last question. Following the Secretary of State's rethink on the draft Wales Bill, when it appeared that he was seeking to draw to himself and to Westminster powers over cockling, now that our position is clarified and safeguarded there, I wonder what the ministerial team have to say about your own vision for the future of that industry. I know that the Minister is particularly familiar within his own immediate constituency with these matters, and given the issues that have arisen around cockle mortality in some of our other rich cockle beds, what is your vision for the future of that important Welsh heritage industry?

[153] **Carl Sargeant:** You wouldn't believe the amount of time I've spent discussing cockles in my office, believe me, and the resilience of service. The Member is right—I live on the river Dee and it's a huge industry there. The Gower is another example of a cockle fisheries industry. There are two points that I'd make. One is about ensuring that we have a long-term fisheries strategy around cockling, because the industry is quite volatile in the way that it is sometimes fished—the cockles are ready for picking and then you get lots of people who sometimes put themselves at risk and others, and that's not a resilient way, or a long-term strategic look to manage cockle beds for the future. Licensing is key to that.

[154] The other issue is around cockle mortality and is one that has troubled my department and NRW. We have had some work done on this, particularly in the Gower area, where the cockles are dying earlier than anywhere else and there are some indications around possible reasons why that might be happening, although we can't confirm them just yet. I do realise that there are people who have their livelihoods based upon this fishery sector, but I have to make sure that we have long-term fisheries that we can have for the nation into the future, rather than two years' worth of cockle picking for some individuals who make a lot of money and we don't have a resilient fishery for the future. So, it's a balancing act, really, but we have to be robust. Leadership is the key to this.

[155] **Alun Ffred Jones:** Llyr Gruffydd.

[156] **Llyr Gruffydd:** One of the challenges—the big challenges, I suppose—facing the next Welsh Government will be to meet a number of our obligations under the water framework directive. Now, clearly there's an imminent consultation on extending nitrate-vulnerable zones, particularly around Pembrokeshire and the Cleddau area. The issue there, of course, is

that if the new obligation was introduced in that particular area then you'd be looking at the need for substantial investment into infrastructure for some of those farms that would be affected. I understand that potentially they'd need to contain slurry for up to five months, or five months' worth of slurry, and, at the moment, current capacity allows for maybe a few weeks'. So, not prejudging the consultation, clearly, but the question being asked is: what support would there be available to invest in infrastructure to meet the obligations that would be extended if the NVZ was extended?

[157] **Carl Sargeant:** Thank you for the question. A really difficult one, this, because we have to do something about this. We're having far too much diffuse pollution into our networks, which is having a massive impact. We have—I think the average is around 1.6 discharges every week, and some are identified, some aren't. We will be going out to consultation about what that means, and there will be an impact on the farming sector and how that moves forward. I'd like a debate on that, about what that means and how we can come to some agreement longer term. I think there are some issues around planning where we shouldn't be—. One of the considerations around planning should be about how we manage slurry. If you're applying for larger farms, or you're increasing your stock hold, then how do we manage that?

[158] There is no other sector—this isn't a criticism; it's factual—that receives the amount of subsidy that the farming sector does, in Wales or in any part of the UK. The tackling poverty agenda, et cetera. In particular, the farming sector receives a significant amount of funding from Europe and from the Welsh Government. I think we have to understand how best we spend that funding together, and I think there is a relationship here about what is it you need to do as a farming sector—'you' collectively—and what do we do in terms of supporting the sector, too. But NVZs must be addressed because it affects the watercourse, our drinking water, and has a massive impact on the environment. So, the consultation will be going out shortly, and we'll have to see. For the next Government, that will be one of the challenges—how they resolve those issues. One of those issues could, in part, be resolved through the RDP, and about how we use the funding to do that. A question earlier on from Jenny was: what's the relationship between funding and tackling climate change? Part of that might be about resolving the slurry issue, too. But it is a difficult subject that we're going to have to face up to, whether that's on an all-Wales basis or whether just on a specific region-based risk approach to NVZs.

[159] **Alun Ffred Jones:** Okay. I want to move on to something else, so Julie

Morgan, and then Jenny.

[160] **Julie Morgan:** Thank you very much. I was going to ask about animal welfare, and I wondered, really, what you felt were the main achievements during your period as Deputy Minister in the animal welfare field.

[161] **Rebecca Evans:** Well, I'm really pleased with the work that I've been able to continue in terms of dog welfare, particularly. That work started off with the banning of electric dog collars quite some time ago now, and then more recently we've introduced the new regulations on dog breeding. I've said that those would be reviewed within a year because I know there was some concern as to whether the ratio of 20 dogs to one member of staff was appropriate, so I've said that we can look at that as part of that review. More recently, there's the work that we've done on compulsory microchipping, which comes into force in April of this year as well. So, all of these things, I hope, will come together to improve the welfare of all dogs in Wales. You're aware of course of that piece of work that the RSPCA is doing for us on responsible dog ownership, which should be with me imminently. I met with the RSPCA just in the last couple of weeks to discuss that and their work that's being undertaken on sanctuaries as well, and both of those pieces of work are now coming to a conclusion. I look forward to seeing them soon.

10:45

[162] I'm pleased that we were able to introduce the regulations on welfare at the time of slaughter. We did so long before England, and that means now that people working in that industry must have the appropriate licences and training, and so on. I've convened recently a group looking specifically at the use of CCTV in slaughterhouses. That involves people representing small, medium and large abattoirs in Wales, but also the Food Standards Agency and our Government vets as well. That's to look at the use of CCTV in the first instance, but I do think that that group could potentially be a useful body for discussing welfare at slaughter more widely in future as well. So, those are two things I'm particularly pleased about.

[163] **Julie Morgan:** Thank you very much. So, the RSPCA report will be published before the Assembly ends.

[164] **Rebecca Evans:** Yes.

[165] **Julie Morgan:** Because there's not very much time now. Right, thank

you for that. You referred to a number of different areas. The stakeholders, when I chaired the group where they discussed animal welfare issues, had the view that a standalone animal welfare strategy and action plan is needed. I wondered what your views were about that.

[166] **Rebecca Evans:** I feel that animal health and animal welfare are inextricably linked. That's why we've brought them both together under the umbrella of the animal health and welfare framework. That's supported by an animal health and welfare framework group, which has made it one of its priorities to engage particularly with the welfare sector to make sure that welfare is considered in the work that that group carries out.

[167] **Julie Morgan:** So, you don't think that their proposal is necessary.

[168] **Rebecca Evans:** I feel that we already have that under the umbrella of the framework that was published, or launched, at the Royal Welsh Show back in 2014.

[169] **Julie Morgan:** Thank you. The other issue they raised was the fact that there is maybe good legislation, but the local authorities have great difficulty actually enforcing it because of the lack of resources. In particular, in the group, there was somebody who was saying that there are some local authorities that don't have any dog wardens any longer, or numbers have been drastically reduced, and, certainly, in terms of the control of horses, questioned whether there were enough resources to actually manage that. So, I don't know if you could give us your views on this.

[170] **Rebecca Evans:** Yes. Local authorities receive funding via the revenue support grant in order to undertake the devolved responsibilities that they have for animal welfare enforcement. But I've tried to take a pragmatic approach—for example, with the work that we did on dog breeding—to allow local authorities to set up the licensing fee to recover the costs of inspections and so on. I've also announced recently a further £100,000 for the remainder of this financial year to enable local authorities to continue with additional priority work that they've identified, such as attendance at critical control points, and so on. So, this is very much about preventing disease spread, and so on, and Christianne might want to talk a bit about the work that those groups are doing, alongside heads of trading standards, to establish a new partnership arrangement. With that, I imagine, would come a new funding agreement in the future.

[171] **Alun Ffred Jones:** Before that, I'll just have some questions on this topic. So, Llyr, and then Bill.

[172] **Llyr Gruffydd:** Well, on animal welfare, I was just wondering whether the Deputy Minister intends to make any further announcements around the bovine TB eradication strategy, particularly relating to the situation now in relation to vaccination, before the end of this Government.

[173] **Rebecca Evans:** Okay. I'll deal with that shortly, but I did omit to address the question that you asked on horses as well. We introduced the fly-grazing legislation and, since we've done so, at least 11 local authorities have taken advantage of that. More than 4,600 horses have been seized under that legislation within the first 12 months of that Act. We've obviously provided match funding, where appropriate, for local authorities to do that as well, because we do understand that that can be an expensive undertaking.

[174] With regard to badger vaccination, of course, we had to suspend, as you know, the vaccination for year 5 of the five-year programme as a result of the global shortage of the vaccine. We're in regular discussion with public health on this particular issue. The global shortage remains, so there are no plans at the moment to return to vaccination, although you'll be aware, of course, of the report that showed that missing out year 5 and returning in year 6 would have the same effect, really, in terms of immunity amongst badgers, as vaccinating for five years straight. And I should say that our annual report on the intensive action area will be published in the early summer, as it is every year.

[175] **Alun Ffred Jones:** William.

[176] **William Powell:** Thank you, Chair. I'm not sure whether this question strays maybe partly into the territory of the Minister for Natural Resources. It relates to correspondence that many of us have recently received about permission for shooting on NRW land—obviously, it relates to the welfare of the birds; I think it's a bit of a crossover issue—as to whether or not it would be possible for you to give us a brief update or expression of position on that matter. And, related to that, do you see any merit in the British Association for Shooting and Conservation code of good practice for shoots being put on a statutory footing, so as to encourage the growth of the sector, which your colleague, Ken Skates, recently spoke of in glowing terms at a cross-party group in terms of its value for the Welsh economy, but also

to bear down on any rogue operators that might be out there not observing good practice in terms of game shooting?

[177] **Carl Sargeant:** There are two points I'd add, and I hope that the committee would welcome the consultation on prohibiting the shooting of white-fronted geese. We've just gone out to consultation on that.

[178] In regard to the correspondence that you received, and I have as well, I've asked NRW for a full report on the shooting of birds on their land and how that is managed. I would like to be fully appraised of that situation before I make a decision on that, but it's something that I'm looking very carefully at.

[179] **Alun Ffred Jones:** Okay, Jenny Randerson—Rathbone, sorry—you've been very patient with me.

[180] **Jenny Rathbone:** Thank you, *Cadeirydd*. I've got three questions around the husbanding of resources, both in relation to sustainability and profitability, and I'll ask them together just in the interest of brevity. No 1: Rebecca Evans mentioned the number of trees that you're going to be planting under the RDP. Could you tell us how many of those trees are going to be fruit trees, given the difficulty often of sourcing local fruit in rural areas, and the importance of ensuring we've got local supplies for our schools for school meals?

[181] Second point: we talked earlier about flooding. I want to turn the question on its head. What are we doing to increase the amount of reservoir storage of water, which is the new gold? I know, Minister, you were involved in ensuring that Llanishen reservoir was brought back into use as a place for storing drinking water in the future, but what else is being done, given that, because of climate change, the east side of England is likely to be suffering from severe water shortages?

[182] And, thirdly, you mentioned electric vehicles being much cheaper in the future. What is being done to plan for the wholesale storage of energy in order to be able to meet the demand for electric vehicles?

[183] **Alun Ffred Jones:** Three very broad questions there. I'd like another question in afterwards, so if you can be as concise—

[184] **Carl Sargeant:** In terms of the first one—

[185] **Rebecca Evans:** Shall I answer on the trees?

[186] **Carl Sargeant:** Yes.

[187] **Rebecca Evans:** So, the Glastir grants for woodlands are forestry grants as opposed to orchard grants. However, there would be opportunities under Glastir Advanced and the small grants scheme in Glastir for fruit trees to be planted. The majority of trees under the Glastir woodlands scheme will be native broadleaves.

[188] **Carl Sargeant:** The other two issues, flooding first of all: working with Dŵr Cymru, we have had several reservoirs now taken back into ownership. We have no long-term plans in terms of developing new reservoirs, but what we have to do is make sure that we use our water well. The other aspects of—. As I said, the use of water is really important, so building regulations are an important factor here, making sure that we reuse rainwater as much as we can in the building technologies, and we use the collection of water. There's a great project in Llanelli, RainScape, about managing rainwater as well, and how they use that and capture that for facilities locally.

[189] Electric vehicles—it's a big issue, and, again, I was up very early reading my briefing, and also articles on climate, because I thought there'd be a lot of those questions today. There's a project launch this week, in Germany, about energy collection, and it's one of the most expensive processes we are currently at. But I think the longer-term technology will catch up very quickly, where we're able to store energy from renewable energy, and disperse it longer term. We should be at the forefront of that, and part of the green growth summit tomorrow is saying Wales is open for business—we can do this, with our track record on renewables, and our, hopefully, increase in renewables. It will give us the opportunity, therefore, for energy storage and much more energy-resilient communities, both locally and nationally. I think it is something that we can deliver on.

[190] **Alun Ffred Jones:** Okay. And, lastly, Russell George.

[191] **Russell George:** Thank you, Chair. Stakeholders—one issue that they raised with us, where they felt not much work had been done over the last five years, was in regard to access to land. There were different views across stakeholders on this, but there was agreement that there needs to be some progress made, and there was also reference to the Scottish model. I know

there was also reference to there needing to be information and education campaigns on existing access rights. Can you respond to stakeholders' views that not much work has been done over the last five years?

[192] **Carl Sargeant:** Well, I wouldn't agree with you; I'm being very polite.

[193] **Russell George:** Not with me—stakeholders said that.

[194] **Carl Sargeant:** Okay. We should celebrate the great success of the Wales Coastal Path—the only part of the UK where we have a complete route, right the way around our wonderful coastline in Wales.

[195] **Alun Ffred Jones:** Not quite around.

[196] **Carl Sargeant:** Well, I think—

[197] **Alun Ffred Jones:** Anglesey.

[198] **Carl Sargeant:** I'm sure we'd like to discuss that after the committee, Chair, if you'd like. The issue—. Well, either way, we should still celebrate our success on that.

[199] **Alun Ffred Jones:** Yes, indeed.

[200] **Carl Sargeant:** The fact that we've been out for a consultation on access, improving the rights of way—these are for the next, incoming Government. There will be decisions to be made on access. I'm sympathetic to the Scottish model in terms of that, but there will be many landowners who the Member will represent who will have a very differing view on my view, and I've already met them.

[201] We've opened up discussions on access to water with Ken Skates, around the Splash fund. So, we should celebrate; we often talk Wales down too much. Stakeholders have a duty and a job to do in challenging Governments—I get that—but what we shouldn't ever forget is that we've got so many good things that we do here in Wales. And I believe that this Government—I would say that—has done an awful lot in developing these new opportunities. The designated landscape review—Lord Dafydd Elis-Thomas is running that for us now, about how can we increase the opportunities for special areas of Wales.

[202] **Alun Ffred Jones:** But I think the point being made here, and being made by the stakeholders, was that there's been a lot of toing and froing. Because it seemed that the Government, at one point, was all for open access—I remember the huge debates, and the national parks, and everybody who was on—. Then, the Government seems to have drawn back from this. So, what is the Government's thinking at the moment in terms of open access?

[203] **Carl Sargeant:** Well, I don't accept we've drawn back, Chair. We've had 5,796 responses on a consultation process, which I hope you'd agree is a positive process. For Governments to do things, without the consultation of our communities, would be wrong to do. And that's why the Green Paper on improving opportunities to access is something that we just received back, and the next Government will be in a position to do something about that.

[204] **Alun Ffred Jones:** Llyr.

[205] **Llyr Gruffydd:** So, the suggestion is that there won't be any further comment from this Government, following the Green Paper—it'll be left to the next Government.

[206] **Carl Sargeant:** Absolutely not, and I've said that publicly—I will not be making a decision prior to the—. We've got two and a half weeks. It's for the next Government to make a proper, informed decision, based upon the nearly 6,000 responses that we've had.

[207] **Alun Ffred Jones:** Russell, did you want to come back?

[208] **Russell George:** There is also a view from stakeholders that local authorities aren't doing enough—they're letting some existing rights of way deteriorate, and there should be more work, and there should—. So, what's your view on what the next Welsh Government should do to address that in local authorities?

[209] **Carl Sargeant:** I think the Green Paper will give the Government a vision of opportunity, and I think, subject to what the Government may, or may not, look like in the future—. I have a view on that—what I'd like to start pursuing. But we can't do that on our own either, and I think it is in partnership with local authorities, with third sector organisations such as the Ramblers. I'm aware that they do, again, some tremendous jobs in Anglesey, actually, on open access. There's a great group in Anglesey that makes small

investments with the local authority, delivering services to ensure that people can gain access rightly across public spaces. So, I think it's a partnership deal—a new approach to open access that we'll have to consider in the future.

11:00

[210] **Alun Ffred Jones:** Okay. I think we've run out of time. May I just thank the Minister and the Deputy Minister and the officials for attending and for your co-operation throughout the—?

[211] **Carl Sargeant:** Chair, I do apologise, but during the discussion, we did talk about some aspects of the EU. We did prepare a paper on that and it might be useful to share that with committee members and yourself for your deliberation on examples of how the EU has benefited Wales in the natural resources department. I'd be happy to share that through your committee.

[212] **Alun Ffred Jones:** Indeed, thank you very much—that will be very useful. Diolch yn fawr iawn. Thank you.

11:01

Papurau i'w Nodi Papers to Note

[213] **Alun Ffred Jones:** Item 3 is papers to note. Is everyone happy? Okay.

Cynnig o dan Reol Sefydlog 17.42 i Benderfynu Gwahardd y Cyhoedd o Weddill y Cyfarfod ac o'r Cyfarfod ar 10 Mawrth Motion under Standing Order 17.42 to Resolve to Exclude the Public from the Remainder of the Meeting and the Meeting on 10 March

Cynnig:

bod y pwyllgor yn penderfynu gwahardd y cyhoedd o weddill y cyfarfod ac o'r cyfarfod ar 10 Mawrth yn unol â Rheol Sefydlog 17.42 (vi).

Motion:

that the committee resolves to exclude the public from the remainder of the meeting and the meeting on 10 March in accordance with Standing Order 17.42 (vi).

Cynigiwyd y cynnig.

Motion moved.

[214] **Alun Ffred Jones:** Item 4—we'll go into private session under Standing Order 17.42, and for next week as well. [*Interruption.*] Yes, it's all private. Okay.

Derbyniwyd y cynnig.

Motion agreed.

[215] **Jenny Rathbone:** Before we go into private session, I'd really like to congratulate the Chair for being an excellent Chair. [Assembly Members: 'Hear, hear.']

[216] **Alun Ffred Jones:** That's very kind of you. The cheque's in the post, Jenny. Thank you.

Daeth rhan gyhoeddus y cyfarfod i ben am 11:01.

The public part of the meeting ended at 11:01.