

Agenda – Petitions Committee

Meeting Venue:

Committee Room 1 – Senedd

Meeting date: 25 February 2020

Meeting time: 09.00

For further information contact:

Graeme Francis – Committee Clerk

Ross Davies – Deputy Clerk

0300 200 6565

SeneddPetitions@assembly.wales

1 Introduction, apologies, substitutions and declarations of interest

(Pages 1 – 42)

2 New petitions

- 2.1 P-05-938 Make Welsh universities consider the Welsh Baccalaureate as an A Level

(Pages 43 – 51)

- 2.2 P-05-939 Immediate embargo on new dog breeding licences, licence renewals and planning applications until regulations are fit for purpose and enforceable

(Pages 52 – 65)

- 2.3 P-05-941 Biodiversity Remit for NRW

(Pages 66 – 86)

3 Updates to previous petitions

Environment, Energy and Rural Affairs

- 3.1 P-04-477 Support for the Control of Dogs (Wales) Bill

(Pages 87 – 90)

- 3.2 P-05-839 Adopt WHO Guidelines and Introduce a Clean Air Act for Wales

(Pages 91 – 95)



Cynulliad
Cenedlaethol
Cymru

National
Assembly for
Wales

- 3.3 P-05-895 Rosa's Legacy: Introduce a scheme to help people access veterinary care for their companion animals
(Pages 96 – 103)

Housing and Local Government

The following two items will be considered together (3.4 and 3.5):

- 3.4 P-05-786 Save our Countryside – Revise TAN 1
(Pages 104 – 107)
- 3.5 P-05-881 Fix our planning system
(Pages 108 – 109)
- 3.6 P-05-903 Filming and Recording of Council Meetings
(Pages 110 – 111)

Health and Social Services

- 3.7 P-05-736 To Make Mental Health Services More Accessible
(Pages 112 – 119)
- 3.8 P-05-764 Better Mental Health Services for Adults
(Pages 120 – 121)
- 3.9 P-05-812 We call for the Welsh Government to encourage trusts to implement the NICE guidelines for Borderline Personality Disorder or justify why they do not do so
(Pages 122 – 125)
- 3.10 P-05-902 Paternal Mental Health (New Fathers Mental Health)
(Pages 126 – 128)

Education

- 3.11 P-05-860 Make curriculum for life lessons compulsory
(Page 129)

3.12 P-05-861 Make political education a compulsory element of the new national curriculum

(Pages 130 – 132)

3.13 P-05-879 Add Mental Health Education to the mandatory teaching curriculum for all schools in Wales

(Pages 133 – 134)

3.14 P-05-888 Make GCSE Welsh Language compulsory in all schools in Wales

(Pages 135 – 136)

3.15 P-05-925 Don't leave Wales behind – teach menstrual wellbeing in schools

(Pages 137 – 143)

Economy and Transport

3.16 P-05-913 Creation of Lôn Las Môn Multi-Use Path

(Pages 144 – 155)

Politics

3.17 P-05-887 Stop regional AMs elected to represent specific parties from defecting

(Pages 156 – 157)

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Agenda Item 2.1

P-05-938 Make Welsh universities consider the Welsh Baccalaureate as an A Level

This petition was submitted by Bronwen Rosie Clatworthy having collected a total of 71 signatures.

Text of Petition

As it is compulsory for young people studying AS and A Levels to complete the Welsh Baccalaureate, surely universities in Wales should accept the qualification, just like other A levels, for all courses.

Additional Information

An example of courses in Wales that do not accept the Welsh Baccalaureate as an A Level, is Speech and Language Therapy at Cardiff Met University. There are no other Speech and Language Therapy courses in Wales.

Assembly Constituency and Region

- Blaenau Gwent
- South Wales East

P-05-938: Make Welsh universities consider the Welsh Baccalaureate as an A Level

Y Pwyllgor Deisebau | 25 Chwefror 2020
Petitions Committee | 25 February 2020

Reference: RS20/11539/1

Petition Number: P-05-938

Petition title: Make Welsh universities consider the Welsh Baccalaureate as an A Level

Text of petition: As it is compulsory for young people studying AS and A Levels to complete the Welsh Baccalaureate, surely universities in Wales should accept the qualification, just like other A levels, for all courses.

An example of courses in Wales that do not accept the Welsh Baccalaureate as an A Level, is Speech and Language Therapy at Cardiff Met University. There are no other Speech and Language Therapy courses in Wales.

1. Summary

Following a Review of Qualifications for 14 to 19-year-olds in Wales, in September 2015 the new Welsh Baccalaureate (Welsh Bacc) was introduced for teaching with a policy of ‘universal adoption’, meaning it was available to all schools and Further Education (FE) colleges to offer to learners but it is not compulsory for pupils to study. Whilst the Welsh Government have publicly said that “undertaking the Skills Challenge Certificate is not compulsory”, some individual schools have made it compulsory for their students.

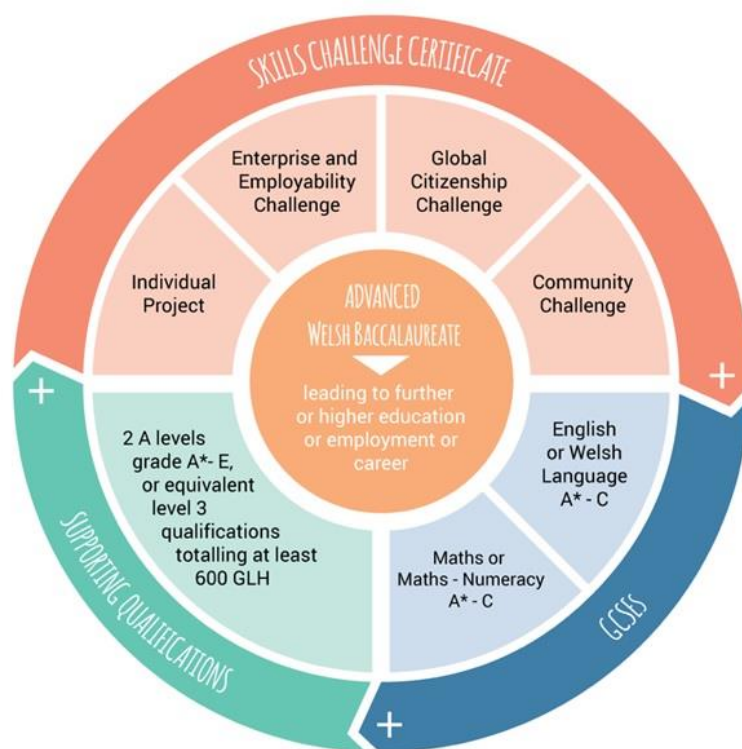


Universities are autonomous bodies who award their own degrees using their degree awarding powers (DAPs). Each university sets its own admission criteria for its own awards. This is known as institutional academic freedom and is set out in the *Higher Education (Wales) Act 2015*. Additional information about academic freedom in legislation can be [found here](#).

Cardiff Metropolitan University does consider the Welsh Bacc for the [Speech and Language Therapy course](#) referred to in the petition.

2. The Welsh Bacc and University offer-making

The Welsh Bacc is based on a combination of qualifications including the Skills Challenge Certificate and can be taken at three levels. The Advanced level of the Welsh Bacc includes the [Advanced Skills Challenge Certificate](#), which is the same “size” as an A-level and also carries UCAS tariff points. The Skills Challenge Certificate is a standalone qualification and it can be awarded without the supporting qualifications that make up the Welsh Bacc. The below diagram, [from the WJEC](#), shows the structure of the Advanced Welsh Bacc.



With regard to how offers can include the Welsh Bacc, the [WJEC says](#) that “all Welsh universities will include the Advanced Skills Challenge Certificate in their

offers". Offers including the Welsh Bacc can be made in several ways, including it being:

- Accepted in the three-grade offer as an alternative to an A-level or vocational qualification;
- Accepted as a fourth grade alongside a reduced three-grade offer (as with the Speech and Language Therapy course at Cardiff Metropolitan University); or
- Accepted in a tariff points offer.

While the Welsh Bacc is accepted within Wales, the picture is not as consistent across the rest of the UK. Other universities, including Oxford and Cambridge, may take a different approach to the above and may not include the Welsh Bacc as part of their A-level grade offer. This picture is made more complex with the potential for individual departments and faculties within large universities to differ in their approach to admissions and including the Welsh Bacc in their offers.

As previously highlighted, universities are autonomous bodies. Section 48 of the Higher Education (Wales) Act 2015, states that the Higher Education Funding Council for Wales (HEFCW) must take into account the importance of protecting academic freedom when exercising its functions. This includes the freedom of Higher Education Institutions (HEIs) "to determine the criteria for the admission of students and apply those criteria in particular cases".

3. Assembly and Welsh Government actions

In September 2018 the Children, Young People and Education (CYPE) Committee began an inquiry into the status of the Welsh Bacc qualification. The Committee found that "there is a lack of clarity about the meaning and implementation of the Welsh Government's universal adoption policy". This led to the Committee's recommendation that, as a matter of priority, the Welsh Government should issue more detailed guidance on the policy of universal adoption.

In November 2019, the Minister wrote to the Chair of the Committee to provide an update on the Welsh Government's work in response to the Committee's recommendations. Addressing the recommendation that guidance should be published on the Welsh Government's policy of universal adoption, the Minister highlighted new guidance on the Welsh Bacc published in October 2019.

This new guidance says that the Welsh Bacc "should be offered to all learners in schools and further education colleges [...but] undertaking the Skills Challenge

Certificate is not compulsory”. It goes on to say that “for some learners, undertaking the Skills Challenge Certificate may not be the right choice, and we therefore need some flexibility”.

When exploring universities acceptance of the Welsh Bacc, the CYPE Committee’s report noted that:

[Its] ability to confirm whether individual universities accepted the qualification were [...] complicated by the fact that admissions policies are generally a matter for – and vary between – individual schools within institutions.

The Committee recommended that “the Welsh Government undertake work to provide a comprehensive list of those universities that accept the Welsh Bacc in their offers”. The Committee suggested that this list should include details on how each university treats the Welsh Bacc. The Welsh Government ‘accepted’ this recommended and said that it “will work with WJEC, Qualifications Wales, UCAS and other stakeholders to ensure that this information is systematically collected [...] and is made accessible”.

During a Plenary debate on the Committee’s report held on 4 February 2019, the Minister for Education, Kirsty Williams AM, said that “I have been provided with a list of selected offers from universities that the WJEC has received that included the Skills Challenge Certificate. There are over 650 courses here”. At the time of writing, neither this list nor the comprehensive list the Committee called for appears to be available in the public domain.

Every effort is made to ensure that the information contained in this briefing is correct at the time of publication. Readers should be aware that these briefings are not necessarily updated or otherwise amended to reflect subsequent changes.



Eich cyf/Your ref P-05-938
Ein cyf/Our ref KW/00012/20

Janet Finch-Saunders AM
Chair, Petitions Committee
National Assembly for Wales
Ty Hywel
Cardiff Bay
Cardiff
CF99 1NA

14 January 2020

Dear Janet Finch-Saunders AM,

Thank you for your letter regarding petition P-05-938, which asks for Welsh universities to accept the Welsh Baccalaureate as an A Level for all courses.

The Welsh Government policy is that we want all learners to benefit from the Welsh Baccalaureate, and achieve the Skills Challenge Certificate, which is one of the qualifications that forms the Advanced Welsh Baccalaureate. By adding essential personal development and employability skills to academic study or vocational qualifications, the Welsh Baccalaureate helps young people to be better prepared for further/higher education, employment and life. It provides an opportunity for our learners to develop the wider skills and knowledge that align with, and build upon, the four purposes of the new curriculum.

In 2018, Qualifications Wales published a review of the Skills Challenge Certificate. In addition, in 2019, the Children, Young People and Education Committee published their inquiry into the Welsh Bacc. The recommendations of both reports are now in the process of being implemented.

In particular, one of the recommendations of the Children, Young People and Education Committee was:

Recommendation 3. That the Welsh Government undertake work to provide a comprehensive list of those universities that accept the Welsh Bacc in their offers. This list should include details of exactly how each university treats the Welsh Bacc, and whether:

- it is accepted as an equivalent A-level;

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Gohebiaeth.Kirsty.Williams@llyw.cymru
Correspondence.Kirsty.Williams@gov.wales

Rydym yn croesawu derbyn gohebiaeth yn Gymraeg. Byddwn yn ateb gohebiaeth a dderbynnir yn Gymraeg yn Gymraeg ac ni fydd gohebu yn Gymraeg yn arwain at oedi.

We welcome receiving correspondence in Welsh. Any correspondence received in Welsh will be answered in Welsh and corresponding in Welsh will not lead to a delay in responding.

- it is used to enable an alternative offer to be made by lowering the grade requirements in other subjects;
- it is considered only as part of a candidate's personal statement.

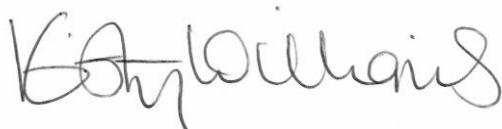
Welsh Government is working with consortia, WJEC, Qualifications Wales and Colegau Cymru to improve how we communicate the Welsh Bacc to all stakeholders, including universities. In addition, Qualifications Wales has a designated member of staff assigned to raising awareness of Welsh qualifications amongst universities. They have prepared an analysis showing the increased inclusion of the Welsh Baccalaureate in offers from all types of universities.

Many universities now include the Advanced Challenge Certificate in offers and the individual project frequently provides good, relevant evidence in supporting statements and interviews even if it isn't accepted as part of the grade offer. The Certificate is recognised as comparable in challenge to an A level and receives the same number of UCAS points. Welsh universities, and a number of Russell Group universities, are clear that they value the Certificate and are taking an increasingly flexible approach to recognising it in their offers. With regard to the specific example provided in the petition, Cardiff Met accept the Welsh Baccalaureate for entry to the Speech and Language Therapy degree – the website states:

Welsh Baccalaureate – Advanced Skills Challenge Certificate, minimum grade B accepted along with three A levels in three clearly separate subject areas, with grades BBB. It is desirable, but not essential, that one or more of these is a science (i.e. biology, chemistry, physics or maths) and that they are academic subjects.

Welsh Government will continue to work with WJEC, Qualifications Wales, UCAS and other stakeholders to ensure that information about which universities accept the Welsh Baccalaureate as part of their offers is systematically collected and continually updated and is made accessible to learners, parents/guardians and schools.

Yours sincerely,



Kirsty Williams AC/AM
Y Gweinidog Addysg
Minister for Education

P-05-938 Make Welsh universities consider the Welsh Baccalaureate as an A Level, Correspondence – Petitioner to Committee, 16.02.20

Dear Ms Williams,

Thank you for your reply about the Welsh Baccalaureate.

Whilst I appreciate that the Welsh Baccalaureate is being increasingly recognised by universities, including Russell group universities, there is a great deal of difference between how different universities take the Welsh Bacc into account. Using it in addition to a personal statement for example, is very different to it being regarded as an acceptable A-level equivalent.

I started this petition when I realised the disparity between how universities regard the Welsh Bacc. I would ask you to consider how this issue has affected my friend Skye Lewis (see her statement below). Although you quote Cardiff Met's reference to the Welsh Bacc for Speech and Language Therapy, they only consider it IN ADDITION TO 3 other A levels. In contrast, to do the same course at Reading, an English university, they will accept the Welsh Bacc AS AN EQUIVALENT TO a third A level. This seems to be extremely unfair, and effectively means that she is unable to study her chosen course in Wales, since she is only studying 2 A levels whilst also working part time for a charity.

I would like recommendation 3 to go further than just compiling a list of universities that accept the Welsh Bacc and raising awareness of the qualification. I would like Welsh Government to be actively encouraging, lobbying and supporting universities (especially Welsh universities) to recognise Welsh Bacc as an A level equivalent.

Thank you,

Bronwen Clatworthy

----- Forwarded message -----

From: **Skye Lewis** [REDACTED]
Date: Sun, 9 Feb 2020 at 20:30
Subject: Cardiff Metropolitan University & SLT
To: [REDACTED]

Hi Bronwen,

Here's an account of how the university situation affected me:

With Cardiff Metropolitan University being the only university in Wales to offer a Speech and Language Therapy degree, I was extremely disheartened to find out that they were ignorant to the fact that the Advanced Welsh Baccalaureate is advertised as being equivalent to /counting as an A Level. Being a Welsh student and someone who very much enjoys the comfort of studying near their home, finding out that I wouldn't be accepted or even so much as considered to study there made things very scary and created a lot of worries for me and my family. Moving away was never something I had considered both for personal reasons but also for financial reasons, so not being able to study my for my dream career where I had set my hopes to study caused a series of

questions to arise: do I find an alternative career that I'm less passionate about and study in Wales, or do I look at alternative universities and broaden my horizons to a new place? Both of which were very daunting options.

I am very aware that A levels are a crucial part to being equipped to do such a degree and proving your academic capability is vital, however I feel as though everyone should be considered on an individual basis as there may be other factors that will help them just as much. For example, this university wouldn't even look at my application because I would only have obtained two A Levels instead of three. However, whilst working towards those two A levels, both being significantly beneficial to the degree I had chosen, I am also carrying out two years of the Welsh baccalaureate qualification in one and working in a Hospice. Having taken two years out of studying to work at the Hospice and gain vital work experience and knowledge that I most certainly would never have gained from college alone, I felt as though it would be more beneficial to me and to future employers to only work on two A Levels plus the Welsh Baccalaureate and therefore be able to keep my role in the Hospice. This role has given me vital insider information about people with life threatening illnesses and how to interact with patients and the bereaved effectively, and much more. These skills I wouldn't have been able to achieve studying three A levels, yet such skills are equally important for Speech and Language Therapists.

Having spoken to admissions tutors at Cardiff Metropolitan University and discovering that they believed not having three A Levels showed them I wasn't academically strong enough and couldn't balance the workload was deeply disheartening, given the workload I currently maintain. Throughout school I achieved all A*/A grades and my A Levels were predicted to be A*A*A (one being the Welsh baccalaureate), which I feel demonstrates my work ethic and personality better than an additional A Level would, yet none of that information mattered.

Additionally, I was confused to learn that the majority of other universities, including Cardiff University, accepted the Welsh Baccalaureate in lieu of an A Level for courses such as Medicine - this to me doesn't make sense. Shouldn't we be trying to encourage Welsh students to excel in Welsh universities, like Cardiff University do for courses arguably more intense? Other universities I looked into for the Speech and Language Therapy degree also were keen to accept the Welsh Baccalaureate in lieu, despite not being as involved in what the qualification entails. The other universities were extremely impressed with the work experience I have gained and the way in which I demonstrated how these skills could be transferred, and all were very generous to offer me a place and voluntarily give me personal feedback about the quality of my interview. Whilst this is not meant to be boastful of the other outcomes as these were not expected, especially after such a certain rejection from Cardiff Metropolitan, I hope this highlights everyone has different skills that are applicable and not all routes to obtaining those skills have to be the same. Just because someone doesn't have three A Levels as well as the Welsh baccalaureate, doesn't mean they are incapable of being an outstanding student. It was a real knock to my confidence, being someone who doesn't have much to begin with and nearly caused me to change career paths.

In conclusion, I believe the system should be revised if a qualification that is considered compulsory and advertised as the equivalent to an A Level is not enough to be considered in a WELSH University as an A level. If it is a good enough qualification for medical students in Cardiff University and majority of others in the UK, why are Welsh Speech and Language Therapy students being deprived of that same chance at Cardiff Metropolitan University?

Best wishes,

Skye Lewis

Agenda Item 2.2

P-05-939 Immediate embargo on new dog breeding licences, licence renewals and planning applications until regulations are fit for purpose and enforceable

This petition was submitted by C.A.R.I.A.D. having collected a total of 1,738 signatures.

Text of Petition

Following the BBC One Wales documentary on Monday 30th September 2019 highlighting the appalling state of the licensed, legal, regulated puppy farming trade in Wales, the failures of the inspection process, the inconsistencies and inaccuracies of Council licensing inspection reports and the often disturbing guidance provided to licensing inspectors (who are not animal welfare experts) by vets on the fitness of dogs to be bred from, we are calling on the Minister to intervene with immediate effect and instruct all Welsh Councils to embargo any further licensing, licensing renewal and planning applications relating to dog breeding until such time as there has been a full inquiry into these failures: Failures that we have been providing evidence on for years to both the Welsh Government and councils and which has summarily been ignored or dismissed. There is absolutely no point in the further issuing of dog breeding licences under the circumstances we have cited. To do otherwise would be to condone a broken licensing system, endanger the welfare of breeding dogs and puppies in these establishments and provide the public with a false sense of security believing that licensing as it stands means an establishment is satisfactory to purchase a canine companion from. It is clear that there is little for the public to discern between a licensed and unlicensed puppy farm and as the Minister has herself made a commitment to run puppy farming out of Wales it stands to reason that she will be of a mind to take the most urgent and appropriate action to see that this happens now. Whilst we welcome the promised urgent review of the current licensing system, this does not go far enough. Until such time as new, robust, fit for purpose regulations are laid by the Welsh Government, no further licensing, licence renewals or planning applications for new dog breeding establishments or extensions to existing breeding establishments should be approved.

Assembly Constituency and Region

- Cardiff North
- South Wales Central

P-05-939 Immediate embargo on new dog breeding licences, licence renewals and planning applications until regulations are fit for purpose and enforceable.

Y Pwyllgor Deisebau | 25 Chwefror 2019
Petitions Committee | 25 February 2019

Reference: RS20/11539-2

Petition Number: P-05-939

Petition title: Immediate embargo on new dog breeding licences, licence renewals and planning applications until regulations are fit for purpose and enforceable.

Text of petition: Following the BBC One Wales documentary on Monday 30th September 2019 highlighting the appalling state of the licensed, legal, regulated puppy farming trade in Wales, the failures of the inspection process, the inconsistencies and inaccuracies of Council licensing inspection reports and the often disturbing guidance provided to licensing inspectors (who are not animal welfare experts) by vets on the fitness of dogs to be bred from, we are calling on the Minister to intervene with immediate effect and instruct all Welsh Councils to embargo any further licensing, licensing renewal and planning applications relating to dog breeding until such time as there has been a full inquiry into these failures: Failures that we have been providing evidence on for years to both the Welsh Government and councils and which has summarily been ignored or dismissed. There is absolutely no point in the further issuing of dog breeding licences under the circumstances we have cited. To do otherwise would be to condone a broken licensing system, endanger the welfare of breeding dogs and puppies in these establishments and provide the public with a false sense of security believing that licensing as it stands means an establishment is satisfactory to purchase a canine companion from. It is clear that there is little for the public to discern between a licensed and unlicensed puppy farm and as the Minister has herself made a commitment to run puppy farming out of Wales it stands to reason that she will be of a mind to take the most urgent and appropriate action to see that this happens now. Whilst we welcome the promised urgent review of the current licensing system, this does not go far



enough. Until such time as new, robust, fit for purpose regulations are laid by the Welsh Government, no further licensing, licence renewals or planning applications for new dog breeding establishments or extensions to existing breeding establishments should be approved.

1. Background

Animal Welfare (Breeding of Dogs) (Wales) Regulations 2014

The Welsh Government introduced the *Animal Welfare (Breeding of Dogs) (Wales) Regulations 2014* ('2014 Regulations') with the aim to improve standards of dog breeding. The Regulations came into force on 30 April 2015. The 2014 Regulations replaced the *Breeding of Dogs Act 1973* in Wales and introduced stricter welfare criteria for dog breeding. The 2014 Regulations:

- require the licensing of breeders who keep three or more breeding bitches and either breed, sell, supply or advertise breeding or puppies for sale from their premises;
- introduce stricter welfare standards for breeding establishments;
- require breeders to adopt socialisation, enhancement and enrichment programmes for their animals; and
- create a minimum staff to adult dog ratio.

Enforcement of the Regulations is undertaken by local authorities. In April 2018, the Welsh Government published [Dog breeding establishments: guidance for local authorities](#). There have been examples of [prosecutions](#) where breeders have continued to breed and sell puppies without a licence.

Several animal welfare charities are concerned that the current Regulations do not go far enough to protect the health and welfare of the dogs. For example RSPCA Cymru's [Delivering for a decade: 10 years of the Animal Welfare Act in Wales: 2007-2017 \(PDF 1.37MB\)](#) (page 16) outlines the RSPCA's continued concerns around dog breeding, particularly around staff to dog ratios. It sets out a recommendation:

While a positive step forward, the minimum one staff member to 20 breeding bitches ratio threatens to undermine the purpose of the regulations. Sadly, this ratio excludes puppies. Given that one breeding bitch could have a litter of up

to 10 puppies, RSPCA Cymru fears this ratio will provide a legal safeguard to a situation whereby one attendant faces the prospect of caring for more than 200 dogs and puppies at once – allowing little over 120 seconds to provide for each animal in a working day. RSPCA Cymru has long argued that any minimum staffing ratio should take into account puppies, studs and bitches.

Respondents to the Welsh Government's consultation on Third Party Sales of Puppies and Kittens (February 2019) referred to the 'inability' of local authorities to 'properly inspect' licenced breeding establishments because of a 'lack of resources and limited training'.

There have been renewed calls for regulation of puppy farms following a BBC documentary which highlighted welfare issues in some breeding establishments.

This petition is calling for a ban on dog breeding until the Regulations are 'fit for purpose and enforceable'. It is important to note that this is different from the high profile Lucy's Law campaign which relates to a third party sales ban which would mean that pet shops, pet dealers and other outlets and licensed sellers of puppies and kittens would be unable to sell these pets unless they had bred them themselves.

2. Welsh Government action

The Welsh Government has committed to reviewing the 2014 Regulations. Following the aforementioned BBC documentary, the Minister for Environment, Energy and Rural Affairs made a written statement on 9 October 2019 setting out further urgent action to regulate the industry:

I have written to the Wales Animal Health and Welfare Framework Group to accept their offer of help and request an urgent and immediate review of our dog breeding regulations. The review will include full consideration of any current barriers to enforcement and how impartial veterinary advice is provided during the licensing and inspection process.

I have written to all Local Authority CEOs to raise concerns and invite relevant representatives to a meeting with the Chief Veterinary Officer for Wales to discuss the licensing process, enforcement and barriers to it.

The Chief Veterinary Officer for Wales immediately referred the BBC programme to the Royal College of Veterinary Surgeons.

Officials are developing a campaign aimed at members of the public who may be considering purchasing a puppy highlighting the importance of sourcing responsibly.

In correspondence with the Climate Change, Environment and Rural Affairs (CCERA) Committee (item 4.2) (17 January 2020) the Minister set out timescales for the review:

The report of the review of the Animal Welfare (Dog Breeding) (Wales) Regulations 2014 was originally due on 31 December 2019. Following a slight delay it was submitted on 7 January. My officials will submit recommendations on next steps to me after full analysis of the report. At this stage, I can confirm the report has recommended a revision of the 2014 Regulations. This includes many of the issues you have raised such as reviewing the current inspection system, staff to adult dog ratio, tackling illegal breeders and addressing barriers to enforcement.

In the Minister's letter to the Petitions Committee (15 January 2020) she says (emphasis added):

Any changes to legislation or to enforcement must be proportionate and evidence based. Dog breeding is a legitimate business and the majority of breeders meet the required welfare standards. **There are approximately 260 licenced breeders in Wales and it would not be appropriate to implement a moratorium which would penalise lawful breeders for the actions of others.**

3. National Assembly for Wales action

The Petitions Committee has recently considered two related petitions:

- P-05-915: Call for better enforcement of puppy farms in Wales: and
- P-05-856: Ban the sale of puppies by pet shops and all commercial 3rd party dealers in Wales.

The issue of dog breeding has been the subject of discussion in Plenary several times in recent years. This has included calls for the Welsh Government to review the 2014 Regulations.

The issue was most recently discussed in Plenary on 29 January 2020 when the Minister committed to publishing a report and recommendations of the Animal Health and Welfare Framework Group following February recess. She said:

The recommendations are comprehensive and include enforcement, training of local authority officials and vets, amendments to licence conditions, as well as consideration of other legislation linked to the breeding and selling of dogs.

The CCERA Committee has raised the issue of animal welfare and dog breeding several times. The Committee questioned the Minister on this policy area most recently during budget scrutiny on 16 January 2020. The Minister recognised there could be additional financial implications for local authorities in the enforcement of further regulation. However, these would vary depending on the number of puppy farms in the region. She suggested this could be mitigated through collaboration by local authorities in order to maximise resources and expertise. The Minister acknowledged that additional funding for local authorities might be necessary eventually after all such opportunities had been exhausted.

The CCERA Committee recommended in its budget report that:

The Minister should report back to the Committee on any discussions she has had with the Minister for Local Government and Housing and local authorities about how the costs arising from her proposed animal welfare interventions will be met.

The CCERA Committee is awaiting a response to its report.

Every effort is made to ensure that the information contained in this briefing is correct at the time of publication. Readers should be aware that these briefings are not necessarily updated or otherwise amended to reflect subsequent changes.



Ein cyf/Our ref: LG/00062/20

Janet Finch – Saunders AM
Chair of the Petitions Committee

Government.Committee.Business@gov.wales

15 January 2020

Dear Janet

Petition P-05-939 Immediate embargo on new dog breeding licences, licence renewals and planning applications until regulations are fit for purpose and enforceable

Thank you for your email of 8 January regarding petition P-05-939.

Animal welfare and the responsible ownership of animals are priorities for the Welsh Government and the Wales Animal Health and Welfare Framework Group. We are committed to maintaining high standards of welfare for all animals kept in Wales at all stages of their lives.

I had already committed to reviewing the Animal Welfare (Breeding of Dogs) (Wales) Regulations 2014 and also made my intentions clear on the value I see in banning third party sales of puppies and kittens. Following the recent broadcast of a BBC Wales Investigation programme, I appreciate urgent action is needed in this area. With this in mind:

- I accepted the offer of help from the Wales Animal Health and Welfare Framework Group and requested an urgent and immediate review of the dog breeding regulations. The work commenced in November and has recently concluded. Officials received the report on Tuesday and a decision how best to address the issues will be made following full consideration of the recommendations.
- The Chief Veterinary Officer has met with Local Authority Chief Executive Officers to discuss barriers to enforcement. The Welsh Local Government Association was also represented. I have been advised the meeting was very productive and officials are considering the next steps.

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Rydym yn croesawu derbyn gohebiaeth yn Gymraeg. Byddwn yn ateb gohebiaeth a dderbynnir yn Gymraeg yn Gymraeg ac ni fydd gohebu yn Gymraeg yn arwain at oedi.

Pack Page 59

We welcome receiving correspondence in Welsh. Any correspondence received in Welsh will be answered in Welsh and corresponding in Welsh will not lead to a delay in responding.

- The Chief Veterinary Officer immediately referred the BBC programme to the Royal College of Veterinary Surgeons.
- Officials launched a social media campaign on the run up to Christmas, aimed at prospective puppy purchasers, highlighting the importance of sourcing responsibly.

The Welsh Government will continue to work with key stakeholders, including Local Authorities and the other Administrations to ensure we introduce changes which will have a lasting impact on the welfare standards of dogs and cats bred in Wales.

Any changes to the legislation or to enforcement must be proportionate and evidence based. Dog breeding is a legitimate business and the majority of breeders meet the required welfare standards. There are approximately 260 licenced breeders in Wales and it would not be appropriate to implement a moratorium which would penalise lawful breeders for the actions of others.



Lesley Griffiths AC/AM

Gweinidog yr Amgylchedd, Ynni a Materion Gwledig
Minister for Environment, Energy and Rural Affairs

P-05-939 Immediate embargo on new dog breeding licences, licence renewals and planning applications until regulations are fit for purpose and enforceable, Correspondence – Petitioner to Committee, 12.02.20



C.A.R.I.A.D. RESPONSE TO COMMUNICATION RECEIVED BY THE CHAIR OF THE PETITIONS COMMITTEE FROM LESLEY GRIFFITHS, MINISTER FOR ENVIRONMENT, ENERGY AND RURAL AFFAIRS

P-05-939

Dear Petitions Committee,

We thank you for considering our petition requesting an immediate embargo on new dog breeding licences, licence renewals and planning applications until regulations are fit for purpose and enforceable.

We launched this petition in response to the BBC One Wales documentary aired on Monday 30th September 2019 highlighting the appalling state of the licensed, legal, regulated puppy farming trade in Wales. We worked extensively with the BBC producer over 18 months providing evidence of the failures of the inspection process, the inconsistencies and inaccuracies of Council licensing inspection reports and the often disturbing guidance provided to the licensing inspectors (who are not animal welfare experts) by vets on the fitness of dogs to be bred from.

In addition, we have been providing such evidence to the Minister's own department supporting these failings for many years which have not been acted upon. In particular, we have cited areas where Councils are unable to enforce the current regulations by their own admissions and which have frustrated the process of prosecution. These areas include the staff:dog ratio and the socialisation and enrichment programmes.

I will now respond directly to the Minister's correspondence, paragraph by paragraph so that it is clear why this generic response that many people have now received from her office is so deeply disappointing and in many areas, extremely worrying. We believe it is imperative that members of the Petitions Committee are fully apprised of underlying issues in regards to the present crisis in puppy farming and puppy dealing in Wales.

"Animal welfare and the responsible ownership of animals are priorities for the Welsh Government and the Wales Animal Health and Welfare Framework Group. We are committed to maintaining high standards of welfare for all animals kept in Wales at all stages of their lives."

With all due respect, we wouldn't expect the Minister of any government to state anything to the contrary. It is however a statement that only has credence if there is concrete evidence

of these 'high standards' which at present there is not in the case of puppy farming, puppy dealing and dog breeding in Wales.

I had already committed to reviewing the Animal Welfare (Breeding of Dogs) (Wales) Regulations 2014 and also made clear on the value I see in banning third party sales of puppies and kittens.

Yes, the Minister has said this on a number of occasions over the last 2 years and was in fact a speaker at our Lucy's Law For Wales event at the Senedd on 11th July 2018. Since then she has also stated in television interviews that it is her desire to 'run puppy farming out of Wales'. In the meantime, England will be proceeding with this 3rd party ban from 6th April this year. Wales is already falling far behind its neighbours with Scotland, Northern Ireland and now Ireland having greater traction in this area than Wales.

Following the recent broadcast of a BBC Wales Investigation programme, I appreciate urgent action is needed in this area. With this in mind:

I accepted the offer of help from the Wales Animal Health and Welfare Framework Group and requested an urgent and immediate review of the dog breeding regulations. The work commenced in November and has recently concluded. Officials received the report on Tuesday and a decision how best to address the issues will be made following full consideration of the recommendations.

The Chief Veterinary Officer has met with Local Authority Chief Executive Officers to discuss barriers to enforcement. The Welsh Local Government Association was also represented. I have been advised the meeting was very productive and officials are considering the next steps.

The Chief Veterinary Officer immediately referred the BBC programme to the Royal College of Veterinary Surgeons.

Officials launched a social media campaign on the run up to Christmas, aimed at prospective puppy purchasers, highlighting the importance of sourcing responsibly.

It is alarming and distressing that it took a BBC One Wales Investigation – in effect a public shaming of the Minister's department - to prompt urgent action, when the very same issues have been shared with this Government time and again over many years.

We are extremely concerned that advice being given to the Minister on how to proceed may be coming from inappropriate sources. For example, The Wales Animal Health and Welfare Framework Group consists largely of representatives from the farming industry. And it is worth noting that the credentials of the key members of this group are as follows (taken from the group's website):

Abi Reader: Abi is a 3rd generation dairy farmer in South Wales and has been farming for more than 10 years. Abi manages a 750 acre farm which comprises of a mixed dairy herd of Holstein Friesians and Dairy Shorthorns. Abi was elected as NFU Cymru County chairman in 2014. Off the farm, Abi is involved in hosting farm open days and charity events.

Les Eckford: Les has spent most of his professional life in government veterinary service (1979- 2016), including within the Welsh Government as a veterinary adviser. Now retired, Les represents Wales as regional officer of the British Veterinary Association since 2017. He has extensive experience of engaging with a wide range of people, from farmers to senior policy makers and representatives of organisations, with diverse interests in animal health

and welfare. Les interacts with veterinary students to raise awareness of animal welfare needs in food production animals.

Chair: Stephen James was appointed as the chair of the WAHWFG in July 2018. His term of appointment is 3 years. He has a wealth of experience in the farming sector, held the position of NFU Cymru President for 2 terms, and was director and chairman of the successful farmers' cooperative.

David Davies, who runs a farming enterprise and property letting business. David is also chairman of the Welsh Advisory Board of NFU Mutual Insurance and former president of the Welsh Dairy Show and former Chair of Hybu Cig Cymru.

Moss Jones, director of the Welsh Agricultural Organisation Society and managing director of Quality Welsh Food Certification Ltd. Moss is also company secretary of Welsh Lamb & Beef Producers Ltd, Livestock Marketing and president of South Caernarfon Creameries.

Sara Carr: Current BVA Welsh branch president, Sarah graduated from Liverpool Veterinary School in 2004. Sarah went on to spend some time as a locum vet in her native Somerset before volunteering for a donkey and mule charity in Morocco. Once back in the UK, Sarah joined a rural mixed veterinary practice in Monmouthshire, where she gained experience in farm animal practice, before moving to Abbey Equine Clinic in 2009 to further develop her skills as an equine vet. Sarah also has a particular interest in modern equine dentistry and in 2014 passed her BEVA/BVDA exams. Outside of work, Sarah runs her own flock of crossbred commercial ewes, which keeps her in touch with the agricultural sector in Wales.

Ifan Lloyd, veterinary surgeon in clinical practice and a senior partner of a veterinary group with surgeries in Swansea and Neath. Ifan is the Welsh regional representative on the British Veterinary Association (BVA) Council.

Paula Boyden: Paula graduated from the Royal Veterinary College in 1992, spending 11 years in general practice before joining Intervet/Schering-Plough Animal Health as a veterinary adviser in 2003. She joined Dogs Trust as deputy veterinary director in June 2010 and became veterinary director in August 2011.

With all due respect, in what possible capacity is this group the most suitable or impartial to be considering what is best for domestic companion animals when it comprises those with experience and interests in livestock farming, food production, the NFU and even a dog charity that lobbied against the introduction of Lucy's Law in England?

It is worth noting that in previous years representatives from the NFU have spoken in favour of large-scale puppy farmers being granted licences despite our evidence showing that the welfare of the dogs involved would be compromised. Again, and with all due respect, why has the Minister not reached out to those who have the best interest of companion animals - dogs (and cats) at heart - and who are experts in the area of puppy farming and puppy dealing; Those who have worked tirelessly for over a decade at the coalface of the problem and know intimately how and where the system can be improved to ensure not only dogs (and cats) are at the heart of any 'welfare' strategy, but that Councils are able to fulfil their duties in terms of licensing and enforcement, and the public are protected? Surely collaboration is key to any such success?

Our concerns about the suitability of advice from this group have not been allayed having read the Wales Animal Health and Welfare Framework Implementation Plan 2019-20 where effectively just one page was devoted to a top line summary on 'Dog Breeding/Third Party Sales in a document that is 34 pages long and is predominantly focussed on issues

pertaining to livestock – e.g. cows, sheep, pigs and chickens, disease prevention and biosecurity.

The Committee will of course be aware that dogs are not livestock, but are domestic companion animals and as such that dog breeding is a complex and specialised area where an understanding of genetics and health testing is now playing a significant role in determining the health of breeding dogs and their progeny, as is the psychological health of breeding dogs in passing on a temperament that is suited to living in a family environment. It is just one of many reasons why dogs are not suitable to be 'farmed'. Equally it is disappointing that the focus on this small excerpt of the 2019-20 plan remains on the puppies and not on the welfare of the breeding dogs themselves. Even when these adult dogs are acknowledged with "appropriate retirement of breeding bitches" there is a failure to mention stud dogs.

What has become clear over the years is that there is now a very real need for the creation of a separate unit devoted to companion animal welfare issues rather than this being given cursory consideration through a department where the primary objectives are those of farming and agriculture.

In terms of the social media campaign launched by officials in the run up to Christmas, we appreciate the effort that was made to create such a campaign. However, in our opinion the contents fell short of having any significant value to the public and we cannot help feeling that perhaps in a rush to put something out there due to the urgency of the current situation, whoever provided the guidance to the Welsh Government for the content of this online campaign is not well-versed in the area of puppy farming/puppy dealing or how puppy buyers can truly protect themselves from those who are dedicated to profiting from animal suffering. The importance of seeking the best knowledge base for any future campaigns on this subject cannot be stressed enough and we remain at the service of the Welsh Government in that capacity should they wish to create a dialogue with us at any time.

The Welsh Government will continue to work with key stakeholders, including Local Authorities and the other Administrations to ensure we introduce changes which will have a lasting impact on the welfare standards of dogs and cats bred in Wales.

To date, C.A.R.I.A.D. – considered to be a key stakeholder in this area in other nations within the United Kingdom has not been consulted or contacted with a view to working with the Welsh Government. Our evidence, however, has been presented to the Task and Finish Group via our Associate Membership of the Companion Animal Welfare Group for Wales.

Any changes to the legislation or to enforcement must be proportionate and evidence based. Dog breeding is a legitimate business and the majority of breeders meet the required welfare standards.

It is true that any changes to legislation or enforcement must be evidence based. And that evidence has been provided over many years now. It is indisputable. It is also worth reminding the Minister that at the time of implementation of the 2014 (Breeding of Dog) (Wales) Regulations, a 12-month review of these regulations was promised. This was then pushed back to 2 years. Then 3 years. And now here we are in 2020 and we are expected to remain patient for action to finally be taken. During those wasted years the number of dogs and puppies that have suffered horrendous neglect and exploitation in Wales will never be known, but we do know that they have been and continue to be substantial in number.

There are approximately 260 licensed breeders in Wales and it would not be appropriate to implement a moratorium which would penalise lawful breeders for the actions of others.

In conclusion, only in the last sentence of the Minister's final paragraph is the subject of our e-petition acknowledged. Whilst there may be 260 licensed dog breeders in Wales, the overwhelming number of dogs being bred are coming from licensed puppy farms due to their high-volume nature. The Minister states that to implement a moratorium would penalise lawful breeders for the actions of others. We strongly disagree. It is in fact doing the smaller number of high welfare home breeders a huge disservice to continue licensing new puppy farms, renewing their licences or accepting planning applications from them when to do so under the current broken system only insures the suffering of breeding dogs and puppies to continue on such a large scale. There is a huge difference between a high welfare dog breeder and a high-volume puppy farmer. Continuing to accept puppy farming as in any way comparable to that of high welfare dog breeders is exactly what is penalising those individuals and ensuring that they cannot operate on a level playing field.

Our calls for an embargo are genuine and to put this into context, if a product is found to be faulty and to potentially be harmful, a company issues a recall of that product until it is 'fit for purpose'. Whilst we in no way compare sentient beings to 'products' – despite the fact that in law they continue to be considered commodities – we do believe the similarity of allowing the continuation of a failed licensing system that is proven to cause harm, is a relevant comparison and should not be dismissed.

If statements made by the Minister that the Welsh Government intends to act with urgency in this regard, an immediate embargo should be completely within the scope of acceptable action as it would cause little inconvenience to those breeders who are committed to high welfare standards. Our fear, however, is that despite all statements to the contrary, revised 'fit for purpose' regulations including the 3rd party ban on puppy and kitten selling (Lucy's Law) will not be laid in Wales until just prior to the Welsh Assembly elections in 2021. We and the Welsh public seek assurances to the contrary and urge the Petitions Committee to continue to press the Minister for confirmation of a firm date for the implementation of such legislation as a matter of urgency.

Kind regards,

Linda Goodman

Linda Goodman
Founder
C.A.R.I.A.D.

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Agenda Item 2.3

P-05-941 Biodiversity Remit for NRW

This petition was submitted by Initiative for Nature Conservation Cymru (INCC) having collected 873 signatures online and 322 on paper, a total of 1,195 signatures.

Text of Petition

The Initiative for Nature Conservation Cymru (INCC) is calling on the National Assembly for Wales to urge the Welsh Government to explicitly include 'Biodiversity' when setting their strategic remit to Natural Resources Wales (NRW) for 2020 / 2021 and in future. Specifically the remit should include:

- NRW will ensure that biodiversity is central to its core purpose of pursuing sustainable management of natural resources by:
 1. Working towards an overall improvement in the status of Welsh wildlife and preventing or at least minimising the risk of any further extinctions as a consequence of human activities.
 2. Establishing sustainable, bigger and less fragmented areas for wildlife, this should initially focus on the consolidation and extensions to existing National Nature Reserves and other protected areas, followed by the establishment of new areas.
 3. Prioritising the need to obtain favourable or recovering status for conservation features on all statutory nature conservation sites (SPAs, SACs, SSSIs and NNRs).
 4. Developing and improving an effective network of Marine Protected Areas which are sufficient to ensure the adequate protection of marine life and sustainable fisheries around Wales.
 5. Ensure that more people are actively engaged with biodiversity issues, and aware of the significance of biodiversity to their health and wellbeing.

Additional Information

Since the inauguration of NRW six years ago, there has been a steady and noticeable deterioration in Wales' commitment toward biodiversity and nature conservation. Wales has been described as one of the most nature depleted areas of the world having already caused the extinction of many of its native plant and animal species. A great number of the species that do remain are now rare or threatened, surviving in fragments of their often isolated habitats.

INCC believes that the people of Wales and the wildlife they share their community with deserve better. Greater commitment from Welsh Government and NRW is required if Wales is to stand any chance of reversing the declines in biodiversity and preventing further wildlife extinctions from occurring.

An effective way of demonstrating this commitment toward reversing the decline in biodiversity would be to ensure that the Welsh Government explicitly includes 'Biodiversity' as part of the NRW strategic remit.

Given the continued losses to wildlife and the perceived lack of prioritisation toward nature conservation within NRW, it is clear that 'Biodiversity' cannot simply remain as an implied part of NRW's functions. It has to be made explicit and given the appropriate prioritisation.

If there is no change, future wildlife extinctions in Wales are inevitable.

Assembly Constituency and Region

- Carmarthen East and Dinefwr
- Mid and West Wales

P-05-941: Biodiversity remit for NRW

Y Pwyllgor Deisebau | 25 Chwefror 2020
Petitions Committee | 25 February 2020

Reference: RS20/11539-4

Petition Number: P-05-941

Petition title: Biodiversity remit for NRW

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conservation. Wales has been described as one of the most nature depleted areas of the world having already caused the extinction of many of its native plant and animal species. A great number of the species that do remain are now rare or threatened, surviving in fragments of their often isolated habitats.

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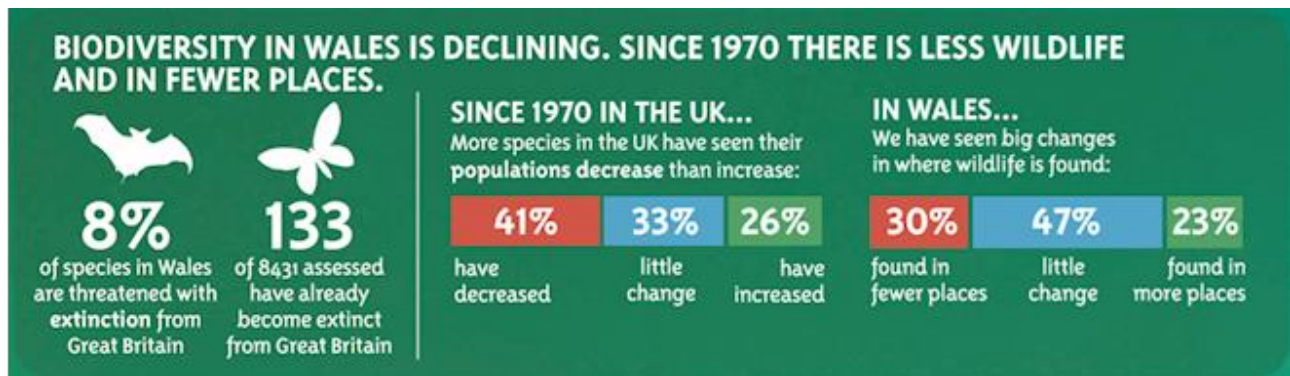
1. Background

1.1. Trends in Biodiversity

Biodiversity is defined in the *Environment (Wales) Act 2016* ('the Environment Act') as "the diversity of living organisms, whether at the genetic, species or ecosystem level".

The UK missed the *Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD) target* to halt biodiversity loss by 2010. In October 2010, at the 10th Conference of the Parties to the CBD, the Parties adopted a new "*Strategic Plan for Biodiversity 2011-2020*" along with 20 "Aichi targets". A 2019 *review* of the UK's actions on the Aichi targets showed that, for some targets, progress was at an "insufficient rate". The UK is therefore also likely to miss some of the Aichi targets.

Natural Resources Wales's (NRW) State of Natural Resources Interim Report 2019 cites the *UK State of Nature report 2019*; "since rigorous scientific monitoring began in the 1970s, of the 3,902 species assessed in Wales, 73 have been lost". It also provides the following infographic:



Source: [State of Nature Report 2019](#) cited in [State of Natural Resources Interim Report 2019](#)

A [NRW Board paper](#) (PDF 3.2MB), from 21 November 2019, provides the following context:

...currently no ecosystem in Wales has been assessed as having good resilience and many will not be adaptable enough to be [sic] deal with pressures including climate change and the impact of invasive non-native species (INNS). Biodiversity continues to decline. The extent of some habitats has declined significantly and connectivity between habitats has reduced. Ecosystem condition, based on designated site features, is mixed, but 55% of species and 75% habitat features on [Natura 2000 sites](#) have been found to be in unfavourable condition.

1.2. Background to NRW

NRW was established on 1 April 2013 when the responsibilities, assets and staff of the Countryside Council for Wales, Environment Agency Wales and the Forestry Commission Wales were brought together.

Alongside a wide range of operational and regulatory responsibilities, NRW is the principal adviser to the Welsh Government on issues relating to natural resources. NRW, as a Welsh Government Sponsored Body, is accountable to the Welsh Ministers through the Sponsorship Minister (currently the Minister for Environment, Energy and Rural Affairs, Lesley Griffiths) and subject to scrutiny by the relevant Assembly Committees.

1.2.a. NRW's general purpose

[Section 5](#) of the Environment Act re-aligns NRW's general purpose to pursue the 'sustainable management of natural resources' (SMNR) in relation to Wales and apply the principles of SMNR.

The SMNR principles are introduced in section 4 of the Environment Act and help to guide and underpin the way SMNR should be interpreted. They include (emphasis added):

take account of the resilience of ecosystems, in particular the following aspects—

- (i) **diversity between and within ecosystems;**
- (ii) the connections between and within ecosystems;
- (iii) the scale of ecosystems;
- (iv) the condition of ecosystems (including their structure and functioning);
- (v) the adaptability of ecosystems.

However, the definition and objective of SMNR in the Environment Act do not explicitly refer to “biodiversity”.

The Welsh Government has produced a guidance document on the purpose of NRW under the Environment Act, which states that:

Action on biodiversity is embedded in the sustainable management of natural resources delivery framework, ensuring that biodiversity is considered as an essential element to contribute to the resilience of ecosystems.

The guidance document states that, in particular, action on biodiversity is embedded:

...in the principles of SMNR (the attributes of ecosystem resilience include biodiversity) and the Natural Resources Policy which sets out the requirement for resilient ecological networks as a priority for action.

Information on the Natural Resources Policy is included in section 2 of this briefing.

1.2.b. Biodiversity and Resilience of Ecosystems Duty

Welsh Government’s guidance document on the purpose of NRW also refers to Section 6 of the Environment Act, which (emphasis added):

introduced **a stronger biodiversity and resilience of ecosystems duty** for public authorities in Wales, which includes Natural Resources Wales.

Section 6 of the Act places a duty on public authorities, including NRW, to:

... seek to maintain and enhance biodiversity in the exercise of functions in relation to Wales, and in so doing promote the resilience of ecosystems, so far as consistent with the proper exercise of those functions.

Under the Environment Act, a public authority other than a Minister of the Crown or government department must prepare and publish a plan setting out what it proposes to do to comply with this duty. Welsh Government's reporting guidance (PDF 444 KB) for section 6 states that:

...for NRW, action for biodiversity is embedded in their statutory requirements for the sustainable management of natural resources, so reporting on that in their annual report fulfils the requirement for a section 6 report.

1.3. NRW's remit letter

NRW received its 2019-20 remit letter from the Welsh Government in March 2019. The letter sets out the Welsh Government's strategic remit for NRW during 2019-20.

The letter reiterates NRW's core purpose as being 'to pursue the sustainable management of natural resources'. **It does not explicitly refer to "biodiversity".**

The letter highlights the development of Area Statements as a priority, which need to be produced by March 2020. Area Statements are a requirement under the Environment Act and must identify priorities, risks and opportunities for SMNR. NRW must take all reasonable steps to implement an Area Statement, and encourage others to take such steps.

NRW's remit letter also highlights the development of the second State of Natural Resources Report, which is also a requirement of the Environment Act. This report is an assessment of the state and trends of natural resources in Wales and considers the extent to which sustainable management of natural resources is being achieved. An interim report was published in December 2020.

In addition, further priorities specified in the remit letter include:

- Preparation for EU exit;
- Renewable energy – production and investment in technology;
- Flood alleviation, coastal adaptation and climate change;
- Woodland management, regulation and creation;
- Waste;
- Brexit and our Land;
- Agricultural pollution and enforcement;
- Clean Air Bill; and
- Access to green spaces.

As discussed, “biodiversity” is not explicitly listed.

1.4. NRW’s action on biodiversity

1.4.a. Vital Nature Report

Vital nature: Making the connections between biodiversity and the people and places of Wales is NRW’s strategic steer for biodiversity to 2022; it is a statement of its priorities, direction of travel and ways of working. The report states that the actions it proposes “will need to be built into our annual business planning processes. They will be translated into more detailed and prioritised annual programmes of work, with resources allocated and clearly defined outcomes, responsibilities and milestones”.

1.4.b. NRW’s Business Plan

NRW’s Business Plan 2019-2020 lists “reversing the decline in biodiversity” as a priority for the period of the plan. It states that by the end of 2019/20 it will have:

- [Completed] an audit of the extent to which we are ensuring that biodiversity and ecosystem resilience is considered at early stages in our planning and decision making processes, our programmes, advice, permitting and regulation, land and asset management, commissioning and procurement.
- Invested an additional £0.8m in bringing Vital Nature to life.
- Developed our future approach to monitoring protected sites, with an initial assessment of the risk of sites not being in their desired state.

- Finalised the Section Seven list of species and habitats of principal importance.
- Transformed our ICT systems for Sites of Special Scientific Interest consents/assents and special sites including the launch of a collaborative tool to share information on designated site management measures.
- Have biosecurity improvement implementation plans in place.
- Have reported on our delivery of the Environment (Wales) Act 2016 Section Six duty.

NRW's Business Plan dashboard tracks progress against a number of measures. It uses a traffic light system to show progress against the measures. The [2019-2020 dashboard, as set out in the NRW Board Paper](#) (PDF 3.2MB) (21 November 2019), provides a performance update up to Quarter 2. A measure "implement 'Vital nature' - restoring, creating and improving habitat and enhancing biodiversity" is included in the dashboard.

Overall, the paper reports that, for this measure, NRW is (emphasis added):

...reporting at amber. While we are on target with the protected sites annual programme and National Nature Reserves project delivery work and we are working across our Operations, Enabling Services and Environment Policy and Planning teams on developing an integrated delivery programme for our Vital Nature commitments, **we are reporting Amber overall because of delays associated with the biodiversity / ecosystems resilience and biosecurity measures.**

2. Welsh Government action

As highlighted, the Welsh Government is responsible for producing NRW's remit letter. As NRW is a Welsh Government Sponsored Body, the Welsh Government provides funding to NRW (see section on budget scrutiny). In addition, the Welsh Government has produced:

- A [guidance document on the purpose of NRW](#) under the Environment Act; and
- [Reporting guidance](#) (PDF 444 KB) for public bodies under the Biodiversity and Resilience of Ecosystems Duty (section 6 of the Environment Act).

Natural Resources Policy

The Welsh Government is required to publish a [National] Natural Resources Policy (NRP) under the Environment Act. The first NRP was published in August 2017. The NRP has been designed to guide how NRW creates Area Statements.

The Climate Change, Environment and Rural Affairs Committee held a brief inquiry into the NRP after its publication and wrote to the Welsh Government regarding its findings on 16 October 2017. The letter states:

Generally, stakeholders were concerned that the NRP is aspirational, with an absence of clear outcomes to achieve the sustainable management of natural resources. There is a lack of clarity about how those aspirations will be translated into actions.

Nature Recovery Action Plan

The Welsh Government's Nature Recovery Action Plan (NRAP) is aimed at addressing the underlying causes of biodiversity loss. It sets out how Wales will address the commitments of the UN Convention on Biological Diversity.

Evidence submitted to the Climate Change, Environment and Rural Affairs Committee's inquiry into Biodiversity – public goods scheme (11 December 2018 to 18 January 2019) highlighted some concerns about the NRAP. For example, Wales Environment Link wrote “as it stands currently, the NRAP is neither ambitious nor focused enough on implementation to have a real impact and ensure the recovery of Wales’ marine and terrestrial environments.”

Section 7 lists

Under Section 7 of the Environment Act, the Welsh Government is required to prepare and publish a list of the living organisms and types of habitat which are of principal importance for the purpose of maintaining and enhancing biodiversity in Wales. Before publishing this list, the Welsh Ministers must consult NRW as to the living organisms or types of habitat to be included in the list. It must also, take all reasonable steps to maintain and enhance the living organisms and types of habitat included in the list, and encourage others to take such steps.

The Welsh Government produced interim lists of species and habitats under Section 7. These state that “this interim list, which is exactly the same as the previous list under Section 42 of the NERC Act, is under review in consultation with NRW”. Work started in 2016 on revising the list, however an updated list has not been published.

3. National Assembly for Wales action

3.1. Annual scrutiny of NRW

The Climate Change, Environment and Rural Affairs (CCERA) Committee undertake annual scrutiny of NRW. Following its last annual scrutiny session on 13 February 2019, NRW wrote (722 MB) to the Chair with further information. Of particular note to this petition, the letter stated that a (emphasis added):

reduction in Grant in Aid has meant we have had to reduce work across a range of services including... **reduction of monitoring of terrestrial and marine biodiversity...**

Where possible we have changed our delivery or used evidence to help our decisions, so that we are mitigating the impact of reducing these services but we are aware that even so there will be **a lower level impact that will become more visible in the longer term.**

In paragraph 54 of our written evidence we indicate that additional money has been released to support the new ways of working in our operational teams. In particular additional resource is targeting the work of teams leading engagement with PSBs, implementing the Sustainable Management of Natural Resources and biodiversity enhancement. In addition, our **Board has committed an additional £800,000 over the next financial year to support biodiversity outcomes plus £2 million through our grants programme.**

3.2. Scrutiny of the Welsh Government's draft budgets

NRW Chief Executive, Clare Pillman, wrote to the CCERA Committee on 12 October 2018 as part of the Committee's scrutiny of the 2019-2020 draft budget. The letter (PDF 829MB) stated (emphasis added):

These budget reductions have come at a time when we are striving to fully implement the spirit and actions of the Well-being of Future Generations and Environment Acts. **Our ambition will be restricted**, and we plan to **submit a business case** early in the next calendar year to **properly fund the impact of this legislation from 2020-21** within our baseline.

The CCERA Committee's draft budget 2019-2020 report conclusions included:

NRW will submit a business case in early 2019 "to properly fund" its implementation of the Well-being of Future Generations Act and the Environment Act in 2020-21. This implies that NRW believes its funding will not be sufficient to deliver its statutory responsibilities in the near future.

We are pleased that NRW and Welsh Government officials are exploring opportunities to increase NRW's income and to provide longer-term certainty over funding. We welcome the Cabinet Secretary's commitment that any further requirements placed on NRW will require an increase in funding.

The Welsh Government responded to the report on 15 January 2019. However, the Welsh Government did not comment on these specific points in its response.

The CCERA Committee's report on the draft budget 2020-2021 was published on 31 January 2020. With regards to NRW's funding, it states:

This year, NRW will have a "flat-line" budget, which is a reduction in real terms.

This funding settlement should be seen in the context of year-on-year reductions in funding and increases in its responsibilities and duties.

3.3. Plenary

On 27 March 2019, the Minister for Environment, Energy and Rural Affairs was asked to comment following the publication of a letter from nine retired and ex-NRW staff expressing their concerns for the future of Wales' National Nature Reserves (NNR).

The Minister said:

I was copied in to the correspondence, and I think yesterday I wrote back to the man who did the original letter. I did note the concerns; I wouldn't say I share them. However, when anybody writes to me with concerns of that nature, I always ask my officials to look into them on my behalf initially, so they will be discussing the points that he raised with NRW. And certainly, if there are any concerns that I think I need to address, I will raise it with the chair and chief executive of NRW at my

regular monthly meetings. Obviously, NRW do manage our NNRs. I think, again, they're very transparent in how they approach the management of them. I also think they set out very clearly in their strategies how they can improve the management of them. So, I will be keeping a very close eye, and if I feel I need to take steps, I will do so.

A response from NRW to the article was quoted in a news article:

Looking after them [NNRs] remains a vital part of what we do...what is changing is the way we manage our NNRs with the resources available in the context of our purpose as an organisation – this is unavoidable...We cannot prioritise NNRs over flood risk management or industrial regulation or timber production – or the other way around. They are all important and we must manage them all as best we can.

Every effort is made to ensure that the information contained in this briefing is correct at the time of publication. Readers should be aware that these briefings are not necessarily updated or otherwise amended to reflect subsequent changes.



Eich cyf/Your ref P-05-941
Ein cyf/Our ref LG/00072/20

Janet Finch-Saunders AM
Chair of the Petitions Committee

Government.Committee.Business@gov.wales

15 January 2020

Dear Janet

Thank you for your letter of 8 January, regarding Petition P-05-941 Biodiversity Remit for NRW.

The Environment (Wales) Act 2016 puts into legislation international best practice for reversing the decline in biodiversity through the 'sustainable management of natural resources' (SMNR).

This involves taking action for biodiversity across the whole landscape, building on the protected site network, through the ecosystem approach.

The definition of natural resources includes (but not limited to) animals, plants and other organisms; air, water and soil; minerals; geological features and processes; physiographical features; climatic features and processes.

The Act puts in place the following delivery requirements for Natural Resources Wales (NRW):

- NRW must pursue the sustainable management of natural resources in the exercise of its functions, the objective of which is to maintain and enhance ecosystem resilience.
- Welsh Ministers' Natural Resources Policy sets out the priorities for the sustainable management of natural resources every 5 years for everyone to take action. NRW must deliver the policy locally through Area Statements, which will be published in March 2020.

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Rydym yn croesawu derbyn gohebiaeth yn Gymraeg. Byddwn yn ateb gohebiaeth a dderbynnir yn Gymraeg yn Gymraeg ac ni fydd gohebu yn Gymraeg yn arwain at oedi.

We welcome receiving correspondence in Welsh. Any correspondence received in Welsh will be answered in Welsh and corresponding in Welsh will not lead to a delay in responding.

The Environment Act introduced an enhanced biodiversity and resilience of ecosystems duty, the section 6 duty, for public authorities in the exercise of function in relation to Wales.

As biodiversity underpins the resilience of ecosystems, biodiversity is central to NRW's core purpose of pursuing sustainable management of natural resources, and is embedded into their statutory requirements.

Please see my initial response to the points in the petition:

NRW will ensure that biodiversity is central to its core purpose of pursuing sustainable management of natural resources by:

- 1. Working towards an overall improvement in the status of Welsh wildlife and preventing or at least minimising the risk of any further extinctions as a consequence of human activities.*
 - The approach and delivery framework in the Environment Act is about reversing the decline in biodiversity through international best practice to achieve this aim.
- 2. Establishing sustainable, bigger and less fragmented areas for wildlife, this should initially focus on the consolidation and extensions to existing National Nature Reserves and other protected areas, followed by the establishment of new areas.*
- 3. Prioritising the need to obtain favourable or recovering status for conservation features on all statutory nature conservation sites (SPAs, SACs, SSSIs and NNRs).*
 - Both 2 and 3 are being taken forward through the SMNR delivery framework. The Natural Resources Policy sets out 'resilient ecological networks' as a priority for reversing the decline in biodiversity. This is being taken forward through Area Statements and the Nature Recovery Action Plan.
- 4. Developing and improving an effective network of Marine Protected Areas which are sufficient to ensure the adequate protection of marine life and sustainable fisheries around Wales.*
 - The Natural Resources Policy, land use planning and marine planning will complement each other in supporting sustainable management of natural resources across the land sea interface (applying the principles of Integrated Coastal Zone Management (ICZM)).
 - The management of the Welsh Marine Protected Area (MPA) network is directly supported by the 2018-2023 MPA Network Management Framework and accompanying annual Action Plans. Collectively they provide a clear steer for Management Authorities to guide delivery of the long-term vision for the Welsh MPA network. They focus efforts on those actions that will improve or maintain the condition of MPAs, thus improving the contribution the network makes to the overall health, resilience and functioning of Welsh seas. Furthermore, a range of regulatory processes, consenting decisions and assessment processes, for example, marine licensing and Habitat Regulation Assessments, proactively consider and provide upfront protection to MPAs.

5. Ensure that more people are actively engaged with biodiversity issues, and aware of the significance of biodiversity to their health and wellbeing.

- Natural Resources Wales' area statements implement the Natural Resources Policy locally through public service delivery and place based approaches. They will be published in March 2020. Ensuring that people are more actively engaged with biodiversity and aware of the significance to their health and well-being is at the heart of the approach.

I would also refer you to [Vital Nature](#), NRW's Strategic Steer for Biodiversity to 2022. It establishes a high-level framework for actions for biodiversity in line with the Nature Recovery Action Plan. Through a series of goals and high-level commitments it shows how, working with others, NRW will deliver the biodiversity and ecosystem resilience duties, and do more to connect people with nature.

Regards

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Lesley Griffiths". The ink is grey and the signature is fluid and stylized.

Lesley Griffiths AC/AM

Gweinidog yr Amgylchedd, Ynni a Materion Gwledig
Minister for Environment, Energy and Rural Affairs



Petitions Committee
National Assembly for Wales

16th February 2020

Dear Petitions Committee

INCC's Comments following the Minister's response (LG/00072/20) to the petition (P-05-941) - Biodiversity Remit for Natural Resources Wales (NRW)

In less than 15 years time, the iconic Curlew will in all likelihood be extinct in Wales as a breeding bird. Its extinction from our countryside will already have been preceded by the Turtle Dove, Corn Bunting and Nightingale. Wildlife in Wales is disappearing. Entire species are being lost from our land and sea and many of the species that do remain are often at such low numbers that their long-term survival cannot be guaranteed. We now live in the worst time there has ever been for wildlife in Wales.

In April 2019, the Welsh Government declared a 'Climate Emergency' but despite the overwhelming weight of evidence, we have not seen a similar emergency declared for Biodiversity. Given the right commitment, dedication and leadership, Wales can still have a chance of halting and reversing the tragic declines in wildlife that we are witnessing today, but only if action is taken now.

In her response to the petition, the Minister makes reference to the 'tools' (policies and documents) intended to deliver action for biodiversity. However, the deeper problem isn't the strength (or otherwise) of the tools at hand but the lack of their application. The Minister's response does not address this. In fact, celebrating the 'tools' alone without acknowledging the lack of action creates a misleading delusion of success regarding biodiversity delivery.

Terminology of key delivery approaches by NRW such as Integrated Coastal Zone Management (ICZM) and Sustainable Management of Natural Resources (SMNR) further obscures the reality of biodiversity delivery. Delivering an SMNR approach may not actually be delivering for biodiversity, and in some instances could actually be damaging to biodiversity.

For NRW to be more accountable to the people of Wales on biodiversity issues there needs to be specific detail from the organisation regarding its activities and far more transparency over its on-the-ground actions to deliver for biodiversity. Without greater detail, transparency and accountability over biodiversity actions, there is the very real risk that the situation for wildlife in Wales will continue to worsen.

One area of concern is NRW's approach to designated areas such as Sites of Special Scientific Interest (SSSIs). These sites play an important role in the conservation of the most important species and habitats in Wales and should therefore be at the forefront of protecting biodiversity. Despite their importance, the conservation status of the SSSI suite in Wales is not fully known by NRW. This lack of essential information has been caused by a reduction in monitoring of sites and species by NRW over recent years and is a further example of the lack of commitment and regard for biodiversity action.

A striking difference between NRW and its counterpart Natural England (NE) is how difficult it is to get a clear picture of how designated sites are faring in Wales. NE's SSSI database enables the searcher to locate any SSSI, their management objectives and importantly the condition the site is in. There is also clear information about the monitoring and reporting programme, which although exposes how poorly many sites are performing it is nonetheless transparent and accessible.

The paucity of detail from NRW regarding protected sites, monitoring and its general approach to biodiversity duty makes it incredibly difficult for the people of Wales to track whether progress toward reversing the declines in biodiversity are being achieved.

Since NRW's inception in 2013, there has been a dramatic reduction in the resources dedicated to frontline Conservation work within the organisation. Currently, NRW employs fewer than 25 fulltime equivalent staff undertaking on-the-ground nature conservation work across the whole of Wales. This is from a staff base of approximately 1,900 employees. In addition, the job title of 'Conservation Officer' has also been abandoned by NRW and some of the U.K.s leading nature conservation experts have been moved away from positions where they can influence biodiversity delivery. These changes suggest a worrying lack of regard and commitment for biodiversity delivery and makes it all the more implausible that the aspirations set out in various plans and policies will be achieved.

One of the greatest threats to biodiversity is from inappropriate development. The planning process represents both a means to protect habitats and species from damage as well as an opportunity to secure biodiversity gains. Therefore NRW should be central to this process. However, since 2015 (amended in 2018) NRW base their consultation responses on a reductionist list of specific areas for comment. The strict reliance on the list and the inability to deviate from it means that NRW, as the statutory environmental body, not only fails in their duty regarding biodiversity, but frequently fails to support officers from Local Planning Authorities (LPA) in their comments and responses. NRW's lack of engagement in the process undermines the ability of LPAs to defend local biodiversity and seek suitable opportunities for biodiversity gains. NRW's very restrictive list of criteria for planning

responses creates situations in which their lack of response is interpreted as no grounds for objection, in cases where the loss of biodiversity is a very real risk.

Making biodiversity an explicit element of NRW's remit will have the following advantages regarding reversing the declines in wildlife.

- 1) It will ensure that budgets (capital and revenue) specifically for biodiversity delivery can be developed, made public and scrutinised by the people of Wales.
- 2) It will ensure that greater detail regarding on-the-ground delivery for biodiversity will be developed, made public and scrutinised by the people of Wales.
- 3) It will ensure that NRW will take greater action and responsibility for biodiversity delivery.
- 4) It will ensure a greater commitment to protecting, managing and monitoring our protected sites in Wales (**Case Study 1**).
- 5) It will enable expert staff within NRW to be able to use their skills and experience to deliver for biodiversity.
- 6) It will enable NRW to become more active in the planning process, and therefore secure better protection for wildlife and more biodiversity gains.
- 7) It will enable the establishment of nature recovery targets so that progress (or otherwise) made toward particular 'at risk' species can be chartered and made public.
- 8) It will provide greater confidence for the people of Wales that the Welsh Government and NRW are demonstrating a greater commitment to biodiversity and reversing the declines.
- 9) It will inspire greater ambition within NRW and the wider nature conservation sector in Wales to do more to reverse the declines in biodiversity (**Case Study 2**).

The above points, as outcomes of an explicit biodiversity remit would provide greater confidence that NRW is using its statutory powers and resources effectively to deliver for biodiversity. Unless the remit is made this explicit, our fear is that NRW will facilitate the disguise, de-prioritisation and failure to deliver for biodiversity through the continued use of obfuscatory language.

I would like to thank the Committee for debating this petition and if you require any further information regarding this response please feel free to contact me.

Yours Faithfully



Robert
Robert Jones Parry
Chief Executive Officer
Initiative for Nature Conservation Cymru (INCC)

Case Study 1: Protected Sites

Black Brook Pastures Site of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI) in Mid Wales was recently subject to a planning application to develop on part of the special site. The planning application (subsequently withdrawn by the applicant) was refused by Powys Local Planning Authority (LPA) on account of it being a protected site and due to the unacceptable loss of habitat that would have resulted if the development had proceeded. However, despite these objections, NRW's response was to condition the planning application and effectively facilitate the direct loss of part of the SSSI and the special habitat features for which the site was designated for.

Regardless of whether NRW acted unlawfully in its decision making over the development, the case highlights a general lack of commitment toward biodiversity and protected sites which are essential havens for biodiversity in Wales and the cornerstones of our ecological networks.

Case Study 2: Lack of Ambition for Biodiversity Recovery

The marsh fritillary is one of the most endangered butterfly species in the U.K. Although Wales still remains a relative stronghold, even here the species continues to suffer. Population declines have meant that the species is now only found in a handful of areas in Wales.

In 2015, NRW permitted a licence application (**68500:OTH:SCA:2015**) to take from the wild and destroy up to 80 marsh fritillary caterpillars from South Wales. Although granted, the licence application wasn't acted upon. The project would have partially repeat a previous (four years prior) genetic study undertaken by its predecessor (Countryside Council for Wales (CCW)) which granted the destruction of up to 360 marsh fritillary caterpillars from across Wales.

In contrast, a licence application submitted to NRW in 2016 aimed to take the same number (80 maximum) of marsh fritillary caterpillars from the same locations as per the 2015 granted licence application. This time however, the license wasn't to kill, but to breed in captivity so that eventually thousands of marsh fritillary butterflies could be returned to suitable habitat in the landscape. As well as the breeding programme, the project would undertake research, practical habitat management for the species, as well as work with local communities, landowners and businesses to showcase the butterfly and its habitat. The licence application was rejected by NRW and the project did not proceed.

It cannot be right for Wales' Statutory Environmental Body to licence the killing of endangered wildlife for academic purposes alone and to not licence an application designed to safeguard a population from local extinction. The case highlights that there needs to be far more ambition for reversing the declines in biodiversity than shown by NRW at present.

P-04-477 Support for the Control of Dogs (Wales) Bill

Petition wording:

We call on the National Assembly for Wales to urge the Welsh Government to proceed with the Control of Dogs (Wales) Bill.

We, the undersigned, residents of Wales, call on the Welsh Government to proceed with its Control of Dogs (Wales) Bill in tackling the issue of dangerous and menacing dogs and not rely on the piecemeal proposals of the UK Government set out in its draft Anti-social Behaviour Bill and initially explained in the its White Paper “Putting Victims First, More Effective Responses to Anti-social Behaviour”.

We agree with the Welsh Government’s statement “The clear advantage of a Dog Control Notice (DCN) over all existing legislation is that a court may never become involved thereby reducing the burden on public finance” and we believe that the UK Governments proposals involving 4 different enforcement tools, namely–

- Injunctions to prevent nuisance and annoyance;
- Crime Behaviour Orders
- Dispersal Powers
- Community Protection Notices

two of which – Injunctions and Crime Behaviour Orders – must be initiated by applications to the court, are unduly complicated, cumbersome, bureaucratic and will lead to delay.

We believe the single all-encompassing Dog Control Notice proposed for Wales is by far the superior approach and we urge the Welsh Government to frame a law based on this concept as originally planned. We draw the Welsh Government’s attention to (i) the highly critical conclusions of the House of Commons Select Committee on Environment, Food and Rural Affairs report “Dog Control and Welfare” which called the UK Government’s proposals as

“simplistic” and “woefully inadequate” & recommended DEFRA and the Home Office to introduce Dog Control Notices and (ii) to the fact that the campaign coalition of Unions, Animal Charities, Police, Vets are also unhappy with the proposals.

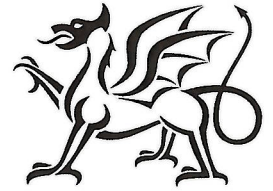
Petition raised by: Cllr. Dilwar Ali

Date petition first considered by Committee: 30 April 2013

Number of signatures : 1119

Assembly Constituency and Region

- Cardiff North
- South Wales Central



Llywodraeth Cymru
Welsh Government

Eich cyf/Your ref P-04-477
Ein cyf/Our ref LG/07475/19

Janet Finch-Saunders AM
Chair of the Petitions Committee

Government.Committee.Business@gov.wales

19 December 2019

Dear Janet

Thank you for your letter of 19 November, regarding Petition P-04-477 Support for the Control of Dogs (Wales) Bill.

I mentioned in my previous correspondence in October the research by Middlesex University, commissioned by Defra, using the joint England, Scotland and Wales research budget. The findings were originally due at the end of the year, at which stage there would be detailed discussions on aspects relevant for Wales.

In line with Defra requirements for the pre-election period, the fieldwork for the project is currently on hold. The decision was made to extend the project end date to February 2020 to enable sufficient time to complete the delayed fieldwork.

Part of the research will look in to measures to reduce dog attacks and promote responsible ownership amongst dog owners with dog control issues in the UK.

The project's core objectives are to investigate:

1. The factors and situations that may cause dog attacks.
2. The effectiveness of current policy and enforcement practice in dealing with dangerous dog issues.
3. How best to promote responsible dog ownership.

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Pack Page 89

We welcome receiving correspondence in Welsh. Any correspondence received in Welsh will be answered in Welsh and corresponding in Welsh will not lead to a delay in responding.

It would not be appropriate to confirm or dismiss future planned work in this area without full consideration of the research. I will update you on developments in due course.

Regards
Lesley

Lesley Griffiths AC/AM

Gweinidog yr Amgylchedd, Ynni a Materion Gwledig
Minister for Environment, Energy and Rural Affairs

Agenda Item 3.2

P-05-839 Adopt WHO guidelines for air pollution into Welsh law and introduce a new Clean Air Act for Wales

This petition was submitted by the British Heart Foundation Cymru, having collected 688 signatures.

Text of Petition

We call on the National Assembly for Wales to urge the Welsh Government to adopt WHO guidelines for air pollution into Welsh law, and to introduce a new Clean Air Act for Wales.

Current legal air quality limits for Wales do not protect health. The EU limits which are observed by UK and Welsh Governments are the same as the World Health Organisation's recommended upper guideline limits for nitrogen dioxide (NO₂), but are less stringent than the WHO's threshold for other health-harmful pollutants such as fine particulate matter (PM_{2.5}).

British Heart Foundation Cymru is calling on the Welsh Government to adopt WHO guidelines into Welsh law, introducing a new Clean Air Act for Wales which will tackle the major sources of air pollution and ensure that everyone from government and local government, to business and the general public are working together to tackle this urgent health crisis.

Additional Information

BHF funded research first proved that short and long-term exposure to poor air quality can aggravate and cause serious cardiovascular problems. Our research established a clear link between cardiovascular disease and exposure to PM_{2.5} and ultrafine particles; and that inhalation of fine particles can increase the risk of a heart attack or stroke in vulnerable groups within 24 hours.

Public Health Wales estimated that, in 2017, air pollution contributed to 2,000 early deaths in Wales. Whilst the Welsh Government has been ordered to tackle illegal levels of nitrogen dioxide, there is still no plan to tackle particulate matter and very little detail on how the Government will improve monitoring of pollutants across Wales.

A new Clean Air Act for Wales will:

- Ensure that WHO guidelines on air pollution are observed by Welsh law;
- Introduce charging Clean Air Zones in areas which are in breach or close to the limits for nitrogen dioxide and particulate matter and ring-fence the funds for further improvements to air quality;
- Ensure that infrastructure and technology is in place to facilitate increased uptake of Ultra Low Emissions Vehicles and public transport;
- Invest in improved monitoring of pollution across Wales, and ensure that information on the risks to health is available to vulnerable groups;
- Increase public awareness of the impact of domestic woodburning and the steps which can be taken to minimise this.

Assembly Constituency and Region

- Cardiff Central
- South Wales Central



Llywodraeth Cymru
Welsh Government

Eich cyf/Your ref P-05-839
Ein cyf/Our ref LG/00239/20

Janet Finch-Saunders AM
Chair of the Petitions Committee

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4

February 2020

Dear Janet

Thank you for your letter of 24 January regarding Petition P-05-839, which asks for further information regarding World Health Organisation (WHO) guidelines and the potential for accelerating the timetable in order to legislate to tackle air quality this Assembly term.

We comply with current legislative limits for particulate matter in Wales. However it is important to reduce average public exposure to particulate matter further due to the positive health benefits this can bring. Given the strength of evidence in relation to the impacts of particulate matter on public health, my ambition is to see concentrations across Wales below the WHO guideline for PM2.5 where it is possible, and lower still where there is sufficient potential and there is high public exposure or risk to sensitive groups. This is why I have committed in the draft Clean Air Plan for Wales to develop and consult on new targets for particulate matter in Wales as part of the development of a Clean Air Act for Wales.

The WHO guidelines represent recommended maximum levels for pollution in ambient air which countries should aim to achieve. They are set on an understanding of the human health impacts. As recognised by WHO, the standard-setting process needs to aim at achieving the lowest concentrations possible in the context of local constraints, capabilities and public health priorities. To do this, WHO encourages the adoption of increasingly more stringent standards and tracking their effectiveness over time. Therefore, future targets for ambient levels of fine particulate matter need to be underpinned by the right evidence and metrics to achieve the most effective improvement.

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Rydym yn croesawu derbyn gohebiaeth yn Gymraeg. Byddwn yn ateb gohebiaeth a dderbynnir yn Gymraeg yn Gymraeg ac ni fydd gohebu yn Gymraeg yn arwain at oedi.

Pack Page 93

We welcome receiving correspondence in Welsh. Any correspondence received in Welsh will be answered in Welsh and corresponding in Welsh will not lead to a delay in responding.

Understanding the processes behind future particulate matter emissions, its formation, and movement in the atmosphere is complex. The analysis we have undertaken so far has helped us to understand where further action is likely to be needed. However, without further analysis, we do not yet know whether it is technically feasible to achieve the WHO guideline absolutely everywhere across Wales, and how and by when it could be achieved if it is possible.

My officials are convening an independent panel of experts to advise on the right approach to take in developing new targets, taking the WHO guidelines into account and factoring in the technical, social and economic feasibility in meeting the targets. This will be important work to inform the development of new targets.

I have also committed in the draft Clean Air Plan for Wales to consult on and publish a White Paper before the end of this Assembly Term on legislative proposals to improve air quality through a Clean Air Act for Wales.

Developing legislation takes time to ensure it is fit for purpose. The draft Clean Air Plan consultation closes on 10 March after which my officials must have sufficient time to give the responses due consideration, potentially resulting in amendments to the proposals. Any Bill has to complete its passage through the Assembly before the next elections or else it would fall. The Assembly Committees need sufficient time to scrutinise a Bill properly and, combined with Standing Order requirements about timing of scrutiny stages, this means a Bill would need to be introduced before this summer's recess. There isn't time to complete the consultation, develop a Bill and pass it through the Assembly before the next elections. I am, therefore, proposing an already ambitious undertaking to consult on a White Paper within this timescale.



Lesley Griffiths AC/AM

Gweinidog yr Amgylchedd, Ynni a Materion Gwledig
Minister for Environment, Energy and Rural Affairs



British Heart Foundation Cymru Petition

P-05-839 Adopt WHO Guidelines and Introduce a Clean Air Act for Wales
Response to Minister's Letter to the Petitions Committee 4 February 2020

14 February 2020

Dear Committee,

Thank you once again for your attention to our petition and the thorough investigation you have taken into the need for our petition. We are pleased to hear from the Minister on the robustness of the preparation she and her team are undertaking to look into A Clean Air Act for Wales, and we are pleased to be able to work alongside her officials to look into what will go into the White Paper.

However, we do feel that whilst robust legislation is the best way forward, there is a huge risk in not bringing forth a Clean Air Act before the end of the Assembly Term. It cannot be assumed that a new government would continue with the White Paper, and even at the earliest point in the Sixth Assembly, no Act would be on the statute books before the beginning of 2022.

Adoption of WHO guidelines is a stepping-stone to achieving far better air quality. In England, through the Environment Bill, the Healthy Air Campaign is asking for WHO limits to be met by 2030; it is recognised that it is not as simple as passing legislation to comply with limits, but what legislation will bring is a method for all stakeholders to work towards compliance. However, in order to do this, the legislative framework must be in place to encourage change.

We also recognise that there are concerns about the adoption of WHO limits which are focused on health outcomes. The Government has stated clearly in the Senedd and in their Clean Air Plan that the limits do not consider the technical feasibility or the economic, political and social aspects of the achievement of these levels, however, we do not feel that these are reasons to reject WHO guidelines; in fact, it is perhaps an argument for enshrining the guidelines in Welsh Law. Laws are used to encourage as well as enforce; without limits, industry has little reason to make changes, and surely the population living in and around areas of industry deserve the chance to breathe clean air as much as anyone else in Wales.

We urge the committee to bring this petition to the attention of the whole Assembly; the most recent opposition debate of this important subject unfortunately took place one day before the receipt of this letter, and I am sure that Members would wish to participate in this debate.

I would be happy to answer any questions the Committee has.

Emma Henwood
Policy and Public Affairs Manager
BHF Cymru

Agenda Item 3.3

P-05-895 Rosa's Legacy: Introduce a scheme to help people access veterinary care for their companion animals

This petition was submitted by Linda Joyce Jones having collected a total of 95 signatures.

Text of Petition

We call on the National Assembly for Wales to urge Welsh Government to regulate commercial bus operators and give powers and funding to Local Authorities to run services that best meet the needs of local people. As well as providing access to employment and education, public transport is a social, health and wellbeing issue which is growing as bus services are being rapidly reduced, affecting the mental and physical health and well being of many residents who will become socially isolated and unable to get to basic services.

Additional Information

Bus operators are cutting many core services which were previously operating with little or no subsidy. Operators are not tendering for new contracts and some are requesting 6 figure sums as a subsidy to continue which is unaffordable for Local Authorities who are facing budget pressures. Local Authorities cannot run services in competition with operators.

Passenger journey times for those accessing employment take too long as direct services are being cut if still exist at all and some are overcrowded. The majority of residents attending the many public meetings we have held are older people who are concerned about accessing services, attending health appointments and becoming isolated. Loneliness is a huge issue in our society. It is our aim to enable older people to live in their own homes longer. It is our aim for them to stay mentally and physically fit and active. Public bus transport is now a huge urgent issue that needs addressing quickly.

Assembly Constituency and Region

- Arfon
- North Wales



16th December 2019

Dear Petitions Committee,

Thank you for your letter regarding Petition P-05-895 Rosa's Legacy: Introduce a scheme to help people access veterinary care for their companion animals.

The Companion Animal Welfare Group Wales (CAWGW) is pleased to have the opportunity to share the views of our members with the committee on the issue of accessibility of veterinary services for vulnerable pet owners.

CAWGW is a newly established sector group that brings together specific expertise, with the aim of improving the welfare of companion animals in Wales. As well as providing knowledge~ our member organisations provide practical support for pet owners across Wales, which puts us in a strong position to inform both the Petitions Committee and the Welsh Government on this issue.

PDSA and Blue Cross provide clinical support for the pets of low income owners across Wales by providing both free and low cost veterinary treatment through their veterinary networks. Just last year, PDSA treated over 21,600 sick and injured pets across Wales through its Pet Hospitals and clinics in Swansea, Cardiff and [Llanelli](#), and through an expanding network of private practices delivering discounted vet care to the pets of vulnerable people in 75 of the 198 geographic postcode districts in Wales.

As well as a pet care clinic in Cwmbran which has 628 registered clients, Blue Cross also run an emergency care fund which enables -participating private vet practices to secure funding for their clients who in an emergency can't cover the cost of treatment. Last year, Blue Cross partnered with nine practices across Wales and hope to expand on this in 2020.

Across Wales, these veterinary charities as well as Dogs Trust and Cats Protection provide low cost neutering and microchipping schemes enabling dog and cat owners to get their animals neutered and microchipped without significant expense. Since 2017 in Wales 19,380 cats have been neutered and 15,809 cats microchipped through Cats Protection's Wales neutering campaign. Since 2016, Dogs Trust has neutered around 20,000 and microchipped around 25,000 dogs in Wales through their Welsh campaign. These schemes help owners overcome the barrier of the cost of neutering, and in the long term, help to prevent unwanted litters which can increase the financial burden on owners or force them into having to make the decision to give up their pets.

The Dogs Trust Hope Project works with homeless dog owners in Wales to help with their veterinary costs and to encourage pet friendly housing in hostels. In regard to an additional, but often related issue, several of our other members including Battersea and Cats Protection have recently produced reports looking specifically at the issue of pet friendly housing policies. It is a significant problem in the rental sector for both private and social housing, with many landlords having blanket bans or stringent conditions on pets. This can put low income owners in the incredibly difficult position of having to choose between a home and their animal. As a group we are advocating for more pet friendly policies and would be keen to work with the Assembly and the Welsh Government to promote these to landlords across Wales.

Figures from Joseph Rowntree Foundation's 2018 briefing on poverty suggest that 525,000 adults are living in poverty in Wales, and with the PDSA Animal Wellbeing (PAW) Report indicating that half of all households own a pet, there is clear need for affordable veterinary care within Wales.^{1,2} Whilst charitable services are focused on areas of greatest need in Wales, there are still many vulnerable pet owners outside the reach of the services of these charity models. We were pleased to see the recent statement from the Minister Lesley Griffiths make mention of the Welsh Government's intention to look at the issue around the provision of veterinary care for owners who are struggling financially. This is something we would like to work in partnership with the Welsh Government on, Blue Cross as part of their recent 'Link in the Chain' campaign have mapped low cost and free vet care across the UK and would be keen to work together on a Welsh map. CAWGW would also like to see more research done to assess the level of need across Wales, only by having a clear picture of areas of vulnerability and levels of pet ownership will charities be able to effectively plan support and intervention which will have a real impact. The petitioner suggests that the Welsh Government could fund a 'NHS' style service for animals through taxation, and we feel it is not the role of CAWGW to comment on the practicality or feasibility of this suggestion at this time. Instead, we would like to outline some clear recommendations which would help to ensure Welsh Government and third sector organisation can work together to better protect and provide for vulnerable owners and their pets across Wales.

We believe that the Welsh Government could work together with CAWGW and other interested bodies to:

- Assess the range of support available to low income pet owners or those in crisis.
- Support charities to co-ordinate the current provision of low cost and free vet care to try and ensure it is focussed in the areas of highest need.
- Promote charity services to the most vulnerable in Wales
- Support with further insight to enable more in-depth identification of the areas of highest need across Wales.
- Support charitable educational work in communities which helps prospective owners understand the lifetime cost of pet ownership

We hope the above information is useful in terms of setting out our views on how the animal welfare sector and the Welsh Government could work together to provide improved support for vulnerable pet owners. We believe these suggestions could go some way to providing the type of scheme and support the petitioner references in her original petition.

We would be happy to provide more detail to the committee if required and will be sending a copy of this letter to the Welsh Government to seek a meeting to discuss how we can take this work forward.

Best wishes,

Dr Christine Chapman
CAWGW Chair
info@cawgw.co.uk
02920 099 066



¹ Joseph Rowntree Foundation, Poverty in Wales 2018 www.jrf.org.uk/report/poverty-wales-2018

² PDSA Animal Wellbeing (PAW) Report 2019 www.pdsa.org.uk/paw

P-05-895 Rosa's Legacy: Introduce a scheme to help people access veterinary care for their companion animals, Correspondence – British Veterinary Association to Committee, 16.01.20

BVA does not have a position on the provision of free animal healthcare. We are aware that charitable services exist to provide free care to those on low wages, such as the PDSA and Blue Cross, as well as voucher schemes at individual practices.

We support education initiatives, such as the recent #PawPreventProtect campaign from Welsh Government, which help potential owners to consider which pet is most suited to their lifestyle, needs and budget, thus preventing many of the issues mentioned in the petition.

I hope this is useful. Please let me know if you have any further questions

Kind regards,

P-05-895 Rosa's Legacy: Introduce a scheme to help people access veterinary care for their companion animals, Correspondence – Petitioner to Committee, 17.02.20

To the Chair and Members of the Petitions Committee of the Welsh Assembly.

P-05-895 Rosa's Legacy: Introduce a scheme to help people access veterinary care for their companion animals.

Thank you for asking for my response on the recent correspondence you have received and once again making my petition an agenda item.

Response from the BVA.

While I welcome their response, I must admit to being very puzzled by it. I am aware that membership to their organisation is not mandatory (unlike the Royal College of Veterinary Surgeons (RCVS) in regards to registering to enable VS and RVN to practice). But still many of their members must have first hand experience of the issues my petition raises.

We support education initiatives, such as the recent #PawPreventProtect campaign from Welsh Government, which help potential owners to consider which pet is most suited to their lifestyle, needs and budget, thus preventing many of the issues mentioned in the petition.

I like many other responsible owners didn't adopt My late Rosa lightly or without considerable thought. As some of you may know I have been involved in the rescue world for many years. Raising much needed funds and awareness and helping to educate others. I have fostered cats and kittens in my own home to alleviate the pressure for many rescues. Rosa was part of my family for eight years, I did everything in my power to ensure her needs were met. But nobody has a crystal ball and the organisation I adopted Rosa from did not test her for FIV. Which I am relieved because if she had been FIV+ they would have euthanised her that is their policy. Instead Rosa went on to have a wonderful life as a cherished member of my family - in stark contrast to her earlier life.

Surely the BVA and their Members must be aware that these issues are seldom black and white and what matters most in these cases are the animals. Who are protected by the Animal Welfare Act (England and Wales) of 2006. Under which owners have a legal obligation to consult a veterinary surgeon.

I also think it's worth remembering here that our Cabinet Secretary Lesley Griffiths AM has acknowledged to your Committee that "I do understand people's circumstances can change" when she confirmed the Welsh Government were looking at such a scheme.

In regards to insurance at present Dog owners whose Dogs have been exempted from breed specific legislation cannot get insurance for veterinary care.

Response from CAWGW.

I greatly welcome this response and the details contained within it are very helpful. I wish to place on record my thanks to their Chair Dr Christine Chapman and their members.

I am aware of the many scheme third sector organisations generously fund. While these provide important treatment, many such schemes center around neutering, spaying and chipping companion animals. Although these schemes are of vital importance sadly they would not assist with the issues I have raised.

Regional differences.

As CAWGW's response states the third sector does sterling work in helping many owners to access veterinary treatment. But it's clear to see there is a large part of Cymru where no such provision is available. The four small animal hospitals (SAH) operated by the PDSA are all in South Wales. In Cardiff (they have two) Swansea and Llanelli. I am aware PDSA's discounted veterinary treatment scheme operates Cymru wide. But is reliant on veterinary practices taking part in the scheme, as I noted in the text of my petition PDSA have changed their criteria for this scheme.

When I attended the launch of CAWGW at the Senedd last year I asked a representative of PDSA about their criteria for the provision of small animal hospitals. I was informed that population figures played a big part in the thought process of providing SAH. So it seems the more rural less populated parts of Cymru (like North West Wales) are almost penalised twice. Coupled with other issues many of you are well aware such as transport provision in very rural areas.

The Blue Cross's provision is also very much South Wales oriented, with their only SAH in Cumbran. I became aware of their Emergency Fund only last year, which I greatly welcome. This shows that Blue Cross themselves see a gap in the provision and are trying hard to address it . Yet I cannot find a veterinary practice in North Wales that promotes this scheme. I certainly wasn't offered this by Independent Vetcare (IVC) with My late Rosa - but euthanisea was repeatedly offered as I have previously stated. Rosa's Clinical Notes from IVC confirm this.

I have read Blue Cross's " Link on the Chain " report and I welcome many of the points they make . Particularly where they acknowledge the benefits that owning a companion animal can bring to a persons wellbeing.

The corporate takeover of the veterinary industry in Cymru.

I did touch on this subject in my last submission but even since then this wagon rolls ever more forward. With the largest corporate company in the UK IVC now owning just short of 1,000 veterinary practices (this includes four out of hours SAH hospitals under their Vets Now branding) . In my part of Cymru (including Ynys Mon/Anglesey) we now only have one **totally** Independent veterinary practice. **1**

As I have stated previously the practice of " upselling " is standard procedure in many if not all of these corporate companies. I certainly witnessed that at my former veterinary practice in Caernarfon (now owned by IVC) when they treated My late Rosa.

I have had veterinary surgeons contact me who are just as concerned as me about the way their profession is going. One VS telling me " the Royal College of Veterinary Surgeons (RCVS) have allowed the corporates to sell our profession down the river, many of us don't like it anymore than you do ". I also know that veterinary practices who are Independently run struggle to recruit staff because of the resources these huge corporate companies have.

I have been mindful of the extreme pressure many within the veterinary profession work under. I think this is linked to the corporate takeover. The charity Vetlife set up by those within the veterinary community has recorded an increase in demand for the support they offer.²

In Conclusion - next steps.

Animal welfare is a matter devolved to our Welsh Assembly and Government . I know you feel just as passionately as I do about this issue.

I know My late Rosa was " only a cat " , but I can honestly say her loss had a profound effect on me . Particularly the circumstances surrounding her demise, which to me flagged up many issues. My mental health suffered greatly and when I became fully aware of the way her veterinary practice acted I did contemplate taking my own life. The responsibility you feel for those who have loved in life, doesn't fade away when they have physically left you.

- I welcome CAWGWs points in regard to trying to establish a more comprehensive picture of the help on offer to owners - Cymru wide.
- I am grateful they have also written to the Welsh Government offering their support following on from our Cabinet Secretary's statement . I would like to be part of this initiative.
- The rise of the corporate takeover is a matter for the CMA . Could the Committee raise this matter with them as my MP Hywel Williams has done?
- I have met with both Llyr Huws Gruffudd AM and Andrew RT Davies AM to discuss this issue. Both are concerned and have been very helpful. I now want to try and get this matter onto the agenda for our CCEC. I feel cross party support is vital here .

As ever if I can assist your Committee and Members further, I would be more than willing to do so .

Cofion Linda Joyce-Jones
Arfon Constituency
17/2/2020.

1. <http://www.independentvets.co.uk/>

2. <https://www.vetlife.org.uk/>

Agenda Item 3.4

P-05-786 Save our Countryside – Revise TAN 1

This petition was submitted by Cllr Mike Priestley and was first considered by the Committee in November 2017, having collected 706 signatures.

Text of petition

Changes in 2015 to Technical Advice Note 1 (TAN1) have resulted in unachievable annual housing targets. This has taken planning decisions away from the local democratic planning process and undermined Adopted Local Development Plans (LDPs) across Wales.

We call on the National Assembly for Wales to urge the Welsh Government to reinstate within TAN1 the use of "past building rates methodology" alongside the "residual methodology". This will ensure that Councils are able to undertake intelligent and credible housing land supply needs assessments. Past housing delivery performance reflects economic conditions and local building industry capacity and resilience.

To ensure credible and deliverable land supply, and to balance the need for housing with the need to protect our environment and heritage, it is essential that economic conditions and local building industry capacity are factored into annual calculations of 5 Year Land Supply for Housing.

Changes to TAN1 have forced Local Councils to allow housing developments in excess of what is considered to be local demand. These developments are often large scale and have a detrimental effect on the green belt and the heritage of our County as urban and rural areas over expand. This in turn puts added demands on already stretched services such as GPs, Hospitals, Social Services and Schools.

The withdrawal in 2015 of the past building rates methodology is causing increasing numbers of Local Authorities to declare a 5 Year Land Supply shortfall. This, in turn, is forcing Local Councils, against their will and better judgement, to approve speculative development applications on locally sensitive Greenfield land, land unallocated within their LDPs and, where local approval to these speculative applications is not granted, local democratic decisions are being overturned on appeal, specifically due to the lack of a 5 Year Land Supply for Housing.

Additional information

In 2014 Conwy Council had a 7+ Year Land Supply when its LDP was examined and approved by the Planning Inspector. Less than 12 months later the changes to TAN 1 reduced Conwy's Land Supply to less than 5 years. This has reduced with successive annual land supply calculations. In 2017, Conwy's land supply now stands at 3.1 years as a direct result of the changes to TAN1, and the Council is receiving speculative development applications for land unallocated within the LDP despite allocated land being available. If the past building rates methodology was still permitted, Conwy would today have an 8.5 year supply.

WG's guidance document TAN1 tells Local Councils how to work out their supply of housing land. All Councils should have enough land to meet the need for 5 years of house building. In the previous TAN1 there were two methods of working out how much land was needed:

1. The residual method based on the total housing need from an adopted Plan
2. The past build rates method, using the house building rates from the last 5 years to project forward for the next 5 years.

The Wellbeing and Future Generations Act requires us to balance our decisions and actions in terms of impact today and impact in the future. Surely, we should apply this thinking to land planning and land use? Current Welsh Government policy is forcing prime Greenfield land to be concreted over and forever become brownfield land. The imposition and restriction to the use of the "residual methodology" was fiercely contested at the consultation stage and beyond, but Local Councils' voices were ignored. Local Councils need to be able to:

- protect heritage and environment and sensitive Greenfield land use and exercise local discretion, judgement and control of where development is needed and where it is allowed.

Assembly Constituency and Region

- Aberconwy
- North Wales

P-05-786 Save our Countryside, Revise TAN 1, Correspondence – Petitioner to Committee, 06.02.20

Thanks for giving me the opportunity to add to this.

I firmly believe that we need to be realistic regarding the amount of new builds that can be delivered locally, if past builds are not recognised when delivering Local Development Plans, we could be in grave danger of developers cherry picking our best land and arguing that we are not delivering on our land supply.

These arguments by developers have certainly been used in Conwy.

Let us not set ourselves up for failure as speculative planning applications are destroying our Countryside and communities.

Thank you

Mike Priestley

Cyng./ Cllr. Michael Priestley

Agenda Item 3.5

P-05-881 Fix our planning system

This petition was submitted by Ruth Parker having collected a total of 250 signatures.

Text of Petition

We call on the National Assembly of Wales to urge the Welsh Government to fix our planning system; new developments need to be sustainable.

Planning Policy Wales paragraph 4.2.15 states that 'planning authorities must ensure that land is genuinely available or will become available to provide a five year supply of land for housing...' For land to be regarded as genuinely available it must be a site included in a Joint Housing Land Availability Study.

The five year housing supply is putting undue pressure on local authorities at the cost of building unsuitable developments. The JHLAS is flawed: it does not take into account empty houses or the amount of second homes in the area. As a result of the shortage of land, councils feel the need to allow planning permission even if they are aware of infrastructure issues. If councils reject planning permission, the Welsh Planning Inspectorate overrules their decisions at appeal.

Developers are aware of the loopholes in the system and can flaunt a community's vulnerability through large speculative developments outside the Local Development Plan. As these developments are outside the LDP, the sustainability of the area in terms of well-being of the economy, health, transport, and environment are not scrutinised in detail. Even if residents highlight local and national studies/ statistics of an area, their voices are not being heard at appeal level. The Welsh Government need to define 'robust' evidence.

The Well-Being of Future Generations Act 2015 was brought in place to prevent unsustainable development in order to ensure that our future generations would have a chance of a reasonable future. Communities feel that policy and practice does not reflect this.

Assembly Constituency and Region

- Aberconwy
- North Wales

Agenda Item 3.6

P-05-903 Filming and Recording of Council Meetings

This petition was submitted by Cllr Russell Spencer-Downe having collected a total of 58 signatures.

Text of Petition

We call upon the National Assembly for Wales to urge the Welsh Government to follow the law In England that enshrines in law the right of residents, bloggers and journalists to report, blog, tweet and film council meetings to ensure openness and transparency. This has not happened in Wales and should be brought in, to allow the same in Wales.

This requirement should allow members of the public, as responsible observers, to record or film such meetings without the need for prior permission and to re-use the material freely to provide a direct and wider line of communication to the electorate.

England brought in this law that gave these rights in 2014 and Wales should be given the same rights.

Assembly Constituency and Region

- Vale of Glamorgan
- South Wales Central



Ein cyf/Our ref JJ/07068/19

Janet Finch-Saunders AM
Assembly Member
National Assembly for Wales
Ty Hywel
Cardiff Bay
Cardiff
CF99 1NA
Government.Committee.Business@gov.wales

28 January 2020

Dear Janet,

Thank you for your letter of 16 December regarding guidance for community and town councils in relation to the recording of meetings by external attendees.

There is presently no guidance on this for community and town councils. The Local Government and Elections (Wales) Bill proposes that community councils meetings held in public would require the chair to give members of the public in attendance a reasonable opportunity to make representations on business items - unless it is likely to prejudice the effective conduct of the meeting.

Once the Bill receives Royal Assent, we will revise the current "[Good councillor's guide](#)" and encourage community and town councils to consider and publish their format for public participation in light of legislative changes.

In addition, we have recently carried out a survey to better understand the sector's use of digital media to engage its electorate. Once the results are analysed we intended to issue guidance before the end of March 2020, using good practice case studies to encourage wider use of digital tools to increase public engagement in the work of community and town councils.

Yours sincerely,

Julie James AC/AM
Y Gweinidog Tai a Llywodraeth Leol
Minister for Housing and Local Government

Canolfan Cyswllt Cyntaf / First Point of Contact Centre:
0300 0604400

Bae Caerdydd • Cardiff Bay
Caerdydd • Cardiff
CF99 1NA

Gohebiaeth.Julie.James@lyw.cymru
Correspondence.Julie.James@gov.Wales

Rydym yn croesawu derbyn gohebiaeth yn Gymraeg. Byddwn yn ateb gohebiaeth a dderbynnir yn Gymraeg yn Gymraeg ac ni fydd gohebu yn Gymraeg yn arwain at oedi.

We welcome receiving correspondence in Welsh. Any correspondence received in Welsh will be answered in Welsh and corresponding in Welsh will not lead to a delay in responding.

Agenda Item 3.7

P-05-736 To Make Mental Health Services More Accessible.

This petition was submitted by Laura Williams, which collected 73 signatures.

Text of the Petition

To make mental health services more accessible the Government should ensure that no-one who approaches a mental health service should be turned away without help. Anyone who goes to their GP or any other health care professional who is experiencing a mental health problem should be automatically referred to the crisis team who should act immediately. The onus should not be on the individual to contact the Crisis Team on their own. There should also always be a one to one therapy option, rather than group therapy.

Many people will know I haven't had an easy time with life or with mental illness; I suffer with depression, anxiety, PTSD and OCD. Recently, I've hit rock bottom and have screamed for help but have been let down by mental health services who I thought would help, instead they have let me down majorly.

I want my experience to help others around Wales and to get the help they need.

Assembly constituency and Region.

- Cardiff West
- South Wales Central



Llywodraeth Cymru
Welsh Government

WRITTEN STATEMENT BY THE WELSH GOVERNMENT

TITLE **Publication of the Together for Mental Health Delivery Plan - 2019-22**

DATE **24 January 2020**

BY **Vaughan Gething AM, Minister for Health and Social Services**

As one of our key Prosperity for All cross government priorities, improving mental health and well-being continues to be a priority for me, as Minister for Health and Social Services, and for all my Cabinet colleagues. This challenges all of Welsh Government to consider its impact on mental health in all that it does. The profile of mental health continues to grow and we will all have been touched by the impact of poor mental health, either through family, friends, work colleagues or in our communities. Our new [Together for Mental Health Delivery Plan](#), which we have published today, reflects this level of priority and the cross-Government working required to improve the mental health and well-being of our population in Wales.

The new delivery plan is the third and final plan underpinning the Together for Mental Health 10 year Strategy, which was published in 2012. We have come a long way since the publication of Together for Mental Health, for instance, we have significantly reduced the number of children waiting longer than four weeks to access treatment and reduced mental health hospital admissions, through an emphasis on more support in the community. Changes are already evident in some areas, including remodelling of provision to meet the emotional well-being needs of children, young people and their families, an example of this would be the Gwent transformation programme. We have also increased the range of support available by establishing new services including CAMHS and adults crisis intervention teams, psychiatric liaison in hospitals and community mental health teams - but there is more to be done, and the new delivery plan places a greater emphasis on the protective factors for good mental health through cross-government and multi-agency working. At its heart, the new delivery plan recognises that in the face of rising demand for mental health support we must do more to prevent and protect against mental ill health as well as continue to invest in specialist services.

In my previous statement I reflected the good response to our consultation with over 240 written responses and over 150 people attending the three formal consultation events that we held across Wales. The responses reflected a broad range of stakeholders including

service users and carer representatives, local authorities, the NHS and professional bodies. I am grateful to all those who took the time to either attend the events or submit comments on the draft delivery plan. Whilst respondents generally supported the priority areas, the focus on protective factors and the emphasis on children and young people, particularly through our Whole School approach, the consultation steered us to a number of areas that needed to be strengthened in the final plan. In response to this feedback we have made a number of changes. For instance, we have broadened actions from an emphasis on rough sleeping and homelessness to a wider set of actions to improve mental health through housing support. We have also included actions to reflect how improving access to green spaces, cultural activities and outdoor recreation can support our mental health and well-being. We also heard through the consultation the need for more targeted action to support the mental health workforce and in response we have included a new commitment for Health Education and Improvement Wales and Social Care Wales to develop a cross-sector workforce plan for mental health. The new plan also places greater emphasis on the importance of learning from research and strengthening data and outcomes, and we have committed to a thorough and independent evaluation of the Together for Mental Health Strategy so that we can assess the impact we have made to date but – crucially – ensure that we are taking the right actions in what is a complex and challenging agenda.

This is an ambitious plan, taking us to the end of our 10 year Strategy. During this period we have increased our investment to support the improvements needed and since 2016-17 we have increased the ring fenced mental health funding in the main NHS allocation by £75m or 12.5% - in 2020-21 this will rise to over £700 million. This is significant and meaningful investment to improve services, but of course this doesn't capture our broader investment to protect mental health through our cross-Government working, for instance on prevention, employment, education and housing.

Our Together for Mental Health Strategy is based on the principle of partnership working across Government, public and third sectors in recognition that no single body or sector can transform services and improve the mental health and well-being of our population. I hope we can continue to build on the multi-agency partnership working and collaboration that has already been achieved in the previous delivery plans to deliver the commitment in the new delivery plan and the ambition of Together for Mental Health.

By virtue of paragraph(s) vi of Standing Order 17.42

Document is Restricted

Agenda Item 3.8

P-05-764 Better Mental Health Services for Adults

This petition was submitted by Megan Tudor, having collected 84 signatures online.

Petition text:

We call on the National Assembly for Wales to urge the Welsh Government to improve the treatment of adults in mental health services with particular focus on improving services in the community such as CMHT, inpatient, A&E and ambulance services.

Too often the mental health services have failed adults. It is appalling to think that everyday thousands of adults are being turned away when begging for help. To be admitted to hospital and quickly reviewed by a psychiatrist and being told 'just distract yourself you'll be fine' and sent home.

I understand that there have been major cuts to these services over the last few year, but frankly it is unacceptable. There should not be a price on someone's mental health. Mental health should have the same level of care as physical health.

Why is there more support in place for children suffering from mental health? Children have support in place following hospital admissions but there's nothing for adults. There may be promises that they will receive support from certain services but they quickly fall through. I am disgusted by the horror stories I have heard from people in the system. I have witnessed first hand the lack of care provided for adults suffering from ill mental health. This needs to change and it needs to change fast. I will no longer sit back and watch this happen.

I want to see huge changes in the way adult patients are treated and supported. All services should liaise with each other to provide the best care possible. At the moment communication is lacking between services leaving the patient without support. If emergency services are needed then there needs to be some follow up support in place for when they return home. Most services work within the hours of 9am and 5pm but mental health doesn't go away at 5pm we need more accessible after hours support. I want to see more care from staff too, they may have the training required for their position but empathy and respect is nowhere to be found. It's time to change.

Additional information:

Ok let's talk..

Mental Health can still be quite a taboo topic but I want you to stick with me here for a minute. I just want you to imagine feeling completely lost, empty and like you have no reason to live. You want the pain to end so you take the most difficult step of your life; you ask for help. You just want someone to recognise how much pain you're in and make it go away.

The doctors/paramedics/police/psychiatrist tell you it's 'nothing to worry about you must be having a bad day that's normal'. The truth is it's not just a bad day you've been stuck in this dark place for much longer. They don't listen, you go home and although you didn't think it was possible, you feel worse than you did before asking for help.

THIS ISN'T HOW IT'S SUPPOSED TO BE! The help and support should be readily available for those that need it but it's not and that's what needs to change. If this petition works it could save thousands of lives every single day. Please show your support by signing this and share it. Things have got to change.

Assembly Constituency and Region

- Montgomeryshire
- Mid and West Wales

Agenda Item 3.9

P-05-812 We call for the Welsh Government to encourage trusts to implement the NICE guidelines for Borderline Personality Disorder or justify why they do not do so

This petition was submitted by Keir Harding and was first considered by the Committee in May 2018, having collected 812 signatures.

Text of Petition

No Longer A Diagnosis of Exclusion, a document that highlighted the mistreatment of those diagnosed with personality disorder was published in 2003.

The NICE guidelines for Borderline Personality Disorder were published in 2009. 9 years on less than half of Welsh trusts provide services that comply with the guidelines. This compares to 84% of trusts in England.

People with this diagnosis have frequently come from backgrounds of maltreatment, neglect and abuse.

1 in 10 people with this diagnosis will die by suicide.

The National Confidential Inquiry into Suicide and Homicide found that of the 1 in 10 people who ended their lives over the period of their study, none were receiving NICE recommended care.

Experts in the field warn that trusts without specialist services will be over reliant on out of area private treatment. This view was supported by representatives of trusts without specialist services at the Personality Disorder Cymru conference in Cardiff in 2016.

We must do more to support the survivors of abuse who have been let down enough already.

We must do more to protect the Welsh tax payer by providing effective community services rather than expensive out of area placements.

We call for the Welsh Government to direct trusts to implement the NICE guidelines for Borderline Personality Disorder or justify why they do not do so.

Assembly Constituency and Region

- Wrexham

- North Wales

P-05-812 Implement the NICE guidelines for Borderline Personality Disorder, Correspondence – Petitioner to Committee, 16.02.20

To the petitions committee,

I thank you for sending me the Together for Mental Health document. It is a substantive piece of work and I hope you didn't put it together just for me.

I welcome the focus on tackling stigma, reducing suicide and self harm, early intervention, trauma services and perinatal services. I think all of this will be of benefit to the client group that I am concerned about. I think it is deliberate that the document makes no specific mention of particular diagnoses other than eating disorders, but I wonder if this is wise when thinking about the stigma attached to a population within an already stigmatised group.

When my petition first began I mentioned the "privatisation of PD" the idea articulated by services within Wales that personality disorder was not their business and should instead be transferred to hospitals in the private sector. I wrote to the first minister and the petitions committee of the poor standards in these private hospitals which claim to have a specialism in this area. Recently we have learned that Wales will no longer send patients to St Andrews due to the poor care that was part of the inspiration of this petition. At present, we do not monitor the diagnoses of those sent to private hospitals and it would be interesting to learn how much we are spending on contraindicated "care" for people with this diagnosis.

No longer a diagnosis of Exclusion was published on 2003 and the NICE guidelines for Borderline Personality Disorder in 2009. Wales has still not implemented these guidelines. In January the Royal College of Psychiatrists published their position statement on personality disorder quoting papers on the subject from England, Northern Ireland and Scotland. Wales took the wooden spoon with no publications or policy in this area which leads me to wonder if the stigma is particularly ingrained in our nation. Without specific direction to address the needs of those who are repeatedly overlooked by services, I worry that health boards will continue to do what they have done in the past and prioritise those they find less challenging. We have the evidence of the past 20 years and our absence from the position statement to give us a hint. Also the British and Irish Group for the Study of Personality Disorder Conference takes place in March, and no one from Wales (other than me) is speaking. It seems that without acknowledging what has been missed in the past we are in danger of repeating it. This is an appalling cost on the lives of people who lived through abuse, but also an appalling cost on the taxpayers of Wales who are funding poor care in England.

I would ask the committee:

Can we discover the extent to which we export people with a diagnosis of personality disorder to the private sector?

Do we have plans to follow the recommendations of the RCP Position Statement?

Currently Wales seems to take no position on Personality Disorder other than to say it is up to individual trusts. As the only home nation without paper describing a national vision is it time to produce one?

Given the multiple publications describing the intense stigma suffered by this client group, can we describe specific efforts in Wales to challenge this? The RCP make reference to post qualification training as well as ongoing professional development. Can Wales commit to something similar?

As a member of the executive committee of the British and Irish group for the study of personality disorder and someone who researched how a trust was able to cease the use of private sector placements for this client group I'd be happy to share my experiences with anyone interested in improving services towards this patient group while reducing costs associated with private sector care.

Many Thanks,

Keir

Agenda Item 3.10

P-05-902 Paternal Mental Health (New Fathers Mental Health)

This petition was submitted by Mark Williams having collected a total of 116 signatures.

Text of Petition

In a "landmark move" NHS England will screen and support fathers for their mental health if the partner has a perinatal mental health illness.

The biggest killer in men under 50 is suicide and with a new debate in Parliament we feel the Welsh Government should be following and funding new father's mental health as without the support it can impact on mums and the development of the child.

The National Childbirth Trust "Dads in Distress report in 2015 found 38% of dads worry about their own mental health and 73% worry about their partners mental health.

1 in 10 dads suffer postnatal depression which looks different more anger, drinking, substance abuse and of course dads struggle to bond with their children too.

Fatherhood pressure is different than years ago with same gender couples and stay at home dads support needs to be in place.

Due to lack of support and screening dads often go into other services at crisis point after the relationship sadly has ended.

The Still Face experiment with dads explains the importance of supporting dad for his mental health due to importance of the first 1001 days antenatal and postnatal period.

When supporting all parents it has far better outcomes for the whole family.

We would like Wales to follow NHS England's new long term plan and include fathers.

Assembly Constituency and Region

- Ogmere
- South Wales West

**P-05-902 Paternal Mental Health (New Fathers Mental Health), Correspondence
– Petitioner to Committee, 07.02.20**

Thanks again for emailing me back about the petition.

The news is great that father's are going to be mentioned in policy and now I'm part of the ALL Wales Perinatal Mental Health Group aim to push to see Father's screening in place.

We need to collect data of how many father's are struggling with their mental health during the antenatal and postnatal period.

We know by research that men are 47 times more at risk of suicide around the perinatal mental health period as often go into other services at crisis point after the perinatal period.

If it can be on record that my aim is to see all parents screened during the antenatal or postnatal period which must include new fathers and must come under the new policies set out in the new plan.

Thanks again Mark Williams

P-05-860 Make Curriculum for Life Lessons Compulsory

This petition was submitted by Emily Jones having collected 121 signatures online and 165 on paper, a total of 286 signatures.

Text of Petition

We call on the National Assembly for Wales to ensure that curriculum for life lessons are compulsory for secondary schools across Wales and that the content is reviewed annually by a board of elected young people.

Additional Information

A curriculum for life would include topics such as; finance, sex and relationships, politics and basic living skills. Article 28 of the UNCRC states children have the right to an education. However, the current curriculum is failing to provide us with the life skills we need.

Assembly Constituency and Region

- Pontypridd
- South Wales Central

Agenda Item 3.12

P-05-861 Make political education a compulsory element of the new national curriculum

This petition was submitted by Kaiesha Ceryn Page having collected 117 signatures.

Text of Petition

Education should provide young people with the skills and tools that will ensure that they become valued and engaged citizens of the country.

Despite the vast advances that have been made by social media and fast-paced news cycles, young people often view politics as a taboo subject, seen as something that is not for the likes of them.

We believe that young people should leave education with a comprehensive understanding of political institutions within the United Kingdom. The Electoral Reform Society report recommended that four key aspects should be taught in school – the parties, democracy, the role of institutions and campaigning.

At present, the Welsh Government has a unique opportunity to lead the way on this matter as it is currently developing its first national curriculum. As one of its four key concepts, the new curriculum aims to produce citizens that are "ethical and informed". It therefore stands to reason that political education should be an essential part of this.

The development of this curriculum provides a unique opportunity for the Welsh Government to revolutionise how it educates its young people, providing citizens that will become the leaders of the future.

Assembly Constituency and Region

- Rhondda
- South Wales Central

P-05-861 Make political education a compulsory element of the new national curriculum, Correspondence – Petitioner to Committee, 17.02.20

I welcome and commend the work that the Welsh Youth Parliament has done and thoroughly agree with the report it has produced.

In my view, the report echoes much of what my own research has found.

Yet so far, in my view, none of the resolutions seem to go far enough, as nothing provides a concrete provision for a political education to be provided. The government could and should do more to ensure that it is now offered in schools. Perhaps this could come in the form of a compulsory school visit to the Assembly for those in year 11 or even the creation of a specific organisation who would provide this education to schools. Until such a provision is created, I believe that it will remain a neglected aspect of skill-based learning.

Too often we choose to prioritise exam results over skill-based learning and with this pressure often placed on teachers, they will adhere to a curriculum. Ensuring that political education is part of this curriculum is the only way to ensure that we are teaching children and young people who to participate in the world around them.

As I have outlined in past documents, there are numerous reasons why now is the crucial moment for such a change to be made.

I believe that providing a political education will impact on the following:

- Help to provide young people with analytical skills and allowing them to be critical of extremist ideologies and fake news.
- Help to engage and politicise young people from all political stances.
- Ensure that we are producing young people who are capable of becoming politicians themselves, hence ensuring that politics looks increasingly like the public it is trying to serve.

As the Senedd and Elections (Wales) Act 2020 formally introduced votes for 16, this is now a pressing issue and it's no longer acceptable to offer a vague promise about the provision for political education. The choice to introduce votes at 16 offers Wales with a unique chance to lead the way and to engage a generation of young people before they become jaded with life and disenfranchised.

Many young people will come from families that have already lost faith in the political system and if we don't catch their attention before they leave school, we risk losing their interest forever. A democracy is reliant upon the public participating and if people don't vote, the entire system is faulty.

The Welsh Assembly has taken a huge leap forward in choosing to legalise votes for 16 but to do this without sufficient education is an opportunity that we won't get a second chance

at. In a world that suggests to young people that their voices don't matter, we have to show them that they do.

Agenda Item 3.13

P-05-879 Add Mental Health Education to the mandatory teaching curriculum for all schools in Wales

This petition was submitted by Annie Harris having collected a total of 1,947 signatures.

Text of Petition

When working for Mental – The Podcast to Destigmatise Mental Health, I am continually concerned by the lack of education in schools around mental health. With 1 in 4 of us experiencing mental illness every year according to the charity Mind, this seems to be a real and significant gap in our education system.

KEY STATISTICS:

Over half of all mental ill health starts before the age of 14, and 75% of this has developed by the age of 18;

A 2015 survey found that 13% of adults (16 & older) living in Wales were reported to have received treatment for a mental health problem, an increase from 12% reported in 2014;

The overall cost of mental health problems in Wales is an estimated £7.2 billion a year.

The statistics are shocking, yet whilst there is a whole subject in the Welsh curriculum about our physical health in the form of PE, our young people are left without knowledge of even the most common mental illnesses.

Not only does this leave them unprepared & vulnerable when it comes to looking out for their own mental health, but also sets the standard that Mental Health is not discussed. This plants a seed of stigma that many carry for their whole lives.

We are keen to hear back from those in power on a more extensive plan to better the lives of Wales's young people.

CAMPAIGNING FOR:

Mental Health education becoming mandatory teaching for all schools in Wales without the addition of any exams/homework on this subject.

Every child in Wales having the ability to access a qualified counsellor through their school.

Every school in Wales offering Mental Health training for its staff.

Please join our petition to help bring us one step closer to making these requests a reality for Welsh children, thus safeguarding the health of generations to come.

Thank you for reading, Annie Harris

Learn more about this petition & the team behind it at mentalpodcast.co.uk/petition

Additional Information

1. Source: Murphy M and Fonagy P (2012). Mental health problems in children and young people. In: Annual Report of the Chief Medical Officer 2012. London: Department of Health.

2. and 3. Source: Mental Health Foundation. Mental Health in Wales, Fundamental Facts 2016
(<https://www.mentalhealth.org.uk/sites/default/files/FF16%20Wales.pdf>)

Please see <https://www.change.org/p/get-mental-health-education-on-the-school-curriculum-mentalpetition-join-me-and-over-100-000-others> for the national interest in this petition. We handed in the petition to 10 Downing Street on 3rd October 2018.

Assembly Constituency and Region

- Monmouth
- South Wales East

Agenda Item 3.14

P-05-888 Make GCSE Welsh Language compulsory in all schools in Wales

This petition was submitted by Gwion Rhisiart having collected a total of 175 signatures.

Text of Petition

Currently, Welsh Language is compulsory as either first or second language in all state schools in Wales. However, this does not apply to private schools, who do not have to follow the national curriculum. In many cases, pupils leave private schools not being able to speak a word of Welsh. If we are to progress with our language, and want to reach the government's target of 1 million Welsh speakers by 2050, we must give every child in Wales the chance to learn. We call on the Welsh Government to: –Make Welsh Second Language GCSE compulsory in all schools in Wales by law for the new curriculum in 2022.

Assembly Constituency and Region

- Cardiff Central
- South Wales Central

P-05-888 Gwneud TGAU Iaith Gymraeg yn orfodol ym mhob ysgol yng Nghymru, Gohebiaeth – Deisebydd at y Pwyllgor, 09.02.20

Rwy'n hapus i'r Pwyllgor gau'r deiseb.

Diolch,

Agenda Item 3.15

P-05-925 Don't leave Wales behind – teach menstrual wellbeing in schools

This petition was submitted by Jade Morgan having collected a total of 846 signatures.

Text of Petition

My name's Jade, and for 15 years I was told the severe pain I was experiencing as part of my menstrual cycle was completely normal. I suffered from excruciating pain, fatigue, and bowel and bladder related problems – all whilst trying to get through school, navigate puberty, and pass my exams.

I wish I had known that what I was experiencing wasn't normal – but symptoms of a common condition called endometriosis which affects 1 in 10 women from puberty to menopause. Endometriosis is just one of many menstrual conditions affecting young people – others include PCOS, PMDD, and adenomyosis. I don't want anyone suffering with a menstrual health condition to do so alone like I did.

By working with Endometriosis UK, I hope we can do exactly that by persuading the Welsh Assembly to teach menstrual wellbeing in schools. Not only would this help break down the taboos around menstrual health and encourage people to talk openly about their periods, but also by teaching what is and isn't normal to experience.

Had I been taught at school what is and isn't normal when it comes to menstrual related pain, I could have sought help and saved myself years of confusion and heartbreak.

For many, school is a happy time to look back on. And whilst I definitely had some good times, it's the falling asleep at the back of the class and having to quit school gymnastics that I remember most. Teachers would treat me like I did not want to be there and never even asked why. In reality I was just too tired and in too much pain to function.

From 2020, children in England will learn about menstrual wellbeing as part of the school curriculum. A subject I can only wish was on the curriculum

when I was at school. As teachers may not have ignored me, but empowered me to get the help I needed.

Whilst it's a huge step forward that those in England will now learn about menstrual wellbeing, let's not leave those in Wales behind. The Welsh Government are now reviewing the curriculum and we have the opportunity to make sure children in Wales get the education they need.

Please sign my petition to get menstrual wellbeing in the Welsh curriculum.

Together, we can stamp out the stigma and give children with menstrual conditions the support they deserve. Period.

Assembly Constituency and Region

- Monmouth
- South Wales East



Your ref: P-05-925
Our ref: KW/00128/20

Janet Finch-Saunders AM
Chair
National Assembly for Wales Petitions Committee
Cardiff Bay
Cardiff
CF99 1NA

SeneddPetitions@assembly.wales

4 February 2020

Dear Janet

Petition P-05-925 Don't leave Wales behind - teach menstrual wellbeing in schools

Thank you for your letter dated 24 January in relation to the aforementioned Petition, which is being considered by the Committee.

The phase of co-construction for refining the new curriculum has concluded and I published the revised [Curriculum for Wales guidance](#) on 28 January. Feedback was provided from a wide range of sources, and informed the refinement work carried out in the autumn.

The Health and well-being Area of Learning and Experience includes a statement of what matters which includes personal care, hygiene and protection from infection. It is intended to support learners to develop positive, informed behaviours to allow them to care for and respect themselves. These behaviours support learners' sense of self-worth, their mental and emotional health and energy levels. The statements of what matters will be a mandatory part of a school's curriculum.

The guidance for this statement of what matters sets out that learners should develop an understanding of a variety of conditions that can affect their physical health and well-being. They should also learn how to respond and/or manage these, especially as learners grow. It is important that learners develop this understanding of and ability to respond to a range of conditions that can affect their lives and those of others. Developing an awareness and understanding of the health and well-being of others is also a key part of this Area and so this is learning that is relevant to all learners regardless of gender.

Canolfan Cyswllt Cyntaf / First Point of Contact Centre:
0300 0604400

Bae Caerdydd • Cardiff Bay
Caerdydd • Cardiff
CF99 1NA

Gohebiaeth.Kirsty.Williams@llyw.cymru
Correspondence.Kirsty.Williams@gov.wales

Rydym yn croesawu derbyn gohebiaeth yn Gymraeg. Byddwn yn ateb gohebiaeth a dderbynnir yn Gymraeg yn Gymraeg ac ni fydd gohebu yn Gymraeg yn arwain at oedi.

We welcome receiving correspondence in Welsh. Any correspondence received in Welsh will be answered in Welsh and corresponding in Welsh will not lead to a delay in responding.

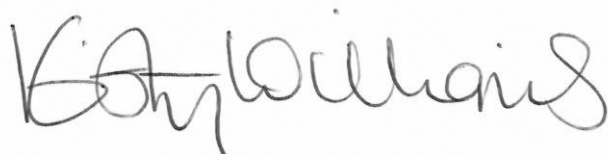
Our new curriculum guidance will allow all schools to begin the journey of designing their own curriculum that meets their own needs within a national approach that ensures consistency.

The Curriculum for Wales framework gives every school in Wales the opportunity to design their own curriculum. It encourages schools to build their own vision for their learners within the context of the Four Purposes and the learning defined at a national level.

Whilst the new curriculum guidance does not include a long list of individual topics, it does set out what schools should take into account in designing their curriculum and the broad expectations for learners. As I set out in my oral statement on January 28, as we look forward to implementation, officials will work with practitioners to identify priorities for the development of resources, to ensure a range of supporting material is available by 2022 to help practitioners develop their own curriculum.

The curriculum's implementation plan will be published after Easter and will provide a clear outline for implementation based on where schools should be focusing their efforts at different points up to 2022 and how they will be supported in doing this.

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Kirsty Williams', written in a cursive style.

Kirsty Williams AM
Minister for Education

To: Petitions Committee

From: Endometriosis UK

Date: February 2020

Subject: **Petition P-05-925 Don't leave Wales behind – teach menstrual wellbeing in schools**

Thank you for the opportunity to comment on the letter from Kirsty Williams AM to Janet Finch-Saunders AM, Chair of the Petitions Committee, dated 4th February. Please find below our responses to the questions suggested.

What are your thoughts on the attached document?

We are disappointed with the response, which does not address the issues we had raised.

The proposed Curriculum for Wales guidance contains no mention of menstrual wellbeing, nor even any mention of puberty. Whilst we did try and identify areas where menstrual wellbeing *might* be included in the curriculum, these could easily be overlooked as there is no explicit mention. We are concerned the new curriculum could easily be implemented by schools with no inclusion of menstrual wellbeing education.

There are areas where menstrual wellbeing could be easily included explicitly and avoid a situation where learners in Wales miss out on a key area of knowledge. For example:

- Under RSE, the *Bodies and body image* section (p39) does include a reference to how the human body 'changes over time' but no reference to puberty nor menstrual wellbeing. Adding in 'puberty and menstrual wellbeing' here would clearly show this is an important area to cover. The sentence would read:

"Learners should develop an understanding of the human body and how it changes over time, including people's feelings about their bodies, puberty and menstrual wellbeing, and their sexual and reproductive capacities and functions."

However, if menstrual wellbeing is only included in RSE, it is signalling it is only important in relation to reproduction and in relationships with others. This does not support learners to believe that menstrual wellbeing is of value to their own health and wellbeing.

- It is good to see the link between Health and Wellbeing Areas and Science and Technology Areas, which would be an excellent place to explicitly mention menstrual wellbeing. We request that the following sentence is inserted into each of the relevant paragraphs under 'Key links with other Areas' for both Health and Wellbeing and Science and Technology Areas:

"Learning how hormones including the menstrual cycle work can help learners understand their thoughts, feelings and emotions."

This would help the large number of learners who will experience menstrual issues by providing them with the language, knowledge and understanding what they are experiencing is not normal and to seek help

We were concerned that the letter refers to the inclusion of a statement of what matters which includes personal care, hygiene and protection from infection, with the implication that this is where menstrual wellbeing would best fit into the curriculum, although with no explicit mention of this it is

hard to see how schools developing their curriculums would know this. We have concerns that menstrual wellbeing is an important area that has not been included to support learners previously, and including here would reinforce historic cultural stereotypes that periods are 'dirty' and 'unclean', one of the roots as to why many think the menstrual cycle is to be hidden away and not talked about. Labelling anything menstrual as 'hygiene' or 'sanitary' implies that periods – the visible output of the menstrual cycle – are unhygienic and unsanitary, reinforcing cultural labelling of periods as dirty and something to be ashamed of.

Does it adequately address the issues that you raised?

No. The issues that we raised have not been addressed. We see this as a step backwards in terms of giving learners the information and knowledge they need to support their health and wellbeing.

We request inclusion of the following which we see as the minimum needed to support the 51% of the population that experiences menstruation:

1. A statement should be included in that issues which may affect learners, such as puberty and menstruation, should be engaged with sensitively and before the onset of physiological changes, and knowledge developed age appropriately through their education.
2. "Learning how hormones including the menstrual cycle work can help learners understand their thoughts, feelings and emotions." To be inserted into Health and Wellbeing Area of Learning, Key links with other Areas, Science and Technology; and Science and Technology Area of Learning, Key links with other Areas, Health and Well-being.
3. The RSE *Bodies and body image* section (p39) should include a reference to puberty and menstrual wellbeing, as detailed above.

Do you have further questions in response?

We have the following questions given the response:

How will the Welsh Government ensure that learners understand the menstrual cycle before they experience it, and can identify and seek help should they have menstrual issues or concerns?

How is the Welsh Government going to ensure that a vital area of learning - menstrual wellbeing - is included by schools, when it is not mentioned in the new curriculum and is rarely taught at the moment?

What consideration has been given to the implication that could be conveyed to the 51% of female learners that their menstrual cycle is related only to reproduction and of value only in terms of relationship with others, if included only in Relationships and Sexuality?

Is there anything additional that you would like the Committee to know at this stage, either in response to this document or as an update to the Committee?

There are many myths around menstruation and menstrual health, with sometimes even severe and debilitating symptoms normalised, such as chronic pelvic pain, heavy menstrual bleeding and mood swings, and this is exacerbated by lack of open and consistent education. If learners are not taught

menstrual wellbeing at school, this will be perpetuated rather than overcome. It should be noted that:

- nearly half (48 per cent) of girls aged 14 to 21 in the UK are embarrassed by their periods; one in seven (14 per cent) girls admitted that they did not know what was happening when they started their period and more than a quarter (26 per cent) reporting that they did not know what to do when they started their period (Plan UK, 2017).
- menstrual diseases and conditions are not rare, they are common: of the female population, 20% have fibroids, 20% have Heavy Menstrual Bleeding, 10% have endometriosis, 10% have adenomyosis, 10% have Polycystic Ovary Syndrome, 5% have PMDD. Yet many suffer for years without a diagnosis, missing school and then employment, and taking a toll on their mental health.

With periods starting younger and menopause starting later, not to mention fewer children at a later stage and with less time breast feeding, females are having many more periods than previous generations. Given this, menstrual issues are likely having more of an impact than in previous generations.

There is an opportunity with simple, short inclusions in the new curriculum to rectify this situation for future generations in Wales, by ensuring age appropriate menstrual wellbeing is taught at key points in the learners development. To not include this is letting down future generations and allowing old cultural prejudices and taboos to continue to impact on girls, young women and those assigned female at birth to reach their potential.

We thank the Petitions Committee for considering this issue.

Agenda Item 3.16

P-05-913 Creation of Lôn Las Môn Multi-Use Path

This petition was submitted by Gethyn Mon Hughes having collected a total of 2,216 signatures.

Text of Petition

We call on the Welsh Government to withdraw its objection, and offer support, to the proposal for Network Rail to permit the Anglesey Central Railway to be re-purposed into an 18 mile traffic-free multi-user path from Amlwch through to Gaerwen. Having been out of service for the past 26 years, it is our belief that the line could no longer serve any useful purpose for passenger services or freight between Gaerwen and Amlwch. Instead, the Lôn Las Môn multi-user path would be open for use by families, walkers, runners, equestrian users and leisure cyclists, including those with disabled access requirements.

Additional Information

Unlike the neighbouring counties of Gwynedd and Conwy, Anglesey has very few sections of traffic free paths. Although two national cycle routes are in existence on the island, they are primarily B-roads which are signposted principally for use by experienced road cyclists. Sixty percent of people who do not cycle state fear of traffic as a reason for not using a bicycle as a means of transportation. A traffic free route such as Lôn Las Môn is crucial to encourage more people to cycle for leisure and transport purposes. In addition, with an average of one rider involved in a road traffic incident every day across the UK, equestrian users on Anglesey would also benefit from a traffic free route, away from fast moving vehicles which pose a major hazard for both horse and rider. Once completed, the multi-user green-way would be a traffic free long-distance corridor from the South West to the North East of the island, allowing users to link with the Anglesey coastal path as well as other footpaths, cycle routes and bridleways. The project would also have knock-on economic benefits for the tourism sector on Anglesey. This is demonstrated by the Camel Trail in Cornwall, a disused railway trail of a similar length to the proposed Lôn Las Môn trail at 17.3 miles. In 2015 users of the Camel Trail spent around £6.7m and generated approximately £13m of business turnover. With obesity, mental health issues, as well as levels of type 2 diabetes increasing at an alarming rate, Lôn Las Môn would allow the public to exercise in a traffic free environment, away from vehicle emissions

and pollutants, and over terrain which is readily accessible to those with disabilities and access needs. The benefits to residents, businesses and visitors that would result from this project are substantial and would undoubtedly improve the quality of life for everyone on Anglesey.

Assembly Constituency and Region

- Ynys Mon
- North Wales



CYNGOR SIR
YNYS MÔN
ISLE OF ANGLESEY
COUNTY COUNCIL

Janet Finch-Saunders AC
Cadeirydd y Pwyllgor Deisebau
Cynulliad Cenedlaethol Cymru
Bae Caerdydd
Caerdydd
CF88 1NA

HUW PERCY B. Eng, C.Eng., CEnv, MICE
Pennaeth Gwasanaeth - Priffyrdd, Gwastraff ac Eiddo
Head of Service - Highways, Waste and Property
CYNGOR SIR YNYS MÔN
ISLE OF ANGLESEY COUNTY COUNCIL
Swyddfa'r Sir
LLANGFNI
Ynys Môn - Anglesey
LL77 7TW

Gofynnwch am - Please ask for: Mr. Huw Percy

ffôn / tel:

E-Bost - E-mail: highways@anglesey.gov.uk
Ein Cyf - Our Ref. HP/LTJ/027.38/M048119
Eich Cyf - Your Ref.

20 Rhagfyr 2019

Annwyl Janet Finch-Saunders

Deiseb P-05-913 Creu Llwybr Aml-ddefnydd Lôn Las Môn

Cyfeiriaf at eich llythyr dyddiedig 4ydd Rhagfyr, 2019 yn cyfeirio at ddeiseb creu llwybr aml-ddefnydd Lôn Las Môn.

Yn dilyn trafodaethau mewnol, nid yw'r Cyngor yn credu y byddai yn addas cynnig unrhyw sylwadau ar y mater gan ein bod yn ymwybodol fod trafodaethau yn mynd yn eu blaen ynglŷn a lês defnydd y lein. Gan mai cwmni Network Rail yw perchnogion y lein, bydd y Cyngor yn cadw mewn cysylltiad gydag NR gan ofyn am ddiweddariadau rheolaidd.

Mae croeso i gysylltu gyda mi os hoffech drafod y mater ymhellach.

Yn gywir

Huw Percy
Pennaeth Gwasanaeth:Priffyrdd, Gwastraff ac Eiddo
Head of Service: Highways, Waste and Property

Copi - Annwen Morgan

By virtue of paragraph(s) vi of Standing Order 17.42

Document is Restricted



Eich cyf/Your ref P-05-913
Ein cyf/Our ref KS/08639/19

Janet Finch-Saunders AM

Government.Committee.Business@gov.wales

31 January 2020

Dear Janet,

Thank you for your letter of 2 December regarding Petition P-05-913 - Creation of Lôn Las Môn Multi-Use Path.

Network Rail included the Welsh Government in a consultation on the proposed lease of the Gaerwen – Amlwch railway in June 2016. Network Rail confirmed that the terms of the lease would provide for a three month rolling termination provision should the line be required for any alternative rail uses (i.e., the lease could be brought to an end with 3 months' notice at any time during the lease term). The Welsh Government consultation response set out our support for the provision for termination of the lease in the event of a requirement for alternative rail uses on the basis that there were identified potential future rail passenger and/or freight uses. With these safeguards in place, the Welsh Government supported this proposed lease arrangement in light of the potential contribution to tourism in North Wales.

As part of our response to the Williams Rail Review we called for the full devolution of rail infrastructure to Welsh Government alongside a fair funding settlement. With this in place we would consider and develop proposals for improving rail connectivity as set out in our rail vision including the consideration of re-opening lines such as Gaerwen to Amlwch.

The station assessment process has been developed to ensure that a pipeline of new schemes is available to take advantage of Department for Transport funding opportunities. To date, preliminary work has been undertaken on the strength of the financial and economic case for a new station at Llangefni. It has not been recommended as a station to be taken forward for further assessment work at this stage. Further information regarding the assessment process can be found here:

<https://gov.wales/sites/default/files/publications/2019-08/new-rail-stations-prioritisation-stage-2-assessment-report.pdf>

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Gohebiaeth.Ken.Skates@llyw.cymru
Correspondence.Ken.Skates@gov.wales

Rydym yn croesawu derbyn gohebiaeth yn Gymraeg. Byddwn yn ateb gohebiaeth a dderbynnir yn Gymraeg yn Gymraeg ac ni fydd gohebu yn Gymraeg yn arwain at oedi.

We welcome receiving correspondence in Welsh. Any correspondence received in Welsh will be answered in Welsh and corresponding in Welsh will not lead to a delay in responding.

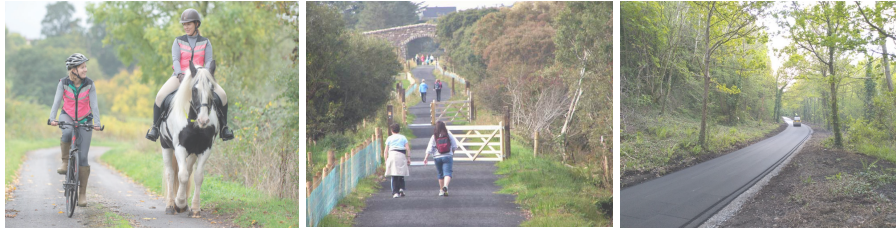
Alongside the above, for the path to be considered for development it will require inclusion in the Isle of Anglesey County Council's Integrated Network Map.

Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Ken', with a long, sweeping horizontal stroke extending to the right.

Ken Skates AC/AM

Gweinidog yr Economi a Thrafnidiaeth
Minister for Economy and Transport



Lôn Las Môn

For the attention of Mr Ross Davies
Dirprwy Glerc, Y Pwyllgor Deisebau, Cynulliad Cenedlaethol Cymru
Deputy Clerk, Petitions Committee, National Assembly for Wales

P-05-913 - Pwyllgor Deisebau 21.01.20 / Petitions Committee 21.01.20

Date 17th February 2020

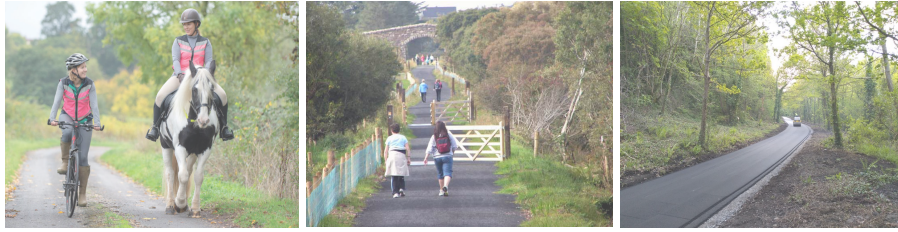
Dear Sirs, Madam

We would like to respond as follows to the letters & enclosures from Isle of Anglesey Council & Mr Ken Skates AM as follows:

1. Letters from Isle of Anglesey Chief Executive Annwen Morgan, Huw Percy Head of Highways are rather disappointing as they do not even offer an opinion as to the merits or not of the creation of a Multiuse Path across the island & the potential benefits it could bring, from health, fitness, disabled & adaptive cycling & many other uses other than just tourism, which at best the Heritage Railway can only offer a very narrow benefit to the island. It is rather at odds that the Anglesey Local Access Forum (a subcommittee of the Council) who we presented our scheme to in November which gave Lôn Las Môn a unanimous vote of approval. As have three Community Councils along its route. As this is a scheme to be run by Lôn Las Môn CIC, we are not looking for Isle of Anglesey to run or manage the project, we just need their support and not to oppose clearly what would be a benefit to the island and a whole.
2. We are aware of the consultation between Network Rail & the Welsh Government on the proposed lease of the railway in June 2016 with an associated 3 month rolling termination provision. Currently Anglesey Central Railway Ltd (ACRL) have a licence to clear sections of the railway which comes to an end in April 2020. ACRL are in discussions with Network Rail over a long-term lease & we believe they may have gone to the heads of terms stage (than could be confirmed by Network Rail)
3. The Minister makes mention of "safeguards in place, the Welsh Government supported this proposed lease arrangement in light of the potential contribution to tourism in North Wales" this indicates that it is only tourism that is of the greatest importance here, Lôn Las Môn offers a greater range of benefits to the population of Anglesey more than just "tourism". We have previously touched on the health benefits apart from the fitness, wellbeing & being active side of things & we have attached an open letter from Dr Dyfrig ap Dafydd Cluster Lead for Anglesey Cluster. If we are to improve the health of Wales, then taking on board what Dr Dyfrig says is bound into the principle behind Lôn Las Môn.
4. We have put a proposal to Network Rail with advice from Greenways & Cyclepaths <http://www.johngrimshawassociates.co.uk> a leading consultant in the creation of cycle-paths & greenways for Lôn Las Môn to be granted a Licence similar to the lease with a 3-month rolling termination clause. This would allow access to the full length of the railway to allow the clearance of dense scrub & restoration of fences & means of enclosure, uplifting of the rails & sleepers. Then over topping of the ballast with a suitable surface for walkers, runners, leisure cyclists, horse riders & adaptive cycling & disabled users. In taking this approach although the rails & sleepers are removed the trackbed is maintained should some form of rail need to return. We cannot just leave the line as it stands presently as an overgrown & forgotten railway.

5. We have read the Williams Rail Review & we do not believe there is any economic case to support a commuter service returning to the line as it does not support a large enough population in Amlwch or Llangefni. A far greater benefit would be investment in electric or similar busses to serve the villages & towns on the island with greater connectivity to Holyhead, Amlwch, Llangefni & Menai Bridge. As a single rail line, the frequency of services to & from Gaerwen to Amlwch would be at best every two hours & there are no stations left along its route that are not in private ownership.
6. In response to the station assessment process that was announced in 2019 we were aware of the fact that Llangefni had not been selected in favour of other potential stations serving a greater Pauli's such as Deeside. As stated, there is a very weak case to reopen Llangefni if financial and economic assessments are used. The station like all the others along the route of the railway are in private ownership & would require compulsory purchase to reacquire for rail use.
7. Isle of Anglesey do not have a fully integrated network map of the entire island & have only published maps in relation to the Active Travel (Wales) Act 2013 which places duties upon local authorities in Wales to map, plan for, improve and promote opportunities for active travel. At present this only covers circular travel (cycling & walking) in Amlwch, Holyhead, Llangefni & Menai Bridge. No consideration has been given to connectivity between these centres that Lôn Las Môn would bring from Amlwch though to Llangefni & the growing business, technology & industry centre of Gaerwen.
8. There is no mention in the Ministers response about the environmental benefits that a Multiuse Path / Greenway could provide. There are a number of schemes on the island that have parallels in the creation of a green corridor: Wild Pathways - Cwllwn Seiriol <https://www.mentermon.com/en/priosectau/cwllwm-seiriol/> Long Forest Project / Cynnal Cymru <https://www.cynnalcymru.com/about-us/> & others. As Lôn Las Môn is an uninterrupted 18 mile traffic free route that passes two large bodies of water & nature reserves such as Gors Dryga, it's potential as a Green Corridor is enormous to biodiversity and wildlife connectivity from North to South on the island.
9. If we have not already reiterated there are many user groups who are supporting this project & see the befits over and above tourism: HSBC British Cycling Breeze Rides <https://www.letsride.co.uk/breeze> 18 miles of traffic free path that would encourage women to take up or return to cycling, Pedal Power Wales <https://www.cardiffpedalpower.org> (adaptive cycling) similarly giving a truly traffic free environment, Horse Riders, historically a lack of any formal Bridleways on the island, they could make use of a greater part of Lôn Las Môn a safe traffic green environment.
10. Schools Potential, 7 secondary & junior schools lie along its length & could provide a conduit for an uptake in safe cycle to school for both pupils & teachers. We have already presented to half of the schools and all the pupils saw the potential benefits to green school travel. Our scheme fits in with Keep Wales Tidy's Eco Schools Curriculum Training 2020 <https://www.keepwalestidy.cymru/Event/eco-schools-and-the-curriculum-for-wales-training-2020>
11. Tourism Potential; one running group has approached us with the view to running a Metric Marathon along its length 26km as opposed to 26 miles, no road closures needed as route travels through a number of villages. Start of end being in Amlwch which in itself would be a boost to the town. Increased footfall from walkers & hikers wanting a more level path than the coastal path, this includes better provision for wheelchair users holidaying on the island. Increase leisure cycle use & hire, small enterprising cafes popping up along the way.
12. Business Potential: Cafes & Pubs along its route: Y Ring Rhosgoch <https://www.theringrhosgoch.co.uk> Steision Llan Café Llanerchymedd, Siop Paget Rhosybol, CycleWales Bike Hire Llangefni <https://cyclewales.net/cycle-hire/> Coffee Hut Llangefni, Holland Arms Garden Centre Gaerwen are just a few, no one big employer but all bring something to the economy.

Continued...



Lôn Las Môn

Too many have assumed for too long that it would be another preserved line. The objective now is to get the line in use for all. 30 years of decay and no one has benefited. With the Welsh Assembly's current consultation on fresh guidance on Active Travel <https://gov.wales/active-travel-guidance> Lôn Las Môn should be used as an exemplar scheme for TrafficFree - ActiveTravelPlus. "Greenways are traffic-free routes connecting communities to all kinds of destinations for commuting, everyday journeys or leisure and recreation".

Yours Sincerely

Adrian Williamson
For and on behalf of Lôn Las Môn

List of Appendices;

Appendix 1 – Dr Dyfrig ap Dafydd – Health Statement

Appendix 2 – List of UK wide former Railways converted into Rail Trails, Railway Paths, Greenways and Multiuse Paths

Appendix 3 – Community Council support

Appendix 4 – Organisations letters of support

Petitions Committee, National Assembly for Wales

Re: Anglesey Cluster Support for Lôn Las Môn

Our population is ageing, the number of over 85s will double in the next ten years.

Care needs will increase and this will place pressure on both health and social care services. We will need to focus on improving self-care, functioning and independence in our ageing population.

One of the most crucial areas in maintaining independence is maintaining good mobility and physical function. Simply leaving the house everyday has been shown to improve and maintain independence and health as we age.

Obesity is increasing, as are the associated problems such as arthritis and joint pain. Individuals with joint pain mobilise less, become increasingly weak and are much more likely to lose independence and become reliant on care services. It is extremely difficult to regain physical function when lost.

We need to emphasise that one of the most important treatments for arthritis is increasing physical activity to improve muscle strength and support around arthritic joints.

The phrase “wear and tear of the joint” is damaging. This reinforces the perception that activity contributes to worsening arthritis when in fact the opposite is true.

Many individuals believe that their joint pains are the cause of their obesity and sedentary lifestyle, but the truth is that it is the sedentary lifestyle and obesity that worsens their arthritis and joint pains.

Obesity and a sedentary lifestyle are huge risk factors for loss of function as we age, with subsequent loss of independence, large demands on care services and loss of quality of life.

We need to change attitudes and understandings and we need to change the commonly accepted view that ageing inevitable means becoming less active and more obese.

We must focus on increased physical activity throughout life but given the current situation and the near future demands we need to focus on the population most at risk, which we believe are the sedentary and obese individuals over fifty years old. This is the population that is likely to place the highest burden on our care services in the next few decades.

Individuals who have stopped being active can find it very difficult and intimidating to start exercising again. Starting at a Gym or trying to become involved in sports team is difficult at any age and can be seen as impossible for individuals who haven't carried out strenuous exercise for years.

We have some schemes based in our Leisure Centres focussing on our older population and we have Social Prescribing schemes to try and encourage and promote exercise but it is essential that we have a wide range of resources that will attract this particular group of patients.

The Lon Las route is an attractive route with good accessibility and good links throughout the Island. It would be a versatile resource, allowing walking, running, cycling and horse riding.

Whilst it is clearly possible to walk and exercise in many different settings the Lon Las route is flat and avoids road traffic. It would feel safe and achievable to individuals with health problems or poor fitness who might be intimidated by walking or exercising in areas with heavy traffic, hilly routes or traditional footpaths over difficult terrain.

Our hope is that the route becomes a good starting point for individuals of all levels of ability and would help to improve fitness and confidence, and inspire people to increase their level of exercise.

Skills "like riding a bike" can be retained for life, but the confidence to cycle on our roads is easily lost. Cycling is increasing in popularity and having this type of facility that allows individuals to return to cycling in a safe and accessible format would be hugely beneficial. It seems possible that we could utilise the growing popularity of e-bikes along with very usable paths to allow for gentle reintroduction to cycling.

A large proportion of health and social care demands are related to mental health difficulties. There is an increasing realisation that mild mental health difficulties are often related to social and community problems and that focussing on addressing these can be more useful to promoting good mental health than a medicalised model involving medication and formal therapy.

Increased physical activity, particularly activities outdoor and activities as part of a group are hugely beneficial to mental health.

Encouraging individuals to start exercising or undertake outdoor activities can be difficult and having easy access to attractive resources such as Lon Las for any level of ability to increase their physical activity would be hugely beneficial, particularly if motivation levels and confidence are low.

We know that many mental health issues are social in their nature and we believe that building more resilient communities can protect individuals and communities. We believe that this can reduce mental health problems and reduce demand on all areas of health, social care and local authority.

We want to focus on schemes that are developed by local communities themselves. Simply introducing projects devised by external agents rarely attract the community support, enthusiasm and involvement needed to be self-perpetuating and self-managing. These tend to rely on ongoing funding and risk failing when this is stopped.

One of the strengths of this scheme is the level of local support and enthusiasm and the numbers of people and groups who have expressed interest and a willingness to support and take part.

We appreciate that there is a hope that a reintroduced railway would attract tourists to the area but it seems very unlikely that a heritage tourist attraction could ever offer the same community amenity that would add value and improve the health and quality of life of the Islands residents. In any case we believe that Lôn Las Môn would be a more attractive tourism draw in its own right.

The suggestion that this line could be a meaningful commuter infrastructure link seems flawed. A service of this type seems unlikely to be able to offer frequent service and we believe that there is a higher likelihood of commuting cyclists in greater number than the numbers of individuals able to rely on what would have to be very limited number of journeys a day. It seems unhelpful to be considering the massive investment needed for commuting of this type when we should be arguing for increased bus services through the variety of isolated communities across the Island.

As practices across Anglesey we have discussed the Lôn Las proposal in our cluster meetings. Besides from the likely economic benefits we feel this is a project that aligns extremely well with our cluster goals and would be hugely beneficial to the physical and mental health of our population.

We are strongly supportive of this project and do not believe that trying to return this line to rail use offers the same potential of community, economic and health benefits that could be achieved.

Yours Sincerely,

Dr Dyfrig ap Dafydd
Cluster Lead for Anglesey Cluster

Agenda Item 3.17

P-05-887 Stop regional AMs elected to represent specific parties from defecting

This petition was submitted by Ifan Morgan Jones having collected a total of 1,301 signatures.

Text of Petition

The Welsh Assembly now has legal power over its own electoral system. We call on the National Assembly for Wales to stop Members on the regional list from switching political parties. When voting on the regional list, voters choose political parties rather than individuals. Under the present rules, however, Members elected on the regional list can voluntarily switch parties.

During previous Assembly terms, this was of little consequence, but in the last three years, multiple Assembly Members have made a mockery of the institution by declaring themselves independent or switching parties. One Assembly Member has now represented three different political parties during the lifetime of the Assembly term, and another declared herself independent within days of being inaugurated as an AM. There is no democratic mandate for this. It means that a third of the Senedd has little accountability to the electorate, who did not vote for them but voted for the party they originally represented. The rules should be changed so that, if an Assembly Member on the list voluntarily decides to change his or her political affiliation, he or she vacates their seat as an AM and the next candidate for that political party on the regional list takes his or her place. In order to prevent abuse of the system, any candidate involuntarily expelled from their group should be able to remain as an independent AM but should not be allowed to join another party.

This petition notes with regret that this change may further cement the perception that regional AMs are 'second class citizens' within the Assembly. However, we feel that this problem is inherent to the two-tier additional member system and is, in this case, the lesser of two evils compared with the way the current rules allow for the electoral process to be undermined.

This petition suggests that the Welsh Parliament and Elections (Wales) Bill be amended to include the changes mentioned above.

Assembly Constituency and Region

- Ceredigion
- Mid and West Wales