

Concise Minutes – Petitions Committee

Meeting Venue:

Committee Room 1 – Senedd

Meeting date: 24 November 2015

Meeting time: 09.18 – 10.56

This meeting can be viewed

on [Senedd TV](#) at:

<http://senedd.tv/en/3290>

Attendance

Category	Names
Assembly Members:	William Powell AM (Chair) Russell George AM Bethan Jenkins AM Jeff Cuthbert AM (In place of Joyce Watson AM)
Witnesses:	Huw Lewis AM, The Minister for Education and Skills Jo Larner, Welsh Government
Committee Staff:	Steve George (Clerk) Kath Thomas (Deputy Clerk) Gill Eveleigh (Deputy Clerk) Matthew Richards (Legal Adviser)

TRANSCRIPT

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1 Introduction, apologies and substitutions

The Chair welcomed everyone to the meeting.



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Apologies were received from Joyce Watson. Jeff Cuthbert substituted in accordance with Standing Order 17.48.

2 New petitions

2.1 P-04-655 Demanding our Rights for the Welsh Language in the Private Sector

The Committee considered correspondence on the petition and agreed to write to:

- The Welsh Language Commissioner to ask for the timetable for reviewing standards for the private and voluntary sector bodies that were not included in the first tranche; and
- The First Minister to:
 - confirm that it is the Government's intention to act on that timetable;
 - provide further information on the Government's intentions in respect of amending the Welsh Language (Wales) Measure 2011;
 - seek further information on the reasons why the Welsh Government has asked for certain businesses to be withdrawn as part of the third tranche of standards; and
 - seek clarification on the role of the Welsh Language Commissioner in deciding which businesses should be withdrawn.

2.2 P-04-657 Charging for Parking and the Relationship to High Streets and Their Success

William Powell declared the following interest under Standing Order 17.24A:

He has given procedural advice to the petitioner.

The Committee considered correspondence from the Minister for Economy, Science and Transport and agreed to:

- Seek further comments from the petitioner on the Minister's letter; and
- Write to the Minister to ask what action she has taken, particularly to liaise with local authorities, following publication of the research to examine the relationship between car parking charges and town centre footfall in Wales.

3 Updates to previous petitions

3.1 P-04-633 To Raise Awareness of the Poor Broadband in Our Area

The Committee considered correspondence from the petitioner and other affected parties and agreed to close the petition. In doing so they wished to thank the petitioner for engaging with the Committee and to forward, for information, a copy of related correspondence recently sent to Members.

3.2 P-04-468 Road Safety Concerns A48 Chepstow

The Committee considered correspondence on the petition and agreed to write to the Minister, supporting the letter from Chepstow Town Council, and asking for an urgent update on the position.

3.3 P-04-539 Save Cardiff Coal Exchange

The Committee considered correspondence on the petition from Save the Coal Exchange Ltd and the petitioner and agreed to:

- write to the Minister for Economy, Transport and Science enclosing the additional comments and ask her for an update of her current understanding of the position and whether she believes that Cardiff County Council are using their powers in an appropriate way; and in doing so
- copy the letter to Ken Skates AM, Deputy Minister for Culture, Sport and Tourism and Stephen Doughty MP, with a request that they update the Committee on their knowledge of the latest position.

3.4 P-04-565 Revive Disused Railway Lines for Leisure

Bethan Jenkins declared the following interest under Standing Order 17.24A:

She is part of a campaign to reopen the Rhondda Tunnel.

The Committee considered correspondence on the petition from the petitioner and agreed to:

- Write to the Minister to ask when she expects the Sustrans review into the Rhondda Tunnel to be completed; and

- Inform the petitioner that the Highways Department own railway tunnels in Wales and that he may wish to contact them direct.

3.5 P-04-540 Stop Sexism In Domestic Abuse

The Committee considered correspondence from the petitioner and agreed to close the petition. Members wished to thank the petitioner for engaging with the Committee.

3.6 P-04-519 Abolition of Park Homes Sales Commission

Members considered correspondence from the petitioner and, given that the research proposal being developed to look at the economics of the park homes industry is not due for completion until after the Assembly elections, agreed to keep the petition open to allow the 5th Assembly Committee to consider it should it choose to do so.

3.7 P-04-537 Planting Trees to Reduce Flooding

Members considered correspondence on the petition and agreed to write to the Minister, as requested by the petitioners, seeking a response to the questions raised in their letter.

3.8 P-04-581 Opposition to Cuts in Provision for Learners of English as an Additional Language

The Committee considered correspondence on the petition and agreed to close the petition. In doing so, Members wished to thank the petitioner for engaging with the Committee.

3.9 P-04-516 Make Political Science Compulsory in Education

The Committee considered correspondence on the petition and agreed to write to the Minister to ask whether there is a strand of Professor Donaldson's work relating to political science which the petitioner could either be involved with, or kept informed of. Members also agreed to move to close the petition once a response has been received from the Minister.

4 Motion under Standing Order 17.42 to resolve to exclude the public from the meeting for the following business:

The motion was agreed.

5 Discussion of Oral Evidence Sessions

Members discussed the evidence session and agreed to write to the Minister to express concerns about the position in the light of advice received.

5.1 P-04-576 Allow Children in Wales to Have a Family Holiday During Term Time

5.2 P-04-606 Ensure Schools Exercise their Statutory Powers Under Regulation 7 of The Education (Pupil Registration) (Wales) Regulations 2010 Without Interference or Bias.

6 Review of the National Assembly for Wales Petitions System

Members considered evidence received from surveys and consultations undertaken and agreed to return to the matter following an oral evidence session to be held on 8 December.

7 Evidence Session – P-04-522 Asbestos in Schools

The Minister answered questions from the Committee.

The Minister agreed to write to the Committee to:

- Confirm whether asbestos management is included in governor training programmes; and
- Provide further information on the membership of the asbestos working group and its terms of reference.