



Cynulliad
Cenedlaethol
Cymru

National
Assembly for
Wales

Cofnod y Trafodion The Record of Proceedings

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[The Petitions Committee](#)

11/10/2016

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Cofnodir y trafodion yn yr iaith y llefarwyd hwy ynnddi yn y pwyllgor. Yn ogystal, cynhwysir trawsgrifiad o'r cyfieithu ar y pryd. Lle y mae cyfranwyr wedi darparu cywiriadau i'w tystiolaeth, nodir y rheini yn y trawsgrifiad.

The proceedings are reported in the language in which they were spoken in the committee. In addition, a transcription of the simultaneous interpretation is included. Where contributors have supplied corrections to their evidence, these are noted in the transcript.

Aelodau'r pwyllgor yn bresennol
Committee members in attendance

Gareth Bennett UKIP Cymru
[Bywgraffiad](#) | [Biography](#) UKIP Wales

Mike Hedges Llafur
[Bywgraffiad](#) | [Biography](#) Labour

Adam Price Plaid Cymru (yn dirprwyo ar ran Neil McEvoy)
[Bywgraffiad](#) | [Biography](#) The Party of Wales (substitute for Neil McEvoy)

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

Jessica England Dirprwy Glerc
Deputy Clerk

Graeme Francis Clerc
Clerk

Kath Thomas Dirprwy Glerc
Deputy Clerk

Lisa Salkeld Cynghorydd Cyfreithiol
Legal Adviser

Dechreuodd y cyfarfod am 09:08.
The meeting began at 09:08.

Cyflwyniad, Ymddiheuriadau, Dirprwyon a Datganiadau o Fuddiant
Introduction, Apologies, Substitutions and Declarations of Interest

[1] **Mike Hedges:** Can I start the meeting? Can I welcome everybody to the meeting?

[2] Croeso cynnes iawn i Adam A warm welcome to Adam Price
Price

[3] who is substituting for Neil McEvoy, who is ill. Janet Finch-Saunders is unable to attend today because her father is ill.

[4] You're welcome to speak either in Welsh or English. The simultaneous translation works. Headsets are available for the translation, from Welsh to English. There is no need to turn off mobile phones or other electronic devices, but please ensure that any devices are in silent mode because, as I can vouch for, it gets awfully embarrassing when it starts playing music for no apparent reason.

[5] Apologies: we've had apologies from Janet Finch-Saunders and Neil McEvoy.

09:09

Deisebau Newydd New Petitions

[6] **Mike Hedges:** That takes us on to the first item, which is new petitions. 'Bring Back January Exams for AS/A level Students', submitted with 88 signatures: we've written to the Cabinet Secretary on 4 August. We've received a response, stating that the assessment arrangements, such as January examinations for AS and A-levels, are a matter for Qualifications Wales. We've written to Qualifications Wales on 23 August, seeking their views on the petition. We've received a response from them. We've got a research brief. The petitioner was informed that the petition would be considered by the committee but had not responded when papers for the committee were being finalised. Has he responded yet?

[7] **Mr Francis:** No.

[8] **Mike Hedges:** What we normally do at this stage is give them another two weeks to respond. Are we happy to do that? Yes.

[9] The next one is 'Teachers' Training Must Include Statutory Training in Autism', submitted with 283 signatures. A letter to the Cabinet Secretary on 4 August. Response received on 16 August. We've got a research brief. The petitioner has also submitted further comments, which are in the papers for the meeting. The recommendation is that we write to the Cabinet Secretary for Education to ask whether the Government intends to address the issue of autism in teacher training through the forthcoming additional learning needs and education tribunal Bill, and what the planned timetable for this is. Are we happy with that? Yes?

[10] **Gareth Bennett:** Yes.

[11] **Mike Hedges:** ‘The Circuit of Wales’—this petition collected 384 signatures, and 3,279 online. We first wrote to the Cabinet Secretary on 24 August and received a reply in September. A research briefing on the petition and related issues has been prepared. The petitioner has also submitted further comments and all above responses are in the papers for the meeting. The auditor general is also looking at it, which means that it may well go before the Public Accounts Committee. The suggestion is that we write to both the Public Accounts Committee and the auditor general. Are we happy to do that? Yes.

[12] ‘Ensure Disabled People can Access Public Transport As and When They Need it’—this was done by Whizz-Kidz. Twenty-two online and 75 paper signatures. Sent to Cabinet Secretary on 24 August. Response on 10 September. We’ve got a research brief. The petitioner was informed that the petition would be considered by the committee but had not responded when papers for the committee were being finalised. Should we invite the petitioners in? I’d be very keen to invite them in to come and talk to us. I think we need to tease out what exactly is the problem, which public transport and what they want to see done. Are we happy to invite them in? Yes?

[13] **Gareth Bennett:** Yes.

[14] **Mr Francis:** I think, Chair, just to add on that, because it’s an organisation with some staffing, and obviously a range of disabled children and members as well, we could have a conversation with them about what they feel is the most appropriate format for that. If a formal committee meeting wasn’t felt the right way, then you might meet with them in a more informal session.

[15] **Mike Hedges:** Yes, informally. But I think that it would be very useful to talk to them because, sometimes, when people put things in writing it doesn’t always carry exactly what they mean. That’s not a criticism of that organisation. It’s definitely a problem for people with disabilities on transport, but we need to know which transport, what is the problem, and what they want done. I know, for example, that the people representing the blind—the Royal National Institute of Blind People—are very keen on having audio reports on buses saying what stop they’re at. Because if you can’t see,

you can't see where you are. I also know that people who suffer from hearing loss are very keen on having something that they can see to tell them. So, different disabilities will want different things. I know that wheelchair access on certain buses is incredibly poor, but on other buses is very good. So we just need to talk to them about what they want to see done, whether they want to do it formally or informally. I'd prefer to see it done formally. I think they would as well, but we'll ask them.

[16] **Gareth Bennett:** They've got the next petition as well, I think. It's the same organisation.

[17] **Mike Hedges:** Yes. If you remember, we received it off them on the steps a couple of weeks ago—'Ensure Disabled People's Housing Adaption Needs Are Adequately Met'. Same organisation. We are waiting for a response from them on this. So, shall we give them another two weeks to respond?

[18] **Gareth Bennett:** Yes.

[19] **Mike Hedges:** There's a new framework going out as well, so perhaps they might want to give their views on that. We can also ask the Welsh Local Government Association and Disability Wales about the issues they've raised.

[20] 'A Welsh Government Department for Europe would ensure a clear, strategic and accountable voice for Wales in ongoing negotiations'—this was received and collected 22 signatures. I've lost the information on when it was received. We wrote to the First Minister on 24 August. We've had a reply and we've got a research briefing. The petitioner also submitted further comments. This really is an External Affairs and Additional Legislation Committee item. We're dealing with Europe, so shall we forward it to them? I'm sure they'll be pleased to receive it.

09:15

[21] 'The Wildlife Warriors' was submitted by the Caerphilly junior forum and collected 13 online signatures and 83 paper signatures. It was sent to the Cabinet Secretary for Environment and Rural Affairs on 24 August. There was a response on 18 September. We've got a research brief, but we've not had a response yet, have we? So, we'll give them another fortnight to respond.

09:16

Y Wybodaeth Ddiweddaraf am Ddeisebau Blaenorol Updates to Previous Petitions

[22] **Mike Hedges:** Updates on previous petitions. 'Save Cardiff Coal Exchange' was last considered on 12 July and we were seeking an update from the Cabinet Secretary for Economy and Infrastructure and from the leader of Cardiff Council. We've had responses from both. We've not had a response from the petitioner. Again, shall we give the petitioner a fortnight to respond? Yes.

[23] We've got two now: one for and one against the charitable chaplaincy campaign. We'll take those both together because they're both on the same issue, but they hold entirely opposite points of view. I suggest that we close both petitions. Okay?

[24] **Gareth Bennett:** The first one's been going since 2013. I know the guy is still active in sending letters, but it's been taken as far as it can, has it?

[25] **Mike Hedges:** Yes. It just comes down to a matter of opinion. There are those people who say that a chaplaincy is very useful and very helpful to people, especially to those coming towards the end of life and that it gives help and succour to those people and their families, and there are those who think it's a complete and utter waste of time and that health money should be spent on different things. There's no meeting of minds there: it's either very good or very bad. There isn't even an 'it's okay' view.

[26] **Gareth Bennett:** I don't have any particular view on it, but what was the view of the Government? Did they come to any firm decision on this? Has it been considered?

[27] **Mr Francis:** In terms of a bit of the background on this. As you say, both petitions are long running. Both were started in 2013 and the previous committee did quite a large amount of work around this, inviting petitioners in to give evidence. Over the summer, that information was all gathered back together and the new Cabinet Secretary for health was written to, summarising all of the issues that the previous committee had heard. The response, which is in the papers, for this indicates that the Government is not minded to change its position on this and, therefore, that chaplaincy services will continue to be funded out of NHS resources.

[28] **Mike Hedges:** Shall we close both?

[29] **Gareth Bennett:** Yes. It's gone as far as it can.

[30] **Mike Hedges:** Yes. The Government are not going to change their mind.

[31] 'Give Every Child in Wales the Meningitis B Vaccine for Free'. We had it on 13 September. We've had further comments from the petitioner. What we've tended to do with these things is: we've got the petitioner's view and we've got the Government's view. If we write to Meningitis Now and the Meningitis Research Foundation to seek their views. It's a bit like what we did with cancer in that we've had two views, so let's ask people who have got expertise on it and see what they tell us. Are we happy to do that? Yes.

[32] 'Abolition of Park Homes Sales Commission'. If I can remind people, we had a park homes private Members Bill put in by Peter Black in the last session, which actually went through. We've had this petition—again, it goes back to December 2013. Rewrite to the Cabinet Secretary, following research into the park homes industry, which has been published, and seek the Welsh Government's reflections on its recommendations in relation to the ability of site owners to charge commission on the sale of park homes—yes?

[33] **Gareth Bennett:** Yes.

[34] **Mike Hedges:** 'EMA Attendance Requirements for Young Adult Carers'—first considered on 13 September. This is a good news story. The Minister responded. The petitioners have submitted a response to the Minister's letter, which we've all seen. The response from the petitioners expresses a significant degree of satisfaction with the approach being taken by the Government. So, shall we write to the petitioner and thank them for their petition and close the petition?

[35] **Gareth Bennett:** Yes.

[36] **Mike Hedges:** Well, that takes us to the end of that.

09:20

**Cynnig o dan Reol Sefydlog 17.42 i Benderfynu Gwahardd y Cyhoedd
o'r Cyfarfod**

**Motion under Standing Order 17.42 to Resolve to Exclude the Public
from the Meeting**

Cynnig:

Motion:

*bod y pwyllgor yn penderfynu that the committee resolves to
gwahardd y cyhoedd o weddill y exclude the public from the
cyfarfod yn unol â Rheol Sefydlog remainder of the meeting in
17.42(vi).*

*accordance with Standing Order
17.42(vi).*

Cynigiwyd y cynnig.

Motion moved.

[37] **Mike Hedges:** Near the end of the fourth Assembly, the previous Petitions Committee carried out a review of the public petitions arrangements.

[38] Can I move to resolve to exclude the public from the meeting under Standing Order 17.42?

[39] **Gareth Bennett:** Yes.

[40] **Mike Hedges:** Okay.

Derbyniwyd y cynnig.

Motion agreed.

Daeth rhan gyhoeddus y cyfarfod i ben am 09:21.

The public part of the meeting ended at 09:21.