



# **Cynulliad Cenedlaethol Cymru** **The National Assembly for Wales**

## **Y Pwyllgor Deisebau** **The Petitions Committee**

**Dydd Mawrth, 4 Mehefin 2013**  
**Tuesday, 4 June 2013**

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

**Aelodau'r pwyllgor yn bresennol**  
**Committee members in attendance**

Janet Finch-Saunders	Ceidwadwyr Cymreig (yn dirprwyo ar ran Russell George) Welsh Conservatives (substituting for Russell George)
Bethan Jenkins	Plaid Cymru The Party of Wales
William Powell	Democratiaid Rhyddfrydol Cymru (Cadeirydd y Pwyllgor) Welsh Liberal Democrats (Committee Chair)
Joyce Watson	Llafur Labour

**Eraill yn bresennol**  
**Others in attendance**

Brian Pearce	Deisebydd Petitioner
Y Parchedig/Reverend Wynne Roberts	Caplan Gofal Bugeiliol a Chadeirydd Rhwydwaith Rhyng- ffydd Gogledd-orllewin Cymru Pastoral Care Chaplain and Chair of the Inter-faith Network of North-west Wales
Alan Rogers	Deisebydd Petitioner
Jim Stewart	Deisebydd Petitioner

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

Kayleigh Driscoll	Dirprwy Glerc Deputy Clerk
Naomi Stocks	Clerc Clerk

*Dechreuodd y cyfarfod am 9.02 a.m.*  
*The meeting began at 9.02 a.m.*

**Cyflwyniad, Ymddiheuriadau a Dirprwyon**  
**Introduction, Apologies and Substitutions**

[1] **William Powell:** Bore da a chroeso cynnes. Croeso arbennig i Janet Finch-Saunders heddiw, ac mae'n braf gweld hen wynebau yn ôl. **William Powell:** Good morning and a warm welcome. I particularly welcome Janet Finch-Saunders today, and it is good to see old faces back with us.

[2] The normal housekeeping arrangements apply. As I indicated in my welcome, Russell

George has sent his apologies today; he has a constituency engagement. It is great to welcome Janet Finch-Saunders as his substitute for today's session.

9.03 a.m.

**P-04-472: Gwnewch y Nodyn Cyngor Technegol Mwynau yn Ddeddf**  
**P-04-472: Make the Minerals Technical Advice Note Law**

[3] **William Powell:** As Members will recall, in the meeting of 14 May, due to time constraints, we had to postpone consideration of the two evidence sessions that we held. Therefore, the first item on today's agenda is a discussion of the first of the two evidence sessions, which was on P-04-472, Make the MTAN law. That petition was submitted in April of this year and calls upon the National Assembly for Wales

[4] 'to urge the Welsh Government to make the MTAN Guidance Notes, notably those relating to a 500 metre buffer zone around open cast workings, mandatory in planning law for Wales.'

[5] To assist in the deliberations on that particular petition, which has considerable support and has aroused considerable interest, and not just locally, we have the full transcript of the meeting, which Members will have had the opportunity to study. We had a full session with Dr Cox and our colleague, Lynne Neagle, on that occasion. I would like to open this up to Members. Obviously, not all of you were present on that occasion, which might bring an additional perspective. Joyce, as you are the Member representing continuity of the discussion, perhaps you would like to give any observations that you have.

[6] **Joyce Watson:** I found it interesting and worthwhile that we had invited people in to give evidence, and it would be right to thank them for giving their time to do that. I also think that they gave a personal perspective, because they live there—and we might not have gained that perspective otherwise—about the effects it might have on their properties and their way of living, because it was not just simply about properties, but about their way of living and the effects on health and wellbeing.

[7] I think that it might be advantageous, before we conclude this inquiry—with the agreement of others—to have the Planning Inspectorate in to give some evidence on how, in reality, the Minerals Technical Advice Note is administered and observed in these sorts of applications, just to give us a rounded, independent opinion. I think that might help us.

[8] Those were my thoughts when I read through the transcript. I asked, 'What more, if anything, would add to our understanding?' and I just felt that that was a possibility.

[9] **William Powell:** I think that that would have some merit, because we have had the actions and perspectives of the Planning Inspectorate presented to us by others who have experienced its work in practice, but to hear from it would potentially be quite useful. Bethan, I know that you have a significant interest in the wider topic.

[10] **Bethan Jenkins:** Yes, I was not at the meeting, but I have an interest in this, considering that I put in a bid for a Member Bill, which, basically, said the same thing as this petition. My requests are that we write to the Welsh Local Government Association and to the Welsh Government asking whether they can give us clear definitions of the seven exceptional circumstances outlined in the MTAN. As far as I and my office can see, there are no clear definitions, which means that all local authorities can make decisions unilaterally, therefore causing this problem of variation from local authority to local authority, because the MTAN is only guidance.

[11] The other issue that I had was with regard to the health impact assessments. I know that opponents of the Varteg Hill application say that Aneurin Bevan Local Health Board approved the health impact assessments on the basis of incorrect data. Therefore, could we put that down for the Welsh Government to respond to at the meeting when it comes in to see us?

[12] **William Powell:** Yes, when the Minister comes in on 2 July.

[13] **Bethan Jenkins:** If the Planning Inspectorate comes in, we could also ask it whether it has a view on that.

[14] With regard to highlighting the areas that we want to pursue with the Minister, if the decision on the Varteg Hill application is made before he comes in, that will give us some perspective on how the MTAN is used. However, I think that we have to ask what certainty the Government has that this MTAN has any weight or teeth whatsoever considering that the Planning Inspectorate currently says that it does not have full legal weight, and therefore it can potentially be ignored or undermined when very serious decisions about the buffer zone come into play. Those are vital issues for us to look at.

[15] **William Powell:** Yes, the issue of consistency of interpretation was something that came up time and again in the evidence session. It is something that we have to bottom out, and it is really good that we have the opportunity to question the Minister. I know that he is very keen to come to committee, but, for reasons that we understand, he cannot come to committee before 2 July. We have a number of actions there. Janet, do you have any particular thoughts on this one? Obviously, you were not present for the discussion.

[16] **Janet Finch-Saunders:** No, no comments.

[17] **William Powell:** I think that we have captured a good set of actions there, and—

[18] **Bethan Jenkins:** Just for the record, I have a short debate this month, which will be on opencast mining. I know that the petitioners are aware of this, but I am just saying that for the record, so that anyone who is watching and who may be interested or are campaigning can get in touch with me if there is anything that they—

[19] **William Powell:** Okay, we will keep an eye open for that one.

[20] **Bethan Jenkins:** It will be specifically on the MTAN.

[21] **William Powell:** Yes, exactly, and, of course, the wider issue of buffer zones, as I alluded to in the session that we had, was one of our key recommendations following the windfarm noise inquiry, so there are some parallels there that are worth being aware of. I think that we have a useful set of actions to take that petition forward, and I very much agree with Joyce that it was a very rewarding session, from the committee's perspective, with both witnesses.

9.10 a.m.

**P-04-442: Sierhau Cymorth Da i Blant Anabl a'u Teuluoedd sy'n Agos i'w Cartrefi**

**P-04-442: Guarantee Good Support Close to Home for Disabled Children and their Families**

[22] The next discussion is on P-04-442, Guarantee good support close to home for disabled children and their families, which was scheduled as the second of the evidence sessions. In practice, because of reasons to do with the availability of the witness, it was the first evidence session that we had on the day. I will give you a moment to turn to the full transcript of the evidence session with Mr Ian Thomas, who is the director of Scope Cymru, as you will recall.

[23] Again, I thought that this was a very useful session, and very wide-ranging in terms of the issues that we were able to take up with Mr Thomas. The breadth of the issues came to light, and he particularly stressed the difficulty in the rural heartlands of Wales, where it is even more difficult to assure a level of service. Joyce, do you have any specific points on this one to raise?

[24] **Joyce Watson:** Again, the evidence session was worthwhile, that is for sure. We got—well, to speak for myself, I got a better understanding of some of the key issues. I think that we all understand the general issues, but we got some understanding of the key issues in relation to those people who are calling for support close to home for disabled children. I am sure that all of us have had casework where we have met real obstacles—I certainly have—in trying to help people to help themselves.

[25] I think that if we were to pick out some of the important aspects that they have highlighted, and write those out in a format to the Minister requesting the specifics that they have asked us to ask, we will have served them well. We can then wait for the response accordingly. We know that the Social Services and Well-being (Wales) Bill is going through at the moment, and we know that Scope Cymru, because it told us so in its evidence, is asking for particular things from that. If we pass that on again, that might add some strength to its voice in that respect. So, that is probably one way forward.

[26] The other issue that I highlighted in the evidence is the issue of payment. Time and again, that seems to be the biggest stumbling block for most people: who is going to pay? Is it a social need, an educational need or a health need? Perhaps we could write to the key players in that regard, namely education, social services and health, to get from them how they work together to resolve those issues, so that individuals do not find themselves having to resolve them at a time of need.

[27] **William Powell:** That last point is particularly poignant. With conditions such as autism, you can frequently be in a situation where you get passed from pillar to post, and people can have insufferable lengths of time to—

[28] **Joyce Watson:** Clear pathways are what people need.

[29] **William Powell:** Absolutely. We also need to bear in mind that we are awaiting the publication of the consultation responses. As soon as we have those available to study, we can decide which bodies would be the most appropriate to call upon to give us some oral evidence to take this one forward. In the meantime, we have agreed to get in touch with Society of Local Authority Chief Executives Wales, the body that covers chief executives of local authorities across Wales, to seek out some examples of good practice. I think that would be a useful action in the interim while we await the outcomes of the consultation.

9.15 a.m.

[30] **Joyce Watson:** When we are talking about best practice, SOLACE is good, but health is a key player in this too.

[31] **William Powell:** That is true; that is a point well made.

[32] **Bethan Jenkins:** The point that I looked at in the transcript was the question by Elin Jones about the definition of 'local'. While looking at the Social Services and Well-being (Wales) Bill, perhaps the health committee could look at this, because there are plans in terms of setting up local safeguarding boards in a different way. Would that mean regional provision or would it change? It is difficult to say whether it would be in that particular local authority. How would it look in the grand scheme of things or in a strategic way? We scrutinised the Bill as a Children and Young People Committee, but I am not sure where the health committee is now—

[33] **Ms Stocks:** It is taking its last oral evidence.

[34] **Bethan Jenkins:** It has taken it, has it?

[35] **Ms Stocks:** It is taking it on Thursday, with the Minister.

[36] **William Powell:** This week.

[37] **Bethan Jenkins:** I suppose that we could flag it up with the committee, because it will not have made any determinations yet, will it? As Joyce said, it is not just about education, but health and how—

[38] **William Powell:** The crossover between the different—

[39] **Bethan Jenkins:** Yes. There are new ideas about payment for information for young people in that Bill, so it could impact on disabled young people.

[40] **William Powell:** Yes, very much so. That idea and the issue of what is meant by 'local' are critical and particularly important given the rural concerns that were an underlying theme as well. I think that we have a clear steer on how to take that forward, and we hopefully will have in the fairly near future clarity on consultation responses so that we can take it to the next stage.

9.17 a.m.

### **Deisebau Newydd New Petitions**

[41] **William Powell:** The first of the new petitions before us today is P-04-484, EMA for all! This petition was submitted by Jack Gillum with the support of 10 signatures. It calls upon the National Assembly for Wales to urge the Welsh Government to allow all children aged 16 to 19 and in full-time education to receive the full £30 a week education maintenance allowance, regardless of their parents' income. This is our first consideration of this one. I propose that we write in the first instance to the Minister for Education and Skills to seek his views on the petition as to how to take this forward. Is that okay? I see that it is.

[42] Following that, we have P-04-485, Abuse of casual contracts in Further Education. Later in the agenda, we have a petition, which is further up the track, that is again related to concerns about practice in further education, but this is a distinct petition in its own right. It

was submitted by Briony Knibbs with the support of 674 signatures. It reads:

[43] ‘We call upon the National Assembly for Wales to urge the Welsh Government to use its influence to ensure that the use of hourly paid (zero hour) and fixed term contracts are not abused in the Further Education sector and only used when there is a genuine objective justification for a short term contract with flexibility.’

[44] Again, this is our first consideration of this one.

[45] **Bethan Jenkins:** I have supported this petition. We had ColegauCymru come before the Children and Young People Committee to give evidence on the Further and Higher Education (Governance and Information) (Wales) Bill and we raised zero hours there in relation to whether the national contract would be adhered to if that Bill was passed. I was not reassured by ColegauCymru that the use of such contracts would be minimised, but I still think that it is worth our writing as a committee to ColegauCymru seeking its view on this petition. I also ask that the Petitions Committee write to colleges in Wales about their individual practices, because I am aware that some colleges have a policy of not using zero-hour contracts, whereas others do. I would like to get an understanding from the individual colleges, as opposed to ColegauCymru as a collective, as to what they do, because if some colleges can manage to not treat staff in that way, why cannot other colleges manage to do that? However, we should seek the Minister’s response as well.

[46] **William Powell:** Yes, we clearly need to write to Leighton Andrews on this one. ColegauCymru is the representative body, is it not? However, are you advocating that we write to a selection of colleges, or all colleges across Wales? What would be the scale of it?

[47] **Bethan Jenkins:** We have to be realistic. It is whether we can do a piece of work—

[48] **William Powell:** Or a mini survey, effectively.

[49] **Bethan Jenkins:** Yes, really, because I know that the contracts—well, I have heard it said that there is a difference. So, I would request it, if we could and our resources allow it. We could do it in the form of a survey instead of a letter, if that is easier, to ask them what their practices are in all the different contracts that we outlined.

[50] **William Powell:** I think that it would help us to drill down to the issue. I see that Janet is supportive as well.

[51] **Joyce Watson:** We must absolutely take issue with zero-hour contracts anyway. What is a zero-hour contract? It is not a contract at all.

[52] **William Powell:** Absolutely, and in these times, it is all the more hard-hitting, is it not? Okay, in that case, we have a series of actions and I think that there is broad support for all of the measures that Bethan in particular has led on, so let us go forward with those.

[53] The next petition is P-04-486, Act Now and Help Save the High Street Shops. This petition was submitted by Keith Davies and it has collected 12 signatures, all from local businesses in his area, I believe. It states:

[54] ‘We call on the National Assembly to urge the Welsh Government to provide support for independent traders in our towns by extending the small Business Relief Scheme to a greater number of businesses.

[55] ‘We would like to see a scheme that is similar to the one operating in Scotland where commercial properties with a rateable value of up to £18,000 get relief of between 25% and

100% on a sliding scale.

[56] ‘We believe that the Welsh Government’s decision to postpone the revaluation of businesses from 2015 to 2017 does not allow the impact of the economic downturn in the High Street to be reflected in the business rates.’

[57] This is our first consideration of this important issue. I recall from the occasion of the previous review of rates quite how intensely this affected particular businesses in a disproportionate way. Obviously, the issue of a review is once again picked up in the final paragraph here. Clearly, we have to write to Mrs Edwina Hart as the Minister for Economy, Science and Transport to seek her views, because she is absolutely central to this matter. Are there any other actions at this stage that Members would favour, or shall we leave it at getting the ministerial response in the first instance?

[58] **Bethan Jenkins:** I think that there is to be an announcement before the summer on this area.

[59] **William Powell:** That is my sense.

[60] **Bethan Jenkins:** Perhaps we can urge the Minister to give us a reply in haste, because of the time sensitivity involved. I do not know, but it might be worth us contacting the chambers of trade or something like that.

[61] **William Powell:** I think that Mr Davies represents Cardigan chamber of trade—that is my understanding.

[62] **Bethan Jenkins:** Would we be able to ask the petitioner whether he has talked to other chambers of trade about their views on this?

[63] **William Powell:** Yes. Initially, we will be interested in the Ceredigion area.

[64] **Bethan Jenkins:** It will be good just to hear some voices about how it has affected their businesses.

[65] **William Powell:** Yes, and we can get back to Mr Davies and seek a little additional background information while sending a letter expressly to Edwina Hart. Are we happy with that set of actions? I see that we are. Good.

9.23 a.m.

### **Y Wybodaeth Ddiweddaraf am Ddeisebau Blaenorol Updates to Previous Petitions**

[66] **William Powell:** First under this item is P-04-470, Against the nationalisation of Cardiff Airport. This petition was submitted by Madeleine Thornton in April of this year. It was supported by 196 signatures. Clearly, they are not best pleased with this, or are not convinced of the merits of the Government’s case with regard to Cardiff Airport. We first considered this matter immediately on receiving the petition in April. We wrote to the First Minister and, indeed, you can see that Carwyn Jones’s response is here in our public papers. I think that the most sensible thing is probably for us to forward that response to the petitioner in order to seek views. I think that we can anticipate that the petitioner will not be entirely enthused by what is stated there, but it is sensible and right for us to share those views ahead of considering what, if anything, further is useful to do on the petition.



[67] **Joyce Watson:** We will not be able to do anything else on the petition; that is obvious. That is the first thing. I am all for doing things that we can do, but I am also honest about things that we cannot do.

[68] **William Powell:** Particularly where decisions have been made.

[69] **Joyce Watson:** Yes. The decision has been taken and the reason for the decision has been given to the petitioner. In terms of what we do next, the answer is 'nothing'. Quite rightly, the petitioner has raised her opinion and we have carried out our work in terms of seeking clarification for that.

[70] **William Powell:** Which the First Minister has provided.

[71] **Joyce Watson:** We passed it to her. Quite frankly, there is nothing further that we can do.

[72] **William Powell:** The debate moves on to other issues in terms of making it work—

[73] **Joyce Watson:** That is not what the petition is about.

[74] **William Powell:** That is not germane to this.

[75] **Janet Finch-Saunders:** I want to place on record that this is quite a large issue. As Assembly Members, it was delivered to us as a *fait accompli*. I know that many residents in my constituency are furious that, at a time when the health service is facing huge cuts, £52 million is suddenly found almost in the back pocket of the Welsh Government. If someone feels this strongly, I do not think that we should just be ruling it out of line. The fact that the decision has been taken by the Welsh Government does not necessarily mean that we cannot look into things and treat this petition with some merit.

[76] **Bethan Jenkins:** The petition is worded so that we can do some work on it. For example, it asks the Government to justify whether it will bring value for money. We do not know that yet. I can understand where Joyce is coming from in the sense that the decision has been made, but there is no reason why we cannot probe further as to how and why the decision was made and what business basis it was made upon. In an objective way—

[77] **William Powell:** I think that is true. In my opening remarks, I said that, procedurally, we clearly need to share the First Minister's correspondence, but I was not advocating that we necessarily close the petition. There may be further issues that flow from it, but that is a discussion for the next stage of the process rather than prolonging it now.

[78] **Joyce Watson:** I think it is, but I am also on the Enterprise and Business Committee and we have looked at this. The big issue here is the due diligence test, if you are going to really bore down into it. That is clearly what has been published in those three underpinning documents. They have not been printed out today, so the people who are not on the Enterprise and Business Committee will not perhaps have looked at those in detail. The petitioner will look at those in detail. I am satisfied that all those things were looked at in an open and transparent way. You clearly would not, when you are entering into buying something, print everything at that stage because you would clearly start a bidding war.

[79] **William Powell:** There are issues of commercial sensitivity; that is understood.

[80] **Joyce Watson:** Indeed and those were exercised. I know why Janet has a problem with this because I have seen various political statements by her party. However, I will not get into party politics with this because we are dealing with this petition as it is written. We can

pass that information on and see what comes from it.

[81] **William Powell:** Absolutely. I know there have been some very interesting wider issues. Some initiatives were launched just this week on wider issues around the airport and I look forward to studying those in more detail.

[82] **Bethan Jenkins:** On the point about how it will affect the ratepayer, I sincerely believe there is more work to do. In my area, you have Greyhound buses going from Swansea straight to Bristol, so we need to test whether people will use the airport or whether they will bypass Cardiff full stop. We want the airport to succeed more than anybody, but we have to look at the wider picture as to what will attract people to go there, what services will be available to get them there and so forth. That is something that we can do as a Petitions Committee.

9.30 a.m.

[83] **Joyce Watson:** I do not agree that we should do it. If you are going to do that sort of work, and you are talking about the economic viability and success of the airport, in the first place you ask the Enterprise and Business Committee to do it. It has already started work in this area.

[84] **William Powell:** We have had the principle of not duplicating work. That happened on energy issues.

[85] **Bethan Jenkins:** Is it doing work specifically on this?

[86] **Joyce Watson:** It has been looking at the question of Cardiff Airport for its report, so I do not think that it is for us.

[87] **William Powell:** I am grateful to you for flagging that up, Joyce. Perhaps it would be useful for me to write on behalf of this committee to Nick Ramsay, the Chair of the committee on which you serve, Joyce, to establish our interest on this matter. I do not think that we have been in correspondence with him on the issue, have we?

[88] **Ms Stocks:** Not on this particular petition.

[89] **William Powell:** That would be useful, and would also serve the purpose of joined-up consideration of the petition. Thank you all for your contributions on that, which have been helpful.

[90] We move on to petition P-04-419, Wind Farm Moratorium, submitted by James Shepherd Foster in October 2012. At that time it had 1,332 signatures in support. We last considered it back in April, and we wrote to the Minister for Housing and Regeneration. For the record, we can see his response in the public papers here today. This comes from the same part of the world as the windfarm noise petition, which we went to considerable lengths to investigate last year.

[91] It would probably be useful for us to write to Alun Davies, the Minister for Natural Resources and Food, to seek any angle that he might have on the petition, and, more specifically, write to Emyr Roberts, chief executive of Natural Resources Wales, to seek any perspective that that organisation, as it beds down in its new role, has on these issues. It would be premature to call to close the petition just now, particularly at a time when Natural Resources Wales is just finding its feet in consideration of these issues. Often, the Countryside Council for Wales and Environment Agency Wales took a different stance on some of these issues, and it would be useful to get a sense of how they are approaching this

now that they are under one umbrella. Are there any other views on that?

[92] **Joyce Watson:** I am quite happy with that. The only thing that we have to highlight is the fact that the Minister said that he does not, and is not going to, accept a moratorium at this stage. However, I am quite happy to go along with what you have said.

[93] **William Powell:** It will be useful to get the views of the pan-Wales lead body on the issue.

[94] We move on to P-04-422 on fracking. This petition was submitted by Friends of the Earth Cymru in October 2012 and has the support of 1,000 signatures. We last considered this petition back in March, and we wrote to the Minister for Housing and Regeneration. We have his response in our public papers. We also wrote to the Environment and Sustainability Committee, on which I serve, asking to be kept updated with its own consideration of the issue. We had an interesting evidence session with some officials of the European Commission, from both the directorate for energy and the directorate for environment, about six weeks ago. It would be useful for us to write to the committee again in the light of that to obtain further information on what flowed from that discussion, which was useful, and which I would like to be shared with colleagues. Are there any other actions that colleagues would advocate at the moment on this issue? We can see that the Minister has taken a pretty clear line on this. I know that there is a high degree of concern out there. It is not just the petitioners; Tim Peppin on behalf of the Welsh Local Government Association is also seeking more specific guidance, which the Minister is not currently minded to provide. Are there any thoughts at all on this one?

[95] **Joyce Watson:** I do have thoughts on fracking, yes.

[96] **Bethan Jenkins:** I think that the action that you have suggested is good.

[97] **Joyce Watson:** I think that that would be fine.

[98] **William Powell:** We will run with that at the moment and try to gather that additional information. Quite a lot of work has been done at a European Commission level. Different member states of the European Union are progressing apace with the development of fracking sites, while others have adopted a much more precautionary approach and have gone for a moratorium. We need to get more clarity on that.

[99] **Bethan Jenkins:** Sorry, I have not been sitting on this committee for a while. Have you asked the Minister about any research that has been done by the Government or whether it has taken advice on any independent research? I remember asking in Plenary about this a few months ago, when John Griffiths was Minister. He did not seem to suggest that there had been any research. I wonder if that is something that you asked when—

[100] **William Powell:** I do not think that that was in the text of the letter, no.

[101] **Ms Stocks:** No, I do not think that that is a specific question that has been asked.

[102] **William Powell:** It would be useful to bring that up, probably in correspondence following our consideration of the evidence that we took from the European Commission. It would be useful to build that in and raise it. There is, potentially, a piece of work that could be usefully be done there. There is a lot of concern out there and we need to take this issue further. Yes, let us do that.

[103] The next petition is P-04-469, Remove the Right-To-Buy Regional Price Cap. It was submitted by James Jackson in April 2013 and had the support of 171 signatures. We first

considered this back in April, as you will recall, and we wrote to the Minister for Housing and Regeneration. We have been keeping him fairly busy this last month or so. His response is in the public papers. Again, we can clearly see that there is no appetite to take this forward. I have a sense that this petition may well have run its course, given the clarity of that response, but I welcome colleagues' views.

[104] **Bethan Jenkins:** We can ask the petitioners, but, politically, I would agree with the Minister. However, the petitioner has the right to have a view, for consistency.

[105] **William Powell:** Joyce also always advocates consistency, and we all have to back that. I think that we should write to the petitioners, including the correspondence, giving them an opportunity to comment.

[106] **Bethan Jenkins:** The Minister has the right to suspend the right to buy in areas of high pressure. That power is there. We have devolution now, so we have to recognise that it does not necessarily mean that we would follow the UK Government's stance on things.

[107] **William Powell:** Absolutely. In large parts of Wales, the vast majority of the relevant housing stock has already left the public sector; we understand that. I think that, for consistency's sake, we should share this with the petitioner and then look at what, if anything, is to be done. I think that a limited number of actions, realistically, remain for us.

[108] The next petition is P-04-385, Petition regarding balloon and lantern releases. This was submitted, as Members will recall, by Bryony Bromley in May of last year and shared the support of 564 signatures. It reads:

[109] 'We call upon the National Assembly for Wales to urge the Welsh Government to legislate against the intentional release of balloons and Chinese (or Air) lanterns into the air.'

[110] We last considered this back in the winter, in February, when we wrote to the then Minister for Environment and Sustainable Development to seek his views. The research on the impact of helium balloons and sky lanterns has been published and we have quite a significant body of data in our papers today. Some very interesting and illuminating examples have come forward. This is a matter that has adverse consequences; we can see some of them indicated and tabulated here in the papers. It might well be useful for us to write to the Minister for Natural Resources and Food seeking information regarding the impact that this piece of research will have on thinking in his department. Do colleagues have any particular views on this?

[111] **Bethan Jenkins:** Unless I am wrong, I cannot see what will happen.

[112] **William Powell:** No, exactly. We do not have that at the moment.

[113] **Bethan Jenkins:** Surely, if you are going to have a report written, you would have some action points, would you not?

[114] **William Powell:** This is just capturing what has happened across the country and over time in terms of the different impacts. That response is missing at the moment, and that is what we need to see.

[115] **Joyce Watson:** The response to this would be useful.

[116] **William Powell:** Yes, exactly.

[117] **Bethan Jenkins:** As would the petitioner's response.

[118] **William Powell:** Yes, absolutely. We need to make sure that the petitioners have access to a full set of these data, because it is quite comprehensive and captures some really very odd and some quite alarming examples that have flowed from these releases. There is obviously quite a range of views on the issue. However, the view that matters in this connection is the view emerging out of the ministry for natural resources, so let us get that letter off to Alun Davies and see what response is forthcoming. Do Members agree? I see that you do.

[119] The next petition is P-04-398, Campaign for a Welsh Animal Offenders Register. This petition was submitted by Mari Roberts and Sara Roberts in June 2012 and has the support of 69 signatures. We last considered this as recently as our last meeting, and a query was raised as to the Assembly's competence on this particular issue. We are grateful to our legal department for providing a private briefing that clarifies that issue for us. Clearly, there is very significant interest and some substantial support, or sympathy, for what is called for in this petition, but the overwhelming message is that the practical and legal concerns that have been highlighted in the responses make it virtually impossible to implement this in practice. I do not know whether colleagues agree with that view. I find it difficult to see a way in which we can take this further forward to meet the petitioners' aspirations. Do colleagues have any views on this? Joyce, I know that you have done a significant study in relation to this.

[120] **Joyce Watson:** It is one of these things, is it not, where you start off thinking that it is a good idea, then you go behind it and you realise the reality? I will speak for myself: it has certainly opened my eyes to the difficulty and the possible negative rather than just the positive outcomes that could come from this. If there was a way around it, I would still support such action, but I cannot see how we can take it forward at this stage. Perhaps you share that view, Chair. Bethan, you were here when we first considered it.

[121] **Bethan Jenkins:** Yes, when we first considered it, but I have not followed it since then.

[122] **Joyce Watson:** It is fraught with so many difficulties that, perhaps, in another way at another time it might be possible, but I think that we have done what we can.

9.45 a.m.

[123] **William Powell:** There has been merit in the airing of the wider issues as well. Janet, I do not know whether you have a fresh perspective to bring to this issue, but it is certainly having read the papers that we have come across—

[124] **Janet Finch-Saunders:** Yes, it is very complex and I am afraid that I do not think that it would be feasible to do this. As much as I am very much in favour of the principle, trying to put it into being is very difficult.

[125] **William Powell:** Therefore, the only conclusion to draw is that we need to close the petition, because we cannot take it any further forward. If colleagues are agreed with that, that is what we must do.

[126] **Joyce Watson:** Yes.

[127] **William Powell:** Okay. The next petition is P-04-439, Ancient veteran and heritage trees of Wales to be given greater protection. This petition was submitted by Coed Cadw Cymru in December 2012 and collected in excess of 5,000 signatures. This issue has been highlighted recently by the tragic loss of the tree in Clwyd South, which was a particular cause for concern to our colleague Ken Skates, who was present when this petition was

received. It is a matter in which he has taken a significant interest. There are a number of actions that we can usefully take on this. We should probably write to the Communities, Equality and Local Government Committee to highlight the importance of the petition, particularly as it will be looking at the heritage Wales Bill. That would be my proposal. Are there any other thoughts on specific actions that would be useful here?

[128] **Joyce Watson:** I would seek the petitioners' views on the correspondence from Natural Resources Wales.

[129] **William Powell:** Yes.

[130] **Janet Finch-Saunders:** I support that, Chair. I am on the Communities, Equality and Local Government Committee and I will not hesitate to highlight the importance of this. I also think that we should write to the Environment and Sustainability Committee highlighting this petition, because it has the planning Wales Bill coming up.

[131] **William Powell:** Indeed, we have that coming up the track and Russell, your colleague who serves on this committee, would be a useful link there. So, we will write to both committees and indeed, as is the normal course, we will seek the petitioners' views on the correspondence that we have received from NRW. Excellent; thanks for that.

[132] We move on now to P-04-444, Dig for Victory. This was submitted by Plaid Cymru Aberavon in January 2013. We first considered it in January when we wrote to the then Minister for Local Government and Communities, the then Deputy Minister for Agriculture, Food, Fisheries and European Programmes and our colleagues in the Welsh Local Government Association. At this stage, we just need to share the responses that we have received from them with the petitioners to see how best to take it forward.

[133] The next petition is P-04-403, Saving Plas Cwrt yn Dre/Old Parliament House for the Nation. This is Sian Ifan's petition, submitted in July 2012. We last considered it in March and we wrote, as you will recall, to the Minister for Culture and Sport, whose response is here. I do not see this one going further forward in the light of that response and I would suggest that we need to close this petition. Are colleagues content with that approach?

[134] **Joyce Watson:** Yes.

[135] **Janet Finch-Saunders:** Yes.

[136] **William Powell:** Okay. So, with your agreement we will do just that.

[137] **Janet Finch-Saunders:** I would just like to put on record that if we had adopted some of the Localism Act 2011, under the community right to bid, it would give members of the community some time to be able, perhaps, to look at taking over—

[138] **William Powell:** Yes, to develop a business case and funding streams and so on.

[139] **Janet Finch-Saunders:** Yes.

[140] **Bethan Jenkins:** Could we not at least flag it up to the committee that will be looking at the heritage Bill? We could probably do a list of things that we have looked at for it to reference—

[141] **William Powell:** Yes, that might feed in and be relevant.

[142] **Bethan Jenkins:** Yes. We could prepare a list of bullet points.

[143] **William Powell:** Let us write to the Chair of the committee, noting the fact that we are now closing this petition, but flagging up some of the consideration that we have given and some of the responses that have also—

[144] **Bethan Jenkins:** I am sorry that I am giving work to the clerks now, but I just think that we should do something wider. The heritage Bill is coming up and we have looked at quite a lot of issues in relation to buildings, such as the Vulcan public house and Customs House in Port Talbot, as well as the ones in your area, Bill, for example.

[145] **William Powell:** So, you are suggesting that we do a kind of audit of stuff that we have done in that area.

[146] **Bethan Jenkins:** We could then say, ‘When you are considering it, please look at these points’.

[147] **William Powell:** There was also the Denbigh asylum issue, which is now closed, and the Mid Wales Hospital issue, which is still live, as well as several other issues. I think that we could usefully go through the work of the last six to nine months, in particular, drawing those themes together.

[148] **Bethan Jenkins:** I do not know what the timeline is, because I am not on that committee anymore, but I think that it would be helpful for committee members to see that, if they have not engaged with some of these issues.

[149] **William Powell:** Yes; it would also feed in from the work that we have done on this. I believe that that is a sensible action, and we will make sure that it is done.

[150] We now move on to petition P-03-301, Equality for the transgender community. This petition has been around for some time. It was received in September 2010, and was supported at that time by 113 signatures. We have had no recent response from the petitioners, following our attempts to contact them after earlier stages of our consideration. In the light of that, I think that we need to draw this to a close. Are colleagues happy with that? I think that that is the only sensible way forward.

[151] **Joyce Watson:** That is all that we can do.

[152] **William Powell:** Yes. The next petition is P-04-362, Ambulance Services in Monmouth. This petition was submitted by Mathew Davies in February 2012, and was supported by 450 signatures, as you will recall. I would very much welcome a steer from Members as to how best to take this issue on. We have written to the Health and Social Care Committee. The previous Chair of that committee indicated that, once the Welsh Government and Wales Audit Office reviews had been completed, this matter would be added to its list of potential further inquiries. In the light of Siobhan McClelland’s overall strategic review, which we have in its full form in our public papers, it is probably best to seek the petitioner’s views on that substantial document, in order to get a steer as to which way we go in the future consideration of this. Is that a sensible approach? We have the overall document here, which addresses a number of the petition’s concerns. We remember the poignant background here, but I think that that is the best way forward.

[153] **Joyce Watson:** I agree.

[154] **William Powell:** Okay. The next petition is P-04-451, Save the Royal Glamorgan Hospital Services. The overall south Wales review is getting very considerable public interest at the moment. My sense is that we cannot do anything while that consultation is ongoing.

The first round of consultation meetings across the wider area kicked off last night, and the consultation goes on until mid July. I sense that we probably need to write to the petitioners, encouraging them to engage fully with the exercise, but we cannot do anything until that has passed.

[155] **Bethan Jenkins:** Do you mean that we cannot do anything because that is something, legally, that we cannot do?

[156] **William Powell:** No; I meant that it was not something that we could usefully do. I was not suggesting that it was illegal.

[157] **Bethan Jenkins:** There are loads of public meetings, but I do not see why we could not ask someone from the south Wales programme, which is administering those meetings at present, to come in to give us a wider briefing as to what is happening, in a purely inquisitive way. I do not know why we say that we cannot do anything.

[158] **Joyce Watson:** It is because of consistency. We will treat this in exactly the same way as we treated the one that we have just gone through.

[159] **William Powell:** Yes—that was the one at the Hywel Dda Local Health Board. We have adopted this approach previously.

[160] **Bethan Jenkins:** But we had representatives of Hywel Dda Local Health Board before the committee, did we not?

[161] **William Powell:** I believe that that was in relation to another petition.

[162] **Ms Stocks:** That was just before the consultation's engagement phase.

[163] **William Powell:** Yes. I believe that, for consistency's sake, Joyce is absolutely on the money on this point, because we took a step back during the actual consultation. I think that we have to stick with that approach.

[164] **Bethan Jenkins:** Was that a policy that we decided as a committee, or was it just a stance, that we still have that point though?

[165] **William Powell:** It is a precedent that we have now set, is it not?

[166] **Joyce Watson:** It is one that we have to keep to.

[167] **William Powell:** I think that the energies of these and the other petitioners are best employed by taking part in this very robust and important exercise that has just kicked off in the last few days.

[168] **Bethan Jenkins:** Well, okay, fine, if it is a precedent, but I just want to say on the record that I do not see the harm in that, because they would only come in to say, 'These are the options'. It might just be useful for the public record. I am not making a political point in this. If a precedent has been set, that is fine, but I think that we do not need to be so careful that we do not ask questions anymore.

[169] **Joyce Watson:** We are not being so careful that we do not ask questions; we are trying to be fair to everybody, because this is going on right across Wales. It is not just in south Wales, as it was not just in mid and west Wales. It is also happening in north Wales. In order to treat everybody exactly the same, we have to have a consistent approach, which we agreed, actually, right at the outset, because we knew that this was coming. We were not



living—

[170] **Bethan Jenkins:** I cannot remember it. I may not have been on the committee at that time.

[171] **Joyce Watson:** We were not living in a bubble, you know. We agreed that because we knew that this would happen, that petitions would be raised. We have a whole load of petitions yet, and that is right and good, and we will consider them.

[172] **William Powell:** I think that time constraints are starting to impinge on us with the evidence sessions coming up the track. We are running a little behind. I am conscious that you have indicated that you have a point to make, Janet.

[173] **Janet Finch-Saunders:** Thank you. If I may, I will come in here. Joyce has rightly pointed out that consultations are going on, but, as we know from many debates in the Chamber and from many representations, the consultation process thus far has been somewhat flawed. This petitioner is an elected member who has collected 1,077 signatures, and I believe that when you are talking about setting a precedent, we are not in a quasi-judicial process here as such. I believe that you should be dealing with every single petition on its own individual merits. Therefore, I would like to see us looking into this matter further—

[174] **William Powell:** Well, we are certainly not—

[175] **Janet Finch-Saunders:** The consultation process is not—

[176] **William Powell:** We are certainly not seeking to suppress anything; it is just a question of doing everything within a framework of consistency.

[177] **Janet Finch-Saunders:** I feel quite strongly that while some Members may have confidence in the consultation process, thus far, very many concerns have been raised about the actual consultation process and how the responses have been weighted, because, again, we have seen very strong feelings come forward—

[178] **Joyce Watson:** It has nothing to do with this, has it?

[179] **William Powell:** No.

[180] **Joyce Watson:** Well, let us stop it, shall we?

[181] **Janet Finch-Saunders:**—about hospital closures and hospital downgrades, and yet—

[182] **Joyce Watson:** Are we going to stop this, Chair, because it has nothing to do with this matter?

[183] **William Powell:** Yes, absolutely.

[184] **Janet Finch-Saunders:** I am trying to—

[185] **William Powell:** No, I appreciate the contribution that has been made. I am just really concerned that we need to make progress on this now, because—

[186] **Bethan Jenkins:** Yes, but I do not think it is right for the Member to interrupt other people when they are talking.

[187] **William Powell:** No, and I would urge us all to show the courtesy that we would

expect from others. The points are well made and I understand a number of the points that you have just made, but we need to make progress now because of the other petitions that we need to give full consideration to. We also have evidence sessions to come and I am conscious that a number of you are under greater time pressures than I am in the run-up to 11 a.m.

[188] **Bethan Jenkins:** May we just have a note, then, for those of us who were not on the committee at the time as to the stance that—

[189] **William Powell:** Exactly. I think that, procedurally, that would be helpful.

[190] **Bethan Jenkins:** As Joyce said, there will be other petitions, and if people are going to put petitions in, thinking that this system is for them to be able to put petitions in, well, for me, we will sometimes have to say, ‘Really, is this the right process for you, because we are just going to say to you to wait until the end of the consultation?’ We have to be honest with people, because these people have put in a petition in good faith and we are now saying, ‘Oh, we can’t deal with it’.

[191] **William Powell:** I think that there is real merit in what you say in terms of expectation management, honesty and clarity. Thank you for that, and thank you for your contributions.

[192] We now move to another very important petition, namely P-04-456, Dementia—This Could Happen to you. This petition was submitted by an august campaigner on this theme, Helen Jones, who has joined us in the public gallery today. It was submitted in February 2013 and it had the support of 1,413 signatures. We first considered this matter back in February, and we wrote at that stage to the Minister for Health and Social Services, to Dementia UK and to the Alzheimer’s Society. We have heard back from the Minister and from the Alzheimer’s Society. We have the public papers here. We have not, as yet, had a response from Dementia UK. Potentially, it would be useful for us to chase that up because I think that it clearly has an important perspective on this. We previously indicated that we wished to invite the petitioner to give oral evidence and I think that we should deliver on that because of the commitment that we made and because the petitioner will clearly make a very important contribution, considering the level of support that there is here. Janet, you indicated that you had previously given your support to this petition.

10.00 a.m.

[193] **Janet Finch-Saunders:** Yes. I do not know whether I have to declare an interest or not, but I wish to put on record the fact that I have signed this petition. I think that it is a huge issue, and I think that we should be taking evidence from whomever we can in order to give this petition full merit. A total of 1,413 signatures have been obtained, and it really is about looking to bring an end to some of the discrimination that dementia sufferers face, and talking about continuing healthcare.

[194] **William Powell:** Absolutely. Thank you for that. I propose that we write to the Minister for Health and Social Services highlighting what the Alzheimer’s Society has stressed in terms of the call for a severe level to be added to the decision support toolkit, and also to ask what his intentions are regarding the commitments made by his predecessor. Also, we have set aside sufficient time for the petitioner to give oral evidence. We need to make sure that that is deliverable. Finally, I think that it would be useful for us to write to the Wales Audit Office to seek a copy of its report into continuing healthcare as soon as it is published. I think that that would be a sensible set of actions and, hopefully, we can pull it all together in a timely fashion, while also chasing Dementia UK for a response.

[195] I welcome our witnesses to the room. We will be with you very shortly.

[196] We now turn to P-04-458, Keep Further Education in the Public Sector. I made reference earlier to this petition in the context of one of our new petitions. This was submitted by the Crosskeys branch of the University and College Union in February 2013, with the support of 246 signatures. We last considered this petition in April and we wrote to the Minister. We have the Minister's response before us and it has been shared with the petitioners. We also have that further information back from the petitioners. I think that probably the best thing for us to do here, colleagues, is to await the Children and Young People Committee's report on further and higher education that was referenced.

[197] **Bethan Jenkins:** As we have not finished it yet, it would be useful for the committee to see the letter and the response, because the committee can pick that up again in the conclusions. Perhaps we could also inform the petitioners that we are seeking to get the Office for National Statistics in with regard to the determination factor. So, that question is very much alive.

[198] **William Powell:** What, in your judgment, is the timescale for that report to be ready?

[199] **Bethan Jenkins:** We have a committee meeting tomorrow where we will look into that further. We have not culminated it yet; so, we have not come to any sort of conclusion. There is no harm in this being flagged up with the Chair, Ann Jones.

[200] **William Powell:** Okay. We will happily write to Ann Jones to make sure that this is taken fully on board. Good.

[201] We now move to P-03-240, Road safety on the A40 in Llanddewi Velfrey. This petition is one of our most mature now. It dates back to September 2009. We have given it significant consideration. I know that Joyce, in recent times, has engaged with the petitioners, and there has been useful dialogue as a result of that. We last considered the petition in March, and we wrote to the Minister for Economy, Science and Transport. Again, we have her response, together with further information from the petitioner among our papers. There are a number of specific actions that we could usefully take up again with the Minister for transport, particularly around getting more information on the gateway enhancements that have been referred to, an update on the speed limit review of that section of the A40 between Llanddewi Velfrey and Scotchwell roundabout, which is a matter of great concern, and, finally, an update on the A40 Llanddewi Velfrey to Penblewin improvement scheme. So, if I write a letter on behalf of the committee seeking clarity on those particular points, it would be useful.

[202] **Joyce Watson:** I can tell you that those improvement works are going on between Llanddewi Velfrey and Scotchwell, because I have been stuck in the lights every time I have gone past recently.

[203] **William Powell:** So, that is all in the course of progress.

[204] **Joyce Watson:** That is definitely progressing.

[205] **William Powell:** Excellent. We now move on to the final update on previous petitions and to P-04-373, School Exclusion Zones for Mobile Hot Food Vans. This petition was submitted by Arfon Jones in March 2012 and was supported by 43 signatures. Colleagues will recall that the most recent consideration we gave to this was in October 2012, after which we wrote to the then Minister for Local Government and Communities, Carl Sargeant. A response has been received—it is quite a pithy response, I think it is fair to say—from the Minister for Economy, Science and Transport on this issue of hot food—not just kebab vans,

but the whole gamut of hot food vans. Clearly, we need to take the Minister's advice on this one. She is suggesting a 'wait and see' approach while we get further information on the emerging policy. Are we all agreed on that? I see that we are. Excellent. I thank you for your contributions on all of those updates.

10.07 a.m.

**P-04-457: Yr Ymgyrch Caplaniaeth Elusennol: Sesiwn Dystiolaeth**  
**P-04-457: The Charitable Chaplaincy Campaign: Evidence Session**

[206] **William Powell:** I welcome Alan Rogers, the lead petitioner for this petition, and Brian Pearce. Croeso cynnes; we are most pleased to have you here this morning and apologies for the slight delay in our proceedings. Thank you very much for the paper that you have provided us with in advance of the meeting. I would appreciate it if you would introduce yourselves briefly at this point, so that the microphone levels can be checked, and to make an additional introductory statement to bring us up to speed on the approach that you are taking.

[207] **Mr Rogers:** Thank you. I will first introduce Mr Brian Pearce. Mr Pearce was a chaplain in the Her Majesty's Prison Service for 11 years, visiting HMP Cardiff, HMP Swansea and Parc prison in Bridgend and he was chair of the Buddhist Council of Wales, a member of the inter-faith council for Wales, and a member of Cardiff's standing advisory council on religious education.

[208] I am an ordinary citizen of Wales, a taxpayer and a user of the NHS. I am married with two adult children and four grandchildren, and my wife and I have lived in Ceredigion since 1974. I became aware of what I regard as the anomaly of NHS funding in religious care about five years ago. I had retired and I was a volunteer driving people in my own car to medical appointments. My wife and I support the Wales Air Ambulance service and Tŷ Hafan, the children's hospice charity, through direct debit contributions and charity shop donations.

[209] As a member of the National Secular Society, I agreed to use the Freedom of Information Act 2000 to collect NHS chaplaincy costs in Wales. The first data were for 2007-08 and I was somewhat shocked to find that the total cost for that year was over £1 million. I was struck by the fact that although the NHS Wales was prepared to pay the full cost of getting a chaplain beside a patient in hospital, it relied on charitable donations to get a paramedic or a doctor to the side of a victim of stroke, heart attack or trauma in the shortest possible time, and to get that patient moved, by the quickest possible means, to an intensive care unit. I continue to make requests for cost data from health boards, and I have also written to Ministers for health in Wales, to health board chief executives, as well as to leading churchmen about the matter. It soon became clear that, if this situation was going to be changed, a long, protracted campaign would be required. We now have supporters in every part of Wales. We have supporters who work for NHS Wales, we have supporters in local political parties, and we have supporters who are Assembly Members. We are an informal group; we have no funds, and we need none. We use the internet to organise, to communicate and to campaign. Ours is a moral campaign. It challenges the Welsh Government to demonstrate an obligation to fund religious care. If, as we believe, this is not possible, then it should reassess the use of the NHS budget for religious care, against the needs of neonatal care, accident and emergency care, and other essential services that must be met from the limited resources of the NHS budget.

[210] I wish to remind the committee that we believe that the establishment of a charitable chaplaincy trust would be an excellent ecumenical project, bringing together people of all faiths, and, possibly, Humanists, to raise funds to support adherents in times of great need.

This petition is not about removing chaplains from hospitals, despite what others sometimes say. It is about the appropriate source of funding. We believe that NHS Wales should facilitate chaplaincy, and employ chaplains, if the cost of doing so is remitted by charity. Our preferred solution would be for organised religion to accept its responsibilities and organise a charity for this purpose. We have tried for five years to persuade leading churchmen to consider this, but without success. While the Welsh Government continues to sanction the use of the NHS Wales budget to fund religious care, it seems that organised religion will happily evade its responsibilities in this matter.

[211] As I only received it last week, I would like to make a few comments about Mark Drakeford's reply that was sent to the committee recently. Is that okay with you?

[212] **William Powell:** Yes. We have some questions that we would like to raise with you, but, for the sake of economy, you may proceed now. We will then start on our questions.

[213] **Mr Rogers:** I found the reply to be very disappointing. We have received similar replies from the Minister for Health and Social Services in the third Assembly, as well as from the current Minister for health's immediate predecessor, and now from Mark Drakeford himself. They all say the same thing, pretty much: they say that funding from the NHS budget is the best way to provide chaplaincy services. However, they do not say why it is best, and they do not say for whom it is best. That is a simple statement of opinion, without evidence, which we are expected to take without argument. It is particularly worrying, given Professor Drakeford's distinguished previous career. It means that three successive Ministers for health have replied in this way. I believe that there is a rather worrying lack of democratic accountability in those responses.

[214] Finally, I also received last week the supporting paper for petition P-04-474, Support for NHS chaplaincy services. Since it largely attacks our petition, I have had no other way of countering its comments, other than in a paper, which I can table now, and give to you.

[215] **William Powell:** We would be grateful for that.

[216] **Mr Rogers:** Is that acceptable?

[217] **William Powell:** Yes. We will receive that, and ensure that Members have the opportunity to see it.

[218] **Mr Rogers:** I have interposed my comments into that paper, in red.

[219] **William Powell:** That would be very helpful, Mr Rogers.

[220] **Mr Rogers:** That is all that I want to say.

[221] **William Powell:** Thank you very much for your introductory remarks, as well as for setting into context how you came to be active in this field, as well as for setting it in the context of your wider voluntary activities. We also look forward very much to Mr Pearce being able to share his experience in the field, and I am sure that colleagues and I will be able to draw that out in some of our questions. To begin, what, in your view, is the essential value of spiritual care in a holistic approach to overall healthcare? Perhaps I can ask Mr Pearce to comment, given his experiences.

10.15 a.m.

[222] **Mr Pearce:** I would simply say that it is very important, particularly to religious people. There is also the extra paper that Alan has submitted here. What the religious

community, largely led by the Evangelical Alliance, is trying to say is that we want to do away with chaplaincy, but we are saying that chaplaincy is very valuable, particularly to people with a religion. All we are arguing about is the funding—it is as simple as that. We have no argument against chaplaincy for those who want it, and it should be facilitated.

[223] **Mr Rogers:** I will make one point, if I may. Mark Drakeford has used the word ‘vital’ in connection with hospital chaplaincy, and, according to the person who submitted petition P-04-474, so has the First Minister. Now, no matter how valuable or important you feel the service is, it is not vital in a healthcare situation. A blood transfusion service is vital—you could not do lifesaving operations without that. I would claim that the air ambulance service is vital, because it gets lifesaving attention to people at the critical moment when they have been injured or have had a stroke or heart attack. I think that we have to be careful about the use of language.

[224] Two further words that bother me are ‘spirituality’ or ‘spiritual’, which are never clearly defined—not even in the standards for spiritual care—and ‘holistic’. Holistic care is not about a bolt-on chaplaincy service. Holistic care is about an ethos for nurses and doctors in the way that they deal with their patients, realising that they are treating both mind and body, inevitably. If someone has a limb amputated it affects their mind as well as their body, and that is the concept of holistic care—that one should take care of the whole person. However, the people who deliver holistic care are the medical practitioners—the nurses, doctors and other specialists who work with the patients—and that is the nature of holistic care.

[225] **William Powell:** Thank you very much for that last point. You referred to the standards for spiritual care. Did you or your colleagues provide views in the consultation on standards for spiritual care in the NHS in Wales?

[226] **Mr Rogers:** We were not involved at all.

[227] **William Powell:** You were not involved?

[228] **Mr Rogers:** No.

[229] **William Powell:** Were you aware of the consultation when it took place?

[230] **Mr Rogers:** The consultation was taking place just as we started up. I quickly obtained copies of early papers that underpinned, or were used to produce, the final standards that were signed off by Edwina Hart in 2009 or 2010, I believe.

[231] **William Powell:** That was during the third Assembly.

[232] **Mr Rogers:** The papers that preceded the standards came from the College of Health Care Chaplains and some of its sister organisations, like the Scottish equivalent. CHCC operates throughout England and Wales, and it provided the bulk of the input to this standards document. There was some consultation, I believe. I asked the director of the Royal College of Nursing at a meeting whether the college had been consulted, and she said, ‘Yes, we were asked for comments and we wrote a letter’, but I think that that was the extent to which the RCN was involved.

[233] **William Powell:** So, in your view, should the standards be revised? If so, how would that best be consulted upon and achieved?

[234] **Mr Rogers:** I think that it would be a good thing if they were revised. One starting place would be to attempt to produce a reasonable definition of spiritual care—I do not think

that the standards achieve that. If you look at the acknowledgements section of the standards, you will find a list. It starts with the chief nursing officer, of course, and then it goes on through about a dozen people with the title 'Reverend', there is an imam, and there are two people from Unite who were involved or were, at least, thanked for their contributions, and that is the basis of those documents. That was the core of the people who provided—

[235] **William Powell:** So, you are suggesting that there is a need for a broader approach and a broader engagement of—

[236] **Mr Rogers:** Well, if you are going to write standards for spiritual care, you have to start with a plausible definition of 'spiritual' that does not involve religion. The only definition that I have seen is ambiguous. It says something about how it should be applied or delivered, it defines religious care and then it says that spiritual care can mean the combination of what has just been defined plus religious care. So, we have two definitions, and you do not know from that point on in the document which one you are talking about.

[237] **William Powell:** So, you are advocating a tighter approach to definition and also a very careful use of language, given your earlier answer. I am conscious that time is pressing, and we have some important issues to raise with you around charitable trusts. I know that my colleagues have some questions—Joyce, you indicated initially—on that, if we can broaden this out a little.

[238] **Joyce Watson:** Good morning both, and, again, apologies that we kept you waiting. If the NHS was not going to fund chaplaincy or spiritual services, how do you believe that the savings made by each local health board and trust should be spent and what would be the benefits of that compared with providing that spiritual care? You have given an example, because, for you, it seems that the issue is that spending in this area possibly negates spending in other areas, so I ask the question in that context.

[239] **Mr Rogers:** That is the nature of budgets; if you spend more money on neonatal care, you spend less on psycho-geriatric care in a fixed budget. It is the nature of budgeting, is it not? The amount spent is not huge. Typically, a health board will spend somewhere around £0.25 million a year on chaplaincy. I keep repeating that we are not saying that chaplaincy should cease. We are saying that it should continue in much the same way as it does now, and that chaplains should be employed by the NHS—that is necessary for criminal records bureau checks and for time-management and financial-management reasons. What we are saying is that, if a charity were set up to fund chaplaincy, we could have exactly the same situation, but we would have another £1.25 million or £1.33 million available for something else. If we take Betsi Cadwaladr University Local Health Board as an example, it spends about £0.25 million a year on chaplaincy, and it is proposing to close the critical care baby unit in north Wales and use an English hospital for that purpose, involving travel by the population of north Wales that is affected by this into England. I do not know the cost figures involved, but it seems to me that, if you had some priorities, you would look at chaplaincy first, and how you might cover the costs by charitable means, and then perhaps think about whether you could afford to continue to provide a service in north Wales. The prospect of a journey from Llangefni to the Wirral when you have a child who is critically ill is not very pleasant, frankly, and I think someone needs to re-evaluate priorities in that area.

[240] **Joyce Watson:** So, really, the only issue that you feel that we need to look at is who is funding it. You do not agree, clearly, that it should be funded in the way that it is from the budgets that it now finds itself sitting in—

[241] **Mr Rogers:** I do not think that I have the expertise to meddle with the chaplaincy service. It is of no consequence; what I am saying is that that is a separate issue. Funding is one issue. Whether it is efficient, whether it is useful or whether it should be organised

differently are totally different issues, which I am not interested in, frankly. I am interested in the budget and how it is funded.

[242] **Joyce Watson:** Do you believe that a hospital chaplaincy service would be for the benefit of all people, whatever faith community they belonged to or perhaps belonging to no faith community at all?

[243] **Mr Rogers:** Should be or is?

[244] **Joyce Watson:** Do you think that it should be? Sorry, would be. Do you think that it would be?

[245] **Mr Rogers:** We collected data on the sect of chaplains, and consistently, throughout the period that we are talking about, 97.4% were Christian, and were recruited as Christian chaplains—either free church, Church in Wales or Catholics. About 8% of the WT is Catholic, and the remainder is divided almost equally between free church and Church in Wales. That pretty much matches the mix of sects as shown in the 2011 census. Chaplains claim that they will even help non-believers, and they seem to think that they can. That is fine; if they feel that, that is fine, and maybe non-believers would want to contribute to a charitable chaplaincy fund. There is no reason why they should not. So, I do not think that that kind of issue has a bearing on the matter of funding.

[246] To quickly mention the other petition, there is a suggestion that, if organised religions were to be responsible for funding, then they would bicker among each other about who should get the most money. I do not think that is necessary; I have a higher regard for people in the faith community than that. It is not necessary if the charity simply raises money and does not make any determination as to how it should be spent. At the moment the health board seems to decide on the basis of what it perceives to be the mix of faiths in the area. For example, there are many health boards outside south Wales that have no spend on Muslim, Buddhist or Hindu chaplains. Those in south Wales do tend to have such small spends, because of the population distribution. That all seems to be quite satisfactory, as far as I can tell.

[247] **William Powell:** Thanks for that. Bethan, you have indicated, and, finally, Janet. I am conscious of time, and that we have a final evidence session ahead of 11.00 a.m.

[248] **Bethan Jenkins:** I just have a few short questions. You said that you are concerned with budgets only, but a lot of what you have been saying has focused on the quality of the service, the definition of spirituality, and so on. I was just wondering, if it is about budgets only, why you mention these things at all, because, really, it is not for this discussion, is it? It is for another place and another time. I am not undermining you by saying that, but, if it is about budgets only, then really it is just about the continuation of the current service in a different format. I just wanted clarification on that.

[249] **Mr Rogers:** The reason I have raised the issue of spiritual care rather than religious care is that I do not know what ‘spiritual care’ means. I do not know what I am talking about when it comes to ‘spiritual care’. I do know what religious care is, and I see a chaplaincy that is composed entirely of clerics, mostly Christian clerics, and I am convinced that what is being offered is religious care. I think that there is an attempt to almost disguise that or to blur it by using this term ‘spiritual care’. That is why we discuss it, really. When the term ‘holistic care’ is used, I really see red, and I have to say something about that.

[250] **Bethan Jenkins:** So, if there were a change to the current system, would you want to see all of these definitions being looked at in the round?



[251] **Mr Rogers:** Well, no. They do not really matter. They are only being used on the part of defenders of the status quo to justify public money being spent on religious care in hospitals, by pretending, perhaps, that it is not really religious care, but is something else. I do not know what else it is.

[252] **Bethan Jenkins:** The second question I had was with regard to accountability. Obviously, in hospitals, the service is in a central location, but there are other places where healthcare is delivered and these services would be necessary. If it had a charitable status, I am just concerned—I know that you said that there would not be disagreements between factions, and obviously we would hope not, because what is the point of spirituality and religion if they cannot co-operate? There we are; we know that wars have been fought over religion, but I digress. Could there be so much divergence between different areas that it could be questionable as to what type of service would be delivered, because it would not be directly through the NHS but via a trust?

10.30 a.m.

[253] **Mr Rogers:** Well, what I am saying—

[254] **Bethan Jenkins:** I cannot see how it is working at the moment.

[255] **Mr Rogers:** What I am saying is that all chaplains would be employed by the NHS and would be paid by the NHS. They would be selected by the NHS and they would be managed by the NHS. There are lots of university hospitals that have research workers, even people working on new surgical techniques or other branches of medicine, paid from a grant from a charity. So, this is done all of the time in hospitals and in universities. This would be the same situation. We have a target figure of £1.3 million, perhaps £1.5 million to cover overheads, for the charity. The health board would then say, ‘We have spent £0.25 million on chaplains, selected on the basis of our knowledge of the population that we support’. They would apply to the trust for a repayment of that money. That is how it would work. The trust would focus on raising money and on publicising how good and valuable chaplaincy is, and the health board would recruit and employ the chaplains. Everybody is happy then, surely.

[256] **Bethan Jenkins:** I just wanted clarification on that.

[257] **Mr Pearce:** The first duty of the health service is to provide healthcare; it is the duty of the religious community to provide religious care. It should see that as its first duty.

[258] **William Powell:** Thank you very much for making that—

[259] **Mr Pearce:** I might also add a little personal note: my daughter works for the NHS in Cardiff. She is a senior pharmacy technician. In her department, pharmacy people are being made redundant, but there are no redundancies among the chaplains.

[260] **William Powell:** We are certainly conscious of the huge financial pressures; in fact, that is something that has run through our earlier sessions on discussing previous petitions. I think that that probably exhausts the lines of questioning in this evidence session. We are grateful to you both for coming here, for having submitted such a full paper, for the candour and depth of your responses to our questions and for supplying this redacted paper in response to the petition that we shall be considering in a few minutes’ time.

[261] Diolch yn fawr iawn. Thank you very much.

[262] I apologise for our late running—I am sounding like Arriva Trains Wales. We will ensure that you receive a full transcript of today’s session for your own records, and for you

to be able to check for accuracy.

[263] **Mr Pearce:** I was grateful for your being late, because my bus did a circuit of Cardiff centre and then promptly broke down.

10.33 a.m.

**P-04-474: Cefnogaeth i Wasanaethau Caplaniaeth y GIG: Sesiwn Dystiolaeth**  
**P-04-474: Support for NHS Chaplaincy Services: Evidence Session**

[264] **William Powell:** Bore da a chroeso **William Powell:** Good morning and cynnes. welcome.

[265] I welcome Jim Stewart, lead petitioner and public affairs and advocacy officer for the evangelical alliance, and Wynne Roberts, pastoral care chaplain and chair of the inter-faith network of north-west Wales. I extend my apologies straight away for the delay to this session. We look forward very much to hearing from you. Will you please introduce yourselves, so that we get the sound levels, and make a brief introductory statement? We will then move to our questions.

[266] **Mr Stewart:** Diolch am y croeso **Mr Stewart:** Thank you for the warm cynnes. welcome.

[267] I am Jim Stewart. I work for the evangelical alliance. I am also part of the First Minister's faith communities forum, and I provide secretariat support for the cross-party group on faith. I submitted the petition a few months ago, in light of the fact that I was aware of the counter petition that Mr Rogers had submitted. There were a few things that I felt needed to be addressed in the petition that I submitted. One of these was language—the refusal to accept the concept of spiritual care. We have the spiritual care guidelines and there is spiritual care in the mental health measure and in other aspects of legislation, so it is important to reaffirm our belief in the importance of that.

[268] I also felt, as Mr Rogers explained in his evidence just now, that there was a narrow secularist agenda behind it, which did not automatically come through when you initially read the petition. It is important to know where people are coming from and what is motivating them.

[269] The third thing is the suggestion in that petition that publicly funded chaplaincy services are unpopular. I feel that that is unsubstantiated. Briefly, although I am not aware of huge research being done on it, I know that there is very much support from the First Minister—I gave you the minutes of a recent faith communities forum meeting at which chaplaincy was discussed. I also referred to those from Wales's faith communities who have been strongly supportive of chaplaincy services being funded by the NHS. I did not include this in my notes, but the Royal College of Nursing, in its 2008 congress, had a resolution on spiritual chaplaincy to condemn any cuts. That was passed by 97% of the people present. That was a lifelong commitment on its behalf. That is it from me. I will hand over to my erstwhile colleague, who has more hands-on experience in chaplaincy services.

[270] **Y Parch Roberts:** Bore da. **Y Rev Roberts:** Good morning. I am Reverend Parchedig Wynne Roberts wyf fi. Wynne Roberts.

[271] I am the chaplain, and have been for 14 years, in north Wales with the Betsi Cadwaladr University Local Health Board. I am a member of the national committee for the College of Health Care Chaplains, and I also chair the inter-faith network of north-west Wales

and am a member of Inter-faith Wales. I am also partially employed by the Welsh Government, because I am also a lay member of the mental health review tribunal for Wales. I just wanted to say that as well.

[272] I was not a part of the putting together of the petition, but I signed up to it. I was then asked by Jim if I would come here today to give a presence from what you might call ‘operational chaplaincy’ and present that perspective to you this morning. Thank you.

[273] **William Powell:** Thank you very much for both of those introductory statements. Mr Stewart, you referred to the other petition, which is being promoted by the charitable chaplaincy campaign, which has obviously been a motivator in mobilising the particular petition that we are considering today. In its written evidence, the charitable chaplaincy campaign states that it knows of no substantive evidence that proves the clinical value that can be attributed to chaplaincy services. What is your response to that question?

[274] **Mr Stewart:** If you look at the aspects that involve spirituality—meaning and purpose, giving hope, forgiveness, belief in a god or deity, morality, self-expression—then it might not have the same criteria and might be more difficult to substantiate than scientific things, but there is wide consensus that it is valuable. I know that my colleague Wynne would be able to comment on that as well.

[275] **Rev Roberts:** Just like many other aspects of healthcare, you can measure it not in scientific ways, but in the patient experience. Therefore, what we tend to do a lot within the health boards is to measure this through feedback from questionnaires, interviews and patient stories and then to get interaction to assess how we impact upon that person’s journey during their period of illness, or whatever. We do not only do that from the religious side, either. One thing that we would like to say as chaplains is that, these days, we tend to be quite diverse in how we deliver that particular service—through the means of counselling services, support services and bereavement services, which might not be done on a religious basis in that sense. We also have people within chaplaincy services who do not hold any particular religious faith. My assistant for five years in Ysbyty Gwynedd was a Humanist. The chaplains are not all ordained. The full-time chaplain of one of our hospitals is not the ordained person within their team; that person is a lay person.

[276] **William Powell:** I have a final couple of questions. In your written evidence, you refer to the significant misunderstandings that exist about the nature of chaplaincy. I wonder if you could elaborate a little on what you think those misunderstandings are. My second question is whether you believe that the services provided by chaplaincy are sufficiently well publicised across Wales in the different hospitals and settings.

[277] **Mr Stewart:** For clarification, do you mean a misunderstanding with what the previous petitioner was saying?

[278] **William Powell:** Are there any misunderstandings out there among the public as to the nature and value of hospital chaplaincy?

[279] **Mr Stewart:** I do not think that there is a misunderstanding. Correct me if I am wrong, Wynne, but I am not aware of any findings that have proven that people do not want it or do not think that it should be publicly funded. On the contrary, where opinions have been expressed or positions have been given, it is that they believe that it is important.

[280] **William Powell:** Moving to the issue of the prominence of communications within hospitals as to the availability of the support of chaplaincy, is that uniformly good or could it be improved in some ways?

[281] **Rev Roberts:** Within my own board, I think that communication is very good—in the sense that we do not go visiting from bed to bed and we do not do cold calling; we work by referrals from clinicians, nurses, doctors, faith communities and non-faith communities. We often get referrals from people just by walking down the corridor. An important aspect is actually being part of system. Therefore, for the last 14 years, I have lectured all the nursing students in Bangor University. So, the majority of nurses will have had lectures and so on about spirituality and bereavement, or will have done a death and dying course and so on. Chaplains are involved in that, so that, by the time nurse students become qualified nurses on a ward, and after 14 years of that, they all know about chaplaincy because they have all grown up with chaplaincy as part of their role.

[282] **William Powell:** So, you contribute actively to ongoing professional training of clinicians and nursing staff.

[283] **Rev Roberts:** Yes. We are the first hospital in the UK—we were in the *Nursing Standard* a few months ago—to have formal nurse placements in chaplaincy. Last year, I spent 75 hours mentoring nursing staff within chaplaincy. It is not the nurses who are religious, because very often they are not, but the nurses who feel that they need the support of the chaplaincy service to meet the bio/psycho/social—I will not use the word ‘holistic’—needs of people. Modern nursing documentation requires you to look at the bio/psycho/social/spiritual—all of those parts. It is not just for chaplaincy to do that, but for the nurses and doctors to do it as well. The chaplaincy is there to support them to do it; very often, we do not do it ourselves.

[284] **William Powell:** Janet Finch-Saunders has been very patient; you are next, Janet.

[285] **Janet Finch-Saunders:** My question is about the previous petitioner believing that the funding for chaplaincy services through the NHS might not be secure in the future, even though there is a requirement on NHS organisations to provide such services. Why do you think that the petitioner feels that?

[286] **Mr Stewart:** Why does he feel that it is under threat?

[287] **Janet Finch-Saunders:** Yes, basically, even though there is—

[288] **Mr Stewart:** We do not necessarily feel that it is under threat; we want to ensure that it does not come under threat. We believe that there is widespread support across the board.

[289] **Rev Roberts:** In fact, I would say, after 14 years in chaplaincy, and before then I was a lay chaplain in Addenbrooke’s Hospital, that I do not think that we have ever been so supported by the boards and those in the NHS—the boards and the directors and so on—in developing the service. They can see every day the evidence of how we interact with staff support and how we support carers. Also, in the development of the new NHS, which I think you mentioned, our board is now looking at developing hubs, for example, the Anglesey hub, which is made up of community hospitals, those who live in the community, long-term chronic conditions and so on. We are now putting a chaplaincy service into those, so that we actually can support people not just in acute hospitals, but in community hospitals. On the way down here last night, I actually visited two of the community hospitals, Caernarfon and Alltwen, because I was saving money by visiting people on the way.

10.45 a.m.

[290] **Janet Finch-Saunders:** If the model were to be delivered by charitable organisations, what are the real difficulties that you see? I think that it is fair to say, from the feedback that I have received and my own personal experiences over many years with

different relatives and different constituents, and just in general terms, that the current system works. What, do you think, would be the real difficulties if the Welsh Government were to withdraw the funding, as has been suggested, and that this vital—and I would agree that it is vital—and very valuable service was then re-assembled to be delivered by the charitable organisations?

[291] **Rev Roberts:** I think that I could give my own example of that because although I have said that I have worked for 14 years within the health service, for six of those years I was working through a service level agreement. In other words, I was paid for by the diocese and then I actually delivered the service. There was huge sea change when the board itself decided that it did not have enough buy-in to what was happening. I did not feel that I was actually part of the health service. I was, but I was not fully part of it. On that day, on 1 January 2006, I think, when I started as a fully employed member of staff, there was a difference. Although I accept the petitioners' view that the governance element can still be there, it will be very difficult because, at the end of the day, you need to be able to be part of that. The NHS is a complex organisation and you need to be in it.

[292] **Mr Stewart:** Also, if funding is going to come from churches and faith groups in order to pay for chaplaincy services, what will they have to cut? If you think of the work that they are doing with things like street pastors, food banks, night shelters and debt advice centres, you will find that some of those will have to be cut. So, you have to think of the overall picture if there is to be any social benefit. I also wish to make a point that the British Humanist Association, according to its website, is currently in consultation with its members on how it should engage with chaplaincy, but it does state quite clearly that it does not have money to pay to train Humanist chaplains at the moment. So, it would lead to uneven services.

[293] **William Powell:** So, with that aspect would be—*[Inaudible.]*

[294] **Mr Stewart:** Yes.

[295] **William Powell:** That is helpful. Joyce indicated that she has a question.

[296] **Joyce Watson:** Have you had any cuts? Do you think that you should have any cuts? We are in the age of people having to tighten their belts. Leading on from the allegation that everyone else seems to be coping or managing with less, but delivering the same, are you aware that you are being asked to do that yourself?

[297] **Rev Roberts:** Yes. I agree that we should be having cuts—and we have—in the sense that the NHS is under tight budgetary controls at the moment. In terms of what we are doing as a chaplaincy, I can say that, to my knowledge, the cuts are no more than what they would be in other departments, and we have to make savings. I know that we have to make savings for next year, which is natural. However, what we actually do try to do these days—to some extent, because of some of the pressure from outside—is to actually justify, document and show what we do. I can give you evidence of how much I have done, personally, last year, for example.

[298] **Joyce Watson:** That would be useful for us.

[299] **William Powell:** Yes, it would be useful, actually.

[300] **Rev Roberts:** I will provide you with that because it was provided under freedom of information in any case. I can give you just one or two things now, which are documented. There were 288 emergency or vital call-outs, as they say. Unfortunately, I took 18 neonatal funerals myself. I gave 74 or 75 hours of staff-side support—mentoring and so on. Part of that

is also developing a relationship with the wider community. I forgot to say that I very much wear an equality/diversity hat as well. Part of that is that, on Friday, I will be attending the Friday Muslim prayers in the mosque in Bangor in order to develop that relationship with the other communities. Also, we have had people from the Pagan Society who have been invited to come to take services and so on within our chaplaincy. The night before last, the Bahá'í were there and, this coming Friday, I will not be there, but the chaplain on call will be the Bahá'í chaplain.

[301] **Joyce Watson:** Would you just put to bed, or answer, the query that what you deliver is religious, not spiritual?

[302] **Rev Roberts:** I would say that the vast majority of my work is with those who are not formally part of a religious community. In other words, what tends to happen the majority of the time is that those who belong to Upper Cwmswt church will be visited by Upper Cwmswt's vicar. I do not need to go to see that person. That person is being cared for by their home faith community. A lot of the work that we do is with those who might not have a place that they can call their spiritual home, those who might not even have thought about religious care until something happens, or even those who say to me quite openly, 'I don't believe in anything'. At that point I, or somebody, will make a referral to a Humanist society or, if they want, we will arrange for a Humanist or somebody to come in. I always say to people, 'I dance with people and they choose the dance and they choose the speed'. Do you see what I mean? Therefore, you do not take people on your journey, you just join them on theirs. I know that it sounds warm and trite, but, on a daily basis, that actually happens in many ways.

[303] **Mr Stewart:** Just to add to that, in the globalised post-modern world in which we live, where identity can often be multifaceted, I think increasingly we will get away from clearly defined religious groups. Even if we take converts, for example—something that we have been doing a bit of research on—most, if not all, faith communities in Wales will have people who have converted to them and often they are a minority within a minority. People who are secularists or Humanists will often have come from maybe a Christian background. I think that the type of service that Wynne and other chaplains provide is fantastic.

[304] **William Powell:** Y cwestiwn olaf, **William Powell:** The last question, Bethan Bethan Jenkins.

[305] **Bethan Jenkins:** Dau gwestiwn cyflym sydd gennyf. Rwyf eisiau eglurhad ar un pwynt. Rydych chi wedi gwneud pwynt eithaf sylweddol o ddweud nad oedd y deisebwyr blaenorol yn amlwg ynglŷn â'r ffaith eu bod yn rhan o'r Gymdeithas Seciwlar Genedlaethol, er i Alan Rogers ddweud ei fod ef yn rhan o'r mudiad hwnnw. Rydych chi newydd ddweud bod y ffordd y mae pobl yn gweithio yn ein byd *post-modern* yn eithaf *fluid*. Beth yw'r broblem felly, os yw Alan Rogers yn rhan o'r mudiad hwnnw, pan fydd yn dweud y dylai'r gwasanaeth gael ei ariannu mewn ffordd wahanol? Nid problem gyda'r hyn sydd yn cael ei wneud yw hi, ond gyda'r ffordd y mae'r gwasanaeth yn cael ei ariannu.

**Bethan Jenkins:** I have two brief questions. I just want to clarify one point. You have made quite a substantial point of saying that the previous petitioners were not clear about the fact that they were part of the National Secular Society, even though Alan Rogers said that he was part of that movement. You have just said that in our post-modern world, the way people work is quite fluid. What is the problem, therefore, if Alan Rogers is part of that organisation, with him saying that it should be funded in a different way? It is not a problem with what is being done, but with the way that the service is funded.

[306] Yn ail, rydych yn dweud yn eich **Secondly,** you say in your document that if

dogfen pe bai'r gwasanaeth yn cael ei ariannu y tu allan i'r NHS, byddai hynny'n arwain at fwy o anghydraddoldeb yn yr hyn sy'n cael ei ddelifro. Ar hyn o bryd, mae'r cyllidebau yn amrywio o ardal i ardal. A ydych chi'n dweud felly bod yr hyn sy'n cael ei wneud yn barod yng Nghymru yn hynod o gyfartal a bod pawb yn cael yr un math o wasanaeth ac, os felly, pe bai'r gwasanaeth yn newid, byddai'r holl beth yn newid yn sylfaenol a byddai rhai pobl yn methu cael y gwasanaeth maen nhw mo'yn, neu'r gwasanaeth maen nhw'n gofyn amdano?

the service were funded outside the NHS, that would lead to more inequality in what is being delivered. At the moment, budgets differ from area to area. Are you therefore saying that what is being done in Wales already is very equal, so that everybody receives the same sort of service and, if so, if the service were to change, will the whole system change fundamentally, so that people will not receive the service that they want, or the service that they request?

[307] **Mr Stewart:** Okay, I will answer this first. If I think of the Wales that I want to be living in in the future, we need to be able to get along with each other. We are living in a pluralistic society. Obviously, there will be a lot of people who do not profess any faith at all. I would say that the National Secular Society as a movement is out of kilter with that type of vision. There have been very strong statements that it does not want to see any public funding going towards religion. Obviously, there are a lot of people of different faiths or no faith, and we all get along well together in the different things that we are involved in. However, I wonder where that motivation is coming from. Is it coming from a particularly narrow ideology that says that no public funding should go towards anything religious? Is it coming from that, because there does not seem to be—

[308] **Bethan Jenkins:** That is not what was said, you see, so you are implying that. They told us that it was because there were other things within the health service that should be funded. If I had heard them say that no religious funding should be put forward, then I would agree with you. However, they did not actually say that. That is the problem.

[309] **Mr Stewart:** Okay. Was he able to explain where he wanted the money to go to instead?

[310] **Bethan Jenkins:** To other services within the NHS, I presume.

[311] **William Powell:** It was to be redistributed among other services was the point they were advancing.

[312] **Mr Stewart:** It is an interest that needed to have been declared. I do not think that it is clear in the petition and in other things, but he did say it in the last evidence session.

[313] **Y Parch Roberts:** O ran eich ail gwestiwn, Bethan, i fod yn onest, ar y funud, rydym yn trio cael gwasanaeth cyfartal ym mhob bwrdd yng Nghymru. Dyna pam mae gennym y *standards*, i drio codi'r rhain i fyny. Ar y funud, rydym yn trio gweithio efo pob bwrdd i'w datblygu, fel coleg ac fel caplaniaid yn yr ysbytai, i godi pawb i'r un safon o ran cyllid ac yn y blaen. Ond, mae'n mynd i fod yn broblem, yn enwedig pe bai hyn yn dod o dan elusen. Y broblem fawr yw y byddai'r gaplaniaeth yn dibynnu ar faint o arian sy'n dod mewn i'r elusen honno. Pwy fyddai'n rhedeg yr elusen honno? Nid y

**Rev Roberts:** On your second question, Bethan, to be honest, at the moment, we are trying to get an equal service across every board in Wales. That is why we have the standards, to try to raise those up. At the moment, we are trying to work across every board to develop them, as a college and as chaplains in hospitals, to raise everyone to the same level in terms of budgets and so on. However, it is going to be a problem, especially if this were to come under the auspices of a charity. The problem that would face us then would be that chaplaincy would depend on how much money came in to that

caplaniaid fyddai'n gwneud hynny. Byddai'n well gen i dreulio mwy o'm hamser efo claf sy'n marw neu glaf mewn angen na mynd o gwmpas efo cap i drio hel arian. Rwyf wedi gwneud hynny am flynyddoedd pan oeddwn yn offeiriad plwyf ac, yn anffodus, y broblem oedd, yn y diwedd, roeddwn yn codi arian yn hytrach na chodi calon.

charity. Who would run that charity? It would not be chaplains. I would prefer to spend more of my time with a dying patient or a patient in need, rather than going around cap in hand trying to gather funding. I did that for years when I was a parish priest and, unfortunately, the problem was that, ultimately, I was raising funds rather than raising people's spirits.

[314] **William Powell:** I am afraid that the clock has beaten us—

[315] **Mr Stewart:** May I make a closing quick comment, Chair?

[316] **William Powell:** We are about to lose Members, but if you keep it to 30 seconds, we may just keep them.

[317] **Mr Stewart:** With regard to extending chaplaincy services to care settings and so on, if you wish to write to the spirituality and psychiatry special interest group, it could give you a detailed position, particularly with regard to mental health and chaplaincy in the community.

[318] **William Powell:** That may well be a useful action for us to do. I thank you both for attending and for your full and comprehensive answers. As with the previous petitioners, we will provide you with a transcript of today's session. We will be considering the evidence provided at our next meeting on 18 June. I look forward very much to that. Diolch yn fawr iawn. Thank you very much indeed.

*Daeth y cyfarfod i ben am 10.58 a.m.  
The meeting ended at 10.58 a.m.*