



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

Y Pwyllgor Deisebau **The Petitions Committee**

Dydd Mawrth, 24 Chwefror 2015
Tuesday, 24 February 2015

Cynnwys **Contents**

Appointment of a Temporary Chair
Penodi Cadeirydd Dros Dro

Cyflwyniad, Ymddiheuriadau a Dirprwyon
Introduction, Apologies and Substitutions

Trafod y Sesiwn Dystiolaeth ar 3 Chwefror, 2015—Diogelu Dyfodol Draig Ffyncci, Cynulliad
Plant a Phobl Ifanc Cymru
Discussion of the Evidence Session on 3 February 2015—Protect the Future of Funky
Dragon, the Children and Young People's Assembly for Wales

Deisebau Newydd
New Petitions

Y Wybodaeth Ddiweddaraf am Ddeisebau
Blaenorol Updates to Previous Petitions

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

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

Aelodau'r pwyllgor yn bresennol
Committee members in attendance

Russell George	Ceidwadwyr Cymreig Welsh Conservatives
Bethan Jenkins	Plaid Cymru The Party of Wales
Gwyn R. Price	Llafur (yn dirprwyo ar ran Joyce Watson) Labour (substitute for Joyce Watson)

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

Steve George	Clerc Clerc
Helen Roberts	Cynghorydd Cyfreithiol Legal Adviser
Kath Thomas	Dirprwy Glerc Deputy Clerk

Dechreuodd y cyfarfod am 09:01.
The meeting began at 09:01.

Appointment of a Temporary Chair
Penodi Cadeirydd Dros Dro

[1] **Mr George:** Good morning. Welcome to this meeting of the Petitions Committee. The committee Chair, William Powell AM, has submitted his apologies for today's meeting and the first item of business is the appointment of a temporary Chair. Therefore, I invite nominations from committee members for a temporary Chair to be appointed under Standing Order 17.22.

[2] **Russell George:** Can I nominate Bethan Jenkins, please?

[3] **Mr George:** I see that there are no other nominations and I declare Bethan Jenkins appointed and invite her to take the chair.

Cyflwyniad, Ymddiheuriadau a Dirprwyon
Introduction, Apologies and Substitutions

[4] **Bethan Jenkins:** Diolch yn fawr. Rwy'n blês i fod yn cadeirio'r pwyllgor yma heddiw. Croeso i bawb i'r cyfarfod, yn enwedig Gwyn Price, sydd yma heddiw yn lle Joyce Watson. Mae clustffonau ar gael i wrando ar y cyfieithu ar y pryd o'r Gymraeg i Saesneg. Nid oes angen i chi rhoi'ch ffonau symudol bant, nac unrhyw ddyfeisiadau electronig eraill, ond a allwch chi roi eich dyfeisiadau ar 'tawel'?

Bethan Jenkins: Thank you very much. I am very pleased to be chairing this committee meeting today. Welcome to everyone to the meeting, especially Gwyn Price, who is here today instead of Joyce Watson. Headsets are available to listen to interpretation from Welsh to English. You don't need to switch off mobile phones or any other electronic devices, but please do change them to silent mode.

[5] Ymddiheuriadau a dirprwyon: fel rwyf wedi'i ddweud, cafwyd ymddiheuriadau gan William Powell a Joyce Watson, sy'n Apologies and substitutions: as I've said, we've received apologies from William Powell and Joyce Watson who are attending

mynychu cyfarfod y Cynulliad Seneddol Prydeinig-Gwyddelig yn Nulyn, ac fe fydd Gwyn Price yn dirprwyo ar ran Joyce Watson. Deallwn na fydd rhywun yn gallu dirprwyo ar gyfer William Powell. Bydd y clerch yn rhoi'r wybodaeth—. Na, nid oes dim gwybodaeth ychwanegol i'w rhoi ar hynny.

the British-Irish Parliamentary Assembly meeting in Dublin, and Gwyn Price will substitute for Joyce Watson. We understand that there will not be a substitute for William Powell. The clerk will give any additional information—. No, there isn't additional information to give in that regard.

09:03

Trafod y Sesiwn Dystiolaeth ar 3 Chwefror, 2015—Diogelu Dyfodol Draig Ffyfnci, Cynulliad Plant a Phobl Ifanc Cymru

Discussion of the Evidence Session on 3 February 2015—Protect the Future of Funky Dragon, the Children and Young People's Assembly for Wales

[6] **Bethan Jenkins:** Pwynt 3 ar yr agenda yw trafod y sesiwn dystiolaeth a gynhaliwyd ar 3 Chwefror 2015. Hon oedd y ddeiseb ynglŷn â diogelu dyfodol Draig Ffyfnci, cynulliad plant a phobl ifanc Cymru. Wrth gwrs, ar y pryd, roedd Russell a fi yno ar gyfer y dystiolaeth hynny, felly efallai fyddai'n dda i Russell a fi gael trafodaeth—a Gwyn, wrth gwrs, os oes gennych chi unrhyw sylwadau pellach—ar beth oedd Plant yng Nghymru wedi'i ddweud i ychwanegu at y drafodaeth ar ran y ddeiseb benodol hynny.

Bethan Jenkins: So, under point 3 on the agenda, we're discussing the evidence session held on 3 February 2015. This was the petition in relation to safeguarding the future of Funky Dragon, the children and young people's assembly for Wales. At the time, Russell and I were there for that evidence session, so perhaps it would be useful for Russell and I to discuss—and Gwyn, of course, if you have any comments to make—what Children in Wales said to add to the discussion on behalf of that specific petition.

[7] **Russell George:** Chair, from my point of view, I do feel that this is a petition that, as a committee, we should take a particular interest in, because it directly affects young people. I think, if anything, a petition is about democracy and promoting democracy, so I do feel passionate about this cause. I think, from my point of view, there are a further few steps that we could take, but, certainly from the evidence we received, things seem to have moved on over recent months. I'm just wondering whether, perhaps, we should write to a number of people—I'm not sure who they should be, perhaps the Welsh Government, perhaps the Assembly Commission—just to understand their perspective, before we do anything further on this piece of work.

[8] **Bethan Jenkins:** Thanks. Children in Wales, obviously, and Funky Dragon have been having ongoing discussions with the Assembly Commission and the Welsh Government, as we learnt in that particular session. So, if we ask them for an update on the work that they're doing in terms of whether the Commission can fill any gaps, or whether the Welsh Government has any future plans, I think those would be the two action points that we can follow. But, did you have any views particularly on what Children in Wales said, because I know that they said that they weren't going to be performing that democratic parliamentary role, although they are speaking to youth forums across Wales? Is that something that you were concerned with?

[9] **Russell George:** Yes. To me, if an entity exists that's not Funky Dragon that's fulfilling the role, then it's fulfilling the role, but it is whether that is happening or not. I think there were gaps; we could tell from the evidence that there were gaps in how young people can feed into the democratic process. I certainly felt that through the evidence session. So, I certainly feel that, as a result of that, we should pursue this. But, I think you're right: I think

we could do with getting those updates in the initial period from the Welsh Government and the Commission.

[10] **Bethan Jenkins:** I think, just to—I'm sorry, Gwyn; did you have a view?

[11] **Gwyn R. Price:** Just to say that I'm fully supportive of both your comments on that and also fully supportive of asking the Welsh Government to look further into it, really, because we are concerned about this situation, and I fully support both of you.

[12] **Bethan Jenkins:** Just to wind up, I think what was interesting was that, perhaps, Children in Wales has been seen as someone to look at to attack, in a way, because of the way that they had won the funding over Funky Dragon. But, we can see from what Children in Wales said that they applied for the same funding pot but they had a different, obviously, set-up in mind to Funky Dragon. So, I think we need to acknowledge that they were never going to be performing the same thing as that particular charity. I think that's important to put on the record.

[13] **Russell George:** I agree with that view, Chair.

[14] **Bethan Jenkins:** Okay. So, are we happy to move forward with those two updates? And then, if we want to take evidence, for those who are watching this or reading this back on the Record, it won't mean that we won't potentially take evidence from both the Welsh Government and the Commission but that we would seek an update first on any meetings that they've had on this issue.

[15] **Russell George:** That's good; it's right to point that out.

[16] **Gwyn R. Price:** Yes.

[17] **Bethan Jenkins:** Ocê, diolch yn fawr. **Bethan Jenkins:** Okay, thank you very much.

09:06

Deisebau Newydd New Petitions

[18] **Bethan Jenkins:** Y ddeiseb newydd sydd gyda ni o'n blaenau ni heddiw yw P-04-617 Stopiwch y Trosglwyddo Dilyffethair o Lyfrgelloedd Cyhoeddus i'r Sector Gwirfoddol. Mae hwn gan bobl sy'n byw yng Nghanol De Cymru, ym Mro Morgannwg. Maen nhw am i'r Dirprwy Weinidog Diwylliant, Chwaraeon a Thwristiaeth dderbyn yr argymhelliad yn yr adolygiad arbenigol o lyfrgelloedd cyhoeddus yng Nghymru 2014. Mae hyn ynglŷn â'r ffaith eu bod nhw am weld ymgynghoriad ar gostau—opsiynau costio cynghorau—cyn i unrhyw lyfrgelloedd naill ai gau neu drosglwyddo i'r trydydd sector. Felly, a oes barn gan unrhyw un ynglŷn â phwyntiau gweithredu ar hyn?

Bethan Jenkins: The new petition that we have before us today is P-04-617 Stop the Wholesale Hiving off of Public Libraries to the Voluntary Sector. This has been submitted by people living in South Wales Central, in the Vale of Glamorgan. They want the Deputy Minister for Culture, Sport and Tourism to accept the recommendation in the expert review of public libraries in Wales 2014. This relates to the fact that they want to see a consultation on costs—costing proposals from councils—before any libraries are closed or transferred to the third sector. So, does anyone have an opinion on the action points on this?

[19] **Russell George:** This is the only new petition that we've got today, Chair, but I think

what we should do, in accordance with what we normally do, is that, in the first instance, we should write to the Deputy Minister for Culture, Sport and Tourism, seeking his views on this.

[20] **Gwyn R. Price:** I fully support that view.

[21] **Bethan Jenkins:** Ocê, diolch yn fawr. **Bethan Jenkins:** Okay, thank you very much.

09:08

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

[22] **Bethan Jenkins:** Felly, symudwn ymlaen at y wybodaeth ddiweddaraf am ddeisebau blaenorol. Iechyd yw'r pwnc cyntaf a deiseb P-04-408, Gwasanaeth i Atal Anhwylder Bwyta ymysg Plant a Phobl Ifanc. Rydym wedi bod yn trafod y ddeiseb yma ers cyfnod o amser nawr—ers 2012 yn benodol—ynghlŷn â chael mwy o gefnogaeth i wasanaethau anhwylderau bwyta i bobl ifanc yng Nghymru. Rydym wedi gwneud lot o waith. Bu inni ystyried y ddeiseb ddiwethaf ar 7 Hydref, a gofynnwn ni am fwy o sylwadau gan y deisebydd. Rydym yn gwybod yr wythnos yma—a bydd y deisebydd eisiau gwybod hefyd—fod y Llywodraeth yn mynd i lansio adolygiad o CAMHS, o'r system iechyd meddwl i bobl ifanc, ac felly byddai'n dda petawn ni'n gallu rhoi'r wybodaeth hynny i'r deisebwr er mwyn sicrhau bod barn y deisebwr yn mynd trwyddo i'r adolygiad hynny. Tybed a oes unrhyw sylwadau eraill, gan ei bod yn Wythnos Genedlaethol Ymwybyddiaeth o Anhwylderau Bwyta—jest i bobl wybod hynny hefyd.

Bethan Jenkins: Therefore, we will move on to the updates on previous petitions. Health is the first subject and petition P-04-408, Child and Adolescent Eating Disorder Service. We have been discussing this petition for quite a long time now—since 2012, specifically—and this is about having more support for eating disorder services for young people in Wales. We have done a lot of work. We last considered the petition on 7 October, and we sought more comments from the petitioner. We know that this week—and the petitioner would want to know this—that the Government is going to launch a review of child and adolescent mental health services, and therefore it would be good if we could provide that information to the petitioner in order to ensure that the petitioner's views go through to that review. I wonder whether there are any other comments, as it is National Eating Disorders Awareness Week—just for people to know that as well.

[23] Russell, any comments?

[24] **Russell George:** Well, Chair, I'm happy for you to, perhaps, to speak to this point because I know that you've taken an interest in this particular subject and I think you chair the cross-party group, so—

[25] **Bethan Jenkins:** Yes, we have a meeting today of the cross-party group on eating disorders, but what I said earlier is that the CAMHS review will be launched this week, on Thursday, by the Minister, so I would be conscious that the petitioner should feed into that.

[26] The other issue that I think is quite worrying is that Beat Cymru, the charity involved with eating disorders in Wales, didn't receive any funding from the Government in this tranche of funding for charities in Wales, so there will not be any work done anymore by a Welsh charity on eating disorders. So, that's something that's very worrying for eating disorders awareness week especially. But, I think we should be keeping a watching brief on this because, while money is being repatriated back to Wales for the treatment of young

people with eating disorders, it's clearly not seeing its benefits yet, and so I wouldn't want to close the petition until we see progress in this particular area.

[27] **Russell George:** I'm happy, Chair, to take your steer on this.

[28] **Gwyn R. Price:** I think you're right, Chair, not to close it. Being on the health committee as well, this has come up on many occasions and we need to look closely at it.

[29] **Bethan Jenkins:** Okay. So, we'll take those few action points forward. Okay. Diolch yn fawr.

[30] Symudwn ymlaen, felly, i ddeiseb P-04-553, Ymchwiliad llawn ac annibynnol i risgiau iechyd sy'n gysylltiedig â thechnolegau diwifr a ffonau symudol yng Nghymru, gan gynnwys yr holl ysgolion. Mae Cymru Sofren wedi rhoi'r ddeiseb yma gerbron ac, eto, rydym wedi gwneud bach o waith ar y deiseb hwn. A oes gan aelodau'r pwyllgor unrhyw sylwadau ynglŷn â sut i gymryd y mater yma ymhellach? Rydym wedi cael lot o ymchwil ychwanegol gan y deisebwyr ac rydym yn ddiolchgar iawn iddyn nhw am hynny, ac mae'n help i ni gael gwybodaeth mor gynhwysfawr. Felly, Gwyn, Russell, unrhyw sylwadau?

We move on, therefore, to a petition P-04-553, A full and independent investigation into the health risks of wireless and mobile phone technologies in Wales, including all schools. Sovereign Wales have submitted this petition and, again, we have done a little bit of work on this petition. Do committee members have any comments on how to take this matter forward? We've had a great deal of additional research from the petitioners and we're very grateful to them for that, and it helps us to have such comprehensive information. So, Gwyn, Russell, any comments?

[31] **Russell George:** We've written to the Minister on this, on one occasion, and provided evidence on this in the past—that the petitioners provided to the Minister—haven't we?

[32] **Mr George:** We wrote to, I think it was Ofcom, and to the Minister. We've had responses. I think what was agreed the last time the committee considered it was that the committee was looking for the petitioner to supply information of the sort he provided, and that the committee agreed that, once that was to hand, we'd then write back to the Minister with that information, and also to Ofcom.

[33] **Russell George:** Actually, we did have quite a detailed response from Ofcom, if I remember, on this. But, if that's the case then, and if we've asked the petitioner specifically to provide additional information, then we should provide that to the Minister and perhaps Ofcom, if we've made a commitment to do that in the past.

[34] **Gwyn R. Price:** There is a lot of research going on, as it says in the petitioner's evidence here, and I agree with Russell George that we should write to the Minister again with this additional information and wait for his reply.

[35] **Bethan Jenkins:** I think the additional question we need to ask the Welsh Government as well is whether the Public Health England Centre for Radiation, Chemical and Environmental Hazards takes account of evidence from within Wales in providing advice to the Welsh Government. So, if we can add that to the letter, that would be useful as well.

[36] Symudwn ymlaen felly at ddeiseb P-04-586, Holl staff GIG Cymru i gael eu talu ar y gyfradd Cyflog Byw o £7.65 yr awr o leiaf. Eto, rydym wedi bod yn edrych ar hyn

We move on therefore to petition P-04-586 All NHS Wales staff to be Paid at Least the Hourly Living Wage Rate of £7.65. Again, we have been looking at this since September

ers Medi 2014. A oes unrhyw sylwadau ar hyn? Rwy'n credu bod y deisebwyr yn weddol hapus gyda beth sydd wedi digwydd.

2014. Are there any comments on this? I think the petitioners are quite happy with what's happened.

[37] **Russell George:** Yes, Chair. To me, it looks like the petitioner has indicated that this has been resolved and they're happy with the outcome. So, on that basis, I move that we close the petition.

[38] **Gwyn R. Price:** I agree.

[39] **Bethan Jenkins:** Okay.

[40] Diolch yn fawr. Gallwn rhoi hynny lawr ar gyfer unrhyw adroddiad sydd yn dweud beth sydd wedi bod yn llwyddiannus i'r Pwyllgor Deisebau, gan ein bod weithiau yn trafod deisebau am gryn amser cyn i ni ddod i unrhyw fath o lwyddiant. Felly, caewn y ddeiseb honno.

Thank you very much. We can put that down for any report that states what has been successful for the Petitions Committee, because we do sometimes discuss petitions for a great deal of time before we come to any kind of successful outcome. So, we'll close that petition.

[41] Symudwn ymlaen felly i P-04-601, Gwaharddiad Arfaethedig ar Ddefnyddio e-sigaréts Mewn Mannau Cyhoeddus. Nid wyf yn gwybod amdanoch chi fel Aelodau Cynulliad, ond rwyf i wedi cael lot o e-byst ynglŷn â'r mater yma. Mae lot o bobl yn teimlo'n gryf iawn am y peth. Wrth gwrs, mae cyfathrebu ar y mater wedi digwydd gyda'r Gweinidog a'r deisebwr, ond beth ydych chi'n meddwl sy'n bwysig i ni fynd ymlaen ag e nawr fel Aelodau? Beth ydych chi'n credu sydd yn bwysig i ni ei wneud nawr?

We move on therefore to P-04-601, Proposed Ban on the Use of e-cigarettes in Public Places. I do not know about you as Assembly Members, but I've had a great many e-mails about his issue. Many people feel very strongly about the matter. Of course, we have had communications on this matter from the Minister and from the petitioner, but what do you think is important for us to take forward now as Members? What do you think is important for us to do now?

[42] **Russell George:** Are we aware—. I assume this is an issue that the Health and Social Care Committee are looking at. I don't know that, but I would've thought this is a big subject area. So, I think we should at least—. I don't want to duplicate work, but I think we should certainly refer the matter to them, and I think we should also, of course, ask the Minister for his views on the petitioner's additional comments since the last meeting as well.

09:15

[43] **Bethan Jenkins:** Yes, I believe that it's going to be considered as part of the public health Bill, which is currently expected to be published before the summer recess. So, I wouldn't want us to totally move away from it, because it could be some time. So, I agree with you: if we write to the Minister on the petitioner's updated comments, and also flag it up with the health committee, that should suffice.

[44] **Russell George:** I assume the health committee is scrutinising the Bill at this time, or coming up to Easter recess.

[45] **Mr George:** The Bill hasn't been introduced yet. There was a White Paper, which indicated that banning e-cigarettes was going to be part of the Bill. According to the legislative timetable, the Bill's going to be introduced before the summer recess, but, obviously, when exactly it'll come in, we're not sure. When it does, it's a matter for the

Business Committee first, but it'll almost certainly go to the health and committee, I would have thought.

[46] **Russell George:** I'm just wondering whether the health committee have taken some evidence on it. I don't know, but—

[47] **Mr George:** That I'm not sure of.

[48] **Russell George:** But if we write sooner than later, then obviously that can feed in to their process, can't it?

[49] **Bethan Jenkins:** I think, having read the petitioner's evidence back to us, we should probably flag up to the committee what's happened in Scotland, when they had a round-table discussion on it, and the Government actually changed their thinking as a result. I think that their view is that, perhaps, the Welsh Minister isn't listening as much as he could be at the moment. So, I hope that we can rectify that situation. Yes? Okay.

[50] Felly, diolch am hynny.

So, thank you for that.

[51] Symudwn ymlaen i'r ddeiseb ar helpu babanod 22 wythnos oed i oroesi. Mae'r ddeiseb yn galw ar y Cynulliad i annog Llywodraeth Cymru i newid y canllawiau, fel bod babanod sy'n cael eu geni ar ôl 22 wythnos, ac sy'n dangos arwyddion o fywyd, yn cael y gofal meddygol priodol. Os yw pobl wedi bod yn darllen stwff am y ddeiseb yma, mae'n dangos faint mae'r deisebwr yn poeni am yr achos yma, yn sgil ei phrofiad personol hi.

We'll move on to the petition on helping babies born at 22 weeks to survive. This petition calls on the National Assembly for Wales to urge the Welsh Government to change the guidelines, so that babies born after 22 weeks, and who show signs of life, are given the appropriate medical care. If people have been reading the material about this petition, it shows how much the petitioner is concerned about this case, as a result of her own personal experience.

[52] Mae llythyr y Gweinidog rydym wedi ei dderbyn yn cynnwys cynnig i'r deisebydd i gwrdd ag un o uwch-swyddogion ieuchyd Llywodraeth Cymru, ac rydym yn deall bod swyddogion y Llywodraeth wedi trefnu i'r cyfarfod hwnnw ddigwydd ar 18 Chwefror, ond nid ydym wedi cael unrhyw fath o gadarnhad gan y deisebwr fod hynny wedi digwydd. Felly, ar hyn o bryd, beth ydych chi'n ei feddwl y dylem ei wneud, yng nghyd-destun y ffaith nad ydym wedi clywed ynglŷn â sut mae'r cyfarfod hwnnw wedi mynd?

The Minister's letter that we have received includes an offer for the petitioner to meet a senior Welsh Government health official, and we understand that Government officials have arranged for that meeting to happen on 18 February, but we haven't had any sort of confirmation from the petitioner that that has happened. So, just at the moment, what do you think we should do, in the context of the fact that we haven't heard about how that meeting has gone?

[53] **Russell George:** Chair, I've taken a particular interest in this petition, after speaking to the petitioner, when she came to speak to Members, on the hand-in of the petition, and her family. I think it's good news that there's been this meeting between herself and the family, and the Government officials. My opinion would be that we don't do anything until we find out what's happened at that meeting. Let's hope it's been a positive meeting. So, certainly, I would like to wait till we hear from the petitioner, either if we need to write to the petitioner or wait for the petitioner to respond to us on the outcome of that meeting, and then let's bring her back to a further meeting, to discuss then.

[54] **Gwyn R. Price:** Yes, I fully agree, because the eighteenth, obviously, was only a

couple of days ago, and I quite agree with Russell that we should wait to see the outcome of the meeting, and then take it further after that if we need to.

[55] **Bethan Jenkins:** Grêt. Diolch. Mae hynny'n glir iawn ynglŷn â sut rydym yn cymryd hynny ymlaen. **Bethan Jenkins:** Great. Thank you for that. That's very clear about how we should take this matter forward.

[56] Felly, fe wnawn ni symud ymlaen i'r ddeiseb nesaf, sydd yn sôn am ymchwiliad mewn i'r system iechyd yng Nghymru. Rydym wedi cael y ddeiseb yma ar 9 Rhagfyr, ac mae wedi casglu 146 o lofnodion ar-lein. Rydym wedi ystyried y ddeiseb ochr yn ochr â gohebiaeth gan y Gweinidog iechyd, ac mae sylwadau gan y deisebydd wedi dod atom ni. A oes unrhyw beth rydym eisiau ei wneud ymhellach gyda'r ddeiseb yma? Beth ydych yn ei feddwl? So, we'll move on to the next petition, which is about an inquiry into the Welsh NHS. We received this petition on 9 December, and it had collected 146 online signatures. We considered the petition side by side with correspondence from the Minister for Health and Social Services, and comments from the petitioner have been received. Is there anything that we wish to do further to this petition? What do you think?

[57] **Russell George:** I'm not quite sure how long we've given the petitioner to respond, but it looks like, by the timeline, that we're still waiting for him to respond. It's not been that long since we've sent the details from the Minister's letter. So, if the petitioner needs a prompting to respond to us, then I think that's what we should do at this stage.

[58] **Bethan Jenkins:** I've just heard the clerk whisper and say he hasn't had much time yet, so we'll allow for that to happen first, yes?

[59] **Russell George:** Yes.

[60] **Gwyn R. Price:** I think the line there—seek the petitioner's views on the Minister's letter—is sufficient to go on at this moment in time, Chair.

[61] **Bethan Jenkins:** Okay, brilliant. If we move forward, then, to the fracking petition, which we know has come in from Gareth_Clubb, Cardiff Central. Clearly, this has been an issue that has animated quite a lot of Assembly Members. We've had debates in the last few weeks. We understand the Minister for Natural Resources has said, and I quote:

[62] 'As a first step, I will be writing to all local planning authorities requiring them to inform me of any application to frack, and therefore imposing a moratorium on fracking in Wales.'

[63] This statement appears to have been made after he wrote to the committee about this petition. So, I just wanted to tell you that, in the context of where we should potentially go. I know that the petitioner wrote to us, saying we could look at other forms of unconventional gas, considering the Government's view on fracking, but I wonder whether we should still write to the Minister to confirm that, because that quote I just read out was from the media, so we haven't got anything on record, as this committee, with him having said that. So, I just wanted to know if you had any additional comments as well.

[64] **Russell George:** I agree with that action—write to the Minister—because, I agree with you, if we read it in the press, it's not good enough. So, let's write to the Minister. *[Laughter.]*

[65] **Gwyn R. Price:** I obviously don't read the press that much—

[66] **Russell George:** Although, I'm not suggesting the press ever print anything that might be inaccurate.

[67] **Bethan Jenkins:** No, never.

[68] **Russell George:** I think, for the record, we should write to the Minister to get that because—

[69] **Gwyn R. Price:** I fully concur with that, Chair.

[70] **Bethan Jenkins:** I think that would be sufficient for now. So, we move on to the next petition.

[71] Yr un nesaf—sori, rwy'n symud rhwng Cymraeg a Saesneg; mae e jest yn rhywbeth rwyf wedi penderfynu ei wneud heddiw—yw Rhoi'r Gorau i Ffatrioedd Ffermio Gwartheg Godro yng Nghymru. Mae hyn, eto, wedi bod yn ddeiseb sydd wedi bod gyda ni am sbel, ac rwy'n credu bod y deisebwyr yn teimlo'n gryf iawn am yr hyn y maen nhw'n deisebu ar ei gyfer. Eto i gyd, mae'n bwysig ein bod ni'n cymryd pob ochr mewn i bersbectif, ac rwyf jest eisiau gwybod sut rydych chi'n credu nawr y dylem ni symud ymlaen gyda hyn. Rwy'n credu maen nhw eisiau edrych ar sut mae gwartheg yn y sector yma yn dioddef. A ydy hyn yn rhywbeth yr ydym ni'n gallu gwneud mwy ar y pwyllgor amdano, neu a ydym ni wedi dod i ben y daith? Beth yw eich barn chi?

The next one—sorry that I'm moving between Welsh and English; it's just something that I've decided to do today—is Stop Factory Dairy Farming in Wales. Again, this has been a petition that we've considered for a while, and I think the petitioners feel very strongly about what they're petitioning for. Again, it's important that we take every side into perspective, and I just want to know, how you think we should move forward with this now. I think they want to look at how cattle in this sector are suffering. Is this something that we can do more about on this committee, or have we come to the end of the journey? What is your opinion?

[72] **Russell George:** I think, Chair, that we may have come to the end of our journey on this particular petition. There could be possible petitions in the future that the petitioner might want to raise with us, but I don't feel that strongly. Maybe Members have got different views, but I perhaps feel that this petition has reached its end. It may well be that the petitioner will come back with another petition, but that's my initial feeling. I'm not strong on that; I'm open to Members' views.

[73] **Gwyn R. Price:** Yes, Chair, I do feel that both sides seem to have come to some sort of an agreement on this, and so at this moment in time, I support Russell that perhaps we could close it.

[74] **Bethan Jenkins:** I know that they've written back, and they've said that they've got an issue with the factory dairy farming concept, but it's what we can do as a committee now that the Minister has given his view. So, I would support closing it at this stage, but I'm happy, whilst saying to close it, to send the additional comment to the Minister for closing comments.

[75] **Russell George:** That's fine.

[76] **Bethan Jenkins:** Symudwn ymlaen at y ddeiseb nesaf—rwy'n gobeithio y bydd Gwyn Price yn gallu ein helpu ni ar y pethau sy'n digwydd yn lleol—sef, Achub Ffordd

Bethan Jenkins: We move on to the next petition—I hope that Gwyn Price will be able to help us on these local issues—which is, Save the Cwmcarn Forest Drive from

Goedwig Cwmcarn Rhag Cael ei Chau am Gyfnod Amhenodol neu'n Barhaol. Rydym ni wedi edrych ar hyn yn y gorffennol, a nawr mae'r grŵp lleol wedi'i sefydlu fel rhyw fath o grŵp ymgyrchol sydd yn erbyn hyn yn digwydd. Rydym ni wedi gwneud tipyn bach o waith ar hyn yn barod, ond tybed, yn sgil yr hyn rydym ni wedi ei glywed gan y deisebwyr, beth yw eich barn chi ynglŷn â symud ymlaen nawr.

Indefinite or Permanent Closure. We've looked at this in the past, and now the local group has been established as some kind of campaign group, which is against this happening. We've undertaken a little bit of work on this already, but I wonder, following what we've heard the petitioners, what your opinion is on how we move forward now.

[77] **Gwyn R. Price:** Well, Chair, thank you very much. I attended a public meeting in Cwmcarn, regarding Cwmcarn forest drive. They're very, very concerned about the indefinite closure. Really, they're very concerned that action hasn't started to address the situation at Cwmcarn forest drive, and I want to put it on record that all the facilities—the cafe and a lot of the walks—are still open. So, I want to make sure that Cwmcarn forest drive is open for business. But, in the future, I think we should be writing to the Minister and asking him to work very closely with Cwmcarn forest drive and the action committee that's been set up there, because I am concerned that none of the work, apparently, has started as of this date. So, I'd like to put that on record, Chair.

[78] **Bethan Jenkins:** Thank you very much. That's very useful. Sorry, I missed a petition. So, we'll finish this discussion first and then we'll go back to the other one. Russell, any comments?

[79] **Russell George:** No, I'd take Gwyn's steer on this, Chair.

[80] **Bethan Jenkins:** Okay, then. So, if we action the points that Gwyn Price has said then we should be good to go. So, sorry, we'll go back to the other petition, which is Reinstate funding for Skomer Island's Guillemot monitoring, which we received on 23 September 2014. The background to this is that we considered it last on 11 November. We sought further comments from the petitioner and the petitioner's comments have been received and are available in your packs. So, I wondered whether you had any views as to the way forward. There were some issues within the petitioner's comments that we could look at.

[81] **Russell George:** The petitioner has provided some details. From our point of view, Chair, I think we should write to the Minister and present the petitioner's comments and ask him to make comment to us on those.

[82] **Gwyn R. Price:** I agree.

[83] **Bethan Jenkins:** Fine. So, now that we're back to the proper proceedings—. I just wanted to throw that in to see if you're all awake this morning. [*Laughter.*]

[84] So, we move on to education and to Keep Further Education in the Public Sector. So, this was calling upon the National Assembly to urge the Welsh Government to ensure further education is retained within the public sector. There were issues there with regard to national arrangements in FE, in terms of pay scales and with regard to the all-Wales contract, which I've been closely involved with. But, we have had correspondence from the petitioners, saying that they have nothing further to add. So, personally, I would propose to close the petition, but I'm willing to listen to any comments if you have a different view.

[85] **Gwyn R. Price:** Yes, I agree with closing the petition, but I just want to put on record that Crosskeys college is in my constituency and I hope that all the correspondence on both sides now has been exhausted and perhaps we can go on from here and make it a fruitful

conclusion.

[86] **Russell George:** Agreed.

[87] **Bethan Jenkins:** Great. Thanks very much. So, the next petition that we have is Review the School Admissions Code. Again, we've had quite a comprehensive response, actually, from the Minister for Education and Skills, going through the petitioners' points, point by point. So, again, would Members have a view on what we do now?

[88] **Russell George:** I notice we haven't had a response from the petitioner. How long has it been since we last wrote to—

[89] **Mr George:** To explain, we wrote to the Minister and the Welsh Local Government Association about this, and we were waiting for both responses before putting it back on the agenda. We haven't had a response from the WLGA, therefore, the response coming back here was delayed. There has been a long delay between the Minister's letter and your consideration of it; so, apologies for that. But we haven't had a response from the petitioner; they haven't themselves been engaging with us over that intervening period.

[90] **Russell George:** If that's the case, Chair, then I suggest we close the petition on the basis that we have had a very comprehensive reply from the Minister. If the petitioner isn't active in this now, I move that we close the petition.

[91] **Gwyn R. Price:** I agree.

[92] **Bethan Jenkins:** Fab. Okay, we'll do that then. So, that was the end of the education sector petitions. If we move now, it's on to public services. A long-standing petition that we've had is Stop Sexism In Domestic Abuse. Again, we've had numerous correspondence on this issue with the petitioners. We did, at the last meeting on 20 January, agree to ask the Minister for Public Services for his views on the petitioners' comments, drawing out a number of points made during the discussion that we had, but we haven't yet received a response from the Minister. It's just whether Members think it's pertinent to wait for that particular response before, as it is my view that we should, moving to close, because I genuinely don't know where we can take it any more because we have had quite a protracted discussion on the issue.

[93] **Russell George:** If we're waiting for the Minister's response, I just think we should keep all this on hold and bring it back to committee when we've had that response.

[94] **Bethan Jenkins:** Okay. Anything else?

[95] **Gwyn R. Price:** I agree.

[96] **Bethan Jenkins:** We'll wait. Okay. So, the next petition is on economy, science and transport, and it's No to Junction 41 closure. I'll declare an interest as Chair that I've been heavily involved in this campaign.

09:30

[97] We have had correspondence from the petitioner and we've had additional correspondence from the petitioner, if you've seen it; that came late yesterday. Obviously, having been involved, I know that it's something that local people are very passionate about, considering the fact that the trial closure is affecting the people of Port Talbot significantly badly because of the effect on the smaller roads around the town. The questions that the petitioners raised with regard to data collection—about the effect of the new 50 mph average

speed cameras westbound—are very pertinent, but also I did write to the Minister asking if she could release minutes of the meetings that she has with traders, the community rep and the Welsh Government, and that was refused. So, I think the petitioners feel a bit frustrated with the lack of openness in this particular discussion, so I wonder if you have views as to whether we should take these views back to the Minister so that, hopefully, she can respond in a more positive way. I'm not sure.

[98] **Russell George:** I'm happy to take your steer, Chair, as you've been involved, but if, from your involvement, you're saying that the people involved and campaigners feel that they've not had a response, and that's our role, and if you're suggesting that we write to the Minister for a fuller reply, perhaps, then I'm happy to agree with you.

[99] **Bethan Jenkins:** We have some clear questions from the petitioners with regard to, as I said, relevant data with regard to the effect on business and with regard to the fact that they believe that they would like to understand how the average speed cameras have affected the flow, but they don't believe that they can understand the flow until the slip road is reopened. So, those are the things we can write about.

[100] **Russell George:** Let's write on those points, then.

[101] **Bethan Jenkins:** Okay. Sorry, I indulged myself there a bit. Moving on to Caernarfon Heritage Centre, we've again discussed this quite a bit and we know that we have actually opened up a door for the petitioners to discuss this matter with Cadw and officials in their area. I just wonder if there's anything else that you think can be done at this stage.

[102] **Russell George:** I think we've probably exhausted our role, and our role has been successful in that we've opened the door to the petitioners to have a direct discussion with the local authority and Cadw. So, I think on that basis it's probably time to close the petition, so I move that, Chair.

[103] **Bethan Jenkins:** Okay. Anything to add?

[104] **Gwyn R. Price:** I support that.

[105] **Bethan Jenkins:** The only thing I probably would add is that we can close it, but, if we send a letter to all the Assembly Members for North Wales, then they could potentially pick up the issue, if they so wished, and help then the petitioners to meet with Cadw officials if they want to—but to write to all the AMs in the North Wales region.

[106] **Russell George:** Yes, I'm happy with that, Chair.

[107] **Bethan Jenkins:** Okay, so we move to close.

[108] The next petition is Revive disused railway lines for leisure. This was put in by Albert Fox and was considered on 17 June: the Welsh Government should be looking into the hundreds of miles of disused railway lines that were axed under Beeching and transforming them into high-quality cycle or walkways. It's something that the petitioner feels would help the Welsh economy. Recently, you will see that many of us have been involved with trying to reopen the Rhondda tunnel for cycling, so perhaps, if that tunnel is successful, we can open up others. But I wonder whether there are possible actions that emanate from this particular petition.

[109] We could write to Sustrans, because I know that they have an issue with looking at reopening tunnels for cycling use, but also the Active Travel (Wales) Act 2013 placed a requirement on local authorities to continuously improve facilities and routes for walkers, so

we could be writing to the Minister to ask for an update as to what she's doing. Is it Edwina Hart on this?

[110] **Mr George:** Yes.

[111] **Bethan Jenkins:** What she's doing to encourage local authorities to put forward that particular Act. Is that something that you—

[112] **Russell George:** I think, Chair, that's a good suggestion. I think that we could ask the Minister whether the Act you just mentioned actually provides that mechanism for addressing this issue. So, I think we should do that, Chair.

[113] **Gwyn R. Price:** I fully support that.

[114] **Bethan Jenkins:** Okay. So, Funding for the Cardi Bach Coastal Bus Service. We had this on 23 September, calling on the Welsh National Assembly

[115] 'to urge the Welsh Government to re-instate the funding of the Cardi Bach coastal bus service in Ceredigion.'

[116] Are there any comments on this? I know that they've had a 12-month reprieve. So, do you want to keep it open and keep a watching brief, or do you want to close it? How do you feel we should move forward?

[117] **Russell George:** I think, Chair, that we've probably reached what we can do as a committee, but as perhaps the issue is developed then, obviously, the petitioner has got a further avenue to bring forward a further petition in line with what's happened, if that's what they feel, but I think, for this particular petition, as it's laid to us, we've done all we can. So, I'd move to close on that basis.

[118] **Gwyn R. Price:** I agree there with Russell. Really, in a year's time, perhaps, if anything does develop, they could come back and we'll address it again then.

[119] **Russell George:** The petitioners could come back then, yes.

[120] **Bethan Jenkins:** Okay. Thank you very much, then. We'll close that petition. We're getting through them today.

[121] Moving on to culture, sport and tourism, and Save Cardiff Coal Exchange, again, having sat on this committee for some time, we have discussed this at length, and rightly so, because it is an iconic building and the petitioners are very concerned about the future of the building and what will happen. We have written on many occasions to the leader of Cardiff council, to the Deputy Minister for culture, Vaughan Gething and Stephen Doughty. We still haven't managed to get a visit to the coal exchange, however, but I wonder if you think there are clear outcomes or actions we can take at this particular juncture.

[122] **Russell George:** Let's ask the county council for an update on the present position. I think that's what we should do. You mentioned about a possible visit, but I just feel that we've exhausted that for the time being. Maybe, if the petition pursues and we still think it's relevant, we can pursue that again, but I think we should write to Cardiff county council in the first instance and also ask the Minister just to keep us updated on developments from that perspective.

[123] **Gwyn R. Price:** Yes, Chair, I think that is the way forward on both those accounts.

[124] **Bethan Jenkins:** Okay, and I think we should reiterate always to the petitioner that we have tried to get a visit, because, where we have visited other sites, it's been really valuable, but it has proved difficult. So, we'll keep that sort of hanging there until we get more positive feedback from Cardiff council. Thank you.

[125] The communities and tackling poverty theme: so, the next petition is Call on the Welsh Government to Investigate the Residential Leasehold System in Wales. Again, I've been declaring an interest; I've been involved with the campaigners in this particular instance, although it has been a very localised issue, which they've expanded into a national petition. So, we considered it on 25 November and we've done various actions and we've had responses from the Minister and from the petitioners respectively and we have been told that the recourse for anybody would be to go through the leasehold valuation tribunal. Do we believe that we should close it or should we seek comments from the petitioner about what the Minister has said before moving to close the petition? Because I just happen to know that, locally, it still hasn't been resolved, but whether, you know—. I think they would appreciate to comment on what the Minister has to say before we close it.

[126] **Russell George:** Well, I was going to suggest we close it, but, given what you've said, if you're aware of that, then I would agree: let's give them the opportunity to respond.

[127] **Bethan Jenkins:** I think we give them the opportunity and then move to close.

[128] **Russell George:** Then we can decide if we should close the petition, yes.

[129] **Gwyn R. Price:** I think that's the way forward.

[130] **Bethan Jenkins:** Okay. Fine. The next one is on finance and Government business, which is Reinstating Funding to the Real Opportunities Project. So, this is calling

[131] 'on the National Assembly for Wales to urge the Welsh Government to reinstate funding to the Real Opportunities project previously funded by the European Social Fund in Wales, or some new similar project'.

[132] So, this has come from Llanelli. Do Members have any particular views as to the way forward? No. Should we inform the petitioner of the Minister's advice that they should contact the Welsh European Funding Office directly and seek comments from the petitioner before moving to close the petition, because the Minister's clearly said that she hasn't got direct responsibility in this area?

[133] **Gwyn R. Price:** Yes, I think that is the way forward. I endorse that.

[134] **Bethan Jenkins:** Okay, great. So, that has brought us to the end of the discussion on the petitions, and I'm glad that we've managed to have a comprehensive discussion on all of them. We just want to make sure that Members are aware that there will be a petition presentation next week at 1 o'clock on a petition to improve the provision of disabled-friendly housing in Wales, just for you to note. Are there any other issues before I move to close the meeting? No. Diolch yn fawr—

[135] **Russell George:** Thank you, Chair, for your stewardship and chairmanship today.

[136] **Bethan Jenkins:** Except one little blip, and that was it. There we are; we're all human.

[137] Diolch yn fawr iawn a diolch, Gwyn, Thank you very much and thank you, Gwyn, am eich cyfraniad heddiw a diolch yn fawr i for your contribution today and thanks to

bawb.

everyone.

[138] **Gwyn R. Price:** Thank you, Chair.

Daeth y cyfarfod i ben am 09:40.
The meeting ended at 09:40.