

William Powell AM
Chair
Petitions Committee
National Assembly for Wales
Cardiff Bay
CF99 1NA

Your ref: P-04-635
Our ref: PO1016/RB/MD/CC

14 May 2015

Dear William

P04-636 Petition Title: James Bond at the Welsh Assembly

Thank you for your letter of 11 May about this petition and for the opportunity to comment prior to the Committee's formal consideration of the matter.

I note in particular the wording of the petition which asks me to reverse my decision to refuse filming of James Bond scenes in the Assembly. The reconnaissance of the estate by those involved in the making of the film took place in July 2014 and the decision was made at that point, not more recently as the media coverage might have implied. I understand that the film is due to be released this autumn.

In order to provide the Petitions Committee with the complete picture about the decision making process, I attach my statement of 17 March 2015, together with my response to a Written Assembly Question. A key point is that this decision was entirely consistent with the approach that has been taken since the Senedd opened in 2006.

I am sure you will appreciate that, when I am asked to consider such requests, I have to think very carefully about the potential disruption to

Croesewir gohebiaeth yn y Gymraeg a'r Saesneg/We welcome correspondence in both English and Welsh



Llywydd
Presiding Officer

Assembly business. In this case, the interest was only in filming in the Siambr, not other parts of the Senedd. As I explained in my statement, the risk of permitting a production of this size and its likely interference with the important work that is undertaken in the Siambr was too great. That said, we have an excellent record of working in partnership with the creative industries in Wales which has enabled us to showcase other parts of the Senedd very successfully, without interference to Plenary and Committee business. We will continue to take up those opportunities to promote our landmark building and our work as a legislature.

I hope you will find the content of this letter helpful. Should you require any further information, please let me know.

Yours sincerely

Dame Rosemary Butler AM
Presiding Officer

Statement from the Presiding Officer

17/03/2015

Statement from Dame Rosemary Butler AM, Presiding Officer, in response to James Bond filming in the Senedd Siambr

"There has been much criticism of my decision not to allow a scene from the forthcoming James Bond film to be filmed in the Senedd Siambr. I did not take this decision lightly when it was put to me. I fully recognise the prestige and reach of the James Bond franchise and I am enthusiastic about the Senedd continuing to play its part in supporting Wales' creative industries.

"Such decisions are my responsibility as Presiding Officer. When I am asked to make a decision I have to weigh up the factors involved in each request. In this case, as well as recognising the potential advantages, I also considered the probable scale of what was being proposed and the likely impact on the Siambr given the number of people and amount of equipment involved in a production of this type, and the adjustments to the Siambr which would have been involved. We offered other areas of the Senedd but this was not taken up.

"On balance, the risk to the Siambr and potential for disruption to business was too great. As Presiding Officer I believe that the Senedd Siambr's primary function needs to be safeguarded and maintained above all else, so the use of the Siambr has to be treated differently to rest of the Assembly's estate. This is not new; allowing such filming in the Siambr would have been a departure from the practice that has been in place since the Senedd was opened.

"I am disappointed that the discussion has portrayed the Assembly as a body that is not open to do business with the creative industries. We have hosted a number of dramatic productions such as Doctor Who, Sherlock, Caerdydd and Sky Arts Portrait Artist of the Year programme. We proactively seek out productions that could be interested in locating some of their activity on the Assembly estate.

"Clearly opinions differ about whether this filming should have been allowed. I stand by my decision. It is the responsibility of the Presiding Officer to take a considered, balanced decision, having weighed up all relevant factors and that is what I did."



**WRITTEN ASSEMBLY QUESTION
TABLED ON 19 MARCH 2015
FOR ANSWER BY THE ASSEMBLY COMMISSION
ON 26 MARCH 2015**

Darren Millar (Clwyd West): Will the Commission publish details of its policy in relation to requests to film drama productions in the Siambr, including the date on which the policy was first agreed by the Commission; the dates of any reviews thereafter, and copies of the minutes of meetings in which the policy was discussed by the Commission? (WAQ68511)

Rosemary Butler AM on behalf of the Assembly Commission:

Guidelines for the use of the Senedd by the media were first put in place by the former House Committee in 2006/07. Since then, the Commission's policy and approach has remained consistent and is currently set out in operational guidance used by Commission staff. The guidance was reviewed last year.

Based on that guidance, the practice throughout the Third and Fourth Assemblies has been that the majority of requests, for example to film or photograph from the public gallery or in public areas of the building, have been delegated to and operated by the Assembly's media team. The guiding principle has been that no media operation should interfere with the proper conduct of Assembly business. Requests with the potential to impact on Assembly business in the Siambr or elsewhere in the Senedd have been dealt with on a case by case basis by the Presiding Officer.

The relevant extract from the guidance on the Siambr says:

- Express permission must be granted by the Presiding Officer, through the Media Relations Team, prior to any media operations in the Siambr;
- Broadcasters (including pass-holders) must be accompanied by Assembly Commission staff at all times whilst filming in the Siambr;
- On business days, filming/photography/recording will normally not be allowed in the Siambr for security reasons but bids may be made and the full circumstances will be considered;
- On non-business days, permission for media operations will normally be granted. Non-pass holders will be accompanied for the duration of their visit. Broadcasters will be informed of any special restrictions on the area and must comply with those restrictions;
- Requests for non-Assembly related media operations in the Siambr, e.g. drama productions, would not normally be allowed but the Presiding Officer may grant permission at her discretion. Applications should be made through the Media Relations Office.