

Ken Skates AC / AM
Y Dirprwy Weinidog Diwylliant, Chwaraeon a Thwristiaeth
Deputy Minister for Culture, Sport and Tourism



Llywodraeth Cymru
Welsh Government

Ein cyf/Our ref KS/01381/15
William Powell AM
Assembly Member for Mid & West Wales
Chair - Petitions Committee
Ty Hywel
Cardiff Bay
Cardiff
CF99 1NA

committeebusiness@Wales.gsi.gov.uk

 November 2015

Dear William,

Thank you for your letter of 16 November seeking my views on the comments of the Chair of the Royal Commission on the Ancient and Historical Monuments of Wales and the Welsh Language Commissioner on the aims of the Mynyddoedd Pawb petition.

During its scrutiny of the Historic Environment (Wales) Bill, the Communities, Equality and Local Government Committee gave thorough consideration to the recognition and protection of Welsh place names and received evidence from the Welsh Place-name Society and the Welsh Language Commissioner. In its report, the committee recommended that historic place names should be referenced in Wales' historic environment records.

I accepted the committee's recommendation and have tabled amendments to the Bill that will place a duty on the Welsh Ministers to create and maintain a list of historic place names in Wales and require historic environment records to provide access to that list. The committee will meet to consider the Stage 2 amendments to the Bill on 26 November.

The historic environment records are key sources of information about historic places and assets. Referencing historic place names in those records would raise awareness of their value and importance by providing better public access to information about them. It would also give local authorities a means to obtain information on historic place names when evaluating development applications and requests for changes to property names.

Bae Caerdydd • Cardiff Bay
Caerdydd • Cardiff
CF99 1NA

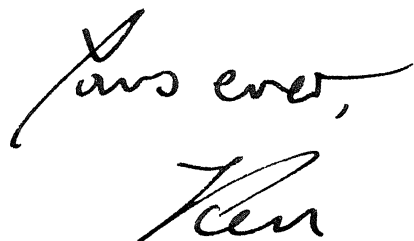
English Enquiry Line 0300 0603300
Llinell Ymholiadau Cymraeg 0300 0604400
Correspondence.Ken.Skates@wales.gsi.gov.uk

Rydym yn croesawu derbyn gohebiaeth yn Gymraeg. Byddwn yn ateb gohebiaeth a dderbynnir yn Gymraeg yn Gymraeg ac ni fydd gohebu yn Gymraeg yn arwain at oedi.

We welcome receiving correspondence in Welsh. Any correspondence received in Welsh will be answered in Welsh and corresponding in Welsh will not lead to a delay in responding.

My officials have explored a number of legislative options for the protection of place names. In many cases, an apparent change only involves the adoption of a business or other name alongside a historic place name that continues to appear on Ordnance Survey mapping and in the Royal Mail's official address database. To protect historic place names by formally controlling all changes would require a costly and complex consent system with procedures for application, enforcement and appeal, as well as a body to manage it. Enforcement under such a system would be challenging, and perhaps unworkable.

I have met with the Minister for Natural Resources to consider aspects of the Bill in relation to the planning system and my officials have had discussions on historic place names with their counterparts in the Planning Division. I also recently had a meeting with the First Minister where we considered the linguistic and cultural importance of historic place names. The amendments that I have tabled will raise public awareness of the rich legacy of place names in Wales and will, in turn, support the Welsh language, which falls into the First Minister's portfolio.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Ken Skates', written in a cursive style.

Ken Skates AC / AM

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