

Concise Minutes – Petitions Committee

Meeting Venue:

Senedd

Meeting date: Tuesday, 9 June 2020

Meeting time: 09.00 – 10.10

This meeting can be viewed

on [Senedd TV](#) at:

<http://senedd.tv/en/6339>

Attendance

Category	Names
Assembly Members:	Janet Finch-Saunders MS (Chair) Neil McEvoy MS Jack Sargeant MS Leanne Wood MS
Witnesses:	
Committee Staff:	Graeme Francis (Clerk) Mared Llwyd (Second Clerk) Ross Davies (Deputy Clerk) Samiwel Davies (Legal Adviser)

1 Introduction, apologies, substitutions and declarations of interest

Apologies were received from Michelle Brown MS



2 Covid-19 petitions

2.1 P-05-962 An emergency amendment to extend age of entitlement to additional educational support from 25 to 26 and to define within Government guidance the Covid 19 pandemic as an exceptional circumstance

The Committee considered the petitions for the first time and agreed to:

- write back to the Minister for Education to share the detailed arguments about the sufficiency of Welsh Government guidance presented by the petitioner, and ask specifically whether:
 - in her view, applications to extend existing study placements for young people with learning difficulties due to the Coronavirus pandemic would be likely to meet the 'exceptional circumstances' test;
 - the Government intends to communicate with specialist education settings for young people with learning difficulties to prompt them to consider whether to make such an application for their students; and
- post a message on social media about the action that the Committee is taking on this petition.

3 New petitions

3.1 P-05-947 Make GP letters for Students gratis

The Committee considered the petition for the first time and agreed to await the views of the petitioner on the Minister for Health and Social Services' response before agreeing whether to take further action on the petition.

3.2 P-05-950 Agriculture and Countryside Education for 4-16-year olds in our schools

The Committee considered the petition for the first time and agreed to:

- write back to the Minister for Education to ask what work is being done to develop teaching resources on subjects brought to the attention of the Committee and when these resources will be made available for teachers; and
- await a response from the petitioner to the information provided by the Minister.

3.3 P-05-951 Impose a legal limit on the maximum number of breeding bitches in licensed dog breeding establishments in Wales

The Committee considered the petition for the first time and agreed to write back to the Minister for Environment to:

- ask whether the Welsh Government intends to take forward recommendation 9 of The Animal Welfare (Dog Breeding) (Wales) Regulations 2014 Review (*for further research to determine whether there would be an animal welfare benefit to this*) at the current time, and in what timescale; and
- ask for an update on the planned legislation and whether this issue could be included within the legislation.

3.4 P-05-953 Ban Single Use Plastic Milk Bottles in schools

The Committee considered the petition for the first time and agreed to write back to the Deputy Minister for Housing and Local Government to share the feedback received from the pupils and request a response to their call for the Welsh Government to fund the purchase of a pergal unit for all schools throughout Wales. The Committee praised the children of St Aidan's Church in Wales VA School for their petition.

3.5 P-05-957 “Next Stop St Clears” – Support the bid for a railway station in St Clears

In light of the fact that a final decision will be made by the UK Government as part of their New Stations Fund, the Committee agreed to write to the UK Government to support the bid for a new station in St Clears and to close the petition. The Committee also agreed to thank the petitioner for raising the issue and to express their disappointment that the final decision is not made in Wales.

4 Updates to previous petitions

4.1 P-05-798 Male domestic violence victim support services to be independently run & funded

Neil McEvoy declared the following relevant interest under Standing Order 17.24A:

He used to employ the petitioner and was once involved with legal action with Safer Wales.

The Committee considered further correspondence and agreed to write to the Deputy Minister and Chief Whip to share the concerns expressed by the petitioners and to:

- enquire when the commissioning of support services for male victims of domestic violence will next be reviewed; and
- ask whether a commitment can be given to offering the opportunity for other providers to submit tenders to provide specific services.

Leanne Wood requested to be excluded from further actions related to this petition and for this to be clear in the letter to the Minister.

4.2 P-05-882 Transforming the response for older people experiencing domestic abuse – a call for action

The Committee considered further correspondence and agreed to write to the Older People's Commissioner for Wales to ask her what more that she thinks should be done by the Welsh Government to increase support for older people experiencing domestic abuse.

4.3 P-05-826 Pembrokeshire says NO!! To the closure of Withybush A&E!

The Committee considered further correspondence and agreed to:

- await a response from the petitioner; and

- keep a watching brief on this matter and consider any further updates received during the remainder of this Senedd term.

4.4 P-05-893 Save Our Parks In Wales

In light of the responses now received from both the Welsh Government and the Welsh Local Government Association, including the protection afforded by planning policies and the rejection of ring-fenced funding, the Committee agreed not to take any further action and close the petition.

4.5 P-05-865 Guarantee fully plant-based options on every public sector menu to protect the rights of vegans and for our health, the environment and animals

The Committee considered further correspondence and agreed to write to the Climate Change, Environment and Rural Affairs Committee to ask them to consider the issue of vegan options as part of their review of their report [Rethinking Food in Wales: Public Procurement of Food](#). It agreed to thank the petitioners for raising the issue and close the petition.

4.6 P-05-929 Encouraging the use of “Cymru” and “Cymry” when referring to ourselves in Welsh and English

The Committee considered further correspondence and agreed to close the petition, given that the Minister for International Relations and Welsh Language has stated that she does not support the adoption of a general policy to use these terms, although would support their use as appropriate. The Committee agreed to thank the petitioner for bringing this matter forward.

4.7 P-05-778 Protect the Razor Clams on Llanfairfechan Beach

In light of the continuing closure of the razor clam beds at Llanfairfechan, the research being carried out on behalf of the Welsh Government and the Minister for Environment, Energy and Rural Affairs' commitment that consideration will be given to daily quotas, total allowable catch and closed periods, the Committee agreed that there is little further that could be achieved at this time and to close the petition.

4.8 P-05-803 Our natural world is being poisoned by single use plastics...it's time to introduce a tax!

The Committee considered further correspondence and agreed to write back to the Welsh Government to:

- ask for an overview of all of the actions that they are taking to tackle plastic pollution including polystyrene cups and food containers; and
- ask that the ban be extended to include single use polystyrene.

4.9 P-05-868 Water Safety/Drowning Prevention and the effects of Cold Water Shock to be taught in all Schools in Wales

The Committee considered further correspondence and agreed to write back to the Welsh Government to ask for further information about the development of the All Wales Water Safety Strategy, the timelines from the All Wales Water Safety Group and to urge the Welsh Government to move with pace as this is an issue of public safety.

4.10 P-05-911 Protect Wales' Ancient Yew Trees

In light of the information provided by Welsh Government regarding various ways of affording protection to ancient trees under current planning or protection orders, and the fact that Cadw has decided that scheduling trees as ancient monuments is not appropriate, the Committee agreed that there is little further that can be achieved at this stage and to close the petition.