

*Cyhoeddir y cyfieithiad o fewn 3 i 10 diwrnod  
The translation will be provided within 3 to 10 days*

## **Answers to Questions not reached in Plenary 18/11/2009**

[R] signifies that the Member has declared an interest.

[W] signifies that the question was tabled in Welsh.

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### **Questions to the Minister for Rural Affairs**

#### **'Birds and golf courses: a guide to habitat management'**

**Q8 William Graham:** What discussions has the Minister had regarding the promotion of RSPB and R&A's campaign, 'Birds and golf courses: a guide to habitat management'? OAQ(3)0879(RAF) *Transferred for written answer by the Minister for Environment, Sustainability and Housing.*

**The Minister for Environment, Sustainability and Housing (Jane Davidson):** I understand that that publication has been very recently produced jointly by the RSPB and the Royal and Ancient Golf Club of St Andrews. It highlights good practice for wildlife-friendly management measures on golf courses. As such, it seems usefully to complement the golf tourism toolkit produced by Visit Wales, which includes advice on adopting sustainable approaches to golf course management, including habitat management. As the next step, Welsh Assembly Government officials will consider how we can help to ensure that both guides are effectively promoted to golf course managers in Wales.

### **Organic Farming**

**Q9 Peter Black:** Will the Minister make a statement on the future of organic farming in Wales? OAQ(3)0884(RAF)

**The Minister for Rural Affairs (Elin Jones):** Organic farming now accounts for almost 10 per cent of the agricultural land area in Wales. The Welsh Assembly Government continues to support the sector through the organic farming conversion scheme. In future, as part of the new Glastir scheme, wholly organic farms will be eligible for a 50 per cent reduction on the points required for entry.

### **The Protection of Fisheries**

**Q10 Helen Mary Jones :** Will the Minister make a statement about the protection of fisheries in Wales? OAQ(3)0891(RAF)

**Elin Jones:** I am committed to the protection of all fisheries in Wales through the implementation of proper management measures and employing a sustainable approach to fisheries management. That will safeguard both the fisheries and our aquatic environments for future generations in line with the aims of the Wales fisheries strategy.

## **Rural Communities**

**Q11 Nick Bourne:** Will the Minister make a statement on her priorities to help to strengthen rural communities? OAQ(3)0901(RAF)

**Elin Jones:** The rural development plan is the main mechanism available to me to help to strengthen rural communities. Activities under this going forward will take account of the findings of the deep rural localities report, about which I will shortly be making a statement.

## **The Agriculture Industry**

**Q12 Brynle Williams:** Will the Minister make a statement on the Welsh Assembly Government's priorities for supporting the agriculture industry? OAQ(3)0890(RAF)

**Elin Jones:** I remain committed to delivering the objectives set out in 'One Wales' and working to deliver sustainable farming, forestry, food and fisheries industries to the benefit of Wales and rural communities.

## **Helping Farmers**

**Q13 Paul Davies:** What are the Welsh Assembly Government's priorities for helping farmers in Wales? OAQ(3)0874(RAF)

**Elin Jones:** My strategy, 'Farming, Food and Countryside: Building a Secure Future', sets out a clear vision of Welsh farming being at the heart of a sustainable countryside and profitable rural economy, and being able to meet future challenges and take advantage of the opportunities presented in an increasingly volatile and globalised economy.

## **Animal Welfare**

**Q14 Irene James:** Will the Minister make a statement on animal welfare in Islwyn? OAQ(3)0873(RAF)

**Elin Jones:** I recently spoke at a Welsh Assembly Government animal welfare conference about CAWES, the companion animal welfare enhancement scheme. The companion animal welfare programme, funded by the Welsh Assembly Government, is supporting local authorities and third sector organisations to be proactive in helping local communities through the local animal welfare fora.

## **The Agriculture Industry**

**Q15 Nerys Evans:** Will the Minister make a statement relating to the Welsh Assembly Government's main policies in support of the agriculture industry in Mid and West Wales? OAQ(3)0895(RAF)

**Elin Jones:** I remain committed to delivering the objectives set out in 'One Wales' across Wales and working to deliver sustainable farming, forestry, food and fisheries industries to the benefit of Wales and rural communities.

## **Questions to the Minister for Environment, Sustainability and Housing**

### **Preserving the Natural Environment**

**Q9 Andrew R.T. Davies:** What discussions has the Minister had with ministerial colleagues

about preserving the Welsh natural environment? OAQ(3)1027(ESH)

**The Minister for Environment, Sustainability and Housing (Jane Davidson):** I am in regular discussion with ministerial colleagues on this issue, including in Cabinet and on a one-to-one basis. Such discussions cover our work on climate change, planning, and other relevant issues. Sustainable development is at the heart of this and encompasses preserving and enhancing, where possible, Wales's natural environment.

### **Affordable Homes**

**Q10 Peter Black:** Will the Minister make a statement on the target of 6,500 new affordable homes by 2011? OAQ(3)1065(ESH)

**The Deputy Minister for Housing (Jocelyn Davies):** We remain committed to our target of 6,500 new affordable homes over the term of this Government. Recent independent figures from the Welsh economic research unit have highlighted that the halfway target of 3,252 homes has been achieved. I congratulate local authorities and housing associations on collaborating to achieve that.

### **Community Land Trusts**

**Q11 Janet Ryder:** Will the Minister outline the support available from the Welsh Assembly Government for community land trusts? OAQ(3)1040(ESH)

**Jocelyn Davies:** As part of 'One Wales', we continue to promote the expansion of community land trusts. A grant from the rural housing development fund is provided to Land for People to support activities across Wales.

### **Empty Homes**

**Q12 Bethan Jenkins:** Will the Minister make a statement on the number of empty homes in Wales? OAQ(3)1036(ESH)

**Jocelyn Davies:** The latest figures from the local government data unit for 2008-09 show that there were 21,758 private sector dwellings in Wales that had been vacant for more than six months at 1 April 2009. Of that total, 567 were brought back into use during the year through direct action by local authorities.

### **Climate Change**

**Q13 Christine Chapman:** What is the Welsh Assembly Government doing to promote measures to combat climate change? OAQ(3)1048(ESH)

**Jane Davidson:** The Assembly Government is fully committed to tackling both the causes and consequences of climate change, and is looking to achieve 3 per cent emission reductions per annum from 2011. I have just finished consulting on our 'Climate change strategy—Programme of action consultation', which will influence the main strategy to be published in the spring next year.

### **Water-powered Micro-energy Generation**

**Q14 William Graham:** Will the Minister make a statement on the Welsh Assembly Government's policies to promote water-powered micro-energy generation? OAQ(3)1039(ESH)

**Jane Davidson:** This month, we received approval from the Welsh European Funding Officer for our new community-scale renewable energy generation programme, which will specifically target advice and financial support for community renewable energy schemes, including hydroelectricity projects.

### **Green Initiatives**

**Q15 Alun Cairns:** Will the Minister make a statement on her priorities for encouraging more individuals to support green initiatives? OAQ(3)1067(ESH)

**Jane Davidson:** We have adopted a range of activities relating to climate change, waste and sustainable development to encourage the people of Wales to support green initiatives and to change patterns of behaviour. Recent proposals to charge for single-use carrier bags are an example of our efforts to increase environmental awareness.