



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

**Y Pwyllgor Plant a Phobl Ifanc
The Children and Young People Committee**

**Dydd Mawrth, 8 Chwefror 2011
Tuesday, 8 February 2011**

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Cofnodir y trafodion hyn yn yr iaith y llefarwyd hwy ynndi yn y pwyllgor. Yn ogystal,
cynhwysir cyfieithiad Saesneg o gyfraniadau yn y Gymraeg.

These proceedings are reported in the language in which they were spoken in the committee.
In addition, an English translation of Welsh speeches is included.

Aelodau'r pwyllgor yn bresennol
Committee members in attendance

Eleanor Burnham	Democratiaid Rhyddfrydol Cymru Welsh Liberal Democrats
Helen Mary Jones	Plaid Cymru (Cadeirydd y Pwyllgor) The Party of Wales (Committee Chair)
Jonathan Morgan	Ceidwadwyr Cymreig Welsh Conservatives
Lynne Neagle	Llafur (yn dirprwyo dros Sandy Mewies) Labour (substitute for Sandy Mewies)
Joyce Watson	Llafur Labour

Eraill yn bresennol
Others in attendance

Kartar Bami	Cyngor Ysgol Gynradd Eglwys Wen Eglwys Wen Primary School Council
Phoebe Clarke	Cyngor Ysgol Gynradd Eglwys Wen Eglwys Wen Primary School Council
Eleri Evans	Trefnydd Clybiau Ffermwyr Ifanc Eryri Eryri Young Farmers Organiser
Chloe Hembury	Cyngor Ysgol Gynradd Eglwys Wen Eglwys Wen Primary School Council
Ellen Hughes	Cyngor Ysgol Gynradd Eglwys Wen Eglwys Wen Primary School Council
Jonathan Hulme	Clybiau Ffermwyr Ifanc Clwyd Clwyd Young Farmers Clubs
Eleri Roberts	Trefnydd Clybiau Ffermwyr Ifanc Clwyd Clwyd Young Farmers Co-ordinator
Siwan Rhys	Aelod o Glwb Ffermwyr Ifanc Ysbyty Ifan Member of the Ysbyty Ifan Young Farmers Club
Emyr Stanbury	Cyngor Ysgol Gynradd Eglwys Wen Eglwys Wen Primary School Council
Anton Trunin	Cyngor Ysgol Gynradd Eglwys Wen Eglwys Wen Primary School Council

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

Sarah Bartlett	Dirprwy Glerc Deputy Clerk
Abigail Phillips	Clerc Clerk
Helen Roberts	Cynghorydd Cyfreithiol Legal Adviser

Dechreuodd y cyfarfod am 9.16 a.m.
The meeting began at 9.16 a.m.

Cyflwyniad, Ymddiheuriadau a Dirprwyon
Introduction, Apologies and Substitutions

[1] **Helen Mary Jones:** Bore da. Yr wyf **Helen Mary Jones:** Good morning. I

yn croesawu pawb i'r cyfarfod hwn o Bwyllgor Plant a Phobl Ifanc y Cynulliad. Mae croeso i chi gyfrannu yn y Gymraeg neu'r Saesneg, ond, yn anffodus, gan fod gennym broblemau darlledu, fyddwch chi yn y gogledd ond yn clywed y cyfieithiad. Fodd bynnag, mae croeso cynnes i chi gyfrannu yn Gymraeg, gan y byddwn yn gallu clywed y cyfieithiad. Ymddiheuraf am hynny; yr wyf wedi'i gwneud yn glir nad yw hynny'n dderbyniol, a mawr obeithiwn na fydd yn digwydd eto. Mae clustffonau ar gael yn yr ystafell hon i glywed y cyfieithiad ar y pryd ac i addasu lefel y sain. Mae'r cyfieithiad ar y pryd ar gael ar sianel 1 a gallwch glywed cyfraniadau yn yr iaith wreiddiol ar sianel 0.

welcome everyone to this meeting of the Assembly's Children and Young People Committee. You are welcome to contribute in Welsh or English, but, unfortunately, as we have broadcasting problems, you in north Wales will only be able to hear the interpretation. However, you are welcome to contribute in Welsh, because we will be able to hear the translation. I apologise for that; I have made it clear that it is unacceptable, and we very much hope that it will not happen again. Headsets are available in this room to hear the simultaneous translation or to adjust the sound levels. The simultaneous translation is available on channel 1 and contributions may be heard in the original language on channel 0.

[2] Atgoffaf bawb i ddiffodd eu ffonau symudol, 'mwyar duon', galwyr ac yn y blaen. Nid yw'n ddigon da eu rhoi ar 'tawel', gan eu bod yn dal i amharu ar yr offer sain a darlledu.

I remind everyone to switch off their mobile phones, BlackBerrys, pagers and so on. It is not enough to switch them to 'silent', because they still interfere with the translation and broadcasting equipment.

[3] Nid ydym yn disgwyl ymarfer tân, felly os ydym yn clywed y larwm tân, golyga hynny fod problem, a bydd angen inni ddilyn y tywyswyr allan o'r adeilad. Nid ydym wedi derbyn unrhyw ymddiheuriadau; mae pawb yn bresennol.

We are not expecting a fire drill today; if we hear the fire alarm, it will mean that there is a problem, and we will need to follow the ushers out of the building. We have not received any apologies; everyone is present.

9.17 a.m.

Adroddiad Etifeddiaeth y Pwyllgor: Casglu Tystiolaeth Committee Legacy Report: Evidence Gathering

[4] **Helen Mary Jones:** Croesawaf ein cyfeillion yn y gogledd.

Helen Mary Jones: I welcome our friends in north Wales.

[5] May I ask you to introduce yourselves, in Welsh or English, before we introduce ourselves to you? For the record, can you say who you are and who you are representing this morning?

[6] **Ms Evans:** Bore da. Eleri Evans ydwyf i, trefnydd ffermwyr ifanc Eryri.

Ms Evans: Good morning. I am Eleri Evans, the organiser of Eryri young farmers.

[7] **Ms Roberts:** Eleri Roberts ydwyf i, trefnydd ffermwyr ifanc Clwyd.

Ms Roberts: I am Eleri Roberts, the organiser of Clwyd young farmers.

[8] **Mr Hulme:** Good morning. I am Jonathan Hulme, the county activities chairman for Clwyd. I am a dairy farmer.

[9] **Ms Rhys:** Siwan Rhys ydwyf i, aelod o glwb ffermwyr ifanc Ysbyty Ifan.

Ms Rhys: I am Siwan Rhys, a member of Ysbyty Ifan young farmers' club.

- [10] **Helen Mary Jones:** Diolch yn fawr. **Helen Mary Jones:** Thank you.
- [11] I am Helen Mary Jones, Chair of the Children and Young People Committee.
- [12] **Joyce Watson:** I am Joyce Watson, a Member for Mid and West Wales.
- [13] **Lynne Neagle:** I am Lynne Neagle, the Assembly Member for Torfaen.
- [14] **Jonathan Morgan:** I am Jonathan Morgan, the Assembly Member for Cardiff North.
- [15] **Eleanor Burnham:** I am Eleanor Burnham, a North Wales regional Member.
- [16] **Helen Mary Jones:** I begin by reminding us all of the purpose of this morning's session. This Assembly term is coming to its end, and one thing that committees do at the end of their term is to produce what is called a legacy report, highlighting, for the next Assembly, the issues that it believes that the Government needs to be scrutinised on. We have decided as a committee not just to produce that report ourselves, but to seek evidence from children and young people and from organisations working with children and young people about what issues they would like us to highlight for the next Assembly.

9.20 a.m.

[17] The idea is that this should be quite a wide-ranging session, and for you to raise whatever issues that you wish to raise with us. However, it is worth reminding Members and witnesses that we need broad evidence here and that we should not talk about individuals or individual organisations, which I am sure does not need saying, but needs to be put on the record. I am sure that you have done some work to prepare for the session this morning. I turn the session over to you, then Members will be able to ask you questions about some of the issues that you raise. Is that okay?

[18] **Ms Evans:** Yes, that is fine.

[19] **Helen Mary Jones:** Over to you, then. I do not know how you are planning to do this, but that is up to you.

[20] **Ms Evans:** Who wants to start—Jonathan?

[21] **Mr Hulme:** Okay, I will start. One of the first topics that we discussed the other evening was housing. We noted three particular issues, the first being that some local councils are considering selling off a proportion or all of their agricultural estates. These have been vital for many years, and were getting new entrants into farming, because it is extremely difficult to start farming privately now, due to the price of land growing disproportionately in relation to earnings from farming. We see the council smallholdings as the only way to get young people into farming and keep farming families going. The press recently covered the announcement that Flintshire County Council is planning to disperse its estate over the coming years, although luckily Denbighshire and Anglesey hope to maintain their estates and invest in them for the future. One of our main concerns was young farmers, really.

[22] Another point was about the operation of the Infrastructure Planning Commission in rural areas. It is increasingly difficult to build, especially in the areas of outstanding natural beauty. Section 106 agreements restricting housing to younger people can also be a problem. I am not too familiar with that issue, but people are struggling to get mortgages on those houses because of the limitations on resale.

[23] The third point that we came up with was that rural housing is becoming far too

expensive for young people to even consider, whether that is renting or buying. So, we need more affordable housing, because the problem is that we are being priced out of housing in rural areas. Does anyone want to add to that?

[24] **Ms Roberts:** We are quite worried, especially with all the starter farms having gone. They were a beginning for young people, and we had no consultation on that at all—we just read about it in the paper. We would like to know your views on this.

[25] **Helen Mary Jones:** Would you like us to ask questions on that and then move on to the next topic, or do you want to give your presentations first, and then we will come back to this? What will be easier for you?

[26] **Ms Roberts:** We would be quite happy for you to ask questions.

[27] **Eleanor Burnham:** I have had representations from various people in north Wales on this issue, particularly in Flintshire and north-east Wales, as you say. I have written to the chief executive of that council, and I asked Elin Jones, the Minister, about this last week. Forgive me, I cannot remember what her reply was, but I think that she said that it is up to the local authorities to decide on this, although there is lobbying on the issue. I was a farmer's daughter many years ago, so I understand, and I know of people who are in similar positions. We do understand, and we are lobbying about this.

[28] **Helen Mary Jones:** I would like to ask a bit more about the smallholdings. I do not know quite how the system works at the moment, but presumably these are available at low rent from the local authority. Do people tend to rent these for a certain length of time and then move on, or do these tend to become longer-term tenancies? If you are not able to answer, we will find that out elsewhere. Joyce, you wanted to come in here.

[29] **Joyce Watson:** I am rural affairs spokesperson for Labour, and on the Rural Development Sub-committee we have looked at this issue and taken evidence from the authorities that you mentioned. The question that I would like to ask you, because you are on the ground, and may have more knowledge than we have—this leads on from Helen Mary's point—is this: is it the case that these local authority owned small holdings are changing hands frequently enough to allow new entrants, or—and this is what we are trying to get to the bottom of—is it the case that they are being handed down through families and do not enter the free market for people such as you to have an opportunity? What is your experience?

[30] **Mr Hulme:** My father is a tenant on a small holding in Denbighshire. He started from scratch back in the 1970s on a 30-acre county council holding and moved up to a bigger one. Unfortunately, we have not been able to continue the process and we have been on the same premises for quite some time. If I was unable to succeed him, I would be out of agriculture. There is no way that I would be able to start farming myself. Although, as you say, holdings are not coming onto the open market as often as we would like, we are keeping young people in farming who would not otherwise be able to get into farming. If my dad decided to retire and I could not get the holding, I would be looking for a job. There is no way that I could buy a farm. The land price is completely out of proportion to earnings. No bank would ever consider lending me the money.

[31] For those who do not know how it has worked in the past, to fill you in, generally, someone from a non-farming background or someone who has been farming but wants to get started with their own farm would traditionally go into a small holding. Over a period of years, they would build up the business and, as opportunities became available within the estate to move to a bigger holding, they would move. However, because of the way that things have gone, there have not been opportunities in the private sector to allow people to move off the estates. Private tenanted farms have become few and far between. Many farmers

have therefore had to stay where they are and have been unable to progress. It is not an ideal situation, but at least they are offering opportunities to young people like me. Even if they do not come onto the open market, there is still more of an opportunity than if they were sold off.

[32] **Ms Roberts:** We know for certain that Flintshire has let three if not more farms to young entrants in the past couple of years. Those families who have gone into farming do not have a hope now; if they sell them off, it is like selling the county silver off.

[33] **Helen Mary Jones:** That is a very important point. Can you tell us a bit more about the issues you raised with regard to planning permission? What are some of those challenges and how do they have a particular impact on young people?

[34] **Ms Evans:** I know from experience of looking into planning permission where I live in north Wales that it is very difficult for young people to start out because of this restriction with the section 106 agreements. I am not sure, but I think that that is given from the Eryri National Park, and it is very difficult to find mortgages and so on. So, even starting to build a house is a problem. We are not allowed to build houses on our own land. It is quite difficult and daunting for a young person like me—I count myself as a young person—to start in the housing market. I do not want to go to live in the middle of a town or city—we do not have cities anyway. I want to stay in the rural areas around my home. It is quite difficult to buy, rent or build. We need something in our rural communities to start young people in the housing market.

[35] **Ms Roberts:** We know that young sons who work on their fathers' farms try to get planning permission in the local villages and cannot get it, so then they have to move away. So, their children go to another school and the local school suffers. I think that this needs to be looked at. If a young family wants to continue living in that village, they should have priority over holiday homes and so on, which seem to get built.

[36] **Helen Mary Jones:** Thank you. Is there anything further that you want to say on those? I will bring Joyce in now and, after that, if there are any further points that you want to raise on housing issues, please do so; if not, we will move on.

9.30 a.m.

[37] **Joyce Watson:** You may not be aware, but the Sustainability Committee, of which I am also a member, has just done a review on the issue that you have brought up, namely planning in the open countryside. Equally, you may not be aware that a review is being undertaken at the moment by the Assembly Government into planning and planning in the countryside, which will address some of your issues. So, my advice to you is to get more knowledge by looking at the National Assembly for Wales and Welsh Assembly Government websites or we could pass that on to you so that you are aware of those things.

[38] You mentioned section 106 agreements, but I am not clear about that. Could you give some clarification about which aspects of section 106 agreements you think work against you?

[39] **Helen Mary Jones:** I will bring you in in a minute to reply on that, but Eleanor wants to raise another point, so I will give you a chance to have a quick think about that.

[40] **Eleanor Burnham:** I had a discussion with the leader of Denbighshire County Council on Friday on various issues, some of which you have touched upon. One was the proposal to extend the area of outstanding beauty. He assured me that he had no worries, because he is a rural man. He believes that there is quite a lot of scaremongering about the restrictions that might ensue from enlarging the area of outstanding beauty. That is what he

told me. If you want to come back and tell me that you agree and why, please do so. His worry was that, apparently, farmers in the Brecon Beacons have had some bad experiences. The Brecon Beacons National Park has been under—I will be careful how I say this—

[41] **Helen Mary Jones:** Yes, Eleanor, be very careful.

[42] **Eleanor Burnham:** It has been very controversial recently, and there have been particular issues there that might have over-accentuated any negative aspects of the extension of the area of outstanding beauty as is proposed in southern Denbighshire.

[43] **Helen Mary Jones:** So, there were two issues there: how much of a problem are the areas of outstanding natural beauty restrictions and Joyce's point about section 106 and which elements of the restrictions were causing the problems that you highlighted.

[44] **Ms Roberts:** On section 106, it was that they often could not get mortgages, because of who they were allowed to sell the houses to, should they ever want to sell the house. The banks just would not give mortgages.

[45] **Helen Mary Jones:** That is because of the restrictions on resale, is it? I see that it is. What are your views with regard to areas of outstanding natural beauty?

[46] **Ms Roberts:** That is on the Llangollen side. All the farmers there are quite worried about it. That is why we have taken it up. We have a lot of members in that area and, like Eleanor, they are not sure what will come, because of all the trouble that they have had in other areas. As everything is working fine as it is, they do not see the point of all the restrictions being put on.

[47] **Helen Mary Jones:** You presumably also need to understand more about what they are, because, from what Eleanor is saying, people are perhaps more concerned than they need to be. However, we can feed that back to the appropriate Ministers.

[48] I am sorry, Eleanor, but we have to move on. Those were the issues to do with housing and planning—I ask Members to be aware that it is a bit confusing for people if more than one person is talking at once at this end. Do you want to move on to your next set of issues? Please remember that you are welcome to use Welsh when speaking to us, because we can hear the translation; it is just that it is not working the other way around for technical reasons.

[49] Os yw'n well gennyh gyflwyno'n Gymraeg, mae hynny'n iawn. If you prefer to make your presentation in Welsh, that is fine.

[50] **Ms Rhys:** Bu i ni drafod addysg a bod pobl a oedd eisiau mynd ar gyrsiau poblogaidd nad ydynt ar gael mewn ysgolion. Hoffwn fynd i Goleg Iâl yn Wrecsam i astudio'r celfyddydau perfformiadol. Fodd bynnag, oherwydd fy mod yn byw mor bell i ffwrdd, nid yw'n bosibl imi deithio yno. **Ms Rhys:** We discussed education and that people wanted to attend popular courses that were not available in schools. I would like to go to Yale College in Wrexham to study the performing arts. However, because I live so far away, it is not possible for me to travel there.

[51] **Helen Mary Jones:** Therefore, there is an issue about travel to college, is there?

[52] **Ms Rhys:** Oes. Yr wyf yn byw yn Ysbyty Ifan, sydd yn bell o bob man. Mae'r ffaith fy mod yn byw yn bell o'r coleg yn fy rhwystro rhag gwneud yr hyn yr hoffwn ei **Ms Rhys:** Yes, there is. I live in Ysbyty Ifan, which is far from anywhere. The fact that I live a long way from the college prevents me from doing what I would like to do in the

wneud yn y dyfodol. Mae nifer o fy ffrindiau yn teimlo'r un ffordd. Nid yw'n deg ein bod yn colli allan. future. A number of my friends feel the same way. It is not fair that we are losing out.

[53] **Helen Mary Jones:** Mae hynny'n bwynt pwysig. **Helen Mary Jones:** That is an important point.

[54] Other people have raised that point with us. Are there any other issues that you would like to raise regarding education?

[55] **Mr Hulme:** There are a few that we would like to raise. Something that should, perhaps, be considered in the curriculum is financial budgeting for young people—both those who are going to university and those who are not. That is, information regarding opening bank accounts, buying and running cars, renting a property, and so on. When they get to university, they will know how to handle the money that they get from student loans or grants and how to budget so that the money lasts for the entire semester in order to save them from hardship. I was not used to handling money and it can come as a shock when you are handed a big cheque. At school, I would have appreciated a little more guidance regarding how it all worked.

[56] **Helen Mary Jones:** Those are very good points. Would any Members like to respond to that?

[57] **Eleanor Burnham:** We have undertaken some work on financial inclusion. Forgive me, I cannot remember which committee did that work.

[58] **Helen Mary Jones:** It was the Communities and Culture Committee.

[59] **Eleanor Burnham:** Sorry, we sit on so many committees that it gets a bit confusing.

[60] To be serious, I agree with you. I used to teach kids who were truants; wonderful people who did not like school—14 to 16-year-olds. Those were some of the issues that we were discussing even then with younger people. Through the report, I believe that we have made some strides regarding how we should move forward and the Government will be responding, or it may have responded already.

[61] **Helen Mary Jones:** We can certainly raise the issues again in our report, can we not?

[62] **Eleanor Burnham:** Yes. So, we agree with you. It should be a part of personal and social education lessons. It is essential that all schools and colleges that are not currently doing this work do it.

[63] **Helen Mary Jones:** Joyce, do you want to add to that?

[64] **Joyce Watson:** I would just like to add that Eleanor is quite right; I sit on that committee as well. There is money from the Welsh Assembly Government and the Westminster Government that is being targeted for teaching financial budgeting in education. The money is there, but perhaps you need to be more aware of it. Perhaps we could send you some information on that. Credit unions and banks are going into schools—although they may not be going into the schools in your area, I do not know—to discuss financial budgeting, but they do so at a much earlier age now so that children and young people are in the habit of thinking about how to manage money. In particular, it is important that they know about the cost of loans, because people do not understand the meaning of APR, that is, the annual percentage rate. They understand that it means paying, £5 per week, say, but they might not understand that that could go on for 20 years or so. Therefore, it is important to

provide information about the real cost of loans and how to manage budgets. Perhaps we could provide you with that information so that you can pass it on and lobby at a local level for that to happen in your area.

[65] **Helen Mary Jones:** Would you like to raise any further issues on education, or are you ready to move on?

[66] **Mr Hulme:** I would also like to discuss the teaching of the Welsh language. Perhaps we should now be moving more towards conversational skills in the language. Obviously, it is a while since I was at school, but the Welsh lessons at my school focused on learning grammar. I learned Welsh at school, but I do not feel that I am confident enough or have the skills to converse with my fellow Welsh speakers. I cannot pick out what they are saying, because they speak too quickly, and I do not have the background in conversational Welsh, and I do not have the background in conversational Welsh. Has that already been considered? We need to get more conversational Welsh tools, in order to help people to achieve better.

9.40 a.m.

[67] **Helen Mary Jones:** I know that a former Assembly education committee considered that issue, but we can certainly raise it in our report. It is frustrating that young people can learn Welsh all the way through school and come out at the end not able to have a conversation. As a Welsh learner myself, I know exactly how you feel about that. It does not seem right that we make people learn the language for so long only for them to leave school unable to talk to their friends and neighbours. We will certainly pick up on that point.

[68] Is there anything else that you wish to add on this issue, or would you like to move on?

[69] **Ms Evans:** Two issues that worry us, especially in rural areas, are public transport and fuel prices. Where I live, a bus comes up on Thursday, but I would have to stay in town for a week before I could come back on it the following week. That is not feasible or handy. Given this situation, we all need cars in rural areas. I work an hour away from where I live. I would have to catch about five different buses if I wanted to go to work on a bus, and it is much easier to go by car. One thing that worries me very much is the fact that I spend over £110 a week on diesel, and I do not do that much mileage, although I travel about 80 miles a day. In some areas, people travel even longer distances, so fuel prices are a worry for us in rural communities.

[70] **Ms Roberts:** There is also the problem of the higher tax on 4x4 vehicles. We do not want to use them like Chelsea tractors; as country farmers, we have to use them. For example, we have to take things to market and so on, which is not possible with a smaller car. It is all very well to talk about lower emissions and so on, but it is just not practical, so we have to pay the higher cost all the time, just to do our daily work.

[71] **Helen Mary Jones:** Do you wish to come in on this, Eleanor?

[72] **Eleanor Burnham:** Roger Williams, the Liberal Democrat MP for Montgomeryshire, and Mark Williams, the Liberal Democrat MP for Ceredigion, have been tackling this issue.

[73] **Jonathan Morgan:** Roger Williams is the MP for Brecon and Radnorshire.

[74] **Eleanor Burnham:** I am sorry—I do beg your pardon. They have been tackling this issue for some time now—certainly before the last general election—and it is a worrying issue. I agree with you. I am a regional Assembly Member for North Wales, and I use a vast

amount of petrol; that is why I come down to Cardiff by train so much. So, that issue is on the agenda. As you say, Chelsea tractors are a very emotive issue, but they are essential in the countryside. I know that Joyce will say something similar. I am sorry for the other committee members, because they are not in the country as such. *[Laughter.]*

[75] **Helen Mary Jones:** We will come into our own when we are joined by the young people from Eglwys Wen Primary School later. Joyce has the next questions.

[76] **Joyce Watson:** Fuel pricing and vehicle taxation are non-devolved issues. So, the best that we can do, as elected representatives, is to influence the Government that is in charge of those issues at Westminster. I am sure that you are aware of the current discussion on reducing fuel costs, particularly in rural areas, and how that could be done. Therefore, if you want to be part of that discussion, the best advice that we can give you is to write to your local MP, in order to influence that person, to influence the Government that is in charge of this legislation.

[77] Regarding public transport, you raise an issue that we hear about everywhere we go. I represent Mid and West Wales, which covers two thirds of Wales, so I know about travelling around and the cost of fuel. This is never an easy issue. The public transport that you mention is mainly devolved to your local authority. It will probably be providing the best service that it can with the money that it has. The local authority works out the routes and what it is sustainable. This issue was going to be addressed in what we call a legislative competence Order, through which the National Assembly for Wales was asking for the powers to look at public transport. Huw Lewis, who is now a Deputy Minister and therefore had to drop it, had quite bold ideas about making things more even. Some subsidised routes in cities and towns are quite profitable, and others, in areas such as yours, are not profitable at all, which is why they do not run. So, again, it would be worth looking at the early stages of what Huw proposed, and maybe picking that up as well.

[78] **Helen Mary Jones:** Those are issues that we will be able to look at again. Even in the case of those issues that, as Joyce rightly points out, are not devolved, we as a committee are able to make representations, so we will certainly pick those points up. We shall now move on to the next set of matters that you want to raise with us.

[79] **Ms Roberts:** We are quite worried. I think that you all know that we, as young farmers' clubs, are the rural youth movement of Wales. This is a point for the Assembly, and not Westminster. We do not get any grants at the moment from the Welsh Assembly Government, and these days the situation is getting more worrying. In most rural villages, we are the only youth provision there is. We know that other youth movements get a grant from the Assembly Government. Can you explain anything about that? How can you help us in the future?

[80] **Helen Mary Jones:** It would help us to know whether it is the case that you have made applications for things that have not been successful. We are getting into specifics, but the point is relevant. It is a question of whether young farmers' clubs are making applications locally and nationally and not succeeding, or whether grant schemes and so on are set up in such a way that it does not make it easy or possible for you to apply. Do you have a take on that? Is it that you are making applications that are not being accepted, or is it that the way in which it is all set up does not work for the kind of youth provision that you offer?

[81] **Ms Evans:** Small applications are successful—those that are for a few hundred to a few thousand pounds. That is a great help for us, particularly in getting stuff that we need to go around the clubs to make sure that our members have something to do each week in their clubs. Our problem is that the Urdd gets such a large grant to keep it going over the year, and that we do not get anything towards our costs at all from the Welsh Government.

[82] **Ms Roberts:** We are looking for core funding, which is not possible to get through these little grants that you see around. As Eleri said, the grants are for special equipment or a new project. Our projects are fine as they are, as anyone who knows about young farmers' clubs must know. We do not really want to change what we are doing too much; we just want the core funding to keep the movement going. As things stand, it is struggling at the moment.

[83] **Helen Mary Jones:** On the core funding, is it the case that you have been making applications and have not been successful, or that there is not an obvious pot of money that you can apply for?

[84] **Ms Roberts:** There is not a pot of money as such for core funding.

[85] **Jonathan Morgan:** I just wanted clarification as to whether it is the case that you are putting in applications now and that they are not being successful, or that you have never been successful. You said that things were difficult now, and I was just wondering whether the picture has changed, or whether this has always been a problem.

[86] **Ms Roberts:** It has always been a problem.

[87] **Helen Mary Jones:** We would be happy to raise that issue with the Welsh Government. We have just done a big piece of work as a committee on opportunities for leisure for children and young people, and particular issues in rural communities were highlighted. Those Members who represent rural areas will know that there are places where your organisation offers the only youth provision. Maybe there will be some members of the public who are listening to this who do not understand that young farmers' clubs do not only do farming-related stuff. We are well aware of that, and we would be happy to include that issue in our report, to see whether it is appropriate for the Government to look at ways in which you might be able to be core funded. I take the point that you make about the Urdd, but, of course, the Urdd is funded from the pot of money that is there for the promotion of the language and not from the pot of money for youth work. I think that we need to look at how that matches up, do we not?

9.50 a.m.

[88] **Ms Roberts:** Some of the youth services in our county give us money, but some of them are now withdrawing it from us altogether. This is happening throughout Wales. We know that, in some counties, youth provision is not given anything at all. With every council's youth service being cut down, we seem to be the first ones to get the chop.

[89] **Helen Mary Jones:** That is also a problem that has been raised with us elsewhere. County councils perhaps tend to continue funding their own services rather than look at the other services in the voluntary sector. That has been a problem. I will bring Eleanor in briefly, and then we will do a round-up of any other issues that you would like to raise with us. As always, time is beating us.

[90] **Eleanor Burnham:** Have you made and had rejected any applications to the Welsh Language Board?

[91] **Ms Roberts:** No. It is very good with us at the moment. We are not funded to the extent that the Urdd is, but we get a small grant from it.

[92] **Eleanor Burnham:** What about European funding in the appropriate rural areas? Have you made any applications for that?

[93] **Ms Roberts:** No, not recently.

[94] **Helen Mary Jones:** The thing with European funding is that it is for one-off projects to do something new and innovative. It would not solve your core funding problems would it?

[95] **Ms Roberts:** That is what I was saying; it is always new projects, but not core funding.

[96] **Eleanor Burnham:** There is the European Centre for Training and Regional Co-operation in Llangollen. I am sure that I do not need to tell you—you know more than I do about what it does. It is always based on exchange, is it not, on an international level? Perhaps that might be one way to get funding, which you might not have had before. I understand what you are saying about core funding. I am only trying to be helpful.

[97] **Helen Mary Jones:** That is a very valid point, Eleanor. We have about five minutes left of this session, so I am going to turn it over to you to give you a chance to run through any other issues. I am sure that there are lots of issues that you have been unable to touch on so far. You are very welcome to send us an e-mail on anything that you have been unable to raise with us this morning that you would like to see us consider for the legacy report. As we draft our report, we will let you see that and the way in which your issues have been included. We have about five minutes left—no pressure.

[98] **Ms Evans:** One thing that I am particularly worried about is the increase in immigration in our country. Their cultures are protected, but I do not think our Welsh culture is protected. Different cultures from other countries have more of a say in our country than Welsh-language speakers have. That is quite worrying for me. In our local Tesco there is an aisle for this or that particular culture and there is nothing Welsh there really. I am quite worried about our culture being forgotten and other cultures being allowed to ruin the Welsh history.

[99] **Helen Mary Jones:** That is quite a controversial viewpoint. What I would say is that, as a committee, we cannot have much of an influence on Tesco. We have just been hearing about the investment made by the Government into organisations such as the Urdd. However, I fully understand the point about communities feeling under pressure, particularly with regard to young people being unable to stay in communities where Welsh is the first language, as you were saying earlier. We have another couple of minutes. Is there anything else? Joyce, I see that you want to come in on that.

[100] **Joyce Watson:** I have quite strong views that we all gain from a multicultural society and that we are all enriched—Wales has certainly been enriched—by being a multicultural society. That is particularly the case for Wales because, as you know, we were a country of extraction industries, so the workers came, and they were very welcome to come from wherever it was they came from to work here. On the point that I think you are making about feeling forgotten as an indigenous population, I would raise the question of who is the indigenous population in any case. The Assembly certainly protects the Welsh language and Welsh heritage, and we have invested very heavily in that, but at the same time, we would seek to encourage diversity because we feel that that is a very good thing. In terms of the issues that you raised about what is sold in your local supermarket, which you named, but I will not do so, we have also provided money to encourage the buying and selling of local produce to support local businesses that produce goods. We are talking, in particular, about meat and dairy products, which might be of interest to you, as farmers. That work has definitely been done here. How it translates on the ground is out of our control. However, I just want to state that I fully support a multicultural society. Long may it be the case that we have one.

[101] **Helen Mary Jones:** There is time for one more issue before we move on.

[102] **Ms Rhys:** Hoffwn godi un pwynt ynglŷn â chinio ysgol. Nid oes unrhyw fath o fwydydd lleol yn cael eu darparu yn y cinio ysgol a gawn ni. Efallai byddai cynnwys bwydydd lleol yn annog mwy o bobl i fwyta'r cinio a ddarperir gan yr ysgol, yn hytrach na dod â'u bwyd eu hunain i'r ysgol.

Ms Rhys: I wish to raise the issue of school meals. No local produce is used in the school meals that we are given. If more use was made of such produce, more people might be encouraged to eat school meals instead of bringing their own food to school.

[103] **Helen Mary Jones:** That is a good point on the quality and nature of school meals. We had some trouble hearing what you were saying, but we have picked that up. I thank you all very much for giving evidence this morning. There are certainly some points for us to consider for our legacy report. We are grateful to you for that. As I said, if there are any points that you have not raised or wish to discuss further, please get in touch and we will give those consideration when we look at the other evidence that we are taking for the legacy report.

[104] Diolch yn fawr iawn ichi. Thank you very much indeed.

[105] Cymerwn egwyl fach yn awr. We will now take a brief break.

[106] We will re-organise the room before bringing in our next group of witnesses from the school council of Eglwys Wen Primary School.

*Gohiriwyd y cyfarfod rhwng 9.57 a.m. a 10.05 a.m.
The meeting adjourned between 9.57 a.m. and 10.05 a.m.*

[107] **Helen Mary Jones:** Bore da a chroeso cynnes ichi i gyfarfod o Bwyllgor Plant a Phobl Ifanc y Cynulliad. Pobl ifanc sy'n cynrychioli cyngor ysgol Ysgol Gynradd Eglwys Wen yng Nghaerdydd sydd gyda ni heddiw. Croesawn Chloe, Emyr, Phoebe, Kartar, Anton ac Ellen.

Helen Mary Jones: Good morning and a warm welcome to this meeting of the Assembly's Children and Young People Committee. We have young people representing the school council of Eglwys Wen Primary School in Cardiff with us today. We welcome Chloe, Emyr, Phoebe, Kartar, Anton and Ellen.

[108] If I am right, you have a presentation for us—you are going to show us some slides. We will watch that first and then, if there is anything else that you are concerned that was not mentioned in the presentation and that you want to tell us about, you will be able to. Members will ask you questions about your presentation. Before we start the presentation, I will just explain what will happen.

[109] We are the Children and Young People's Committee in the Assembly and that means that it is our job to make sure that when the Government makes promises to children and young people, it keeps its promises. As we are coming to the end of this Assembly term—there will be elections in May and there will be a new Assembly—our committee is writing down all the things that we think that the next Assembly needs to think about for children and young people. So, we will listen to what you have to say, and we will also listen to lots of other children and young people and the adults who work with them, and we will then write a report that will go to the next Assembly so that it understands some of the things that you have been telling us and what it needs to do next.

[110] So, over to you—it is your presentation.

[111] **Mr Bami:** In Eglwys Wen, we recycle paper, ink cartridges, batteries, stamps, milk bottles, videos and more. We have three green flags and we are hoping for a fourth soon, but do people recycle at home? Why do people not get rewarded when they recycle? Should people be given points so that they can get money off their council tax? How can we encourage people to recycle? When the bin men come, they could weigh your green bin and if it is over a certain amount, in time, the council could send you a card so that you could get money off your council tax.

[112] **Mr Trunin:** Good morning. My name is Anton Trunin. My question is: why should pupils in primary schools not have a laptop each? Children in primary schools should have a laptop each. Sometimes, we need to do individual work, but we have to wait for a laptop or a computer. You can also use laptops for research.

[113] **Ms Hembury:** Good morning. My name is Chloe. I am one of four children and I do not have a family car. My parents find it very expensive to go on the bus or the train. My question is: why can children not have a free bus pass?

[114] **Ms Clarke:** Good morning. My name is Phoebe. These days, petrol prices in Wales are really expensive. A full tank of petrol can cost well over £50. There are people who cannot afford to travel anywhere. My question to you is: can we lower the price of petrol in Wales?

[115] **Mr Stanbury:** Good morning. My name is Emyr. My question is: why do sports pitches not get regularly maintained? I play football every Saturday and we had 14 weeks in a row without a game. I think that pitches should be looked after. The pitches should be checked every two weeks for danger and problems. If the pitches are not good, they should do whatever they can to make them decent. If the pitches are playable, the game should go on.

[116] **Ms Hughes:** Good morning. My name is Ellen. My question is: why do all classrooms in Wales not have energy-saving light sensors? In school, we have energy monitors that help us to save electricity. It would help if we had sensors to make the job easier. We would save quite a bit of money for the school.

[117] **Helen Mary Jones:** Thank you. That was really interesting. I thought that you might raise some of those issues, but I did not have a clue that you might be thinking about some of the other things. Do any Members want to say something or ask any questions?

10.10 a.m.

[118] **Eleanor Burnham:** Those were brilliant ideas. Giving people a discount on their council tax for recycling is a controversial idea and many parents might agree, but others would not; it is, however, an interesting thought. Do any of you have councillors in your families? I see that you do not. I was going to say that it would be interesting for you to discuss that idea with a councillor.

[119] On laptops, that it is a matter of money, to be honest. We have been discussing free bus passes with the Deputy First Minister and my understanding is that there is not enough money at the moment to give youngsters free bus passes, although I am sure that others will have something to say on that. On petrol prices, we discussed that with the young farmers via video-conference, when you were in the public gallery waiting to come down. It is a big issue that is dealt with at Westminster. On sports pitches, I am very interested in that issue. Are you talking about council-run or school sports pitches? I would have thought that they would be maintained.

[120] **Mr Stanbury:** We were talking about the council's pitches.

[121] **Eleanor Burnham:** Are they out of school or in school?

[122] **Mr Stanbury:** They are out of school.

[123] **Helen Mary Jones:** What has been the matter with the pitches, Emyr? Could you tell us a bit about that?

[124] **Mr Stanbury:** They are massive holes in the middle of the pitches and long grass because it has not been cut.

[125] **Eleanor Burnham:** Are the pitches vandalised or just neglected?

[126] **Mr Stanbury:** Just neglected.

[127] **Eleanor Burnham:** That is interesting. Your point about energy-saving light sensors and monitors was a brilliant idea. When we first came here, we did not have any, but now, when we walk down corridors in the dark, as some of us do, the lights come on. You would have to ask the council about that, and I suspect that it would tell you that it does not have the money to do that, because the cost could outweigh the benefits. However, we have all kinds of energy-saving devices here at the Assembly. That was fascinating.

[128] **Helen Mary Jones:** It is good for the environment and it saves money, which is why we do it here.

[129] **Jonathan Morgan:** First, I thank the school for this evidence. Obviously, the school is in my constituency, so I am proud to see pupils from Eglwys Wen here this morning. I think that the list of ideas is terrific. It helps us to understand some of the issues that young people are concerned about. I made a note of all of them, but there are two that I picked up immediately. First, on the lack of maintenance of playing fields, we did a report looking at how we can improve the areas of Wales where we have playgrounds and open spaces, and how we can provide safe places for children and young people to play and hang out. However, perhaps the next Assembly ought to look at the quality of playing fields and the resources that are available to local authorities to maintain them, because if you lose 14 weeks of sport in a row, then a lot of sports time is being lost. On the energy-saving light sensors, what clicked with me was not just the issue of the sensors, but the way in which we can engage children and young people about the quality of school buildings. As an Assembly, we spend a lot of time talking about how school buildings are being improved, how they are being made more energy efficient, and what new buildings will look like. In the next couple of years, you will have a fair bit of money spent on the building that you occupy because of the changes happening in Cardiff, and we want to ensure that, whatever money is spent, we get good value for it. To get better value, we ought to be asking children and young people how we can improve those school buildings, and what they feel needs to change, because poor school buildings, as we all know, make school more difficult and more miserable. We ought to be engaging children and young people on that.

[130] I agree with Eleanor that the cost of petrol is a huge issue for the UK Government to resolve. On the laptops for each primary school pupil, that is an interesting one; is the Government here not committed to that?

[131] **Helen Mary Jones:** It is piloting that for children aged 11 and upwards. It is interesting to hear that young people in primary school are asking for that as well.

[132] **Jonathan Morgan:** Is it not piloting that for primary schools?

[133] **Helen Mary Jones:** It is not piloting individual laptops, so that is an interesting point about when it may be best to bring them in. It may be that what we are hearing today is that 11 is perhaps too old. I will ask a question about that in a minute. Have you finished, Jon?

[134] **Jonathan Morgan:** I had one more question on the environment. I liked the idea of a reduction in council tax to encourage people to recycle. We ought to offer council tax reductions if people put solar panels on their roofs and things like that—if people make their homes more environmentally friendly, we ought to find ways of encouraging them. I like the idea of that. I am being Cardiff-specific here but I know that other local authorities are looking to do this. At the moment, our green plastic recycling bags get collected every other week, and the black bags get collected every week. Cardiff Council is looking at reversing that, and having the green recycling bags collected every week, and the black bags every other week. What is your view on that? That forces people to recycle, does it not, because they know that they can get their green bags collected every week? Do you have problems at home with storing green bags? I do. Do you help your parents with recycling? Do you go home and say, ‘Do not put that in that bin, because it can go in the other one’? I am a bit lazy; I stick most things in the black bag, and then I get a row from my wife, who has to reorganise all the rubbish and tell me which item goes in which bag. Are you pretty good at helping your parents to sort it all out?

[135] **Ms Hughes:** Yes.

[136] **Helen Mary Jones:** Some people are, and some people are not. My daughter is a bit older than you, and she knows more than I do. She will sometimes say, ‘You cannot put that in the recycling, Mum—it is polystyrene, not plastic—but you can put it in there’. So, I am sure that you know more than some of us adults.

[137] **Joyce Watson:** I thought that your presentation was fantastic, and you raised some issues that we were not expecting, which is always great. How did you come up with those items? I think that there were six of them. Did the whole school get together and vote on those being the things that you cared about?

[138] **Helen Mary Jones:** Was it the school council?

[139] **Ms Hughes:** There was a sheet with all the ideas listed, and we had to choose. We picked one, and then we had to pick a question to ask you. That was how we did it.

[140] **Joyce Watson:** Was that sheet just for the school council?

[141] **Ms Hughes:** Yes.

[142] **Joyce Watson:** Moving on to some of the things that you said, you mentioned free bus passes for children, and we have talked about that in the Assembly many times. We know that it has a cost. You said that you were one of four children, but I was one of eight, so there you go. We had the first people carrier ever—my father put bus seats into a van that we used to go around in. We would all support the idea of giving free bus passes to children, but the sad truth is that we simply could not pay for it. If we gave you free bus passes, we would have to take that money from somewhere else, and the somewhere else might be saving energy in your school. I am sure that you are aware of those things.

[143] I thought that the idea about saving energy in school was fantastic. You have really thought about that issue, and that is great. However, everything has a cost. Jonathan said that your school is up for refurbishment, so maybe now is the time to do that. Perhaps we should recommend that your voices are heard at the outset when they are thinking about reorganising your space—because it is your space: you live there, during the day, although not all the time;

I am sure that you would not want that. You should be able to enjoy that space, and you have come up with some ideas that I think are really valuable.

[144] The fuel crisis is not a devolved issue. The laptops issue is something that we have discussed. Again, it comes down to cost, but we could look at that in other areas. You have put it on the table for us now, and we can look at it across the piece, and see the effect that it has. You mentioned waiting for laptops, and said that you could them for research, and things like that. How big a problem is it?

[145] **Helen Mary Jones:** Do you often have to wait to get to use a computer in school?

[146] **Mr Trunin:** Sometimes.

[147] **Joyce Watson:** Is that in class time? That is what we are trying to understand, because these issues matter. Does it stop you working in your classroom if you have no access to a laptop? Does it mean that you are doing nothing else?

10.20 a.m.

[148] **Mr Trunin:** Not really, because you could be doing other stuff.

[149] **Helen Mary Jones:** However, it means that you cannot get on with that piece of work when you are ready to get on with it. You have to do something else instead.

[150] **Mr Trunin:** Yes.

[151] **Joyce Watson:** What about the pitches? That is down to local authorities. You have said that they are local authority pitches and, again, Jonathan has outlined a way that we can take that forward. That is about it. Well done; you were fantastic and you have made us think, which is what you are supposed to do.

[152] **Helen Mary Jones:** I want to ask you a question about laptops. My party's idea was that, ideally, every child in Wales should have a laptop when they were 11. We did not have enough money to do that, but the Government is trying it out in some secondary schools to see whether it works, whether people will look after them, whether it costs too much money and all those things. We picked on the age of 11 because we thought that that was when someone would be grown up and responsible enough to look after a laptop. However, you are suggesting that young people quite a bit younger than that would be able to look after one and be sensible with it, perhaps even to be allowed to take it home to do homework and things. Obviously, you would not give a laptop to a little four-year-old who had just started in infant school, but do you have an idea of what sort of age would be sensible?

[153] **Mr Trunin:** About seven.

[154] **Helen Mary Jones:** So, when you start juniors. That is interesting, because that is a good point. It is quite a lot younger than I thought, but it is well worth thinking about that.

[155] **Eleanor Burnham:** In an ideal world, I would agree. What you can do is absolutely fantastic. My worry would be how you would cope if someone bullied you and stole it or you lost it, because, with the best will in the world, we all move around and, even as adults, we tend to lose things—although we would try not to lose a laptop. Are you talking about an iPad, a small one, or a fully fledged Dell or whatever?

[156] **Helen Mary Jones:** That might be slightly too technical a question for these young people—

[157] **Eleanor Burnham:** They are far more technical than I am. Would you think about a slim little one—you know what I am talking about—rather than a big laptop?

[158] **Mr Trunin:** A small one would be better, probably.

[159] **Eleanor Burnham:** How would you cope if you were bullied, you lost it or someone stole it?

[160] **Mr Trunin:** I am not sure. I would report it to someone.

[161] **Eleanor Burnham:** Yes, but you know what I am saying—

[162] **Helen Mary Jones:** Of course, Eleanor, if every child in the school had their own laptop, you would be unlikely to be bullied about it, because everyone would already have one.

[163] **Eleanor Burnham:** That is a good point, Chair.

[164] **Helen Mary Jones:** When we were looking at the policy, we went to the city of Wolverhampton, which has given a free laptop to every 11-year-old. One of the worries there was whether people's laptops would be stolen or that sort of thing, but because everyone had one, that was not a problem.

[165] **Eleanor Burnham:** You would still get issues, would you not?

[166] **Helen Mary Jones:** There would be the issue of looking after them.

[167] **Eleanor Burnham:** There could also be naughty people doing things that you would not want them to do, like putting pressure on you, even if they had one themselves. That is what would really concern me. The insurance costs would be enormous, I have no doubt, but could cover it. I am just thinking—

[168] **Helen Mary Jones:** There are practical things to think about, but with the insurance, it would be like it is in the Assembly. We do not bother to insure our stuff, because there is so much of it, we just get it replaced and, again, if there are thousands and thousands of laptops, you would replace one. Anyway, these are technicalities—

[169] **Eleanor Burnham:** They are technical, but they have thought about it.

[170] **Helen Mary Jones:** We are perhaps getting into too much detail.

[171] **Jonathan Morgan:** In the next Assembly, perhaps the committee could look at the outcome of the pilot scheme and take some evidence as to how well that has worked. I would imagine that a number of you are pretty good at using a computer. We know that children and young people have a better chance of using computers well the earlier that they start, and we know that there are schemes all around the world in which primary school children have been given free laptops to help improve literacy and numeracy. If you look at the gap between primary and secondary schools on literacy and numeracy, I suspect that it would work best in primary schools. In terms of using computers, what do you use them for the most? Is it for research, writing documents or e-mail?

[172] **Eleanor Burnham:** Or is it for playing games?

[173] **Helen Mary Jones:** Not in school, Eleanor. Dear, oh dear. I have more trouble with

her than the rest of the committee put together. However, it was a serious question. What sort of things do you use your computers for at school?

[174] **Mr Trunin:** We use them for research and to produce documents.

[175] **Helen Mary Jones:** So, you type up your work as well as undertaking research.

[176] **Jonathan Morgan:** I understand that you all put together the PowerPoint presentation for today's meeting.

[177] **Helen Mary Jones:** It is a very impressive presentation; I could not begin to do that myself without having someone to help me. Those are skills that you have that our generation did not have.

[178] **Lynne Neagle:** Thank you for your presentations, which were very interesting. I would like to ask a question about something a bit different. Have you noticed any problems with some of your friends from school who, perhaps, come from families that do not have a lot of money? Do they have any particular difficulties or are there other things that may be causing them problems in school? I just wondered whether any of you have noticed anything.

[179] **Helen Mary Jones:** That might be something that is difficult to talk about. If anyone has any ideas, perhaps you could talk to us about them after the meeting. Other young people have told us that children from families with enough money to buy their own laptop have an advantage over someone who can only use one at school. So, we wondered whether that might be a problem for some people.

[180] **Joyce Watson:** Do any of you have your own laptops? I see that some of you do. Do any of you not have a computer at home? I see that you all have a computer at home.

[181] **Helen Mary Jones:** Most people have a computer at home these days, but there is then the question of who gets to use it. Chloe, you said that you come from quite a big family and it may be tricky to get time on the computer if your mum, dad, brothers and sisters want to use it too. The research tells us that it is girls who get the least time, for some reason. So, we need to change that.

[182] This has been very interesting and you have raised some things that I would never have thought you would raise. Some of the things that you have asked us about are areas that the Assembly is not in charge of—petrol prices being the big one. It is the big companies that set the petrol prices, but the Government can help that by the varying the amount of tax that it asks for. That is decided by the United Kingdom Government in Westminster, but that is not to say that our committee cannot say what we think about that and ask it to consider those things. All of the other issues are things that the Assembly Government can influence. However, it is important to remember what some Members have said regarding how much some things cost. The issue of free transport for young people will not go away, and we will ask Ministers to look at that again when there is perhaps more money around. You have raised some very interesting and quite unusual ideas regarding saving energy and recycling for us to think about, which is exactly what we hoped for when we asked children to get involved in this.

[183] I wanted to ask you whether you agree with one of the points that Jonathan raised. When a new school building is being built or when a school is being redeveloped or redesigned, do you think that the people doing that work should ask the school council what it thinks, so that you can ask the other pupils what they think? I see that you think that that is a good idea. It would be a good thing if that happened everywhere in Wales, would it not? Emyr made a point earlier about playing fields, and the committee has been looking at

providing opportunities for young people to play and to have access to good leisure facilities. However, when we looked into that, young people told us that councils and the Government can waste a lot of money if they put a football pitch, build a skateboarding park, open a youth club, or build a playground somewhere without asking young people about it first, because they might put in the wrong place or it might be too difficult for people to get to. The same is true about schools, is it not? I do not think that we had thought of that, but it is also true of schools.

[184] Would you like to say anything else about some of the issues that you have raised today, or is there anything that you think is a concern or a worry for young people of your age? I see not. So, on behalf of the committee, I would like to thank you for a very good presentation, which was very thought-provoking. As I said, you have raised some things that we thought you might be concerned about, but you have also raised some things that we had not thought you would be concerned about. That is exactly why we wanted you to come to the committee. Diolch yn fawr iawn.

[185] There are a few things that we need to do quickly, but Abi was saying that you might like to take some photos afterwards. Perhaps we can show our guests out in order to do our bits of paperwork, and then, if Members are able to stay for a few minutes for some photos, that would be great. Thank you all very much indeed for your evidence and your time. It was really interesting stuff. Diolch yn fawr. We will see you in a minute.

10.30 a.m.

**Ymchwiliad Dilynol i Rianta yng Nghymru a rhoi'r Cynllun Gweithredu
Rhianta ar Waith—Trafodaeth a Chytuno ar y Fersiwn Saesneg Clir
Follow-up on Inquiry into Parenting in Wales and the Delivery of the Parenting
Action Plan—Consideration and Agreement of Plain English Version**

[186] **Helen Mary Jones:** This item is to agree a plain English short version of our reports. We were scheduled to go into private session for these, but we are not discussing the content. We are just discussing the presentation, so do we need to go into private session? Is it all right with everyone if we just continue?

[187] **Jonathan Morgan:** I am content.

[188] **Helen Mary Jones:** Are we happy with the plain English version of the parenting action plan report?

[189] **Eleanor Burnham:** Are we having two versions then?

[190] **Helen Mary Jones:** We have one that has all the complicated legalistic language, which sets out the evidence in great detail, and then we have a simpler version that focuses more on the recommendations and uses more accessible language.

[191] **Eleanor Burnham:** Can we not recommend that we just have a plain English version and just leave it at that, rather than using complicated language?

[192] **Helen Mary Jones:** Abi says that that presents some difficulties. We could think about that in our legacy report. We can consider whether we need two versions or whether we should focus on the simpler one. However, putting that to one side for today—

[193] **Eleanor Burnham:** Does the same apply in Welsh?

[194] **Helen Mary Jones:** Yes. It is a matter of simple language.

[195] **Jonathan Morgan:** Chair, may I ask why it would present difficulties to have only a plain English report?

[196] **Helen Mary Jones:** I do not think the issue is the language so much as the length. In the full reports, we include extensive references to the evidence. In what we call the simple language versions, it is not just that the language is simpler; we do not include as much of the background material. Is that right, Abi?

[197] **Ms Phillips:** That is it, yes.

[198] **Helen Mary Jones:** That is the big difference. I think that, with regard to the language used and the recommendations and so on, we can always work towards those being simple and straightforward. It is more a question of how long these versions are.

[199] **Eleanor Burnham:** So this is a pocket-sized version.

[200] **Helen Mary Jones:** It uses slightly simpler language and it is shortened because it does not set out all of the evidence at great length.

[201] **Jonathan Morgan:** I just assumed that Government officials do not understand plain language and that, perhaps, the more complicated version was always required. [*Laughter.*]

[202] **Helen Mary Jones:** You might think that, but I could not possibly comment. We have started to do it more than other committees have so that it is easy for the children who have given us evidence to understand what has happened to that evidence. However, for the legacy report, we could certainly think about whether there are ways in which we can make the main reports simpler and more accessible. We, or any children's committee, would probably always want to produce something that is easy for our witnesses to cope with.

[203] **Joyce Watson:** There is a typo under the heading of 'Families First' on page 10. There is a missing word in the last but one line. I think that the word 'to' is missing. Also, on page 11, recommendation 19 is for a review. It might strengthen that to think about a timescale.

[204] **Helen Mary Jones:** We cannot do that, Joyce, because we have already signed off the main report. This is just about agreeing the plain English version of the report.

[205] **Joyce Watson:** I see.

[206] **Helen Mary Jones:** We have agreed the content—that is why we have not gone into private session. This is just about whether we are content with these plain English versions.

[207] **Lynne Neagle:** There is a typo on page 7. Recommendation 9 refers to 'guidance give' to local authorities. That should be 'given'.

[208] **Helen Mary Jones:** Thank you. Other than that, are we happy with the shorter version? I see that we are.

10.35 a.m.

**Ymchwiliad Dilynol i 'Tlodi Plant yng Nghymru: Ai Addysg yw'r Ateb?'—
Trafodaeth a Chytuno ar y Fersiwn Saesneg Clir**

Follow-up on Inquiry into ‘Child Poverty in Wales: Eradication through Education?’—Consideration and Agreement of Plain English Version

[209] **Helen Mary Jones:** Does anyone have anything that they want to raise?

[210] **Joyce Watson:** Recommendation 12 says:

[211] ‘The committee recommends that the Welsh Government checks that Families First does not accidentally suggest that only poor parents need help with parenting sometimes.’

[212] That did not read right to me, but maybe everyone else will agree that it does. I thought that it should say: ‘suggests that only poor parents sometimes need help with their parenting.’ I think that that reads better, but it is only semantics; I am not going to die in a ditch over it.

[213] **Helen Mary Jones:** Okay. We will look at moving the words around a bit to make things a bit clearer. Do Members have anything else that they wish to raise? I see that you do not.

[214] Thank you, everyone. This has been an interesting session. Again, I heard some things that I expected to hear, and some that I did not. The next meeting is on 1 March, and there will be Welsh cakes, on account of it being St David’s Day. I am a brave woman, Joyce, but I do not think that even I could cope with raw leeks at 9 a.m.

[215] **Joyce Watson:** We could have leek and potato soup.

[216] **Helen Mary Jones:** Yes.

[217] **Eleanor Burnham:** We could always have leek tart.

[218] **Helen Mary Jones:** We could. I suggest that, before we talk about any more of our culinary plans, I bring the meeting to a close. Thank you all very much.

*Daeth y cyfarfod i ben am 10.36 a.m.
The meeting ended at 10.36 a.m.*