



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

**Y Pwyllgor Cyfle Cyfartal  
The Committee on Equality of Opportunity**

**Dydd Iau, 11 Hydref 2007  
Thursday, 11 October 2007**

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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**

Angela Burns	Ceidwadwyr Cymreig Welsh Conservatives
Christine Chapman	Llafur Labour
Michael German	Democratiaid Rhyddfrydol Cymru (yn dirprwyo ar ran Mick Bates) Welsh Liberal Democrats (substitute for Mick Bates)
Mark Isherwood	Ceidwadwyr Cymreig Welsh Conservatives
Bethan Jenkins	Plaid Cymru The Party of Wales
Ann Jones	Llafur (Cadeirydd y Pwyllgor) Labour (Committee Chair)
Helen Mary Jones	Plaid Cymru The Party of Wales
Lynne Neagle	Llafur Labour
Joyce Watson	Llafur Labour

**Eraill yn bresennol**  
**Others in attendance**

Esther Barnett	Swyddog Ymgyrchoedd, Scope Cymru Campaigns Officer, Scope Cymru
Kay Jenkins	Ymgyrchydd Polls Apart, Scope Cymru Polls Apart Campaigner, Scope Cymru
Kay Jenkins	Pennaeth Swyddfa Cymru, y Comisiwn Etholiadol Head of Wales Office, the Electoral Commission
Ruth Scott	Pennaeth Polisi a Materion Llywodraeth, Scope Cymru Head of Policy and Government Affairs, Scope Cymru

**Swyddogion Gwasanaeth Seneddol y Cynulliad yn bresennol**  
**Assembly Parliamentary Service officials in attendance**

Sarah Bartlett	Dirprwy Glerc Deputy Clerk
Claire Morris	Clerc Clerk
Gwyn Griffiths	Cynghorydd Cyfreithiol y Pwyllgor Legal Adviser to the Committee

*Dechreuodd y cyfarfod am 9.32 a.m.*  
*The meeting began at 9.32 a.m.*

**Cyflwyniad, Ymddiheuriadau, Dirprwyon a Datgan Buddiannau**  
**Introduction, Apologies, Substitutions and Declarations of Interest**

[1] **Ann Jones:** Welcome to the meeting. If you have a mobile phone, pager, BlackBerry or anything else that will affect the broadcasting, please make sure that you switch them off. Headsets are available for translation; people are able to conduct their business in Welsh or

English in this meeting. The headsets can also be used to amplify sound. Translation is available on channel 1. We do not expect a fire alarm test this morning, so if there is a fire alarm we will stay here and take instructions from the usher on the best way to evacuate the building. I remind everyone that we do not need to touch the buttons on the microphones, because they will come on automatically; you should check that the red light is on before you start speaking, because it helps with the verbatim record.

[2] We have received apologies from Mick Bates and it is nice to see Mike German again substituting for him. Welcome again, Mike.

[3] To update Members, you will remember that we asked Disability Wales to come to give evidence on our review of polling stations; I am happy to tell you that that will take place at our next meeting, on 25 October. Are there any other apologies or substitutions? I see that there are none.

9.34 a.m.

### **Ymchwiliad i Hygyrchedd Gorsafydd Pleidleisio yng Nghymru Inquiry into the Accessibility of Polling Stations in Wales**

[4] **Ann Jones:** I welcome the witnesses to committee. It is my pleasure to introduce Ruth Scott, Esther Barnett and Kay Jenkins. Thank you all for coming. We have received apologies from Gwilym Morris. We wrote to ask him whether he would like to come along, but I think that he was a victim of the postal strike. He has sent his apologies, and so no doubt we will catch up with him at a later date. So, we will hear a little from you now. Who is going to start off?

[5] **Ms Scott:** If it is okay, Chair, I will start by giving a general overview of the findings and then I will pass over to Kay to give us the personal perspective of her experience.

[6] **Ann Jones:** Okay, that will be great, and we will then go to Members' questions.

[7] **Ms Scott:** Thank you for inviting us to give evidence. Scope Cymru has conducted its Polls Apart survey at the last two National Assembly elections, and we have looked at access to democracy UK wide since 1992. Encouragingly, the findings of our survey at the latest Assembly elections show some significant improvements in access for disabled people. However, overall accessibility is still quite poor: 70 per cent of polling stations in Wales at the last election had one significant obstacle or more that prevented a disabled person from voting.

[8] Significantly, there has been a positive improvement in physical access to polling stations, which we are really pleased about. Two thirds of the polling stations that we surveyed are physically accessible to disabled voters, which is a massive improvement on the last Assembly elections. We are incredibly pleased about that, and we commend electoral administrators for their hard work in achieving that. In Wales, given some of the demographic and rural challenges that administrators face, we are aware that it is particularly challenging to find appropriate buildings in which to house polling stations, so we would certainly like to put on record the fact that we appreciate their efforts. However, that still leaves a third of polling stations not physically accessible, which exclude disabled voters with physical impairments. There were still cases at this election of people having to vote out on the street and having the ballot box brought out to them. That is not equality, and we need to commit to enabling every disabled voter to vote independently and in secret on a par with non-disabled voters.

[9] Physical access aside, we had some concerns that almost in focusing on physical access, attention has been pulled away from other aspects of accessibility; in fact, we saw the

number of non-physical-access issues appear to increase. For example, 51 per cent of polling stations surveyed at this election did not have a large-print copy of the ballot paper, which helps visually impaired voters to work out what the ballot paper says, so that they can fill in their standard ballot accurately. That is a statutory requirement, and so it is a real concern. The focus has moved on to physical access to the detriment of other issues. We received a number of responses from disabled people with visual and hearing impairments, who felt that the whole way in which the polling station was set up did not take their needs into consideration. So, we wanted to flag up the fact that physical access is not the only aspect of accessibility that we need to consider; we need to consider access in an holistic sense to ensure that some improvements do not disadvantage other groups of disabled people, and vice versa.

9.40 a.m.

[10] The positive part to be taken from that comment is that the vast majority of these non-physical barriers are incredibly easy to remove. It is not difficult to ensure that you put your large-print copy of the ballot paper in the appropriate place on the wall of the polling station. It is not difficult to arrange the layout of a polling station so that it accommodates the needs of different groups of disabled people. So, the message that we need to take away from this is that better training and a clearer approach to how best to lay out a polling station will remove a huge number of these barriers very simply, and that does not cost money, unlike some physical access adjustments.

[11] The other interesting finding from this year's results was that 17 per cent of voters said that they would prefer to vote using an e-voting method. That was only 1 per cent lower than the number of people who said that they would like to vote by post. That indicates that there is some appetite among disabled voters for new methods of voting. Scope Cymru certainly supports the further exploration of e-voting systems, because they can be designed to be fully accessible from the start. There are problems inherent in paper-based voting systems for some groups of disabled people, particularly those with vision impairments. If 17 per cent of disabled people have expressed an interest in e-voting as their preferred method of voting, perhaps the Welsh Assembly Government would be interested in exploring that further.

[12] One recommendation that Scope Cymru is suggesting from the results is better training for electoral administrators and polling station staff on the ground, which is crucial to delivering a good experience for disabled voters. Often, the quite significant turnover of polling station staff also creates problems of continuity, so the importance of training people at every election needs to be emphasised.

[13] Scope was also going to suggest that we consider creating an award or some kind of incentive, essentially, for local authorities to look at, and prioritise, polling stations. There is a new obligation under the Electoral Administration Act 2006 to review polling stations every four years, and perhaps combining that with some kind of 'carrot' or incentive might be a way of encouraging people to commit to trying to make the electoral system as accessible as it can be.

[14] We have also been quite concerned about registration. Seventeen per cent of people who responded said that they found registering to vote difficult, and we are particularly concerned about registration for groups of people who are the most isolated, namely people who use residential care services and people in old people's homes, and we would like to see some proactive work done around how we engage older people and disabled people living in residential settings to register to vote. We have anecdotal evidence of people being denied their right to vote, essentially, because of assumptions about their capacity or lack of interest in the voting process. So, on the engagement of groups of voters, that group of voters

deserves specific attention.

[15] We would also like to see some best practice guidance around producing accessible layout, design and text for bilingual polling cards. One of the biggest problems with polling cards is that you are trying to cram a lot of information onto a small piece of paper and, given that you are providing that information in both English and Welsh, space is at a premium. So, some best practice guidance on how that could be approached would be valuable.

[16] There is also a more general point about how we encourage young people to understand the democratic process and engage in it, so a final recommendation involves looking at developing materials on democratic literacy for disabled and non-disabled young people to use in schools.

[17] **Ann Jones:** There is a lot there for us to think about. Kay, would you like to tell us, from your personal experience, what you think we could do to help people to engage in the democratic process and to persuade them to go to vote?

[18] **Ms Jenkins (Scope):** I thought that I would just tell you about my experience of voting this time. I am all for educating the next generation, so I took my niece and nephew with me. You could say that I could vote by post, but I really like to feel part of my community, so I like to go, to see people whom I have not seen for a long time, and to join in like everyone else.

[19] So, on my way there, I was driving in my chair and saying to my niece and nephew, 'Yes, I can vote like everyone else because they have a special booth'—which they had last year—'Access is great, because it is a school, and it is fine'. However, I got there and they did not have a booth, so I had to vote on a table. I expressed my concern, but they said that they had forgotten, which is really not on. I was a bit annoyed about it, because how can you forget a booth? Everyone votes in a booth.

[20] I do not think that we are asking for anything different from that given to anybody else. The same booth could be used by everyone; it does not have to be a special booth like they say that it does. It could be used by everybody. Some people could sit down and use it and we could just wheel in to use it. So, we are not asking for anything different. Access was a big issue before, but now it is 10 times better. It is just a shame that a simple thing like that—and the booth is just the tip of the iceberg—was not there for me. I had been telling my niece and nephew all about it, and then they were disgusted because that had happened. I am always trying to teach them that we are the same as you; it is just that we need reasonable adjustments to be made, which are not being done.

[21] It is 2007 and I cannot believe that I am sitting here asking for accessible voting rights. I was part of the Wales 60 group of voters, this time, and had I known that I could not vote, I would have brought the matter up with the group. However, last year, it was great. It seems that one year, provision is good but the next year it is not. There is no organisation and no procedures, but there should be procedures on accessibility for all—and not just for wheelchair users, but for everybody.

[22] **Ann Jones:** That was very helpful. Some issues have come out of that about the consistency of the training of polling staff and the fact that they should undertake checks. You made a good point about having a booth at a level that anyone can use. That is a good point to look at. Why should people not sit down to vote, if they feel that they want to? That is a very good point. There are those of us who want to run in, stand up and just put a cross in the box, but a lot of people are not able to do that, so that could become a booth used not just by you, but everyone. That is a good level to start from. Thank you for that, Kay. We will now move on to some questions and comments from Members. I will start with Helen and then move

across the table—and I have all of your names on my list.

[23] **Helen Mary Jones:** I think that we would all agree, Chair, that Kay's experience is just shocking in this day and age. It is just unbelievable that something would be accessible one year and not the next. The one thing that we must do is to make some comments about consistency in our recommendations.

[24] I have questions for Scope on two subjects. First, did the work that you undertook identify significant differences between local authorities? Did you find that some were better at this than others? Were there areas where you could say, 'There is some good practice going on here to do with training', or, 'This authority is particularly dreadful'? That information might be useful for us in what we might want to say to the Assembly Government. A balance must always be struck between getting people to do something by persuasion and assistance, and making people do something, if they have had all of the persuasion and assistance in the world but are still not doing it.

9.50 a.m.

[25] The other question is just a matter of fact, which I probably should know and do not. Are any national guidelines issued to returning officers either from the Electoral Commission or from the Assembly Government, about accessibility? You mentioned some issues of problems of access that were not physical, Ruth. Physical access problems ought to be obvious in that you do not want a huge flight of stairs and so on, but the non-physical aspects are not obvious unless you think about them. As you said, they are often inexpensive to put right, but they are not obvious. Are you aware of any national guidelines? If they exist, are they fit for purpose, and if none exist, should we recommend having guidelines?

[26] **Ms Scott:** Taking your last point first, the Electoral Commission does produce accessibility guidelines, and they are quite comprehensive. One of the difficulties with accessibility, particularly with regard to non-physical aspects, is exactly as you say: if you are not a disabled person, it is not particularly obvious where things create barriers for disabled people. What the Electoral Commission's guidelines do not do is to spell out to people almost exactly what a polling station should look like—'Here's a map showing you where to put things', as it were. Another part of the problem is that people do not read the guidelines.

[27] The other big issue is that, because most polling station staff on the day are volunteers, they do not have access to a great deal of training, so they might turn up on the day without a really clear idea, and they are expected to troubleshoot when they find that they do not have an accessible polling booth because one was never delivered or they cannot find the keys to the accessible entrance, which are the types of things that seem to happen regularly. So they are really on the front line of delivering an accessible service in the polling station, and yet they are the people who have had the least exposure to training and development. They are not necessarily the same people year after year—local authorities have difficulty in recruiting volunteers to staff polling stations—and that creates a problem of consistency, in that the person who was good at knowing how to set up an accessible polling station the last time is not there anymore. A simple means of addressing this would be to encourage more disabled people to volunteer to be polling station staff, as disabled people would spot these problems beforehand.

[28] The Electoral Commission's guidance is good and it is comprehensive; the problem is that it often does not reach the right people or that there is not enough time for the right people to digest it and understand it. Also, there is a lot of guidance and rules around elections, and people are expected to learn quite a lot about what can and cannot happen, and accessibility often gets pushed to the bottom of the list, because it is not seen to be a priority, which is unfortunate.

[29] In terms of good and poor practice, I would be happy to furnish the committee with a more specific breakdown of the results to help you to identify some of the poorer and better practices among local authorities.

[30] Bob Screen of the Association of Electoral Administrators is doing a positively good job, doing some very good work, but that has not necessarily filtered down to everybody in Wales. However, I would cite his work in promoting accessibility through his organisation. I would be happy to furnish the committee with a more detailed breakdown of results so that you can distinguish between practices.

[31] **Ann Jones:** That would be handy, thank you. We might see whether Denbighshire can actually get a cheer rather than the jeer they got in your report in 2003, but there we go.

[32] We have the other Kay Jenkins with us, and she will give evidence from the Electoral Commission and pick up points from our discussion. I am pleased that you mentioned Bob, Ruth, as he is coming to give us evidence on behalf of the AEA, and so we will certainly take up the points that you raised in that regard.

[33] **Joyce Watson:** We all know that local elections are coming up in May, and now is a good time to nab your local councillor, because you may or may not vote for them. You can hold them to ransom, which often works well, I think. I do not know whether you would find this possible, but if you could make representations like those you have made here this morning, by writing to your local council—they all have scrutiny committees, and they all have elections coming up—so if you could break down your case-by-case scenario to that unitary authority, and present your case in terms of the statistics on the number of disabled people in your area, and the people who may be excluded, that would add some value to the work that you are doing, and make them sit up and listen. I would also suggest that you put it out in the press, announce that you are doing this, and that it is your right, and see what the response is. I just think, Chair, that that might bring it to the fore. We can do all that we can here, but what you really need is to get this issue publicised out there.

[34] **Ann Jones:** That is a fair comment. Part of what we are trying to do in this short review is reach some conclusions that we can take to local authorities so that they can implement them in time for the May elections. Then Kay will be able to go and vote, and take her niece and nephew with her, and, hopefully, they will see that we have been able to do a little bit.

[35] **Ms Jenkins (Scope):** I do not know whether this is legal or not, but I will take it further next time, if I am discriminated against when I go to vote. I think that we are too quiet. Years ago we used to chain ourselves to buses, but now we basically have more rights, but are not doing anything with them. If I am treated differently next time—which I will go to the papers about; that is a great idea—I will take it further. I think that somebody should do something, and that person will probably be me. That is just for you to know.

[36] **Ann Jones:** We hope that we get it right so that you do not have to. If for some reason things are not right, we will look forward to your press release.

[37] **Michael German:** The point about consistency is well made. Consistency requires oversight, and in the hierarchy of these things, it is the Electoral Commission guidelines that provide consistency and oversight. In the end, if that is not working, as you seem to be describing, I am not certain where the legislative competence lies in terms of directing the Electoral Commission in these respects—whether it lies with Westminster or here at the Assembly. That will colour the question that I will ask.



[38] **Ann Jones:** Gwyn, do we know?

[39] **Mr Griffiths:** I can give you an indication—I cannot give you a definitive decision.

[40] **Michael German:** I am sorry, Chair—

[41] **Ann Jones:** That is all right—it is important.

[42] **Mr Griffiths:** If you look at Schedule 7 of the Government of Wales Act 2006, which covers the powers that the Assembly would have after a referendum, it refers to local government, and it deals with electoral arrangements for local authorities:

‘Powers and duties of local authorities and their members and officers.’

[43] However, there is a specific exception in relation to electoral registration and administration. So, I think that the Assembly’s powers would be limited even at that stage, although obviously a case can be made for applying for them. It does not rule it out—

[44] **Michael German:** So, in general, just to make this absolutely clear, the committee’s recommendations—if there were to be recommendations about changing the direction of the Electoral Commission, to strengthen its guidelines or to exercise its powers—would have to go to Westminster, and not to the Assembly.

[45] **Ann Jones:** We could make recommendations to Westminster as well.

[46] **Michael German:** Yes, I am saying that we could do that, but just so that this is clear, my question would be: having heard the process that we have to go through in order to change direction, would you say that it was better to try to amend the guidelines that the Electoral Commission responds to, or simply to try to apply pressure to individual local authorities by persuasion?

[47] **Ms Jenkins (Scope):** I would say ‘pressure’.

10.00 a.m.

[48] **Ms Scott:** I would mention the disability equality duty in this context, because it is probably a potentially more powerful tool for directly influencing local authorities. We would welcome a section in every local authority’s disability equality scheme that looked specifically at access to democracy. That would be valuable and something concrete that local authorities could commit to and include in the scheme. It would also reflect their responsibility to promote the political and social engagement of disabled people in a proactive, practical way. Kay from the Electoral Commission will probably talk more about what it is looking to do to help to influence this, and we welcome all the support that the Electoral Commission can give to this issue in terms of guidance and regulation for local authorities. However, the disability equality duty provides quite a practical way forward.

[49] **Michael German:** And that is within the competence of the National Assembly for Wales, the Welsh Assembly Government?

[50] **Mr Griffiths:** The Welsh Assembly Government, not currently the National Assembly for Wales.

[51] **Michael German:** My second question is on postal voting. You either said that 1 per cent more than the number of people who wanted to vote by e-methods were voting by post or are voting by post; could you confirm which? Do you know whether that figure equates

roughly to the population at large, in terms of the number of people using postal votes, or is it smaller than that?

[52] **Ms Scott:** The figure that I quoted was that, of the people whom we surveyed, 17 per cent said that their first preference for voting would be an e-method, so by SMS—text message, internet or telephone; 18 per cent said that they would prefer to vote by post; a much higher proportion, the rest, said that they would prefer to vote at a polling station. I do not know how that relates to the general population.

[53] **Michael German:** So you do not know what sort of percentage of disabled people are using the postal vote at the moment?

[54] **Ms Scott:** No. We do not have information on how disabled people specifically vote. I am sure that Kay could tell you how everybody votes.

[55] **Mark Isherwood:** Have you engaged with the new Equality and Human Rights Commission regarding enforcement powers under the disability equality duty? I know that it is very early days for the commission, and it is still finding its feet and training its staff, but I wonder whether it could have a role at this stage in making public bodies aware that these important duties apply and that although it would never wish to need to use its enforcement powers, it could if the necessity arose.

[56] Who do you think would best carry out training? Do you believe that peer group training is best, or would you leave it to the authorities to commission their own training? Are the barriers primarily to do with training, or is there a cultural barrier that needs to be shifted too? If so, how best do we approach that? What link is there between the worst performers and those who have broader accessibility issues in a local authority area?

[57] With regard to the role of politicians, and we have talked about letters and so on, would there be a role—I do not know whether it would be appropriate—for the committee to write to local authorities to make them aware that we are formally carrying out this investigation, that we hope to see improvements, and that we will be monitoring the elections next May accordingly?

[58] **Ann Jones:** We can write to them. We have not written to them, because we have asked people to come in to give us evidence. We have asked the Association of Electoral Administrators and a returning officer to come along, so, in that sense, perhaps local authorities are aware, but we can write to local authorities to tell them.

[59] **Mark Isherwood:** Would it be worth writing to representatives of elected council members? If they are made aware of the broader concern and the campaign, some of them who might be supportive but who are not at present could come on board and apply pressure internally.

[60] **Ann Jones:** We would have to write via the council leaders; we could not write to every individual councillor. We have a good committee secretariat, but they just could not do that, and the budget would go out of the window. We can notify leaders that we are carrying this out. We will write to leaders and ask them to persuade one of the returning officers to come along and give evidence to us, because we are having difficulty in finding a returning officer who wants to tell us what is happening. I am sorry, Ruth, I jumped in. Would you try to answer Mark's other points and then we will move on?

[61] **Ms Scott:** There were a number of questions, so, if I miss one, do remind me of it. In terms of engagement with EHRC, we have worked with the Disability Rights Commission previously; we have not engaged formally with EHRC in Wales yet, but I am pleased that

Alun Thomas from EHRC is sitting up in the observers' gallery. We certainly want to continue the discussion once EHRC gets itself established. The concept of it being able to use its enforcement powers on this issue would certainly be something worth exploring.

[62] With regard to the provision of training, we would like to see disabled people delivering this training. That is the best way for people to understand the barriers that disabled people face. That is possibly one of the reasons why some of the Electoral Commission training is not as effective as it could be. Some of it involves people using information themselves. They do not get the personal perspective that you would get from someone explaining the barriers and why this is problematic. That personal impact makes a big difference. It would also help to address some of the cultural barriers that you mentioned. This is definitely still the case; the vast majority of non-disabled people do not really think about the needs of disabled people nor do they know many disabled people. So, they go through life without ever really considering the fact that disabled people face barriers that they do not. Rather than just training on accessibility, equality, and awareness of the barriers that disabled people face, this would present an aspect that does not get a great deal of focus, but which would be useful, because it is more about understanding how a disabled person would find this particular environment. So, you address those barriers before you start.

[63] In terms of links between some of the worst performers and other factors, I do not want to say much as I do not feel that I am in a position to give much information—and, therefore, a detailed response to that—in a way that would be fair on the local authorities. However, we can send you the breakdown of the results, which may allow you to draw your own conclusions.

[64] **Ann Jones:** Thank you very much.

[65] **Christine Chapman:** Ruth, you mentioned earlier the point about older people in residential care. Could you say a bit more about that? In the paper, you talk about the need for work to focus particularly on hard-to-reach groups, such as those with mental health conditions and learning difficulties. Have you identified any good practice? This is an area that has concerned me for some time, and I am not sure whether anyone is getting to grips with this.

[66] **Ms Scott:** This is something that we are starting to do some work on. We are in the process of designing a project that would develop empowerment programmes for people in residential care, or disabled and older people who use day services, who tend to be excluded from mainstream life. We are also looking at working with the staff who support those people. This is crucial to giving people, particularly those who live in residential services, the opportunity to engage as equals in the process. We have anecdotal evidence from people who have had their postal votes thrown in the bin or about whom there has been an assumption that they will not want to register, so the registration forms disappear.

10.10 a.m.

[67] It is around those kinds of attitudinal issues that we need to do a lot more work, particularly when it comes to issues of capacity to vote and to understand the process. Part of the programme that we are developing looks at how we can train staff—a training programme, or an awareness programme, to deal with how their role fits with supporting the right of people who are marginalised to exercise their democratic rights. Some of that will involve helping people to understand the process and supporting them much more than they would support another person to access the vote.

[68] It is early days in terms of addressing the needs of this group of people, but we would agree that they are some of the most marginalised people who are furthest away from

achieving equality in this regard. There is a lot of work to be done around mental capacity guidelines and how to judge mental capacity, because it is a difficult area, especially if you are an individual. We get a lot of phone calls from individual parents of disabled people, asking, 'How do I assess the capacity of my adult child?'. So, we could do with much clearer guidance and thinking on that, while focusing on empowering individuals to understand that they have rights and that they can exercise them, and on how we train and support staff to understand that their role is to help to empower people to do this. At the same time, we recognise that there is a broader area of work to be done around staff who work in residential settings in relation to their role in the empowerment of the individuals that they support more generally, not just in the context of elections.

[69] **Christine Chapman:** Chair, this will be a short review, but could we take some further evidence? That is a really good point that we should keep on board, even if it is by receiving written evidence from an appropriate group.

[70] **Helen Mary Jones:** On that point, thinking about people with learning disabilities, I know that the All Wales People First organisation and local groups have done a lot of work on this. The Carmarthenshire group did some work with younger people with learning disabilities living in the community, therefore I had practical experience of this work because, for the first time ever, when I was knocking on doors in the election campaign, if an adult with a learning disability answered the door, instead of saying, 'Oh, I'll go and fetch mam and dad', he or she would often ask questions, and that was as a result of working with All Wales People First—they had identified what questions mattered to them. That was really good to see. In terms of good practice, I do not know whether we would have time to ask the organisation to come in, but we could ask it for some examples of the materials that it used with people with learning disabilities. It has also done some work with staff in residential settings on trying to change the situation. It is always good to see some good practice.

[71] **Ann Jones:** Perhaps we can take further evidence from that organisation. I am still conscious of the fact that if we are to make a difference in the May elections, we must have a short and sharp review. Unless anyone else has a question, I will take my Chair's hat off, or abuse my power as Chair, and ask Ruth a question. The Welsh Assembly Government put some money into making physical adaptations to polling stations. You said that you think that polling stations have improved in some areas, but you then said that, sadly, a third of them have not. Do you think that the grant that was given to local authorities has been used in that area or do you feel that it has been used somewhere else? Perhaps that is an unfair question. To put it another way, do you think that the grant has helped to make improvements, and should we be looking for more grant?

[72] **Ms Scott:** It has certainly helped to make improvements. The improvements that have been made in terms of physical access have been positive and we should be pleased about them. In terms of investment by the Welsh Assembly Government, there are some issues around long-term investment. One of the battles that we always face with polling stations is that they can move from one building to another. So, you could invest in physical access adjustments to a building that might not be used next time. That is one of the problems. We would advocate thinking about something where organisations could qualify for grants for access adaptations on the condition that they would be willing to make their premises available. There are long-term issues that need to be considered in terms of grant making, because you cannot guarantee the use of one particular building over another every year. That would be my suggestion. I think that the grant has helped, but there is further to go.

[73] We have also encouraged local authorities to think more creatively about where they position polling stations and the type of building that they use, particularly where they find it difficult to find public buildings that are available for use during an election and which are suitably central and accessible. We have seen some interesting practice in terms of people

using unusual buildings that we would not normally think of as polling stations, but this has been done to good effect. In some cases, it has helped to involve members of the community who otherwise would perhaps not have been as likely to take part in elections because of the choice of building. So, our other suggestion would be to think creatively about the types of buildings that you use—you do not just have to use village halls or scout huts; we have used mosques, people's front rooms and pubs.

[74] **Ann Jones:** Thanks for that. Will you keep your last question brief, Mark?

[75] **Mark Isherwood:** Last Friday, I went to the North Wales Regional Partnership Board and I mentioned this inquiry among other things. It may be worth contacting the partnership boards because they are working together on training, purchasing and signage, and so on, and this might make it more deliverable for them.

[76] **Ann Jones:** We have contacted the Welsh Local Government Association, so we expect it to disseminate the information before it comes to give evidence. We will also write to the leaders of the councils, which is an additional task that we said that we would do today. If we are to make a difference in time for the May elections, and, although I am not normally on the side of fairness for local authorities because I think that they should do it, if we are going to ask them to take some of the recommendations on board in the light of what Kay has told us about her experiences, we must give them time. I know that many local authorities, under the Electoral Administration Act 2006, are reviewing their polling stations. So, now is the time for us to pass on any recommendations from our report to the local authorities that are undertaking that review. I am conscious that if we start increasing the number of institutions invited to committee, we will just keep going around the table seeking people's views, without ever making recommendations that will make them feel that they are part of the community and taking part in the democratic process, when that is what we all want to do.

[77] **Helen Mary Jones:** I would support that, Chair. We may also need to revisit this issue as a committee, but we need to present something short, sharp and focused in order to make a difference by May, see what works and what does not, and, in a year's time perhaps, come back to the issue in one or two committee meetings to talk to people to see what worked and what did not. We should not necessarily see this review as the end of the matter.

[78] **Ann Jones:** I agree, and I do not think that any of us will see it as that. I thank Ruth, Esther and Kay for giving evidence from Scope. We will bear your experiences in mind when we look at our recommendations. You are welcome to sit at the back to hear what the Electoral Commission will say, or you may leave if you wish. Thank you for your time this morning.

[79] **Ms Jenkins (Scope):** Thank you.

[80] **Ann Jones:** I now welcome to the table another Kay Jenkins, who is from the Electoral Commission. Thank you very much for coming, Kay, and for sitting in to listen to the previous witnesses. Perhaps we can now focus on some of the issues that Esther, Kay and Ruth raised earlier. You know the format; please give us a brief introduction, and then we will move on to questions.

10.20 a.m.

[81] **Ms Jenkins (Electoral Commission):** Thank you, Chair and the committee, for inviting me. I will just go through a few brief points from my paper that I wish to highlight. As you said, I will try to pick up as many points as I can from the previous discussion.

[82] I want to cover four areas in particular: the training and guidance that the Electoral

Commission provides, on which there has been quite a bit of discussion already; our assessment of accessibility for the Assembly elections; the statutory duty on returning officers to review their polling stations; and the introduction of performance standards for electoral services.

[83] On training and guidance, the position is that the Electoral Commission provides briefing and training materials for returning officers and their staff. We train returning officers and electoral services managers at local authority level, and we provide them with materials to cascade training to presiding officers and poll clerks. The Welsh Assembly Government funds the attendance of presiding officers and poll clerks at the training that local authorities provide. So, for the Assembly elections this year, we provided a returning officers' manual for electoral services managers and returning officers, which contained a big section on accessibility and how to improve it. The key document that we provided is a handbook for polling station staff, which is available in English and Welsh. This is available to order by local authorities free of charge. I would say that the vast majority of polling stations in Wales, but not every one, received a copy in May. It includes a layout of how polling stations should be set out, and a checklist, which includes the following advice:

'The layout must work for the voter...In particular, the needs of voters with a range of disabilities must be considered. For example...are the ballot box(es) accessible for all voters? Can a wheelchair user easily get around the polling station and its surrounding areas? Is the low-level polling booth in the most appropriate position for wheelchair access?'

[84] It also refers to ensuring that large-print notices are available, and other similar issues. There is a section at the back that covers accessibility to the polling station in terms of car-parking, signage, public transport links and so on. It gives advice on how polling staff can assist people with particular sorts of disabilities, such as blind or partially sighted people, deaf blind people, deaf people, and people with mental health problems or learning disabilities. Again, there are checklists on each of those areas. So, the guidance is there quite substantially, but we do not know the extent to which it is used at local level and taken up by staff—you can take a horse to water but you cannot make it drink. I take Ruth's point very much that the way in which training is delivered at local level is variable—there is no doubt about that. Ruth's point about involving people with a disability who have experienced these things is well made. It would be a useful step forward if local authorities did that. The basis of the materials is there for them to use and take forward.

[85] The second area is our assessment of accessibility for the Assembly elections. You will all have had copies of the report that we published on the elections, which included a section on accessibility. We had observers in just under half of the constituencies in Wales and in all five electoral regions. Our observers, who are commissioners and Electoral Commission staff, visited probably around 10 polling stations each in the constituencies that they looked at. I would say that our experience very much reflects what Ruth has reported to you. There is a positive and improving picture across Wales.

[86] Substantial improvements have been made, particularly since 2003. However, difficulties remain in several cases; they are a minority of cases, but there should not be one case of the kind that we have just heard about from Kay—one is unacceptable, and, unfortunately, there are still a minority of difficulties. Some of those spring from the accessibility of public buildings in Wales, particularly in some rural areas, where there is only one building that is suitable for a polling station; we are always going to have that problem. The Welsh Assembly Government's funding of temporary ramps undoubtedly helps, but we need better accessible public buildings.

[87] There are also several small changes that could be made in buildings that are accessible. I am sure that we have all seen polling stations that are in good buildings, but the

signs are not there, you have trouble finding the polling station, and when you go in they are not well laid out. If everyone followed the checklist, several improvements could be made. However, as I say, our experience generally reflects that of Scope—that is a fair assessment. Again, on how that is implemented locally, much could be done in terms of polling station inspectors looking at how polling stations are laid out so that the guidance that the local authority gives is effectively implemented. On evaluations, we encourage local authorities to get evaluation sheets from their polling station staff as to what the voter experience was. Therefore, there is still work that could be done in that area, but it is generally a positive picture.

[88] On the third area, there is, as you mentioned, Chair, a new statutory requirement for local authorities to review polling stations. That review must take place between 1 January and 31 December this year. In your papers, I have included our guidance as to how those reviews should be carried out. As you have probably seen from that, we have, again, provided checklists. Many of those reviews are ongoing. We had briefings in July for electoral administrators across Wales, and most of them were planning their reviews then. Obviously, they had not undertaken them before the election, so most of those reviews should be ongoing, and we have encouraged them to involve local disability groups. One thing that Assembly Members can do is ask about the progress of those reviews and follow that up locally. After those reviews, there should be improvements in place for next May's elections.

[89] However, there is another development that I would like to tell you about. The Electoral Commission is now introducing performance standards for electoral services—it is a new statutory role that we have—and we have just rolled out performance indicators for electoral registration; we rolled those out in September. Since I drafted the paper for the committee, we launched a consultation paper on Monday this week on performance indicators for elections; that paper is accessible on our website. The draft performance indicators will be trialled at all elections in Wales next May. One of those performance indicators is on the accessibility of polling stations. Therefore, if the committee wants to respond to that consultation, or if Assembly Members wanted to respond, that would be helpful. We have the draft indicator on accessibility on there, and we would welcome comments on it. As I say, that will be piloted in May, and that will be one way of, in a sense, squaring the circle; as I have said, we are giving all that guidance but we cannot require people to follow it. However, we hope that the introduction of performance standards will go some way to addressing the issues of consistency that undoubtedly exist.

[90] Those are the main points that I wanted to make, Chair. I am happy to take questions.

[91] **Ann Jones:** Thank you for that, Kay. Joyce has the first question.

[92] **Joyce Watson:** Thank you for that presentation—it was more than useful. I am particularly keen to know where the pilot schemes are to be held and how they were picked. I am pleased that you are inserting performance indicators, because that will give a clearer picture of what is happening where and why. I represent a rural area, so we will be able to start to unpick the rural issues.

10.30 a.m.

[93] **Ms Jenkins (Electoral Commission):** The pilot schemes are being carried out everywhere where elections are being held next May, so that includes the whole of Wales and some local authorities in England. Wales is the biggest pilot area, because it involves all our local authorities.

[94] **Christine Chapman:** You mentioned cascade training, which you felt was variable across authorities. Do you intend to review that in future, because some authorities may not

be as committed as others? Is it too flexible and does it need some more monitoring? I am pleased with the performance indicators, which you talked about; that is a good move forward. Do you have any comments on that?

[95] **Ms Jenkins (Electoral Commission):** I think that we will review that. We had a big push, if you like, on improving accessibility after the last Assembly elections and we did some work with Scope in focusing, in particular, on disability training. This year, our big push on training was due to the new arrangements that were introduced for the elections, in terms of checking postal vote identifiers, of which you will all be aware. The access training was a part of that, but it was not the biggest focus this year; we now need to give it another push.

[96] We looked particularly at physical access in the past, and we are doing some work with Mencap and a group called Partners in Politics, which has a project involving young people with learning disabilities. We have introduced Mencap and that project to electoral administrators in the last few weeks, and we are encouraging them to work with Mencap. We will review our training in that area and, in particular, we need to pay more attention to learning disabilities.

[97] **Helen Mary Jones:** My first question relates to what Christine has just asked about in terms of training. In your initial comments you mentioned that the idea of local authorities involving disabled people in training would be useful. Is that something that the commission could recommend to local authorities, or is it something that we would need to recommend to the Assembly Government?

[98] My second question is about the guidance that you have just mentioned. Does it refer separately to the needs of people with learning disabilities and the needs of people with mental illness? While there are some commonalities, there are big differences as well, and, quite often in service provision, those two groups of people get lumped together and that can be quite bad for both groups of people.

[99] I also wanted to ask about one of Scope's recommendations, which is about further access to e-voting. I have worries about that, because of the balance between access and security. Does the commission have any thoughts on that?

[100] **Ms Jenkins (Electoral Commission):** On the point about mental health problems or learning disabilities, it is true that the section in our polling station handbook is entitled, 'voters with mental health problems or learning disabilities'. The guidance that follows that does separate out the two, but I agree with you that we could improve on that; we will look at that again.

[101] Recommending to local authorities that they involve people with disabilities in providing that training is something that we could recommend, but, again, it would not do any harm if the committee were also to recommend that. That is something that we could put to the Wales election planning group, for example, as a general Wales recommendation. We could certainly do that. It could only be helpful for as many people as possible to recommend that.

[102] We share your concerns about e-voting. The commission has a statutory duty to evaluate pilot schemes, and we evaluated the pilot schemes in English local authorities this year, publishing our evaluations in August. We had a number of concerns about those pilot schemes. Our view on e-voting and other types of voting is that it needs to be made more secure. The systems need to be more robust before they can be fully rolled out. It is certainly true that people with disabilities have expressed a wish for a range of voting methods, as have many people, especially young people, and the commission is committed to providing that in



the long term—that is, voting by choice—but our view is that security needs to be balanced and, at the moment, the system is not sufficiently secure. As you know, that is why we favour individual registration.

[103] **Ann Jones:** Okay. Are Members happy with that?

[104] **Bethan Jenkins:** Do you know of any local authorities in Wales that are currently taking part in pilots?

[105] **Ms Jenkins (Electoral Commission):** The system at the moment is that the Ministry of Justice funds pilot schemes. It has to make legislation-enabling pilot schemes, and it launches a prospectus of the pilot schemes that can take place in local government. It has not yet launched a pilot prospectus for the May 2008 elections so, at the moment, there are no pilots in place. We await developments from the MOJ on that, but our view in any case is that planning for pilot schemes has to be done well in advance, and it is already very late to be introducing pilot schemes for the May elections, as they take a lot of work.

[106] **Michael German:** I want to ask Kay about page 15 onwards in the circular, which is the survey form. I presume that this is the survey that local authority electoral officers will carry out during the course of the coming year, or whatever timescale you have given them in which to do it. That will obviously be done when there is no election, so it is a cold look at the village hall, getting in between the jumble sale and whatever, to find your way around. We have just heard of the internal problems from Scope, such as not having a large-print ballot paper on the wall and so on. Is that included in your checklist of how a polling station should look—there should be room for this and space for that? I know that, on the interior plan, you just say, ‘Is there space for official signage?’ but would you expect returning officers to have your checklist, along with this survey, and to marry the two together? There is nothing in here that says that you should refer to the checklist on page x of the other document to ensure that these things happen. It is very different to look at a polling station when there is nothing going on it in and when it is being put to another use, to check whether things are in place, ready for election day.

[107] **Ms Jenkins (Electoral Commission):** That is a fair point. The display of the large-print ballot paper is a statutory requirement, so that should certainly be there. This time, we spotted that some polling stations did not have the regional ballot paper in large print. I think that the vast majority did have the constituency ballot paper in large print, but some electoral administrators said that the regional ballot paper was so large anyway, the large-print version of it was not put up. It is a statutory requirement and it should have been displayed clearly, however big it is. That is the answer that we have given.

[108] I take your point very much on board. It is different looking at polling stations cold and when the ballot papers are on the wall, but they should be doing that, and they should be aware that it is a statutory requirement. It is often a problem to do with small things. I go to polling stations that are in schools, and the large-print ballot paper is there, but it is alongside children’s paintings and school notices, and so on, so you do not spot it. Alternatively, it might be on the wall, but in a place where someone in a wheelchair or someone with visual impairments would not see it easily. So, it is all about making the polling station work on the day, and that means training presiding officers. Some presiding officers have been doing the job for a long time, and it is often the new ones who take on things more enthusiastically. They will look at their guidance and checklist and do what they are supposed to do. It is sometimes more difficult to make progress with the more experienced staff who have been doing it for years.

10.40 a.m.

[109] **Michael German:** The point that I was making, and which you have just confirmed, Kay, is that, if this survey stood on its own and the people doing the survey took it with them, it would not necessarily answer all the problems that we have just heard about. Perhaps some cross-referencing is needed in your guidance for those conducting the survey. Am I right in saying that that is about to start or has started? If not, how far off are we? What is the timescale?

[110] **Ms Jenkins (Electoral Commission):** It should have started after 1 January and it has to be completed by 31 December across England and Wales. The reality in Wales is that no-one did it before the May elections, but the majority are doing it about now, according to their timetables. We are holding another series of briefing meetings with electoral administrators across Wales at the beginning of December and we are having a feedback session for them on undertaking those polling station reviews, so we will hear from them how it has gone at that time. I agree that we need to pick up that point.

[111] **Mark Isherwood:** In your briefing paper, you say that performance indicators have been introduced. Within your existing powers, what can you do to performance-manage those authorities that are failing to meet the targets set by the indicators?

[112] Secondly, it is good news that 21 out of 22 local authorities attended the briefing sessions. Is the one that did not attend a top performer? If not, how are you going to access it?

[113] **Ms Jenkins (Electoral Commission):** Answering the last question first, we try to get as many as we can to attend all of our briefing meetings, but we cannot make authorities attend, of course. The vast majority of local authorities sent three or four representatives, but one did not send anybody. We always chase them and try to get people to come, as much as we can.

[114] On performance indicators, we have few sanctions, in truth. It is about publishing reports of what local authorities do. We can direct returning officers to provide us with reports in response to the performance indicators if they have not done so, but the commission is a statutory body and it has not been given sanctions in relation to performance standards, so we have yet to see how that will develop. We are at the stage of rolling out performance indicators for electoral registration at the moment, to introduce standards for the annual canvass next year. We are piloting the indicators for elections in May to roll out as standards for the elections the following May. So, when we start to get the reports in, we will see whether we need to ask for more powers in relation to that.

[115] **Joyce Watson:** On the survey's tick-boxes for whether a building has this, that or the other, unless I have missed them, I cannot see any questions on visual impairment and the physical structure of the building. The one big issue for people with visual impairment is contrast between colours. They would not necessarily see a doorframe, for example, if it was painted in a colour that blended into the background, and they would not see a step for the same reason. I cannot see anything that asks that question, but that kind of thing can become a physical hazard.

[116] **Ms Jenkins (Electoral Commission):** It is true that that is not in that guidance. We are aware of the issue and we have raised it in training. Some local authorities in Wales have worked with groups that give advice on visual impairments locally, and it is one of the issues that we consider very much, for example, in deciding on the colour of ballot papers. The advice is that white is not a good colour for a ballot paper: cream is better. That is a fair point that we should take on board.

[117] **Ann Jones:** Does anyone else wish to comment? I see that they do not. Thank you very much, Kay, for coming here today and for your evidence. We will certainly look at your

consultation document on performance indicators. I am sure that the committee, or even individual Members, will have some views to feed in.

10.45 a.m.

**Cytuno ar Gylch Gorchwyl ar gyfer Ymchwiliad y Pwyllgor i Faterion sy'n  
Effeithio ar Weithwyr Mudol  
Agreement of the Terms of Reference for the Committee's Inquiry into Issues  
Affecting Migrant Workers**

[118] **Ann Jones:** We have before us the proposed terms of reference. We have received one comment from Helen. Helen, do you want to raise your point now, and we can then look at the paper?

[119] **Helen Mary Jones:** I will begin by saying that I think that the letter is very good and effective, and we have a pretty comprehensive list of consultees. Congratulations to the clerks on putting that together. However, I am concerned about a potential inconsistency in the terms of reference as they stand. We make reference in the first paragraph to scrutinising the Assembly Government, but then we do not make reference anywhere to any other levels of government. However, we then go on to say that we will,

‘Explore the impact of the current regulatory framework governing the working and living conditions of migrant workers in Wales’.

[120] That regulatory framework is not set here; it is set at Westminster. I also think that when it comes to housing issues, for example, although we may have recommendations for the Assembly Government, we may also have recommendations for local government. There may be something wrong with the regulatory framework, for example, which the Assembly Government would need to address, but there may be issues to do with monitoring housing standards and implementation that would be for local authorities to address. So, there is a bit of an inconsistency there, and I have been thinking about how it might be resolved. It is obviously right that this committee's main focus be the scrutiny of the Assembly Government, given that we are an Assembly committee, but I wonder whether we could add something to the second paragraph. It says that we will,

‘Make recommendations on the action that needs to be taken’.

[121] Could we add the phrase ‘at any level of government’ there? That would keep the main focus on the Assembly, which I think is important, but we would also be saying that, if the evidence was about what local councils needed to do, or if we were concerned about the regulatory framework, we could make recommendations on those points, too. We have always done so before, certainly in this committee as well as in others, but of course we are in a different situation now. Perhaps Gwyn could advise us of the appropriateness of this suggestion. If we make recommendations only to the Assembly Government, we will miss huge areas.

[122] **Michael German:** One area in which that is likely to occur is the sources of funding for migrant workers—where does the money come from for benefits, allowances and so on? That will probably come in to the system as well. I am sure that there is an interface here with a raft of different pieces of legislation, and different sorts of impact with regard to the funding that people get. I would support the idea that we should make recommendations wherever appropriate, to whomever. Whether they listen or not is another matter, but at least we can make the recommendations. That means that we will have to scrutinise the people who would have an impact, so you may want to call in people from local government or from the benefits

agency, and so on.

[123] **Joyce Watson:** I can see what you are getting at, and I agree with the comments; I expect that a lot of the comments will relate to problems within the local government area. I do not doubt that that will be the case. We could scrutinise local government and our procedures and, if it is the case that we give money and guidance to local government, perhaps we could do further scrutiny of the implementation of our schemes. However, I am not sure, and so perhaps we need to take some advice on that.

[124] **Ann Jones:** When we were discussing the terms of reference, and when I looked at what had been said, I thought that we had probably covered that by saying that we will 'Examine the experiences', 'Identify the impact', 'Explore the impact' and 'Highlight examples of good practice'. I read into that, rightly or wrongly, that we would, if necessary, scrutinise Westminster, local authorities or whomever. You want to strengthen it in that way, but is that what we are after? I thought that it was all covered by: 'In doing so, the Committee will', but—

10.50 a.m.

[125] **Helen Mary Jones:** It is covered in the third point, but my point is that the first paragraph is not entirely consistent with the third point.

[126] **Michael German:** I think that what the Chair is saying is that the second paragraph of the proposed terms of reference is silent on the matter of to whom you should make recommendations, and that it could therefore be anybody. As long as it is understood that we are talking about recommendations to anybody, then I think that that is reasonable.

[127] **Ann Jones:** I will bring Lynne in.

[128] **Lynne Neagle:** I think that it is fine the way that it is. I think that Ann has covered the concerns that Helen Mary raised. The other issue is whether we can technically make recommendations to local government directly. Would we not be making recommendations to the Assembly Government to change the framework within which local government operates? Perhaps the legal advice could be clarified.

[129] **Helen Mary Jones:** Well, we certainly always did before, if we felt that we needed to. I completely accept what Lynne says, in that we are operating under new legislation now. In terms of making recommendations that might affect the regulatory framework at Westminster, previously, committees of which I have been a member have handled that by recommending that the Assembly Government makes recommendations.

[130] **Lynne Neagle:** Yes, but then the recommendations are to the Assembly Government, are they not?

[131] **Helen Mary Jones:** That still brings us to the point that we are saying that we are going to scrutinise the Assembly Government, but, around this table, we are all saying that we will also scrutinise the regulations, which are not a matter for the Assembly Government, and that we are going to scrutinise local government. What I am worried about, if I can explain—and I am probably being a bit picky—is that some of what we will have to address will be very controversial. We may want to talk to certain organisations that will not want to talk to us very much, and I do not want a situation in which we ask local government representatives—I am not saying that this would happen, Chair—to come in, they look at the terms of reference, and they say, 'This is nothing to do with us because you say you are going to scrutinise the Assembly Government'. I am looking at the worst case scenario, Chair, because, having been on the predecessor committee for eight years, during which time we

addressed some very controversial things—the work with Gypsies and Travellers was potentially very controversial—I think that this is potentially the most controversial thing that we have done, and I just want to make sure that we are not giving anybody any opt-out clauses. I am not going to die in a ditch over it or push the matter to a vote, but if it goes pear-shaped, I reserve the right to say, ‘I told you so’.

[132] **Ann Jones:** Okay. Gwyn, do you want to clarify the legal position on the issue that Lynne raised about us now being in a different ball game, in effect? We all knew where we stood before May on committees and stuff, but perhaps now we need clarification.

[133] **Mr Griffiths:** Lynne is quite right. Standing Order No. 17.1 says:

‘There is to be a Committee on Equality of Opportunity to consider and report on the relevant duties contained in the Act placed on the Assembly, the First Minister, Welsh Ministers or the Commission’,

[134] because those are the bodies answerable to the Assembly. Therefore, I think that the terms of reference are right in the first line: ‘To scrutinise the Assembly Government’. However, if the Assembly Government does not have the relevant powers, then there is no reason why recommendations should not be broader.

[135] **Helen Mary Jones:** Yes, we have ‘scrutinise’.

[136] **Mr Griffiths:** The first line of the proposed terms of reference is in accordance with the Standing Order that sets up the committee.

[137] **Helen Mary Jones:** That is why I am not proposing that that should be changed, because we can only scrutinise the Assembly Government, so we could not, for example, ask Westminster Ministers to come here and insist that they did so. They have been very nice and have done so in the past, but there is no capacity to scrutinise them. However, we may want to make recommendations, and that is what I am concerned about.

[138] **Ann Jones:** Is it not covered in the four bullet points:

‘In doing so, the Committee will... Examine the experiences... Identify the impact... Explore the impact... Highlight examples’?

[139] **Helen Mary Jones:** I think that it is, but my problem is that I think that it is then inconsistent. I am not going to die in a ditch over this; I have put my point of view on record, and I hope that I will be proved wrong, but I think that there is a point of inconsistency. If others do not agree, then that is fine—I have said what I needed to say.

[140] **Ann Jones:** Okay. What is everybody’s view, then?

[141] **Michael German:** Given that the second paragraph is silent, the issue is whether it is included by implication, which is what I think most people here accept, or whether you want it made explicit to ensure that you do not forget it, which, I think, is a matter of trust. I am only a substitute here—

[142] **Ann Jones:** You are quite a regular substitute, are you not?

[143] Given our discussion of the terms of reference and given that we have the verbatim transcript, which will be attached, do you want to add a phrase in the second paragraph stating ‘at any level of government’?

- [144] **Helen Mary Jones:** I do, but I will not press for it if others do not agree.
- [145] **Lynne Neagle:** I would not want to add that.
- [146] **Michael German:** For the sake of clarity, I would support its inclusion.
- [147] **Bethan Jenkins:** I do not see a problem putting it in, if it is only to clarify, but then I am new to the committee. As Mike German said, it is perhaps better to clarify than to leave it out, perhaps; I do not know.
- [148] **Ann Jones:** Okay, fine.
- [149] **Joyce Watson:** May I play devil's advocate for a moment, Chair?
- [150] **Ann Jones:** You may.
- [151] **Joyce Watson:** If we put in 'make recommendations to any level of government', but we find that the problem is not actually in government, but outside—perhaps with somebody that we are supporting, or that local government is supporting, but which is not directly attached to Government—then we will find that we have restricted ourselves. By leaving it open, we do not restrict ourselves and then find that we cannot make recommendations where, as we will probably find later on, they are needed; I do not know. That is just another way of looking at it.
- [152] **Ann Jones:** That is another angle to this.
- [153] **Michael German:** You could just take out the word 'government'. That would solve that, would it not?
- [154] **Ann Jones:** You are suggesting a different form of words, then.
- [155] **Helen Mary Jones:** What I would say about that, Chair, is that, if we find out that there is a big problem with the private sector—and I think we might—then I do not think that we can make recommendations directly to the private sector, but we can make recommendations to the levels of government that regulate the private sector. If, for example, we find that there is a huge problem with the way that particular companies conduct themselves, then I do not know that we can speak directly to them—or whether that would be any use, knowing some of those companies. However, we could say that either there is a problem with the regulatory framework, because it is not strong enough on x or y, in which case that is a recommendation for the Westminster Government, or that the regulatory framework is good, but for one reason or another the local authority, for example, is not monitoring or implementing effectively. So, I completely understand Joyce's point, because I think that the *drwg yn y caws*—the problems—will not necessarily be with what Government is or is not doing, but with what Government is or is not doing to regulate the private sector. I cannot recall any recommendations from previous Assemblies that were made other than to levels of government, but they have often been about regulating what other people do. I am being picky about this, Chair, and I acknowledge that, but that is because, as I said before, this is a controversial piece of work.
- [156] **Michael German:** To relate that to the previous discussion, we might decide as a committee that we want to make recommendations to the Electoral Commission, for example, and that commission stands alone, and is not necessarily a level of government. I am trying to be helpful here—you just said 'at any level of government', but that does not cover bodies such as the Electoral Commission.

[157] **Ann Jones:** Except that I think that, under the Government of Wales Act 2006—it seems ages ago—we are now governed by a different set of rules, and where we had freedom to make recommendations in the past, as an Assembly corporate, any recommendations we make now are all to the Assembly Government. Our work is to scrutinise the Assembly Government and its policies, and this brings me back to the four bullet points: if, in doing that, we find other areas, then we can bring those people in and scrutinise them to assist us in making recommendations. It may be that we ask the Welsh Assembly Government to speak to the appropriate Westminster department—for example, the Department of Works and Pensions—and ask it to do a, b or c.

[158] **Michael German:** I am not worried about that. It is just the question of who the recommendations are aimed at. The route-map may be different, but the question is who they are aimed at. I am just trying to think the other way around. The Welsh Affairs Select Committee has no problem at all in making recommendations about the sort of things that we should do—

[159] **Ann Jones:** That might be the setup there—

[160] **Michael German:** As I said earlier, a recommendation is a recommendation, and if people do not want to take it, they do not have to. In fact, as I understand it, the recommendations that we currently make through committee reports are laid and debated, but there is no longer a requirement for the Government to respond to them.

[161] **Helen Mary Jones:** It is not a requirement.

11.00 a.m.

[162] **Michael German:** In other words it will be a recommendation that we hope people will listen to. The floor for that will be the floor of the Chamber when the report is laid in Assembly time.

[163] **Lynne Neagle:** Helen Mary said that we do not have any power to recommend something to the private sector, but I do not see that we have any more powers to recommend something to local government or central Government. Our power is to recommend to the Assembly Government that it makes representations to the UK Government or changes the framework for local government. That is perfectly contained within this, and we should just crack on.

[164] **Helen Mary Jones:** I am going to ask you to put this to a vote, Chair. We are not going to agree. I see Lynne's point of view, and I hope that she sees mine, but I do not agree with her.

[165] **Ann Jones:** Okay.

[166] **Helen Mary Jones:** I propose the following amendment: in the second paragraph, after the word 'taken', insert:

*at any level of government.*

[167] **Bethan Jenkins:** May I ask a question?

[168] **Ann Jones:** Yes, but let me hear the proposer and the seconder first.

[169] **Michael German:** I did say that I would second it earlier; I would like to amend it by removing the word 'government', but there you are, that will do. I will do it in a moment.

[170] **Ann Jones:** Hang on a minute now. There is a proposal on the table—

[171] **Michael German:** I will second it.

[172] **Ann Jones:** Okay. Bethan has a point for clarification.

[173] **Bethan Jenkins:** Have other committees, since the Government of Wales Act 2006, taken on this mantle of making recommendations to other institutions or levels of government. Is it possible to do this?

[174] **Ann Jones:** I will ask Gwyn to answer that. However, my understanding of the Standing Orders is that scrutiny committees have a different role from ours. We are not a scrutiny committee; we are a standing committee. Scrutiny committees have a wider remit when setting their scrutiny projects; that is the problem. Gwyn, can you offer legal advice on that?

[175] **Mr Griffiths:** Yes, Chair, you are quite right that there are different provisions for the different committees. If it would be of assistance to the committee I could provide a note on the differences so that you can consider whether you think it is appropriate. Scrutiny committees have the

‘power within their remit to examine the expenditure, administration and policy of the government and associated public bodies.’

[176] That is missing from this committee’s remit. Interestingly, the Committee on European and External Affairs has the power

‘to consider and report on any matters relevant to the exercise by the First Minister .... of any of their functions’.

[177] Again, that is slightly broader than ‘the relevant duties placed on the First Minister’ etc. I can provide a note if that would assist.

[178] **Ann Jones:** That might be helpful.

[179] **Mr Griffiths:** In the meantime, I am afraid that you are stuck—

[180] **Michael German:** Can we ask for recommendations?

[181] **Ann Jones:** In the meantime, there is a proposal on the table, but—

[182] **Mr Griffiths:** In the meantime, as I recommended earlier, the fact that it starts ‘To scrutinise the Assembly Government’ puts it clearly within the terms of reference, and what you agree subsequently is of less importance because it is subsidiary to scrutinising the Assembly Government.

[183] **Ann Jones:** Thanks, Gwyn. There is a proposal on the table. We can have a quick debate if anyone wishes to speak on it. I see that no-one does, so we will move straight to the vote.

*Cynhaliwyd pleidlais drwy ddangos dwylo.  
A vote was held by show of hands.*

*Gwrthodwyd y cynnig.*



*Motion defeated.*

[184] **Ann Jones:** I am sorry, Helen.

[185] **Helen Mary Jones:** That is fine. However, as I said, but I reserve the right to say 'I told you so.'

[186] **Ann Jones:** Yes, you will refer us back to the verbatim record at 11.04 a.m. on 11 October. I am sure that you will.

[187] **Angela Burns:** I am worried that we are going to leap off this topic, because I want to comment on consultation and consultees.

[188] **Ann Jones:** No, we will not. I just wish to reassure Helen. I hope that the way that we conducted that was helpful. The silence in this recommendation will mean that we will perhaps be able to recommend to the Assembly Government what we feel is most appropriate to help migrant workers and to get the most out of this report.

[189] **Helen Mary Jones:** I completely accept that.

[190] **Ann Jones:** Perhaps you and I will refer to the transcript for 11.04 a.m. on 11 October at various points in future. We will move on to the proposed consultation letter, as we have not changed the terms of reference. That will go out to consultees.

[191] **Angela Burns:** There is an exhaustive list of consultees, but we are a little light on business organisations. I say that because, in our last committee meeting, we said that we would try to seek out the worst of practices and the best in order to make this a positive committee. Some industries are far more attractive to migrant workers, including, for example, agriculture, forestry, fishing, and building. Perhaps we should look at getting a representative or a representative body from one of those industries. Pardon my naivety, but I do not know whether gangmasters have an association. By doing this, we can get right down to the people who are offering these people jobs.

[192] The other organisations that I would like to see here are banks, building societies and post offices. I have it on record that these are reluctant to give bank accounts to migrant workers. Therefore, these poor people have money and are pretty much in the thrall of whoever is giving them the money. That is not true of them all, but I have had a couple of cases where that has happened. Many people will chuck this letter in the bin. However, they will know that we are looking. That in itself might make people change, and then it is worth it. I would like to try to think about targeting more business operations, so that we can shoot a little warning shot across their bows if necessary.

[193] **Ann Jones:** The Gangmasters Licensing Authority is on the list of consultees. So, that covers that point. Your point about the banks and financial institutions is great, and I would add credit unions to that, as they are probably working with these people in the community. I would prefer to send these people down the credit union route knowing that they would be helped and supported, rather than their being directed to one of the big high-street banks.

[194] **Angela Burns:** Perhaps we should have someone like the National Farmers Union as a consultee.

[195] **Ann Jones:** NFU Cymru is on the list.

[196] **Angela Burns:** Sorry, I missed that.

[197] **Ann Jones:** It is under the trade union heading. The Farmers Union of Wales has also been included. This is still open and we can add to it. If there are others that you would like to be included, please let Claire know.

[198] **Helen Mary Jones:** The Federation of Master Builders should be included.

[199] **Angela Burns:** I agree, because the building industry is a huge attraction for migrant workers.

[200] **Mark Isherwood:** On banks and building societies, it is UK legislation that now compels banks, building societies and others—due to money-laundering regulations—to ask for specified proof of identity. It does not matter who you are, you have to provide it. The problem is the legislative framework within which they are operating and we perhaps need to consider that.

[201] It is an exhaustive list. It seems to be good on health, but light on education and housing. Perhaps we could include the headteachers' unions, and social housing providers such as Community Housing Cymru and Cymorth Cymru, and perhaps, in the private sector, the National Landlords Association.

[202] **Ann Jones:** That is fine; there were some helpful comments there.

[203] **Michael German:** On official agencies, I cannot remember whether the benefits agency still exists or whether it has been merged with something else. Whatever it is, we should include the body that handles benefits. Is that the benefits agency?

[204] **Helen Mary Jones:** Yes, it is still there.

[205] **Michael German:** Okay, it has not been altered. It would be useful to have information about people who get support for their families and so on.

[206] **Ann Jones:** Is that not Jobcentre Plus now?

[207] **Michael German:** That is what I was asking. I do not know the answer to that. I think that they are separate organisations.

[208] **Helen Mary Jones:** Jobcentre Plus handles benefits related to employment, and the benefits agency—if I am right—deals with the other benefits, such as disability benefits and so on.

[209] **Ann Jones:** I thought that Jobcentre Plus helped people with their benefits and so on.

[210] **Michael German:** Can we say 'whatever'?

[211] **Ann Jones:** We will look into this, and if we think that there is a significant 'whatever', we will add the benefits agency to the list.

[212] **Michael German:** With regard to the list of business organisations, many migrant workers are employed in the food processing industry. This is particularly the case in Wrexham and other areas where there are meat producers and so on. There is a federation of companies and employers in that sector, though I cannot remember what it is called. There is a sectoral body for food processors and producers that it would be useful to include.

11.10 a.m.

[213] **Ann Jones:** We will give Claire some weekend reading—she will have to go through all the specialist journals and see what she can find. Is there anything else?

[214] **Mark Isherwood:** On the business one, there is also the Institute of Directors, which covers larger companies, manufacturers as well as the banking sector.

[215] **Ann Jones:** This list is growing. Is there anything else? I hope that you will all have time to read all the written evidence that we will receive. We will be living and breathing it, but that is quite right.

[216] **Joyce Watson:** Has everyone added groups? I want to go on to examples of good practice.

[217] **Ann Jones:** In what sense? Are there some groups that you think ought to come and give us—

[218] **Joyce Watson:** I want to comment on something else, but only if everyone has finished with the list.

[219] **Ann Jones:** Have we finished on the consultation list? If you have a flash of inspiration at 4 a.m., do not ring Claire, but make a note of it, e-mail her the next day and we will add that to list of consultees. Is that okay? Fine, I see that it is. Joyce, you wanted to comment on good practice.

[220] **Joyce Watson:** I would like to add good practice in providing successful healthcare, accessible procedures for dealing with complaints or issues raised by workers, and good practice in advertising materials, giving rights-based information in the relative language

[221] **Ann Jones:** Do you want to add that to the letter?

[222] **Joyce Watson:** If we are looking for examples of good practice—I do not expect anyone to reply fully—this would be a way of marking that we are looking at it. I do not know if you want to do this, but those were my thoughts about it, and if they are off the wall and you do not agree—

[223] **Ann Jones:** Is that not covered under ‘accessible and appropriate public services’?

[224] **Joyce Watson:** I agree that it is, sort of, but will it necessarily be a public service that provides the materials that will give rights-based information? Usually, that would come from outside the public services; it would be the voluntary sector that would usually do that. Accessible procedures to deal with complaints are often dealt with, again, by the voluntary sector, usually by citizens’ advice bureaux. Is accessible healthcare not provided by GP practices and other primary care providers? Is that the public sector? What makes up the public sector? I am not precious about this idea, but I would like us to give it some thought.

[225] **Lynne Neagle:** If you did not want to add all that, you could change the wording to say ‘Please provide examples of good practice, including projects’, and then, presumably, doctors would think about healthcare and send in the information anyway.

[226] **Helen Mary Jones:** Just as long as—[*Inaudible.*]

[227] **Ann Jones:** ‘Please provide examples, including—’. Would that be all right? I see that it would. Does anyone wish to raise anything else on this?

[228] **Michael German:** I had a flash of inspiration again, Chair. The hotel and catering sector as well as the food processing sector should be involved. Therefore, there is another sectoral body of employers that could be useful.

[229] **Ann Jones:** Fine, that will go on to the list of consultees.

[230] **Christine Chapman:** What about sector skills councils? There are specific ones, but what about the umbrella group for the sector skills councils?

[231] **Michael German:** The difference is that the skills councils are responsible for the training, which is useful, but there are also the employers and their experience of employment, which is—

[232] **Angela Burns:** They are the ones that we want to get in.

[233] **Ann Jones:** We can invite both groups, because if training is not being undertaken correctly or accessibly, workers are vulnerable. So, are there any other consultees? If you think of some later, let Claire know and we will add them to the list.

[234] **Michael German:** It will be a case of see you in six years.

[235] **Ann Jones:** No, we will get it done.

[236] **Helen Mary Jones:** We always said that it would be—*[Inaudible.]*

[237] **Ann Jones:** We did.

[238] **Helen Mary Jones:** It will not be like the accessibility inquiry, where we can just—

[239] **Ann Jones:** No, it is a big piece of work. We need to do it properly, and we will see where we go from there.

11.14 a.m.

### **Cymryd Rhan yng Nghyfarfodydd y Pwyllgor Participation at Committee Meetings**

[240] **Ann Jones:** We will move on to the last item on our agenda, which is participation at committee meetings. You will remember that the background to this was whether the Equality and Human Rights Commission and other standing invitees would be allowed to attend committee. We sought clarification on the attendance and participation of non-Assembly Members at committee meetings, and Gwyn has kindly provided a report. Gwyn, do you wish to add anything to the report?

[241] **Mr Griffiths:** I do not think so, but I am happy to respond to any questions or points.

[242] **Ann Jones:** Are there any points on the paper?

[243] **Helen Mary Jones:** The paper is very useful and clarifies what we can and cannot do. It is clear that we cannot have standing invitees as we did before, because they participated as members of the committee in that they asked questions directly to the witnesses. Gwyn's point about privilege is important in that regard, particularly if we begin to undertake controversial work. Standing Order No. 10.44 says:

‘Committees may invite any person to attend meetings for the purpose of giving evidence, or providing advice’.

[244] The question is whether or not we want to have someone from the commission to provide advice to the committee on a regular basis. I can see advantages and disadvantages to that. One of the things that was very useful before was that we would have submissions from the Government and other public bodies and, in an informal pre-meeting, the then three commissions would be able to say, ‘That is what is in the Minister’s paper, but our information is that that is not happening’, or, ‘That is what this public body is telling you, but we are in the process of taking action against it’. The standing invitees did not ask the questions, but we had direct information that enabled us to be more challenging and to take a stronger line.

[245] Rather than making a binding decision today, perhaps it would be better if you, Chair, had a discussion with the commission once it is off the ground—at the moment it is just training staff and we do not know how it will be shaped—and tell it what its new, more limited, role would be if you were to invite it to attend regularly to give advice. If the commission thought that that was a useful suggestion, you could then make a recommendation to the committee as to whether or not it would be helpful. It was helpful to have the commission at meetings before but the structures are different now, and I would not want us to waste its time. On the other hand, its advice might be useful. If attending the meetings is not deemed to be useful, perhaps we could, because the commission will monitor the committee’s papers, set up a system that allows it to e-mail Members with its concerns about the evidence that we are given. So, there may be different ways of doing it.

[246] **Ann Jones:** We have given a lot of thought to this issue, and I have spoken to Claire and Gwyn about it. I remember the helpful contributions made by the commission, but we are now in a different situation. If we are to do the scrutiny properly, we must not fall foul of any rules or regulations that would invalidate our work.

[247] I would suggest that we look at when the commission can be invited to our meetings. It will obviously have an opportunity to come to give evidence on whatever issue that we are considering, or we could take advice from it. I was going to suggest that we meet the commission on an informal basis, as Helen Mary suggested, but perhaps not as regularly, to look at the forward work programme so that it can flag-up any problems that it sees. Your idea about the e-mail is good, but perhaps we could get around the table on an informal basis and see where we go from there—perhaps the answer is that we should suck it and see. The channel of communication would be kept open, but if the commission felt that it wanted to give us evidence or if we thought that it would be useful to have its advice, we could invite it to committee on a formal basis.

[248] **Michael German:** I am sorry to press Gwyn on this matter, but paragraph 3 of his paper does not refer to the representative of the European Commission in Wales, and therefore I assume it is not in the Standing Orders. However, the representative of the European Commission in Wales attends all the meetings of the Committee on European and External Affairs and speaks. Should he be included?

11.20 a.m.

[249] **Mr Griffiths:** I am aware that he attends meetings. The clerk describes him as a regular attendee.

[250] **Michael German:** He is there at every meeting.

[251] **Mr Griffiths:** Well, I am told that he is not coming to the next meeting, for example.

[*Laughter.*] I have explored this in some detail. When he comes, he provides specifically factual information. For example, he will comment on the progress of particular items rather than express a view or give advice.

[252] **Michael German:** He reports on the European Commission's view of issues. I think that what you are looking at here is the Equality and Human Rights Commission having a similar sort of role. It might be a model to think about; it can be taken to the commission.

[253] **Ann Jones:** Are we happy to keep the informal channels open?

[254] **Mark Isherwood:** What Helen Mary said is very similar to what I was going to say. I endorse her proposal, because it would be helpful to find out at this stage what the EHRC thinks. Does it think, for example, that it would be beneficial for it to attend meetings as a regular invitee with an advice-only role? You could come back to notify us of its feeling. The EHRC covers six strands. The other former standing invitee was the Welsh Language Board. Will we take the same approach with the board or not?

[255] **Ann Jones:** We need to look at that. I received an e-mail from Kate Bennett, who tells me that they are settling into their temporary new home and that she is concerned that the standing invitees are no longer on the committee in the same way. She goes on to refer to the last committee meeting on access to polling stations and migrant workers, and says that she would have expected us to have consulted with the standing invitees on those issues. However, we have covered that ourselves. She also says that she feels that we should not lose this valuable experience—I do not want to lose it, but we are constrained by the Standing Orders. If there is a way around it, whereby we can meet as a committee with her and possibly the other standing invitees, such as the Welsh Language Board, which Mark mentioned, we perhaps need to put that on a formal informal setting. We could meet during Plenary during Government business time on a Tuesday, rather than try to fit it into a schedule that is already full. I am happy to explore with the secretariat how we can do that, while not falling foul of the Business Committee or Standing Orders.

[256] **Helen Mary Jones:** That seems to be a sensible approach, particularly given that the commission is in the process of being set up. I wish to put on record that the intention, and the assurance that was given to the former committee, was that Standing Orders would be written in such a way that we would be able to have the standing invitees if we so chose, although I am not saying that that would be the case. A bit further down the line, when we have seen how this works, we may want to request a change in Standing Orders. The idea was that there was an acknowledgement that the Committee on European and External Affairs and this committee had operated differently from other committees and that that ought to be able to carry on. Somewhere in the process, that has obviously got lost.

[257] **Michael German:** Except that it is—[*Inaudible.*]—Committee on European and External Affairs, which is in the Standing Orders.

[258] **Helen Mary Jones:** I am just saying that, six months down the line, we may want to go back to the Business Committee. If everyone agreed, I am sure that we could secure a change to the Standing Orders, if needed.

[259] **Ann Jones:** The Standing Orders allow us to ask the Equality and Human Rights Commission to come in to give us advice whenever we think that is appropriate. So, that channel is still open in the Standing Orders, and it is about how we develop that. That would be in a formal setting, but we could also try to structure meetings with the commission on a regular basis in an informal setting, to keep those channels open. We should explore how we can do that, and then we can perhaps revisit it if we think that it is not working. Let us give this one a try. Is that okay—is everyone happy with that?

- [260] **Helen Mary Jones:** Yes, that seems fine, as long as—[*Inaudible.*]
- [261] **Joyce Watson:** May I raise a point about the minutes?
- [262] **Ann Jones:** Yes.
- [263] **Joyce Watson:** There is an inaccuracy in item 4—the forward programme. It says:  
‘The Clerk to include Domestic abuse in the forward work programme.’
- [264] The request was not to review domestic abuse; it was to end violence against women in all its forms. It was about female genital mutilation, trafficking, and so on.
- [265] **Ann Jones:** It should have been ‘ending violence against women’.
- [266] **Joyce Watson:** Yes. ‘Domestic abuse’ is not broad enough—it is far too narrow, and we discussed that point.
- [267] **Ann Jones:** Yes, we did. If we looked at the transcript, we would probably see that we discussed all that. All right, we will amend the minutes for the next meeting.
- [268] **Angela Burns:** On the minutes again—and it does not have to be amended—we all undertook that we would write to our respective business managers to press for a children’s committee. I just wanted to check what was happening with that.
- [269] **Ann Jones:** We have a children’s committee, do we not?
- [270] **Angela Burns:** Really?
- [271] **Ann Jones:** It is sorted—nominations are being sought from people who would want to sit on a children’s committee.
- [272] **Angela Burns:** That is excellent.
- [273] **Helen Mary Jones:** We can expect the motion to formally establish it before the half-term recess.
- [274] **Angela Burns:** That is brilliant.
- [275] **Bethan Jenkins:** Will that explain how many will be on the committee?
- [276] **Ann Jones:** Yes. I believe that groups have already been asked to submit nominations, have they not?
- [277] **Helen Mary Jones:** Yes, it will be a small committee of five.
- [278] **Ann Jones:** That is one small success. Thank you, everyone.

*Daeth y cyfarfod i ben am 11.26 a.m.  
The meeting ended at 11.26 a.m.*