

Campaign for Dark Skies Petition – Supporting Information

"The Campaign for Dark Skies deserves wide support during this special year [2009, International Year of Astronomy]. But it's not just astronomers who want to experience a clear view of the stars, just as it's not just keen ornithologists who would feel deprived if song-birds disappeared from parks and gardens. It's indeed a deprivation if young people living in cities never see a dark starry sky - just as it is if they never see any natural countryside."

**Sir Martin Rees, Astronomer Royal,
at the UK opening of the International Year of Astronomy 2009.**

The Campaign for Dark Skies (CFDS) petition is the culmination of a series of International Year of Astronomy events at the National Assembly for Wales. Members of the Cardiff Astronomical Society (CAS) & CFDS held events to raise awareness of astronomy throughout the year and, in July, held an event in the Senedd. At that event Nick Ramsay AM agreed to host a seminar on light pollution at the Assembly. CAS and CFDS held that event in October and helped raise awareness of light pollution with AMs, Ministers and members of the voluntary sector from across Wales.

The aim of the petition is to persuade the Welsh Assembly Government to tackle light pollution head on, by ensuring that only developments with properly designed lighting are given planning permission. Light pollution has been a growing problem since the 1950s and now less than 10% of the UK's population have an unspoilt view of the night sky as wasted light is blotting out all but the brightest stars in a smog of orange glow. Unfortunately, the once commonplace sight of the beautiful disk of our galaxy stretching overhead is denied to most people. There are children alive today who have never witnessed the magnificent sight of the Milky Way spread across the night sky and will never experience the sense of awe and wonder of the Universe. Thankfully, parts of Wales are free from the blight of wasted light, in fact the UK's centre for monitoring the potential threat to earth from asteroids has moved to Knighton¹ as the skies over Cambridge became too light polluted. It is our aim that these dark skies in Wales will be protected and we hope to reverse the pollution over our cities.

50 years ago Wales saw the creation of the UK's first Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty on the Gower Peninsula; the night sky is also an area of outstanding natural beauty and deserves the same protection. Wales has a chance to take the lead in tackling the problem of wasted light. We are not asking for everywhere to be plunged into darkness just for lighting to be shone where it is needed and wanted. Properly designed lighting delivers light where it is needed, not upwards into the night sky. This is also important from an energy saving standpoint. It is estimated that we waste around £120m per year on street lighting which light up the sky rather than the streets. In total we could be spending up to £1bn in the UK every year on wasted light. A single 100-watt bulb burning for all hours of the night for one year creates a quarter of a ton of carbon dioxide, with world governments trying to agree on how we can halt global warming can we really afford the half a million tonnes of CO₂ it costs us to perpetuate the orange glow above the UK?

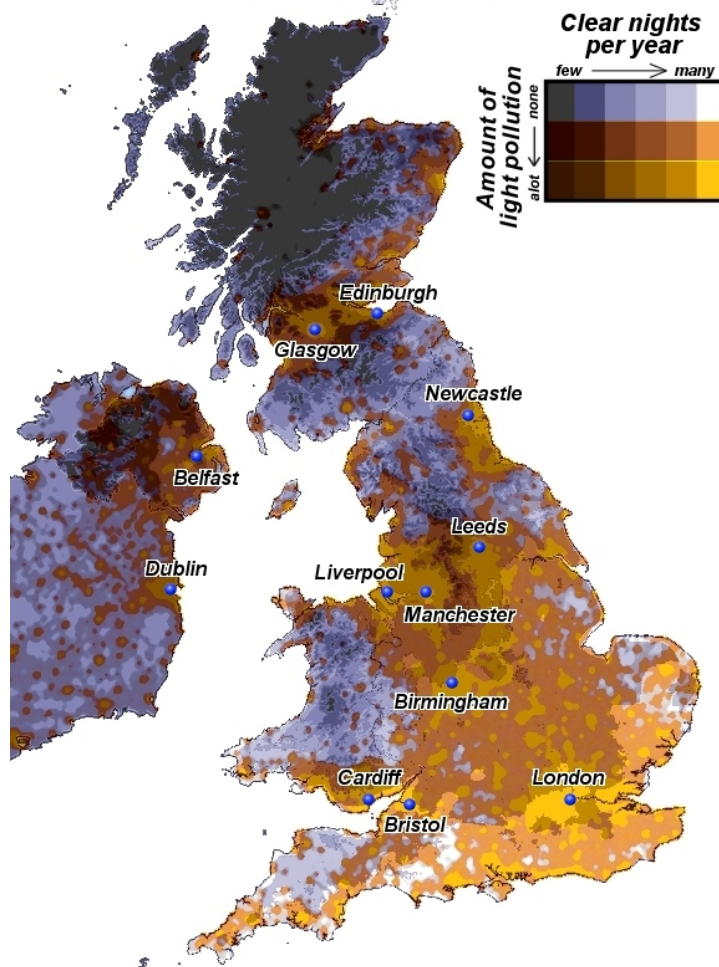
The night sky is part of our environment and needs protecting, the Government must take action before it's too late. We wouldn't stand by and let a 10 lane motorway be built across the Brecon Beacons, so why should we let the wonders of our universe be hidden by an horrendous orange smog?

We need to ensure that future generations will be able to see and appreciate the night sky, to see light from stars that has travelled for billions of years and to share the same sense of awe & amazement that mankind has been experiencing since the dawn of time.

Mark Major
Regional Information Officer (Wales)
Campaign for Dark Skies

¹ <http://news.bbc.co.uk/1/hi/wales/mid/7193928.stm>

The UK's best places to see the rest of our Universe



As you can see, Wales has some of the darkest skies in the UK and some of the most light polluted. The National Assembly for Wales can, through planning guidance, halt the spread of light pollution thus protecting our night environment. Scotland has marketed their dark skies by applying for special Dark Sky² status and as a result hopes to attract over a million visitors a year.

² <http://www.guardian.co.uk/science/2008/dec/23/astronomy-galloway-dark-sky-park>



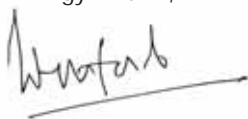
At sylw: pwyllgor rheoli Urdd Gobaith Cymru

Llythyr agored gan Gyngor Cymru ar Alcohol a Chyffuriau Eraill ynglŷn â'r bwriad i ganiatáu gwerthu alcohol ar faes Eisteddfod yr Urdd

- 1** Mae Cyngor Cymru ar Alcohol a Chyffuriau Eraill yn gwrthwynebu bwriad yr Urdd i ganiatáu gwerthu alcohol ar faes Eisteddfod yr Urdd ac yn argymhell y dylai'r Urdd ddileu'r bwriad ar unwaith.
- 2** Mae'r gwrthwynebiad yn seiliedig ar y ffaith mai Gŵyl a gynhelir ar gyfer plant a phobl ifanc ydyw. Prin fod angen eich atgoffa bod y mwyafrif mawr o gystadleuwyr a'u cyfeillion o dan oed yfed.
- 3** Gofynnwn i'r Urdd gydnabod bod yna llinell na ddylid ei chroesi parthed plant a phobl ifanc a'u perthynas ag alcohol, ac i anfon neges i aelodau, eu rhieni a'r genedl nad yw'r Urdd, fel mudiad cyfrifol plant a phobl ifanc, yn barod i groesi'r llinell honno. Mae'n llinell a dynnwyd ar sail tystiolaeth feddygol a chymdeithasol sy'n dod yn gynyddol amlwg yma yng Nghymru ac ar draws y byd "bod gohirio'r oed mae plant yn cael eu cyflwyno i alcohol a chyfyngu ar yr hyn a yfir gan bobl ifanc yn debygol o hybu eu hiechyd a'u ffyniant", (Institute of Health and Society, 2008). Mae'n ffaith frawychus bod plant Cymru yn yr oed 11-15 yn defnyddio mwy o alcohol na phlant o'r un oedran yn yr un wlad arall yn Ewrop. Mae hyn yn amharu ar eu hiechyd, eu rhoi nhw mewn peryglon o bob math ac yn difrodi eu gobeithion am y dyfodol. Mae hyn yn hollol groes i amcanion a bwriadau clodwiw'r Urdd.
- 4** Dylai'r Urdd, fel mudiad sy'n derbyn arian cyhoeddus, weithredu i gadarnhau polisiau'r Cynulliad ar iechyd a ffitrwydd. Rydym yn galw ar yr Urdd i gydymffurfio â pholisi Cadw'n Heini'r Cynulliad. Mae sylw mawr a buddsoddiad sylweddol mewn gwahanol ymgyrchoedd gan y Cyngor Chwaraeon a Her Iechyd Cymru er enghraifft, i annog pobl i gadw'n heini ac i fyw'n iach. Mae'r hyn mae'r Urdd yn ei fwriadu yn tanseilio hyn trwy gadarnhau arferion, megis yfed alcohol, sy'n groes i'r nod o hyrwyddo iechyd a lles. 'Does neb nad yw'n ymwybodol o les plant yn amau bod gwir angen cael plant (ac oedolion) i newid eu patrwm byw, a'u cael i fwyta'n iach a diogelu eu hiechyd. Beth yw cyfiawnhad yr Urdd dros danseilio polisi cyhoeddus?
- 5** Gellid dweud yr un peth am yr angen i'r Urdd gefnogi polisiau gwrthdodi'r Cynulliad. Mae'r Cynulliad ar hyn o bryd yn trafod LCO (Gorchmynion Cymhwysedd Deddfwriaethol) fydd yn rhoi grym statudol i Lywodraeth Cynulliad Cymru ddi-ddymu tlodi plant. Os oes unrhyw beth yn cyfrannu'n sylweddol at dlodi teuluol, ac felly tlodi plant, dibyniaeth ar alcohol yw hynny.
- 6** Dadleuir bod yfed alcohol yn gyfrifoldeb i'r unigolyn ond bydd caniatáu alcohol ar y maes yn anfon neges bwerus i ieuentid a phlant ac felly yn dylanwadu ar eraill. Bydd yn cadarnhau'r neges na all rhieni Cymru na'i hoedolion ifanc, yn nhyb yr Urdd, fwynhau Gŵyl na Hamdden heb orfod cael cyfle i yfed alcohol. Ar hyn o bryd mae'r Urdd yn gosod esiampl wych o barch tuag at y gorau a'r hyn sydd yn ddirchafol yn ein diwylliant a'n gobeithion fel cenedl drwy beidio ag ymwneud mewn unrhyw ffordd ag alcohol. Paham cymryd y cam gwag hwn a darnio'r fath osodiad cadarnhaol?
- 7** Os yw oedolion a rhieni am gael y cyfle i yfed alcohol onid oes digon o fannau trwyddedig eisoes yn bodoli yn nalgylch pob Eisteddfod? Ac os yw mor bwysig â hynny iddynt fel na allant ddygymod â bod heb ddiod alcoholaid ar faes yr Eisteddfod beth y mae hyn yn ei ddweud wrth ein plant am y ddibyniaeth seicolegol sydd gennym fel oedolion ar alcohol? Onid yw'n rhesymol i ofyn i'r oedolion a'r rhieni hynny sy'n gwneud penderfyniadau ym mhwyllgorau'r Urdd - o bawb - sefyll o blaid egwyddorion a nodau'r Urdd a gosod esiampl well?
- 8** Pe symudid ymlaen gyda'r bwriad i werthu alcohol ar faes yr Eisteddfod, ni fyddai na pharch na sylw yn cael ei roi gan ddisgyblion i unrhyw raglen iechyd/cymdeithasol a drefnir fel rhan o gwricwlwm ysgol fydd yn "addysgu" am beryglon alcohol. Y cwestiwn amlwg ac anodd i'r athro fyddai - "Os ydi alcohol mor fgythiol i bobl ifanc yn arbennig, pam felly ei fod ar gael yn Eisteddfod yr Urdd?"

- 9 Mae'r mater hwn wedi ysgogi trafodaeth dros y misoedd diwethaf. Mae'n achos pryder, sut bynnag, mai mudiad ieuencid sydd wedi codi'r testun, gan fod problem goryfed alcohol mor ddifrifol ymhlith y genhedlaeth iau. Byddai gwerthu alcohol gyda bwyd ar faes yr Eisteddfod yn caniatáu plant 16-17 oed i yfed gwin, cwrw a seidr yn gyfreithlon gan roi pwysau ychwanegol ar athrawon a gwirfoddolwyr sy'n arolygu'r plant rheini. Dylid cofio hefyd, nad oes bellach "trwydded i werthu alcohol gyda bwyd" gan mai "trwydded i werthu alcohol" ydyw.
- 10 Mae prif enwadau Cristnogol Cymru, sy'n cynrychioli dros 75,000 o aelodau a phlant – yn eu plith miloedd di-ri o gefnogwyr a gweithwyr selog yr Urdd a'i Eisteddfod – yn gofyn i'r Urdd newid ei feddwl. Ategwyd yr alwad gan unigolion blaenllaw fel Archesgob Cymru, y Parchedigaf Ddr Barry Morgan, aelodau o Gyngor Aml-ffydd Cymru, Y Barnwr Michael Farmer a'r Gwir Anrh. Dafydd Wigley.
- 11 Dylai'r Urdd wyrddroi'r penderfyniad ar sail ei bolisi Diogelwch Plant. Os bwriedir caniatáu yfed alcohol ar y maes yna bydd yr Urdd yn hwyluso'r cyfle i oedolion sydd â gofal dros blant gymryd cyffur sy'n gallu effeithio'n andwyol ar y gallu i wneud penderfyniadau ac i ymateb yn briodol i sefyllfaoedd annisgwyl.
- 12 "Rydym yn tynnu eich sylw at bolisi'r Urdd ei hun: *Mae staff a gwirfoddolwyr yn y sefydliad hwn yn derbyn ac yn cydnabod eu cyfrifoldebau i ddatblygu ymwybyddiaeth o'r materion sy'n gallu peri niwed i blant. Mae'n rhaid i ni gyd ofalu nad yw ein hymddygiad yn achosi pryder, nac mewn perygl o gael ei gamddechongli.*
- 13 Mae'n amlwg, yn ôl y pryderon a godwyd yn y drafodaeth gyhoeddus ar y mater hwn, y gallai gwerthu alcohol ar faes yr Eisteddfod fod yn ymddygiad y gellid ei gamddechongli gan blant fel cymeradwyaeth ac anogaeth i ddefnyddio alcohol.
- 14 Ar y llaw arall, mae yma gyfle i'r Urdd ddatblygu ymwybyddiaeth o'r materion sy'n gallu peri niwed i blant, *trwy ddangos arweiniad cadarn a dewr ar broblem gymdeithasol fawr sydd bellach yn troi'n argyfwng gwirioneddol ymhlith ein pobl ifanc.* Oherwydd y parch eithriadol sy'n perthyn i'r mudiad, ei rwydwaith o aelwydydd a changhennau, a'i statws arbennig mewn ysgolion, mae'r Urdd mewn safle unigryw i helpu diogelu iechyd meddyliol, corfforol ac ysbrydol ein plant.
- 15 Byddai newid meddwl ar y mater hwn yn anfon y neges i blant a phobl ifanc ei bod hi'n bosib mwynhau cyffro a bwrlwm Eisteddfod yr Urdd (ac unrhyw weithgarwch arall) heb alcohol. Ond byddai hefyd yn anfon y neges i'r genedl bod Urdd Gobaith Cymru yn fudiad cyfrifol sy'n rhoi lles plant a phobl ifanc o flaen popeth arall.
- 16 Credwn y byddai hynny'n cael ei groesawu gan y mwyafrif o gefnogwyr yr Urdd a'r bobl hynny sy'n poeni bod bwriad gwreiddiol y Pwyllgor Rheoli yn un niweidiol. Er lles y mudiad a'n plant, erfyniwn arnoch i newid eich meddwl.

Yn gywir iawn,



WYNFORD ELLIS OWEN

Prif Weithredwr



DENZIL I JOHN

Cadeirydd

Ilyfryddiaeth

INSTITUTE OF HEALTH AND SOCIETY AT NEWCASTLE UNIVERSITY, (2008).

Impact of Alcohol Consumption on Young People: A Review of Reviews. *Commissioned by Department for Children, Schools and Families (DCSF)- Tender No: eor/sbu/2008/007*

yn hyrwyddo dewis a byw bywyd cyfrifol

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For the attention of Urdd Gobaith Cymru management committee

Open letter from the Welsh Council on Alcohol and Other Drugs regarding the proposal to permit the sale of alcohol on the Urdd Eisteddfod field.

- 1** The Welsh Council on Alcohol and Other Drugs opposes the Urdd's proposal to permit the sale of alcohol on the Urdd Eisteddfod field and recommends that the Urdd should withdraw this proposal immediately.
- 2** The opposition is based on the fact that it is a Festival for children and young people. You will scarcely need reminding that the great majority of competitors and their friends are under the legal age for alcohol consumption.
- 3** We ask the Urdd to acknowledge that there is a line which should not be crossed regarding children and young people in relation to alcohol, and to send a message to members, their parents and the nation that the Urdd, as a responsible children and young people's movement, is not prepared to cross that line. It is a line that was drawn on the basis of medical and social evidence which is becoming increasingly apparent here in Wales and across the world 'that to postpone the age when children are introduced to alcohol and to restrict young people's consumption is likely to promote their health and well-being'. (Institute of Health and Society, 2008). It is a frightening fact that Welsh 11-15 year-olds drink more alcohol than those of a same age in any other European country. This impairs their health, places them in all sorts of danger and damages their hopes for the future. This is totally against the praiseworthy aims and intentions of the Urdd.
- 4** The Urdd, as a movement which receives public funding, should act to strengthen the Assembly's policies on health and fitness. We call on the Urdd to conform to the Assembly's 'Keep Fit' policy. There has been a great deal of attention and substantial investment by the Sports Council and Health Challenge Wales in various campaigns to encourage people to keep fit and live healthily. The Urdd's proposal undermines all this by reinforcing practices, such as drinking alcohol, which run counter to the aim of promoting health and welfare. No-one who is concerned for the welfare of young people doubts the real need to get children (and adults) to change their life patterns, to eat healthily and safeguard their health. What justification does the Urdd have for undermining public policy?
- 5** The same could be said of the need for the Urdd to support the Assembly's anti-drink campaign. At the moment, the Assembly is discussing an LCO (Legislative Competence Order) which will give statutory power to the Welsh Assembly Government to eradicate child poverty. If anything contributes substantially to family and therefore child poverty, it is alcohol dependency.
- 6** It is argued that the consumption of alcohol is the individual's responsibility but allowing alcohol on the field will send a powerful message to youths and children and will therefore influence others. It will confirm the message that, in the view of the Urdd, neither the parents of Wales nor their young adults can enjoy a Festival or leisure without having the chance to drink alcohol. At present, the Urdd sets an excellent example of respect for the best and most exalted in our culture and our hopes as a nation by having nothing to do with alcohol in any way. Why take this retrograde step and destroy such a positive stance?
- 7** If parents and adults wish to have the opportunity to drink alcohol aren't there already enough licensed premises around the location of every Eisteddfod? And if it's as important as all that to them, so that they can't manage without alcoholic drink on the Eisteddfod field, what does that tell our children about our psychological dependency on alcohol as adults? Isn't it reasonable to ask adults and those who make decisions in Urdd committees – of all people – to make a stand for the principles and aims of the Urdd and set a better example?
- 8** If the decision to sell alcohol on the Eisteddfod field were to go ahead, pupils would pay no respect or attention to any social/health programme organised as part of a school curriculum to 'educate' on the dangers of alcohol. The obvious and difficult question for the teacher will be – 'If alcohol is so dangerous for young people in particular why is it available at the Urdd Eisteddfod?'

- 9 This matter has provoked debate over recent months. It is a matter of concern, however, that it is a youth movement that has raised the issue, since the problem of alcohol misuse has become so serious amongst the younger generation. Selling alcohol with food on the Eisteddfod field would permit 16-17 year-olds to drink wine, beer and cider legally, putting additional pressure on teachers and volunteers who supervise those youngsters. It should also be borne in mind that there is no longer 'a licence to sell alcohol with food' since it is 'a licence to sell alcohol'.
- 10 The foremost Christian denominations, representing over 75,000 members and children – including countless thousand supporters and loyal workers in the Urdd and its Eisteddfod – are calling on the Urdd to change its mind. Adding to the call are prominent individuals such as the Archbishop of Wales, the Most Revd Dr Barry Morgan , members of the Wales Inter-faith Council, Judge Michael Farmer and the Rt Hon Dafydd Wigley.
- 11 The Urdd should overturn the decision on the grounds of their Child Safety policy. If the consumption of alcohol on the field is allowed then the Urdd would enable those adults who have the care of children to take a drug, namely alcohol, which could seriously damage their ability to make decisions and to respond appropriately to unexpected events.
- 12 We draw your attention to the Urdd's own policy: *The staff and volunteers of this institution accept and acknowledge their responsibility in developing awareness of matters which could cause harm to children. We must all take care that our behaviour does not cause concern, or be in danger of being misinterpreted.*
- 13 It is evident, given the concerns that have been raised in public debate on this issue, that the sale of alcohol on the Eisteddfod field could be seen as a decision which could be misinterpreted by children as approval and encouragement regarding the use of alcohol.
- 14 On the other hand, there is an opportunity here for the Urdd, by reversing its earlier decision, to *promote awareness of those issues which can harm children*. It will demonstrate strong and courageous leadership over an enormous social problem which is now turning into a real crisis amongst our young people. Because of the exceptional respect accorded to the movement, its network of groups and branches and its special status in schools, the Urdd is uniquely placed to help safeguard the mental, physical and spiritual health of our children.
- 15 A change of mind on this matter would send a message to children and young people that it is possible to enjoy the excitement and buzz of the Urdd Eisteddfod (and any other activity) without alcohol. But it would also send a message to the nation that Urdd Gobaith Cymru is a responsible movement which puts the welfare of children and young people before everything else.
- 16 We believe that that would be welcomed by the majority of Urdd supporters as well as by those people who are concerned that the Management Board's initial proposal is a damaging one. For the good of the movement and our children, we beg you to change your mind.

Yours very truly,



WYNFORD ELLIS OWEN

Chief Executive



DENZIL I JOHN

Chair

bibliography

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promoting choice and responsible living

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The 'efficiency savings' proposed by the Assembly Government will severely damage the quality of university education in Wales which is already suffering the consequences of years of underinvestment and a massive funding gap compared to English universities.

There is no slack within the Welsh university sector to absorb the proposed funding cuts. These cuts will have a catastrophic impact on our students and will result in damage to Welsh higher education from which it will take a generation or more to recover. These cuts would almost certainly trigger unnecessary course closures and the loss of jobs in the higher education sector.

The impending cuts to Welsh universities make no sense given the university sector's crucial role in Wales' economic recovery, particularly at a time when other countries are deliberately choosing to invest in universities as a strategy to recover from the recession.

Now more than ever Wales needs a strong, well-funded university sector, for the future prosperity of Wales. The Assembly's Enterprise and Learning Committee announced recently that for every £1 invested in higher education a further £5 is added to future economic prosperity in Wales. Conversely, for every £1 cut, £5 is lost to the Welsh economy.

We urge the Welsh Assembly Government to follow the example of France, Germany and the US, which have decided to invest in higher education as a strategy for combating the recession. By contrast, the response of the Westminster Government has been staggeringly short-sighted, and if the Welsh Assembly Government follows its lead, the Welsh university sector will be brought to its knees.

Now is the time for the Welsh Assembly to demonstrate its commitment to a properly funded university sector in Wales.