



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

**Y Pwyllgor Deisebau  
The Petitions Committee**

**Dydd Mawrth, 20 Hydref 2009  
Tuesday, 20 October 2009**

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

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

**Aelodau'r pwyllgor yn bresennol**  
**Committee members in attendance**

Michael German	Democratiaid Rhyddfrydol Cymru Welsh Liberal Democrats
Val Lloyd	Llafur (Cadeirydd y Pwyllgor) Labour (Committee Chair)
Janet Ryder	Plaid Cymru (yn dirprwyo ar ran Bethan Jenkins) The Party of Wales (substitute for Bethan Jenkins)

**Swyddogion y Cynulliad yn bresennol**  
**Assembly officials in attendance**

Alun Davidson	Clerc Clerk
Joanest Jackson	Cynghorydd Cyfreithiol Legal Adviser
Andrew Minnis	Dirprwy Glerc Deputy Clerk

*Dechreuodd y cyfarfod am 9.33 a.m.*  
*The meeting began at 9.33 a.m.*

**Cyflwyniad, Ymddiheuriadau a Dirprwyon**  
**Introduction, Apologies and Substitutions**

[1] **Val Lloyd:** Good morning and welcome to this morning's meeting of the Petitions Committee. There are just a few housekeeping issues. Please turn off all your mobile phones and such devices. We are not expecting a fire alarm, so if you hear one, please take action straight away—the exit is to my left. I remind everybody that you can hear the translation on channel 1 of the headsets and that there is amplification on channel 0.

9.34 a.m.

**Deisebau Newydd**  
**New Petitions**

[2] **Val Lloyd:** We have two new petitions this morning. The first one, P-03-252, relates to opposing RAF St Athan's northern access road. It is from the Boverton residents. We have already had a petition that covers substantially the same ground, so I propose that this petition be considered alongside the previous one, P-03-227, on the access road in Llanmaes. Is everybody in agreement?

[3] **Michael German:** I second that.

[4] **Val Lloyd:** The petition calls upon the National Assembly

[5] 'to urge the Welsh Government to amend its plans for the proposed Defence Technical Academy at St Athan so that no northern access road is constructed and that the green field sites at Tremain's Farm, Picketston and Eglwys Brewis are preserved. This would take into account the views of 95% of the 395 individuals consulted in Boverton.'

[6] What would Members like to do with this petition?

[7] **Michael German:** I suggest that we do what we normally do, which is to contact the relevant Ministers in relation to the proposals to deal with traffic movements. I presume that those Ministers would be the Deputy First Minister and Minister for the Economy and Transport and the First Minister, who have both been involved in this.

[8] **Val Lloyd:** We could also provide the petitioners with a copy of the letter that we have already received, as the issue is very similar. Thank you.

[9] I welcome Janet Ryder, who is substituting for Bethan Jenkins. I apologise for not doing so at the start of the meeting.

[10] **Michael German:** While we are considering this petition, which I think is perfectly reasonable, I would like to draw your attention to a practice that we adopted some time ago when we have one signature on a proper petition and another 377 signatures, say, on another petition. People will collect signatures for a petition, then realise that they can submit it and then have it on another piece of paper. So, I think that we should record that, when people realise that they must do it in a particular way, but they have already done it another way, we do our best to accommodate them.

[11] **Val Lloyd:** Thank you for reminding me of that, because it is an issue for us to make the process as straightforward as possible, and thereby encourage people to come to the Petitions Committee—although we are not usually short of customers.

[12] We now move to the second new petition, P-03-253, on the adoption of private sewers, which has come from Carmarthenshire residents. The petition was raised by Tracy Thomas and collected 260 signatures. It calls on the Assembly Government to

[13] ‘speed up negotiations with Welsh Water and agree the earliest possible date for all private sewers on existing housing estates to be adopted by Welsh Water’.

[14] This is not just a problem for these residents; it also occurs in different parts of the country with regularity.

[15] **Michael German:** Could I suggest two things, Chair? One is to write to Jane Davidson to find out the progress on the adoption of private sewers in housing estates, and the sewage proposals not just with Welsh Water but with Severn Trent Water, because it is also active in Wales. I wonder whether we could get the Members’ research service to issue a briefing note on the matter itself because, just like the adoption of private roads or lanes, it is a matter that keeps coming up. Perhaps we could have a background note on how it has all occurred, how it has worked and what the problems are.

[16] **Val Lloyd:** I think that that is an excellent idea. I do not know about you, but I have heard about these issues from my constituents. There is a likelihood of us getting more petitions on this issue, so it would be just as well to be really well informed about it. I certainly agree with that action.

[17] **Janet Ryder:** I just want to say that, if you do get that briefing note, you make it available to everyone, because I, like you, have had a number of similar issues presented to me. It may be interesting to ask all Members whether they have issues of this nature that they are dealing with and whether they would be prepared to give you the detail of that, although I do not know whether that action goes beyond the remit of this committee. That way, when you write to the Minister, you could present her with a fuller picture of what is happening right across Wales, because this is an issue everywhere.

[18] **Michael German:** To finesse the point, it might be useful for us to write to all Members stating that we have received this petition and that we intend to do x and y, and that it would be very helpful to us if Members could contribute to that discussion.

[19] **Val Lloyd:** Are you happy with that? I see that you are. We have not done that in the past, but it does seem a sensible way forward.

[20] **Michael German:** When we receive another petition on the adoption of private roads, we could do the same thing.

[21] **Val Lloyd:** I think so. These petitions are about very real problems to local residents.

9.40 a.m.

### **Y Wybodaeth Ddiweddaraf am Ddeisebau Blaenorol Updates on Previous Petitions**

[22] **Val Lloyd:** The first update is on petition P-03-172, about restoring the Swansea-Cork ferry, and, as usual, I declare my keen interest in this. The ferry port is in my constituency, and I work with some of the people aiming to restart the ferry. Should there be a vote, I will not be taking part.

[23] We have considered this several times since October 2008, but we have recently had an update from the petitioner telling us that a ship has been purchased and trials have taken place. Funding is still an issue, but the service is scheduled to start in March next year.

[24] **Michael German:** There is not much more that we can do. If the funding issue raises its head again, we need to keep track of that. I have just come from a meeting of the British-Irish Parliamentary Assembly, where this matter was raised by Irish members, who were all of the view that it would happen. So, I think that we can say that the chances of it failing are limited at the moment. However, you never know—these things can come back to hit you with a financial problem.

[25] **Val Lloyd:** I know that, from this end, part of the consortium has been in touch with the financial arm of the Welsh Assembly Government, and is being looked after quite well. However, I cannot pre-judge the outcome.

[26] **Michael German:** We need to keep track of it.

[27] **Val Lloyd:** We could ask the petitioners to keep us up to date.

[28] **Michael German:** When the service is launched on 1 March, can we have a joint statement from the National Assembly for Wales and the Dáil Eireann saying that this Petitions Committee has done its job in getting the ferry restored?

[29] **Val Lloyd:** Perhaps it could sail out with a banner stating that. [*Laughter.*]

[30] The next one is P-03-205, on keeping Abergavenny livestock market, and there is a considerable amount of literature on this. It was first considered in May of this year, and now we have updates from Abergavenny Market Auctioneers Ltd., the Farmers' Union of Wales and the National Farmers' Union Cymru, which are included among your papers. The clerk has helpfully included a summary paper, which I found useful—I would like to record my thanks for that.

[31] **Michael German:** I would like to declare, not an interest exactly, but, as a local Member, I attended a meeting with these bodies—the Abergavenny auctioneers and the farmers’ unions. There was debate about this petition, and although I did not give an opinion, I said that it was the right thing to do to send this material, and that is what they were intent on doing. So their position is now clear, but we need to ensure that the Minister considers whether an amendment to the Acts would be more appropriate than repeal. We could also ask the Minister to let us know as soon as he has a formal request from the local authority to either repeal the Acts or amend them. We ought to know the scope of the consultation, when he comes to it, as well. Since these are very unusual Acts; it might be useful if we could find out what would happen once he gets the call.

[32] **Val Lloyd:** I think that that is eminently sensible. Janet, are you content?

[33] **Janet Ryder:** Yes, as long as the groups that have contacted you are kept informed.

[34] **Val Lloyd:** Yes, that is our usual practice, but thank you for reminding us, and letting us know your view. There is quite a lot of paperwork to move forward on.

[35] The next update is on the petitions to abandon the badger cull, P-03-213 and P-03-235. Again, this issue was first considered in May of this year, and we have considered it at three previous meetings. I think that we are now in the position of just needing to wait for a response from the Minister, unless anyone can suggest anything else. The Minister’s statements are among our papers. Is the Minister due to say anything on this, because I have received an inordinate number of e-mails this morning relating to the subject?

[36] **Michael German:** The petitioners probably know by now that a process is going through the Assembly; otherwise, they would not be sending us such a large number of e-mails. However, to take a belt-and-braces approach, perhaps we should inform the people who submitted the petition of that process, just to ensure that they know about it.

[37] **Val Lloyd:** There was a huge number of signatures—more than 14,000. It was raised by the Secret World Wildlife Rescue.

[38] **Michael German:** Is there a debate in Plenary this week?

[39] **Val Lloyd:** I have not looked at the agenda.

[40] **Michael German:** Neither have I, but a debate on this matter is coming up.

[41] **Val Lloyd:** There must be, given the number of e-mails we have received.

[42] **Michael German:** A motion has been proposed to annul the Tuberculosis Eradication (Wales) Order 2009, so there will be a debate on this matter. Undoubtedly, the petitioners will have a chance to listen to that. We just need to inform them that the debate is taking place.

[43] **Val Lloyd:** I see that Members are happy with that.

[44] The final petition for us to look at today is P-03-227 on the access road in Llanmaes. I referred to this at the beginning of the meeting, because a new petition has come in and we have agreed to consider them together. I suggest that we write to the petitioners to let them know the Deputy First Minister’s response and to ask for their views on that. Is there anything else? I see that there is not, so that brings us to the end of today’s meeting. I thank everyone for attending and Janet Ryder for substituting for Bethan Jenkins.

*Daeth y cyfarfod i ben am 9.47 a.m.*  
*The meeting ended at 9.47 a.m.*