



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

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

**Dydd Llun, 22 Mawrth 2010
Monday, 22 March 2010**

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

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

Aelodau'r pwyllgor yn bresennol
Committee members in attendance

Eleanor Burnham	Democratiaid Rhyddfrydol Cymru Welsh Liberal Democrats
Helen Mary Jones	Plaid Cymru (Cadeirydd y Pwyllgor) The Party of Wales (Committee Chair)
Sandy Mewies	Llafur Labour

Eraill yn bresennol
Others in attendance

Mandy Davies	Gwirfoddolwr Prosiect, Iwth Pen Project Volunteer, Iwth Pen
Jamie Digwood	Cyfarwyddwr Pêl-droed Clwb Pêl-droed y Rhyl Director of Football, Rhyl Football Club
Lee Jones	Rheolwr Datblygu Cymunedol, Rhyl FC FITC Community Development Manager, Rhyl FC FITC
Shane Owen	Rheolwr Prosiect, Grŵp Gweithredol Ieuenctid y Rhyl Project Manager, Rhyl Youth Action Group
Val Owen	Gwirfoddolwr Prosiect, Iwth Pen Project Volunteer, Iwth Pen

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

Sarah Bartlett	Dirprwy Glerc Deputy Clerk
Abigail Phillips	Clerc Clerk
Helen Roberts	Cynghorydd Cyfreithiol Legal Adviser
Siân Thomas	Gwasanaeth Ymchwil yr Aelodau Members' Research Service

Cynhaliwyd y cyfarfod yn Neuadd y Dref, y Rhyl.
The meeting was held in Rhyl Town Hall.

Dechreuodd y cyfarfod am 10.03 a.m.
The meeting began at 10.03 a.m.

Cyflwyniad, Ymddiheuriadau a Dirprwyon
Introduction, Apologies and Substitutions

[1] **Helen Mary Jones:** Bore da, gyfeillion. Croesawaf bawb i'r cyfarfod hwn o Bwyllgor Plant a Phobl Ifanc y Cynulliad yn y Rhyl. Diolch i bawb sydd wedi gwneud yr holl drefniadau—staff y Cynulliad, neuadd y dref a'r lleoedd eraill y byddwn yn ymweld â nhw.

Helen Mary Jones: Good morning, colleagues. I welcome everyone to this meeting of the Assembly's Children and Young People Committee in Rhyl. I thank those who have made the arrangements—the staff of the Assembly, the town hall and the other places that we will visit.

[2] Atgoffaf bawb fod croeso i chi I remind everyone that you are welcome to

ddefnyddio'r Gymraeg a Saesneg. Mae offer cyfieithu ar gael, ac mae'n bosibl eu defnyddio er mwyn sicrhau eich bod yn clywed yn well. Atgoffaf bawb sy'n cymryd rhan yn y cyfarfod—aelodau staff, tystion a phawb sydd yn y gynulleidfa—i ddiffodd unrhyw ffonau symudol, 'mwyar duon', *paggers* ac yn blaen. Nid yw'n ddigon i'w rhoi ar 'dawel' oherwydd gallant amharu ar yr offer cyfieithu a'r offer darlledu. Os clywn y larwm tân, bydd y staff yn ein tywys o'r ystafell.

use Welsh or English. Interpretation equipment is available, which can also be used to amplify the sound. I remind everyone taking part in the meeting—members of staff, witnesses and everyone in the audience—to switch off any mobile phones, BlackBerrys, pagers and so on. It is not enough to put them on 'silent' because they can interfere with the interpretation and broadcasting equipment. If the fire alarm sounds, members of staff will lead us out of the room.

[3] A oes gan Aelodau unrhyw ddatganiadau o fuddiant o dan Reol Sefydlog Rhif 31? Gwelaf nad oes.

Do Members have any declarations of interest to make under Standing Order No. 31? I see that there are none.

[4] Yr ydym wedi derbyn ymddiheuriadau gan Angela Burns a Joyce Watson. Nid oes dirprwyon.

We have received apologies from Angela Burns and Joyce Watson. There are no substitutes.

10.04 a.m.

Ymchwiliad i Fannau Diogel i Gymdeithasu—Casglu Tystiolaeth Inquiry into Safe Places to Hang Out—Evidence Gathering

[5] **Helen Mary Jones:** I thank Shane Owen for joining us. Shane is the project manager for the Rhyl Youth Action Group. I understand that we should congratulate you on the birth of your first baby. You were kind enough to help us to organise all this while you were still on paternity leave. We are really grateful to you; thank you.

[6] Thank you for joining us, and thank you for all the written information about the project that you have already given us. I was going over that again last night, and I think that we are going to have trouble keeping to the time, because there are so many different things going on. If Members are content, I will ask Shane to begin by saying a few things about the project. Perhaps you could focus particularly on the leisure side, although, from reading about it, I know that one thing about the project is that everything is very joined up, so I am sure that you will talk about other aspects. Then we will go straight to questions if that is okay with everybody. Are you okay with that, Shane?

[7] **Mr Owen:** Yes.

[8] **Helen Mary Jones:** That is great. Thanks again for being with us. Do you want to begin?

[9] **Mr Owen:** To give you a bit of background first, the Rhyl Youth Action Group has been going for about four years now. It is presently a limited company with charitable aims. Until October last year, all the directors were young people between the ages of 14 and 25. However, with Companies House changing the law, we lost everyone under 18 as a director. So, we have formed a new sub-group, and we have temporary directors from a number of different agencies around Rhyl. The youth committee sits as a sub-group below the directors. We have about 1,200 members, who are young people who have used the services. Every year, we do something called 'No Frills', where we train a group of young people as consultants. They then go out into the community to interview other young people about their priorities for the town, how funding should be spent, what they like and what they do not like.

From that information, we build a business plan and run our projects.

[10] One of our current projects is the youth cafe, which is a social and leisure activity. It is very similar to a statutory youth club, but, in order to run it, young people have to volunteer. So they will come in and do some training on child protection, health and safety, food hygiene and so on. Then, they have to volunteer alongside our staff in order to open up the facility, which at present is open Monday to Saturday every week. We usually get about 50 to 60 young people coming in at night. From the report, you can see that the activities that we do vary from week to week depending on what young people say that they want to do. There is always the agenda of staff to push extended entitlement and some sort of informal learning while young people are there, but most of the activities are really about them hanging out with their friends and having somewhere safe to go.

[11] Healthy eating sessions are run on Tuesdays and Thursdays. Seven or eight young people will cook a meal for everyone else in the facility at the time and then serve food to them. They take it in turns every week to do that. That came about as a result of what we saw as child poverty—young people were coming out from the house straight after school and their parents had given them 20p and told them not come home until 9 p.m., so we buy in food from supermarkets and we run it as a healthy eating activity. There are pool tables, internet access and PCs, as well as the massive dance machines that you get in arcades. Everything that we have has been bought as a result of consultation with young people. With the dance machines, for example, we found that a lot of young people were taking money from their parents or bullying each other and taking money off each other, and one of the reasons they were doing it was so that they could go up to the promenade and put a pound into these machines. So, it was easier for us to buy a dance machine and set it to free play. That pretty much wiped that out. So, our youth cafe is one project.

[12] We have loads of projects. We have something called YouthBank. We train young people as a grant-making body and they distribute Welsh Assembly Government grants of up to £4,000 in Rhyl for environmental projects. The idea is that it is a red-tape-busting grant scheme where young people in the community prioritise what they think is important. This approach takes away all the nightmares that you would usually associate with a group of young people that might not have a constitution or any formal training. It enables them to do something in the community.

[13] We have residential courses with Coleg Harlech Workers' Educational Association. We usually take about 15 or 20 young people away over a weekend. It is really all about independent living skills. They split into groups of two or three and, for the day, their job might be to cook meals for the rest of the group, plan activities for them, wash up, do laundry or take on what I suppose you would call parenting roles for the rest of the group.

10.10 a.m.

[14] We have a youth information service, which is open at night when young people can come in and have free access to telephone calls. Two youth and community workers—youth information workers—are based there. The Menter Iaith, which is a Welsh language promotion group, is also there. Social services also come in. Therefore, a mass of organisations come in. It enables us to engage further with young people. A young person can leave his or her mobile phone number with us. There is a list of the 10 entitlements and, under each section, they can tick if they are interested in it; therefore, if a course comes up at the local college around motor vehicles and they have ticked that they are interested in training, we can send them a text saying that this activity is on, when it is on, and who they have to contact. They can just reply to the infoshop, come in, make a telephone call from there to book themselves onto any sort of course or programme that is running.

[15] We have the Rhyl alcohol prevention programme, which is a detached programme where we seek out young people who might be hanging around on the streets and drinking. It is just about intervention, looking at offering the young people who are hanging around drinking an alternative to being on the streets and trying to find a place for them to go. It is probably not working as well as it could, because we find it very expensive to hire local facilities, particularly sporting and leisure facilities. At present, we cannot get any sort of discounts from the local authorities and, as a group, we only have a set budget that we can spend.

[16] I do not want to go on for too long. That is very brief.

[17] **Helen Mary Jones:** That is a great introduction, Shane. I am sure that you will be able to pick up on some of the other things that I am sure that you are dying to tell us through the questions. Is that okay?

[18] **Mr Owen:** Yes, that is great.

[19] **Helen Mary Jones:** We will therefore move on. The first question is from me. In the written information that you sent to the committee, you explain that Rhyl Youth Action Group currently has over 1,100 members. Can you tell us more about the types of things that might get in the way of these young people having safe places to hang out in their home areas? What sort of problems are they encountering? I know that it is a big question.

[20] **Mr Owen:** The biggest issue is probably cost. I am sure that it is the same around Wales, but in Rhyl and with the young people with whom we work, poverty is a massive issue. Access is another issue. There is a specialist youth gymnasium on the promenade in Rhyl that none of the young people we work with can afford even though they are the ones who would probably benefit the most from going there and being able to access the facilities. That is one end; the other end is probably bullying and fighting between young people. It is definitely something that we have been trying to tackle for months. Perhaps it is only an issue with the young people we work with, but the role models are completely wrong. The parents are not acting as responsible role models, and they are not seen in the wider community or in the mass media.

[21] **Helen Mary Jones:** You also mentioned the cost of using local authority facilities. Therefore, it is not only the case that they cannot get access to some of the private facilities, even some of the local authority facilities are beyond what they can afford themselves, or sometimes what you can afford as a group.

[22] **Mr Owen:** There are various opportunities. For example, there is a skate park on the promenade. Much of the criticism that comes back from that is around lighting and shelter. Little shelters have been built there, but they are all perforated, and because they are on the promenade, the wind just goes straight through. So, the young people do not want to sit in the shelters and they have no control of the lighting. Therefore, as soon as it gets dark, they move away from there. Those are massive problems, really, that could be addressed quite easily.

[23] **Helen Mary Jones:** Sandy has the next question.

[24] **Sandy Mewies:** With your permission, Chair, as you have alluded to a couple of things in my question, and you have mentioned something in another question that I have, perhaps I could broaden my question out slightly. The Chair was talking to you about how cost was a factor for young people in Rhyl in accessing youth clubs, in particular, and other local authority provision. You have said that it is difficult. I will round-up with a question in the end. We are concerned to find out what is stopping young people from benefiting from the sort of youth provision and other provisions that you make. I must congratulate you on the

range of what you are doing. However, looking at other evidence that we have had in the past, I guess that what I want to know is whether you want to be sustainable. You need to be sustainable to continue to provide the service for the future. I understand that you charge a small amount for some services, but you can come back on that in a minute. You also say in your evidence that you need more core funding for more workers. How will you balance the sustainability of having the money to provide the services that you provide now in the future? You have been going for a good while now; you have spread your nets and you are providing good services. So, how will you ensure that you remain sustainable and do not remain entirely reliant on grants and other funding? What is the way forward?

[25] **Mr Owen:** First, all our facilities are free; we never charge young people anything. The only time that they ever pay for anything is if they want to buy food on a normal night in the youth cafe, apart from on a Tuesday and Thursday when healthy food is given away for free. However, they only pay what it costs us to go to buy the food. For instance I think that it is 5p for some toast and 15p for a jacket potato. All our activities and facilities are free to young people. The way that we make money is by targeting regeneration strategies or other things that are happening in Rhyl. For example, last year we took a Welsh Council for Voluntary Action mortgage on an empty building, and we were match-funded by some Welsh Assembly loans and grants from a number of different organisations. That building has three flats upstairs that young people can rent off us in partnership with Nacro Cymru Rhyl Supported Housing.

[26] **Sandy Mewies:** Is that part of your sustainability plan?

[27] **Mr Owen:** The money that comes in from the flats covers the cost of the WCVA mortgage. We are looking to take on many more derelict properties in west Rhyl, but that will take time. On the ground floor, we have many offices, and we charge rent to agencies that are able to provide services to the young people who we work with. So, we have a symbiotic relationship. The Prince's Trust, Want to Work, Working Links, SERCO, Rathbone, and other large national youth engagement groups rent office space from us, as well as regeneration groups. The money that we make enables us to run our youth cafe and projects that engage with young people. Those young people then engage with those organisations, which saves them marketing money in trying to find young people. So, everything feeds itself.

[28] It has taken time to build up and it has been difficult because many of the organisations that we have in there are all competing for the same pots of money. However, many of them have now started to see, particularly with DWP contracts, that they are able to work together and reach the same sort of goal. So that is what has been happening with RYAG. Our building just down the road is being rebuilt now and we are building nine more office spaces for more agencies, eight of which were booked before they were even built. So, we have a sustainability plan and we know that, within about three years, we will probably bring in 70 per cent to 80 per cent of all our costs, from core to staffing—

[29] **Sandy Mewies:** I was looking for a budget sheet in the annual report, which we have just received. Is there one in there?

[30] **Mr Owen:** No there is not, but RYAG as an organisation will have one. That information can be sent to you, along with some cash flow figures for the next 12 months. So, within three years, we will have about 80 per cent of our core costs.

[31] **Sandy Mewies:** That is what I was trying to get at. I am interested in your point about competing organisations like DWP because that is really the way forward. So, the organisations that are taking tenancies are very much overlapping organisations, are they not?

[32] **Mr Owen:** Yes, they are.

[33] **Helen Mary Jones:** Thank you. That was useful.

[34] Eleanor, chi sydd â'r cwestiynau nesaf. Eleanor, you have the next questions.

[35] **Eleanor Burnham:** Y peth cyntaf yr hoffwn ddweud ydyw, 'Waw, mae hyn yn ffantastig'. Da iawn chi. Fel Aelod rhanbarthol, hoffwn ymweld â chi. Yn anffodus, ni allaf ddod ar ôl y cyfarfod, oherwydd mae'n rhaid imi adael ar ôl y pwyllgor ffurfiol.

Eleanor Burnham: The first think that I want to say is, 'Wow, this is fantastic'. Very well done. As a regional Member, I would like to come to visit you. Unfortunately, I cannot come after the meeting because I must leave immediately after this formal meeting.

10.20 a.m.

[36] Cyn imi fynd i'r Cynulliad, yr oeddwn yn gwneud gwaith gyda phobl ifanc a oedd ychydig yn debyg i XL. Yr wyf yn falch o weld eich bod yn defnyddio hwnnw, ac mewn tua pythefnos byddwn yn cwrdd yn y Rhyl eto i drafod XL. Mae'n debyg y byddwch yno, felly edrychaf ymlaen at siarad gyda chi eto, oherwydd mae hyn yn wych.

Before I went to the Assembly, I did some work with young people that was quite similar to XL. I am glad to see that you use that, and we will be meeting again in Rhyl in about two weeks' time to discuss XL. It is likely that you will be there, so I look forward to speaking with you again, because this is fantastic.

[37] Yr ydych yn crybwyll diffyg cyfleusterau, ac yr ydych yn dweud bod angen rhagor o bethau i'w gwneud, bod angen gwneud y Rhyl yn fwy diogel, a bod angen glanhau sbwriel a gwastraff ac yn y blaen. Yr ydych yn sôn hefyd am broblemau gyda chyffuriau ac alcohol. Sylwaf o'r graff yn ffigur 5 bod y problemau sbwriel bron iawn â bod yn waeth na phroblemau yn ymwneud â chyffuriau ac alcohol, ac mae hynny'n drist. Ers ichi ysgrifennu eich adroddiad gwych, a oes unrhyw beth wedi gwella yn eich barn chi?

You mention the lack of facilities, and say that there needs to be more things to do, that Rhyl needs be made safer and that the town needs to be cleaned of litter and rubbish. You also mention problems regarding drugs and alcohol. I noticed from the graph in figure 5 that the litter problems are almost worse than drug and alcohol-related problems, and that is sad. Since you wrote your fantastic report, has anything improved in your opinion?

[38] **Mr Owen:** We are now undertaking a review, through which we are asking young people what they believe, and we should have the results in a couple of weeks. We hope that things have improved. In relation to the three things at the top of the list in the 'No Frills' consultation, on alcohol and drugs, our Rhyl alcohol prevention project—RAPP—stemmed from that. It involves detached youth workers going out and engaging with young people who are drinking. I think that number 2 was about seagulls—

[39] **Eleanor Burnham:** I was going to ask you about that. Are you going to take a pot shot at them or what?

[40] **Mr Owen:** As a group, we could not do anything, so we pressured the Rhyl City Strategy to do something. You have probably seen the reference in the papers to the hawks project, which involves a couple of guys and young people going around with hawks, which scare off the seagulls. That is being funded through intermediate labour markets and the WCVA.

[41] **Eleanor Burnham:** Have you spoken to anyone in authority about the correlation between waste food—you talk about rubbish and food that is thrown away, for example McDonald's meals, although I apologise if anyone from McDonald's is here—and the seagull issue? It is not just an issue in Rhyl; it is an issue in Wrexham, which is not by the sea.

[42] **Mr Owen:** We have approached Denbighshire County Council on a number of occasions to try to run projects. It is probably not the most receptive in relation to how we deliver. We have been working with the police and the fire service. Young people have been doing massive 'litter-picks' and street clean-ups, and that has been going on for about six months now. There is a group of young people called West Rhyl Marshals, who work with the police and the fire service. They pick a street every couple of months, and walk up and down the street. The police and the fire service will knock on the door and speak to parents and young people. The police might give them advice about security and the fire service might give them advice about fire alarms or ask if they want to have them fitted, while the young people help to clear their gardens. We also have a gardening project whereby a bank of young people go out with a lawn mower and strimmer to cut the grass of anyone who is disabled or who is a pensioner and who is facing a fine from a local authority because their gardens are not being tidied—well, that is how it started. In return, the young people get a cup of tea and some biscuits.

[43] We have done a mass of work. As I mentioned before, our YouthBank involves distributing grants. We have given grants out to groups from schools such as Ysgol Tir Morfa, Rhyl High School and youth groups from elsewhere. We have given out about £50,000 or £60,000 in grants to do environmental projects, which have related to anything from creating community gardens, vegetable patches and century gardens—anything that tidies up the local area.

[44] **Eleanor Burnham:** When I took my kids out—I used to call them 'scallywags'—they used to deposit litter and I used to say, 'Who will pay for that to be collected?' Do you think that your work with these youngsters has shown them that they should not put their litter on the floor when they are out and about?

[45] **Mr Owen:** They definitely notice it after they have done their 'litter-picks'. A problem that seems to be simple but that is, in fact, difficult to sort out is that there are not enough bins around. We asked the local authority about that. A YouthBank grant was available for young people to make little wooden bins out of recycled wood and place them all around Rhyl, but we could not get the local authority to come and pick up the rubbish that was in the bins. As a group, we did not have the resources to do it ourselves. So, that did not happen.

[46] **Eleanor Burnham:** After all the terrorism and bombings, bins in public places, such as stations, disappeared. I do not think that there are bins even in the station in Cardiff.

[47] **Helen Mary Jones:** There are none in the stations, but I would not have thought that the terrorist threat is high on the agenda in Rhyl, although I could be wrong.

[48] **Eleanor Burnham:** In public places, bins disappeared. However, I am going off on a tangent.

[49] **Helen Mary Jones:** A allwch symud **Helen Mary Jones:** Can you move on to ymlaen i'ch cwestiwn nesaf, os gwelwch yn eiddo? your next question, please?
dda?

[50] **Eleanor Burnham:** I will ask it in Welsh.

[51] Yn eich adroddiad ‘No Frills’, yr ydych yn awgrymu y dylid sefydlu ac ariannu mecanweithiau er mwyn galluogi pobl ifanc i gysylltu’n uniongyrchol â Chyngor Tref y Rhyl, Cyngor Sir Ddinbych a Llywodraeth Cynulliad Cymru. Yr ydych hefyd yn nodi y dylai fod systemau gwell a mwy cynhwysol nag sydd ar gael ar hyn o bryd. Sut ydych yn meddwl y dylai’r systemau cyfranogi presennol gael eu newid i fod yn fwy cynhwysol?

In your ‘No Frills’ report, you suggest that mechanisms should be established and funded to enable young people to make direct contact with Rhyl Town Council, Denbighshire County Council and the Welsh Assembly Government. You have also noted that improved and more inclusive systems should be available than those that are currently in place. How do you think that the current participation systems should be changed to be more than inclusive?

[52] **Mr Owen:** That is a massive question. There is lots of room for improvement in the capacity building of young people before they go to events and are involved. Support, guidance and a bit of work are needed before they go. A number of years ago, we tried to take a group of young people to a YPP meeting and ended up pulling away from it, because it was not young-person friendly. It has changed and improved, over the years, but it seems to be the same with many of the groups that we have been involved in. When we have tried to take young people there, we have asked for change, but people do not seem to be receptive.

[53] **Eleanor Burnham:** When you say people, who exactly do you mean and how can we help, because that is what the inquiry is about?

[54] **Mr Owen:** First, I mean the local authority and local partnerships—everything from the crime and disorder partnerships to what was Communities First, which we do not have any more in west Rhyl, because it was withdrawn by the Assembly Government. Again, young people’s partnerships need to be more young-people friendly. There has been a massive improvement from Denbighshire Children and Young People Partnership over the last two years. Before that—

[55] **Eleanor Burnham:** So, things are improving.

[56] **Mr Owen:** Yes. Things are getting better.

[57] **Helen Mary Jones:** I will bring Sandy in, because she wanted to ask a supplementary question.

[58] **Sandy Mewies:** Quickly, are any of the young people who you know about involved in the Funky Dragon project or do you find that that is not that accessible, because people do not know about it? In addition, are you aware that all Assembly Members have e-mail addresses that are public? I certainly tell young people every time that I visit them in my constituency that I am their Assembly Member and that they should feel free to e-mail me with all sorts of things at different times. Do you encourage people to access services in that way?

[59] **Mr Owen:** The Assembly Member, Ann Jones, comes to the youth café every couple of months and spends the night chatting with young people about what they do. We run a quiz, which is based on who Ann is, what the Assembly is, what it does, how it affects us as a group and what we do.

[60] **Helen Mary Jones:** What about Sandy’s point about Funky Dragon, which is supposed to be the national consultation mechanism for the Assembly Government?

[61] **Mr Owen:** We have not been able to engage with it. That is probably because we are

working with different types of young people. The young people who we are working with do not engage with—I am trying to think of how to say it—

[62] **Helen Mary Jones:** Like it is.

[63] **Mr Owen:** They are the most excluded young people and something like that might be frightening for them. The people who tend to sit on Funky Dragon are sixth formers or preparing to go to university.

[64] **Eleanor Burnham:** It is brilliant. We have all been involved in Funky Dragon. I have done a lot of interviews for it. In addition, do you have a list of your Assembly Members? Whether we like it or not, there is more than one Assembly Member for an area; I am one of your regional Members—

[65] **Helen Mary Jones:** Perhaps we can pursue that matter afterwards. I am keen to move on—I will say this before I ask my next question—so can we try to be shorter with answers and questions? We have another nine questions and 20 minutes in which to cover them. All the supplementary questions have been completely relevant and useful, but there is so much going on that it is hard to get through it.

[66] As Eleanor has pointed out, one of the things that we are looking at is whether young people have the opportunity to be involved in decisions that affect them with regard to safe places in which to spend their spare time. I think that I know the answer to this, and it may be a one-word answer, but is this local authority supporting the young people with whom you work to become more involved in decision making, particularly about leisure opportunities, but also about other things?

10.30 a.m.

[67] **Mr Owen:** They are improving, but there is scope for much more improvement.

[68] **Helen Mary Jones:** Could you tell us briefly what has changed? You say that things are getting better, but could you be specific about how?

[69] **Mr Owen:** One clear thing that has changed is that, up until around six or 12 months ago, we had no relationship whatsoever with the local authority youth service. It would not even speak to us or recognise that we existed as a group. That has completely turned around over the last six to 12 months. We are running joint projects. I meet the lead officer for the Denbighshire youth service every few months just to ensure that everything that we are doing links up, but, before that, we were out on our own.

[70] **Helen Mary Jones:** What brought about that change? Was that a change of personnel or was it that it was obvious that you were not going to go away, so the service would have to engage with you?

[71] **Mr Owen:** We do not know.

[72] **Eleanor Burnham:** I think that it is down to the change in leader, to be honest, and the change in the local authority's chief executive, if I might be so bold.

[73] **Helen Mary Jones:** My question was to Shane, Eleanor.

[74] **Mr Owen:** We do not know what changed. We were completely ignored, but the service then got in touch with us and asked for a meeting and from that point, everything snowballed. We are doing three or four projects together now and we are planning and

looking at how we can share resources. For example, RYAG's minibus gets used by the youth service or our facilities get used by it. The same is true when we do detached work—our workers meet up and run projects between them. That helps us.

[75] I just wanted to go back to the point about enabling young people to engage in the wider structures that are out there. It is not just the fault of those agencies, because it is also our fault, which is to do with the capacity and time of our staff. It is about how much we can get out and do. For the last few years, a couple of young people have sat with the Children's Commissioner for Wales in the Colwyn Bay group who have come through from RYAG. So, we engage as much as we can, but we are limited in what we can do. However, we recognise that improvements are needed at both ends.

[76] **Helen Mary Jones:** That is good to hear. I am sure that Eleanor's point may well be the case—that there has been a change of leadership, which has filtered down into the culture of the organisation. Sandy, it is over to you.

[77] **Sandy Mewies:** You refer in your written evidence to the quality of provision offered by some voluntary groups and say that sometimes inadequate health and safety is built into that provision. I do not know whether you mean the assessment or evaluation. Could you tell us more about those issues? Earlier, you mentioned the very chilly shelters on Rhyl promenade, of which I am aware, but are those the areas that it would be nice to see lit? Where would you like young people to be able to control the lighting? They would not only have to turn the lights on, of course, but have to turn them off.

[78] **Mr Owen:** You can get systems in multi-use game areas, of which there are two in Rhyl, for example, the skate park on the promenade, which include a button that you press to put the light on and after 10 minutes, the light turns itself off. There are such systems in such areas in Cardiff and Merthyr, for example. I do not know how much they cost or how they work, but that can be done. What was your other question?

[79] **Sandy Mewies:** You said that you had concerns about the inconsistency of provision in voluntary groups. Could you expand on that? You also raised the issue of health and safety.

[80] **Mr Owen:** I was a bit concerned about saying that, because I did not want to seem too critical of groups. We are quite fortunate to get visits from many groups in Wales. Around 70 or 80 groups from across Wales have visited RYAG in the last year and half. My point was more about what seems to happen when groups visit us. We end up giving them our health and safety policies and our child protection policies—we are passing on all the things that we have developed to other groups. We think that a system should be in place to support third sector and voluntary groups. There is a great deal of goodwill out there among people to deliver for and support young people in the community, but, sometimes, it is about knowledge, experience and skills.

[81] **Sandy Mewies:** That is the sharing of good practice, but there is a message there.

[82] **Helen Mary Jones:** That is a very clear message, I think. You have already touched on the lighting, have you not, Sandy?

[83] **Sandy Mewies:** Yes, I was very quick.

[84] **Helen Mary Jones:** Eleanor, you are next.

[85] **Eleanor Burnham:** I will be equally quick, because I think that you have answered this question already.

[86] Wrth edrych ar eich tystiolaeth ysgrifenedig, mae'n amlwg eich bod yn gweithio mewn partneriaeth ag ystod eang o sefydliadau eraill yn lleol—a thu hwnt, fel y gwnaethoch grybwyll funud yn ôl. I ba raddau y mae partneriaethau fel y bartneriaeth blant a phobl ifanc—y Ddraig Ffyfinci yw honno, onid yw?

From looking at your written evidence, it is clear that you work in partnership with a wide range of organisations locally—and further afield, as you mentioned a minute ago. To what extent are partnerships such as the children and young people's partnership—that is Funky Dragon, is it not?

[87] **Helen Mary Jones:** Na, nid yw hynny'n bartneriaeth leol.

Helen Mary Jones: No, that is not a local partnership.

[88] **Eleanor Burnham:** Mae'n ddrwg gennyf. I ba raddau y mae partneriaethau fel y bartneriaeth plant a phobl ifanc leol yn gallu gwneud y gwaith mwy strategol a hirdymor o ddatblygu cyfleusterau i bobl ifanc yn eich cymuned?

Eleanor Burnham: Sorry. To what extent are partnerships such as the local children and young people partnership able to undertake the more strategic and long-term work of developing facilities for young people in your community?

[89] **Mr Owen:** On the first point, we definitely work with the partnership, although, again, a couple of years ago that probably did not happen. That might just be about us as a group being recognised. Are you asking about the capacity and the ability to deliver facilities or support?

[90] **Eleanor Burnham:** Yes, and about the planning. Are you involved with that in any way?

[91] **Mr Owen:** We sit on some of the sub-groups, and many of the new evaluation tools that are coming out from the YPP are based on some of the stuff that we have created. There is communication and other things are happening in that respect. As for how they look at sustainability, I do not know and I cannot see how they do, if I am honest.

[92] **Eleanor Burnham:** That is fine—be honest.

[93] **Helen Mary Jones:** Yes, that is what we want.

[94] In the written information that you gave us, you say that a number of the facilities for young people in the area have recently closed because of a lack of revenue funding. We were talking a bit about that before the formal meeting started. Can you tell us about the extent to which the closure of the facilities has impacted on young people?

[95] **Mr Owen:** It has not impacted on them too much, hopefully. A number of groups that deliver for children and young people in west Rhyl specifically have closed over the last six months. RYAG has been able to substitute and to take on those projects and programmes, and we have agreed to carry on delivering them over the next 12 months.

[96] On sustainability, I do not know how we will be able to cope with that. As I mentioned before, there needs to be more groups. There is a lot of talk about duplication, which I am sure is relevant in some areas, but, in Rhyl, we need more groups. We, as a group, are already overwhelmed with the amount of young people who use our facilities, and are struggling to cope with that. However, as other groups close, we do not want to see the projects disappear. There are child activity projects, parent and toddler groups, and so on. There are a number of projects that we are agreeing to manage in the short term, but, as a group, we cannot carry on delivering that. Someone else needs to take that on or a system needs to be put in place, but I do not know what that would be.

[97] **Helen Mary Jones:** Thank you, that is helpful. Sandy, we have touched on your question, but you might want to explore it a bit more with Shane.

[98] **Sandy Mewies:** You talked about the issue of bullying and how it could stop young people from feeling safe when they are out. Can you tell us how serious it is and how you think it can be dealt with? You have already told us about the money, or the bank, but perhaps you would like to expand on other methods.

[99] **Mr Owen:** I am probably not the expert on that; the staff who work at our facilities probably are. I know that they have a number of ways of doing so, which vary depending on who they are dealing with.

[100] **Sandy Mewies:** Perhaps you could write in—

[101] **Mr Owen:** Yes. I could send some information to you. An issue that comes up a lot at team meetings is that we do not want to exclude young people. There might be one or two young people who are being an absolute nightmare, and the easy option would be to exclude them, because the rest of the young people would then all want to come in. However, as soon as we do that, we are losing what RYAG was about when it was developed: trying to engage with everyone. So, we would lose the core of what our group is about. The truth is that I do not know. We would need some guidance from someone else on how we are supposed to deal with this. We are just managing chaos at the minute, and I would say that it is definitely getting worse.

[102] **Helen Mary Jones:** I think that most people who work with children and young people—as someone who used to do that for a living—often feel that they spend a lot of time managing chaos, and there is nothing wrong with that, as long as the chaos is managed.

10.40 a.m.

[103] **Eleanor Burnham:** From one chaotic management to the next—sorry.

[104] Yr ydym wedi cael tystiolaeth gan bobl ifanc sy'n ymwneud â phrosiect y Ddraig Ffyni yn nodi'n glir bod rhai ohonynt yn teimlo'n fwy diogel pan fo oedolion yn eu goruchwyllo. Yr oedd y neges yn glir eu bod yn croesawu goruchwyliaeth, innau gan weithwyr ieuenctid fel chi, gan yr heddlu neu gan oedolion eraill, fel ffordd i leihau bwllo a chadw pobl ifanc yn ddiogel. A fyddai'r bobl ifanc yr ydych yn edrych ar eu hôl, neu'n cydweithio â hwy, o'r un farn? Yr wyf yn gwybod eich bod wedi trafod bwllo yn barod.

We have received evidence from young people involved with the Funky Dragon project that clearly states that some of them feel safer when supervised by adults. There was a clear message that they welcome supervision, either by youth workers like you, by police or by other adults, as a means of reducing bullying and of keeping young people safe. Would the young people whom you look after, or work with, be of the same opinion? I know that you have already discussed bullying.

[105] **Mr Owen:** Yes, 100 per cent. Even when our facilities are closed, young people will come into our building to seek refuge with our staff and talk to them about any bullying that is going on. One problem is what happens to young people when they are away from our supervision, when, inevitably, they are on the streets, on their own or with friends; that is what needs to be looked at and perhaps addressed with some sort of support system.

[106] **Eleanor Burnham:** Would helping people with assertiveness and how to deal with issues when they are out on the streets be of benefit?

[107] **Mr Owen:** Yes, so that they can manage the problem themselves. We can mostly deal with the issue, and control it, when young people are at our facilities, but they are most vulnerable when they are on their own; that support, however it is formed, needs to be there.

[108] **Eleanor Burnham:** You believe that there is a lot of pressure on young people, and that they need additional help when they are not receiving your wonderful support.

[109] **Mr Owen:** Yes. Definitely.

[110] **Helen Mary Jones:** In the youth café annual report, you say that you have been able to demonstrate clearly that your youth projects have had a significant impact on young people's antisocial behaviour and their offending rate. This committee believes that young people should have the right to access safe places where they can spend time with their friends, regardless of the effect that that has on antisocial behaviour, but reducing antisocial behaviour can be a factor in making the case for money from other adults. What sort of evidence do you have on this issue?

[111] **Mr Owen:** We have heard from community support officers and local beat managers that since they have been involved with us, young people have gone from throwing stones at them to be chased—which did happen quite a lot—to having games of pool in the youth café, or going out for the street cleanups. Relationships have grown with the 10 to 15 young people who have been thorns in their side; that is the information that is coming back from them.

[112] **Helen Mary Jones:** Is that coming from the front line of the police service?

[113] **Mr Owen:** Yes.

[114] **Helen Mary Jones:** That is interesting stuff.

[115] **Sandy Mewies:** I want to talk about the negative stereotypes that some people have of young people. We have heard evidence that some people look at a group of youngsters and believe that the fact that they are wearing hoodies—we have had campaigns to ban hoodies, or to 'hug a hoodie', depending on who you are—is an indication that they have a criminal record or are likely to do something untoward, despite the fact that it is certainly not such an indication. I am the mother of a son, and his friends—all of whom are over six feet tall—could have looked intimidating, I suppose, but they were nice lads. Is this an issue for the young people whom you work with? I knew Rhyl very well as a youngster—I have hung out in various places here over the years—and it did not seem to be such a big problem then; the fear was not there.

[116] **Mr Owen:** We have no issue with how people dress; they can express themselves however they want to when they are involved in one of our programmes. We have chatted about hoodies with the young people who use our projects. There are a range of reasons why young people wear them and put their hoods up, from being cold, to feeling intimidated if they are walking the streets in the dark and are approached by a group of young people who have their hoods up. I do not know why, but the fact that they have put their hood up acts as a sort of safety mechanism for them. It could just be that they are cold and so they put the hood up just to keep their heads warm. The reasons vary.

[117] **Helen Mary Jones:** Eleanor has the last question for Shane.

[118] **Eleanor Burnham:** Mae fy **Eleanor Burnham:** My question is about the nghwestiwn i'n ymwneud â'r prosiectau gardening projects that you talked about and garddio yr ydych wedi'u trafod a'r the information that you gave us on those,

wybodaeth a roesoich am hynny, sydd wedi annog goresgyn rhwystrau rhwng gwahanol genedlaethau. Yn eich barn chi, i ba raddau y gall prosiectau fel hyn gael effaith hirdymor ar wella'r berthynas rhwng gwahanol genedlaethau mewn cymuned leol fel hon?

which have encouraged people to overcome the barriers between different generations. In your view, to what extent can such projects have a long-term impact on improving the relationship between different generations in a local community such as this one?

[119] **Helen Mary Jones:** To what extent have the gardening projects helped with intergenerational barriers?

[120] **Mr Owen:** Are you asking how they have helped?

[121] **Eleanor Burnham:** Yes.

[122] **Mr Owen:** Just by communicating, really. I suppose that they have benefited us as a group in that, as a result of the young people doing up their gardens, those people have come into the youth cafe sessions, and they have done some sewing, and made pillows and put someone's favourite football team badge on it, for example. Some of them have helped with healthy eating sessions and making cakes. Therefore, it starts to bounce both ways, really. Most of it is just about trying to get everyone to respect each other, because the disrespect, if you can call it that, comes from both sides.

[123] **Eleanor Burnham:** Sandy just made that point about hoodies. Do you think that that has a lot to do with the media making people feel intimidated by hoodies?

[124] **Mr Owen:** I used to have my hood up when I was younger. I did not put it up intending to intimidate other people. I am sure that hoods have been around since I do not know when and people have been wearing them up. I think that the media just likes to blow things up. However, I am not going to defend every young person. I am sure that some of them might have their hoods up because they have something to hide, but, as I say, for the majority of them, it is a matter of keeping their heads warm and feeling safe. Those are the two things that we have picked up on.

[125] **Helen Mary Jones:** Thank you very much, Shane. It has been a really interesting session. Both Eleanor and Sandy have made some points that we will certainly want to pick up as we come to produce our report. If there is anything further that comes to you that you wanted to raise with us today but did not have a chance to, please feel free to get in touch. There is obviously some really interesting work being done, and it has been great to hear about it. Thank you and well done. See? There was no need to be nervous.

[126] Symudwn ymlaen felly at y darn nesaf o dystiolaeth. Hoffwn groesawu Val Owen a Mandy Davies o glwb ieuencid Iwth Pen. Diolch yn fawr am y wybodaeth a ddarparwyd gennych yn ysgrifenedig. Efallai yr hoffech ddweud gair neu ddau am sut y mae'r prosiect wedi datblygu cyn inni ddechrau gofyn cwestiynau sy'n seiliedig ar eich papur. A fyddai hynny'n iawn?

We will now move on to the next piece of evidence. I welcome Val Owen and Mandy Davies from the Iwth Pen youth club. Thank you for the written evidence that you have submitted. Perhaps you would like to say a few words on how the project has developed before we move on to ask questions based on your paper. Would that be okay?

[127] **Ms Owen:** Dim problem. Yn gyntaf, hoffwn ddiolch yn fawr ichi am y cyfle i ddod yma. Mae Mandy a finnau wedi synnu eich bod chi wedi clywed amdanom—fel mae pawb, mewn gwirionedd. Clwb bach iawn

Ms Owen: No problem. First, I thank you for the opportunity to come here. Mandy and I were quite surprised—in fact, everyone was—that you had even heard of us. We are a tiny club that has a very specific purpose,

ydym sydd â phwrpas penodol, sy'n cwrdd ar nos Wener yn Nyffryn Nantlle. Mae'n neis bod rhywun wedi clywed amdanom gan ein bod wedi bodoli ers pum mlynedd.

which meets on Friday evenings in the Nantlle Valley. It is good that someone has heard of us because we have been in existence for five years.

[128] Fel y gwelwch o'r papurau, yr wyf wedi nodi sut y mae'r clwb wedi datblygu a beth oedd yr angen ac ati. Hoffwn egluro un o'r pethau nad wyf wedi'i nodi. Fel yr oeddem yn ei drafod y bore yma, ar y ffordd yma, mae llawer o bobl yn gofyn sut y cawn gynifer o bobl ifanc i ddod i'r clwb ieuentid mewn ardal mor wledig. Yr oedd Mandy yn gweithio ar nos Wener, a daeth 106 o bobl ifanc yno. Mae honno'n nifer fawr o bobl ifanc. Un peth nad ydym wedi'i nodi yw mai un rheswm y mae pobl ifanc yn dod atom ni yw am eu bod yn gwybod ein bod ni yno o'n gwirfodd ac ein bod yn mwynhau bod yno. Mae llawer o'r gwirfoddolwyr yn hynod o falch bod cynifer o bobl yn dod i'r clwb ieuentid. Gan ein bod yn rhan o rywbeth llwyddiannus, mae'r bobl ifanc hefyd yn falch o ddod. Maent yn deall mai gwirfoddoli yr ydym. Maent yn dod o'u gwirfodd fel yr ydym ni, sy'n creu teimlad neis yn y clwb. Yr oeddwn eisiau ychwanegu hwnnw.

As you will see from the papers, I have noted how the club developed and what the needs were and so forth. I want to explain one thing that I have not noted in the paper. As we were discussing on the way here this morning, many people ask us how we get so many young people to come to the youth club in such a rural area. Mandy was working on Friday night, and 106 young people came along. That is a huge number of young people. One thing that we have not noted is that one reason young people come to us is because they know that we are there voluntarily and that we enjoy being there. Many of the volunteers are exceptionally proud that so many young people come to the youth club. The young people love to come, because we are a part of something successful. They understand that we are volunteering. They come voluntarily and so do we, which lends a great atmosphere to the club. I wanted to add that.

10.50 a.m.

[129] Yr wyf wedi rhoi hanes y clwb, felly nid wyf yn siŵr beth yn ychwanegol yr hoffech ei glywed.

I have given you the history of the club, so I am not sure what additional information you would like to hear.

[130] **Helen Mary Jones:** Na, mae hynny'n wych. Mae'r cwestiwn cyntaf wrthyf i ond, i raddau, yr ydych wedi ei ateb. Mae gennych dros 200 o aelodau ac mae mwy na 100 yn dod yn gyson, ac yr ydych wedi dweud bod y ffaith eich bod yno am eich bod eisiau bod yno yn ffactor bwysig. A oes ffactorau eraill sy'n helpu? Mae honno'n nifer fawr o bobl ifanc mewn ardal mor wledig, onid e?

Helen Mary Jones: No, that is excellent. The first question is from me but, to some extent, you have answered it already. You have more than 200 members with more than 100 turning up regularly, and you have said that the fact that you are there because you want to be is an important factor. Are there other factors that help? That is a great number of young people for such a rural area, is it not?

[131] **Ms Owen:** Ydy, mae'n llawer. Yn yr adroddiad, yr ydym yn dweud ein bod wedi ceisio sefydlu'r clwb, o'r cychwyn, bum mlynedd yn ôl, heb unrhyw fath o rwystr i bobl ifanc ddod iddo. Fel y clywsom gan y siaradwr cynt, mae cost yn un rhwystr i bobl ifanc. Nid ydym yn codi dim ac mae hynny'n bwysig iawn. Er bod clwb ieuentid i gael yn y pentref sy'n codi 50c yn unig, mae 50c bob nos yn ormod i rai teuluoedd. Gofynnais i

Ms Owen: Yes, it is a lot. In the report, we say that, from the outset, five years ago, we tried to establish the club without there being any obstacles to stop young people from coming to it. As we heard from the previous speaker, cost is one obstacle for young people. We do not charge a penny, and that is very important. Although there is a youth club in the village that charges just 50p, 50p every night is too much for some families. I

hogyn pam nad oedd yn mynd i'r clwb ieuentid arall a dywedodd nad oedd yn medru mynd am ei fod yn costio 50c. Dywedais nad oedd hynny'n lawer, ond dywedodd bod pump o blant yn y teulu a bod hynny felly yn £2.50 bob nos ac na fedrai ei fam ei fforddio. Felly, mae cost yn bwysig ac nid ydym yn codi dim byd, yn debyg iawn i'r siaradwr cynt.

[132] Rhwystr arall y soniodd y siaradwr arall amdano yw ymddygiad. Mae llawer o'r bobl ifanc sy'n dod atom wedi'u gwahardd o bob man arall. Felly, mae'n bwysig ein bod yn rheoli ymddygiad pobl ifanc. Mae honno'n ffactor bwysig. Nid ydym yn gadael iddynt fethu na pheidio ag aros gyda ni. Yr ydym yn gwneud hynny drwy reoli. Yr ydym yn gosod esiampl a safon uchel yn yr hyn yr ydym yn ei ddisgwyl gan bobl ifanc. Yr ydym yn gofyn iddynt ymddwyn ac yn atgyfnerthu hynny drwy'r amser. Dyna yw rôl Mandy a finnau yn y clwb. Gyda 120 o blant weithiau, mae'n rhaid cael rheolaeth neu bydd pethau'n mynd dros ben llestri yn hawdd. Felly, mae ymddygiad yn fater arall.

[133] Yn ogystal, os ydym yn gorfod gofyn i rywun adael am ryw reswm, yr ydym yn gofyn iddynt adael am weddill y sesiwn yn unig. Mae croeso iddynt ddod yn ôl, a dyna'r geiriau yr ydym yn eu defnyddio bob tro. 'Mae croeso i chi ddod yn ôl. Gwnawn ni siarad efo chi'r wythnos nesaf. Yr ydym yn edrych ymlaen atoch chi'n dod yn ôl.' Fel arfer, byddant yn dod yn ôl ac yn dweud 'Sori, Mandy' neu 'Sori, Val' cyn cerdded i mewn. Maent yn ymddiheuro bob tro, sy'n neis. Nid ydym yn gofyn iddynt wneud nac yn pwysleisio'r peth, dim ond eu derbyn yn ôl.

[134] Mae Dyffryn Nantlle yn ardal wledig. Nid oes bysiau, ar wahân i'r bws ysgol, yn y rhan fwyaf o'r pentref. Weithiau, bydd bws i mewn i'r pentref tua 6 p.m. ond nid oes dim yn dod allan o'r pentref. Mae 16 neu 17 pentref yn y dyffryn. Felly, un o'r rhwystrau i bobl ifanc ddod i'r clwb ar nos Wener yw'r diffyg trafnidiaeth, felly maent yn aros yn y pentref ar ôl ysgol ac yn disgwyl i'r clwb agor. Mae hynny'n ein poeni, achos maent yn y pentref rhwng 3.30 p.m. a 7.30 p.m. heb unman i fynd. Fodd bynnag, maent yn mynd i dai ffrindiau ac mae rhai lleoedd

asked a young lad why he did not go to the other youth club and he said that he could not go because it cost 50p. I said that that was not much money, but he told me that there were five children in the family and that £2.50 every night was more than his mother could afford. So, cost is important and we do not charge anything, similar to the previous speaker.

Another obstacle, which the other speaker also talked about, is behaviour. Many of the young people who come along to our club have been banned from everywhere else. So, it is important that we manage young people's behaviour. That is an important factor. We do not allow them to fail or not to stay with us. We do that by managing the situation. We set an example and a high standard for what we expect from young people. We ask them to behave and we reinforce that all the time. That is the role that Mandy and I play in the club. With 120 children sometimes, you have to be in control or things can easily get out of hand. So, behaviour is another issue.

In addition, if we have to ask someone to leave for any reason, we ask them to leave for the remainder of that session only. They are welcome to return, and those are the words that we always use. 'You're welcome to come back. We'll speak to you next week. We're looking forward to seeing you back here.' Usually, they do come back, and they say 'Sorry, Mandy' or, 'Sorry, Val', before coming in through the door. They always apologise, which is nice. We do not ask them to do that or make a big deal of it. We just take them back.

The Nantlle Valley is a rural area. There are no buses, other than the school bus, in most of the village. Sometimes, a bus will come into the village at about 6 p.m. but nothing comes out of the village. The valley is made up of 16 or 17 villages. So, one of the obstacles stopping young people from coming to the club on a Friday night is the lack of transport, so they stay in the village after school and wait for the club to open. That worries us, because they are in the village between 3.30 p.m. and 7.30 p.m. with nowhere to go. However, they go to friends'

lle y gallant fynd. Bob tro yr ydym yn gyrru i fyny, mae pobl yn disgwyl amdanom ni y tu allan.

houses and there are some places they can go. Every time we drive up, there are people waiting for us outside.

[135] Yr unig beth arall y maent yn dweud sy'n rhwystr gyda chlybiau eraill yw nad ydynt eisiau gwneud dim byd rhy ffurfiol. Mae pwyslais mewn rhai clybiau bod rhaid i bawb gymryd rhan yn yr un sesiwn. Nid ydym yn gwneud hynny. Mae sesiynau yn mynd ymlaen ac mae pethau'n digwydd, ac os ydynt eisiau ymuno gyda ni, mae hynny'n wych, ond os ydynt eisiau eistedd a chael paned, mae hynny'n iawn hefyd. Y cyfuniad o'r pethau hynny yw'r rheswm y maent yn dod, gan nad oes rhwystr arall.

The only other thing that they say stops them from going to other clubs is that they do not want to do anything that is too formal. In some clubs, there is an emphasis on everyone taking part in the same session. We do not do that. We hold sessions and there are things going on, and, if they want to join us, that is great, but if they want to sit down and have a cuppa, that is fine, too. It is through a combination of all those things that they come along, because there is no other obstacle.

[136] **Helen Mary Jones:** Yr oedd yr hyn a ddywedasoch am ymddygiad yn ddi-ddorol. A ydych yn canfod bod agwedd strwythuredig ond un lle'r ydych yn maddau iddynt bob tro yn gweithio dros amser? A ydych yn gweld newid yn ymddygiad yr unigolion? Hynny yw, maent yn 'stroplyd' i ddechrau ond maent yn newid unwaith maent yn gwybod nad ydych yn mynd i ganiatáu nonsens, ac mae croeso iddynt ddychwelyd. A yw hynny'n effeithio arnynt dros gyfnod?

Helen Mary Jones: What you said about behaviour was interesting. Do you find that a structured approach but one in which you forgive them every time works over a period of time? Do you see a change in the behaviour of individuals? For instance, they may be 'stropky' to begin with, but change, once they know that you are not going to take any nonsense, and that they are welcome to come back. Does that have an effect on them over time?

[137] **Ms Owen:** Mae gennym drefn. Yr ydym yn gwybod bod gan lawer o'r bobl ifanc sy'n dod i'r clwb gynorthwy-ydd yn yr ysgol—hynny yw, mae ganddynt rywun i fod gyda nhw yn unigol oherwydd eu hymddygiad. Maent yn dod i'r clwb ac maent dros y lle i gyd. Mae gennym drefn rhyngom ni, ac felly os ydym yn gwybod bod person ifanc sy'n gallu mynd dros ben llestri, bydd un o'r gwirfoddolwyr yn cefnogi'r person hwnnw. Un noson, gallant fod ar 'Siôn watch', a noson arall ar 'Siân watch' neu bwy bynnag. Os yw'r person ifanc yn un sy'n gallu mynd dros ben llestri, bydd un o'r gwirfoddolwyr yn treulio amser gydag ef neu hi. Fel arfer, byddai Mandy yn gofyn wrth un o'r merched, 'A wnei di jyst wyllo Sioni bach draw fan yna?'.

Ms Owen: We have a system. We know that a lot of the young people who come to the club have a support assistant at school—that is, they have someone to be with them on a one-to-one basis because of their behaviour. They come to the club and they are all over the place. We have a system between us and if we know that a young person is likely to go over the top, one of the volunteers will be asked to support that person. One night they might be on 'Jack watch', and another night, they could be on 'Jill watch' or whoever. Therefore, if the young person is one who can go overboard, one of the volunteers will take time to be with him or her. Usually, Mandy will ask one of the girls, 'Will you just keep an eye on little Johnny over there?'.

[138] **Ms Davies:** It is not about standing close to them and asking what they are doing, where they are going, or where they are at; it is just about being in the same area as them and noticing their behaviour, so that there is a chance that you will see if something is about to start up, and you can step in and say, 'Right, what are we playing?'. It is about intervening in time before anything happens that is important.

[139] **Ms Owen:** Nid ydym yn gorfod **Ms Owen:** We do not have to do that for

gwneud hynny yn hir—dyna'r gwahaniaeth. Ar ôl tipyn, mae'r bobl ifanc yn sylweddoli, 'Fel hyn mae'n rhaid i ni fihafio yn fan hyn'. Nid oes gennym yr adnoddau i gael llawer o bobl yn gwyllo unigolion. Ar ôl rhyw ddau fis, gallwn adael y person hwnnw ar ei ben ei hun am fod ei ymddygiad wedi gwella.

long, however—that is the difference. After a while, the young people realise, 'This is how we have to behave here'. We do not have the resources to have a lot of people watching individuals. After about two months, we can leave that person alone because the behaviour will have improved.

[140] **Helen Mary Jones:** Mae hwnnw'n ddiddorol. Ar nos Wener yr ydych yn agor, onid e? A oes galw i chi agor rywbryd arall yn ystod y penwythnos neu'r wythnos? A oes gennych gynlluniau i ddatblygu'r prosiect o gwbl?

Helen Mary Jones: That is interesting. You are open on a Friday night, are you not? Is there any demand for you to open at other times during the weekend or the week? Do you have any plans to develop the project at all?

[141] **Ms Owen:** Na. Cychwynnodd Iwth Pen oherwydd bod problem ar nos Wener ym Mhenygroes ar yr adeg honno. Mae'r broblem honno wedi'i goresgyn yn awr oherwydd bod Iwth Pen ar gael. Nid oes arwyddion bod angen noson arall. Nid ydynt erioed wedi gofyn inni agor ar noson arall. Ar nos Wener, maent eisiau mynd i Benygroes, i'r pentref. Nid ydynt yn gofyn am noson arall. Mae pethau eraill yr ydym yn eu gwneud ar nosweithiau eraill—y stwff awyr agored. Yr ydym yn cynnig profiadau gwahanol i bobl ifanc ac yn mynd â nhw allan—eto, pethau awyr agored yn benodol—ond nid oes cynlluniau na'r angen ar hyn o bryd i feddwl am wneud dim byd arall.

Ms Owen: No. Iwth Pen started because there was a problem in Penygroes at that time on Friday nights. That problem has been conquered because Iwth Pen is open. There are no signs of any demand for another night. They have never asked us to open on another night. On Friday nights, they want to go to Penygroes, to the village. They are not asking for another night. There are other things that we do on other nights—the outdoors stuff. We offer different experiences to young people and take them out—again, outdoor things, specifically—but there are no plans and no demand at the current time to think about doing anything else.

[142] **Helen Mary Jones:** Mae'n ddigon naturiol dymuno bod allan ar nos Wener, o feddwl am y peth.

Helen Mary Jones: It is quite natural to want to be out on a Friday night, if you think about it.

[143] Sandy, the next question is from you.

[144] **Sandy Mewies:** With your permission, Chair, I will take the question after the one that I was supposed to ask because the first one has been partly answered.

[145] **Helen Mary Jones:** Yes, of course you may.

[146] **Sandy Mewies:** The committee is extremely interested in the problems that young people from disadvantaged areas and low-income households face when it comes to equal access to facilities. You have said clearly that you do not charge, but I think that you charge just £2 for transport sometimes, is that right?

[147] **Ms Owen:** Yes, if there is a trip.

[148] **Sandy Mewies:** Transport is a huge issue, and you touched on that. Do you think that this policy will be sustainable in the long term? More and more young people will be turning up, by the sounds of it. I am not sure if it was your figure, but I saw somewhere that five extra young people turn up every Friday. If so, money will become a bigger issue as time goes on.

[149] When you were answering Helen Mary's question on why people come, you said that it was because of the structure. The fact is that there is a structure and it is obviously well thought out, but it is not in their face at all. You deliver the national youth work curriculum, but not in a way that is recognised by the young people who receive it. Do you have any further views on the national youth work curriculum or on the Welsh Government's youth strategy generally? So, there are two issues there: sustainability and the curriculum and strategy.

[150] **Ms Owen:** Mandy, you take the sustainability issue, and I will do the youth work curriculum. One problem with the youth work curriculum is that it takes skilful people to develop and run it. I have found that we can build sessions, but if it is on cultural issues, for example, or on learning some basic number skills, young people just do not want to do it in their spare time or their leisure time, unless it is good fun. So, it takes skilful people to promote and develop the skills.

11.00 a.m.

[151] One session that took place the other week might illustrate how I feel. One of the volunteers, a youth worker, is also a seamstress. She is really good at designing and making costumes and lots of other stuff, but we do not put formal sessions on, so we were thinking about what she could do. She brought in a teddy bear that she was making. It was a really nice teddy bear. She did not do or say anything; she just brought her teddy bear out in the middle of the youth club and started slowly to put it together. It was a teddy bear for a christening. During the evening, some of the young people came and sat with her, and they were talking and asking how much it costs to make a teddy bear, and suddenly they were planning how to make a teddy bear. They were talking about how much fur they needed, how much it would cost and where they would get it from. They wanted to make one, and so it was decided that Mandy would go off and get some funding. More than that, they were also discussing christening, what was important and why they were giving these gifts. A host of things was going on that fitted in with the youth curriculum, but it was delivered very skilfully by this woman who was just putting a teddy bear together. That is what you need. Employing a youth worker to just turn up, and telling that person, 'You are now a youth worker; go off, do your youth work and deliver the curriculum', is not enough. There needs to be a lot of training and support to deliver that. We are lucky, however, because a lot of talented people come to the club to volunteer with us.

[152] **Ms Davies:** On sustainability, I do not know really; how do you sustain it? We do face a few problems in sustaining the number of volunteers that we have. Financially, keeping the club open is a sustainability issue. As it says in the report, the local high school, with its community fund, pays rent. At the moment, we are managing to sustain it with small grants, but as to the way forward, when we have talked about trips with the young people, some have been willing to say, 'We can pay for ourselves to go in', but then we talk to them about those who cannot afford to pay, and we ask them how they think it would come across to have a fee to come in and everything else. We ask them, 'Although it would be okay for you, what could we do for those who cannot pay?' Some have suggested that they themselves would pay more each week, but others have said that that would not work. So, although the young people have been given something to think about, nobody has come back.

[153] I do not know what the answers are, but there has to be some development, perhaps to do with the outdoor pursuits activities, to set up something similar to RYAG—although that is not completely sustainable from grants, as far as I understand it; it is sustainable over a certain period. I do not know what the answer would be. However, even with the local authority youth club, having bargained for it to open on a Friday, to help us with the numbers, the first thing that many young people say is that they will not go if they have to pay to get in. Even when we tell them that we have covered the cost for a few weeks, they still have not gone

over and it is a case of ‘Don’t we want them any more?’ At the moment, we can sustain it only by being there on a Friday, but on the money, it is a question of grants all the time.

[154] **Ms Owen:** The point that Mandy was making there is that we have had to give some of our money to the local youth service so that it can offer those nights to young people free of charge. It is a bit difficult, because the youth service has resources—its own buildings, its own staff, and its own policies and procedures—while we are struggling with 120 young people on virtually nothing, and yet we are having to pay the youth service.

[155] **Sandy Mewies:** How many attend what is provided by the local authority on a Friday?

[156] **Ms Owen:** Two or three.

[157] **Sandy Mewies:** How many?

[158] **Ms Owen:** Two or three.

[159] **Sandy Mewies:** Thank you.

[160] **Ms Owen:** It is open three nights a week. On the other nights, there may be 10 people attending. It is a big issue, but we are working with them.

[161] **Eleanor Burnham:** Yr ydych wedi trafod trafndiaeth. Pan oeddwn yn gweithio gyda phobl ifanc, cefais drwydded i yrru bws mini. A ydych yn meddwl gwneud rhywbeth tebyg? Nid wyf yma i ddweud wrthyhych beth i’w wneud, ond sut yr ydych am oresgyn yr her yn y ffaith nad oes trafndiaeth gyhoeddus ar ddiwedd diwrnod ysgol a’r problemau mae hynny’n eu peri? Yr ydych hefyd yn dweud eu bod yn hongian o gwmpas o 3.30 p.m., pan mae’r ysgol yn cau, tan eich bod yn cychwyn am 7 p.m.. Gwn ei fod yn anodd, ac nid wyf yn eich beirniadu, ond a yw’n bosibl i chi gychwyn yn gynt?

Eleanor Burnham: You have discussed the transport issue. When I was working with young people, I got a licence to drive a minibus. Are you thinking of doing something similar? I am not here to tell you what to do, but how will you overcome the challenge posed by the fact that there is no public transport at the end of the school day and the problems that that creates? You also say that they hang around from 3.30 p.m., when school closes, until you begin at 7 p.m.. I know that it is difficult, and I am not criticising you, but could you not start earlier?

[162] **Ms Owen:** Y problem yw nad yw’r ganolfan hamdden ar gael inni tan 7 p.m.. Mae hynny’n un peth. Mae llawer o ddefnydd ar y ganolfan hamdden gan grwpiau—mae pêl-droed i blant bach cyn 7 p.m., felly mae’r cyhoedd yn cael defnyddio’r ganolfan hamdden tan 7 p.m. ac mae wedyn ar gael i ni tan 9 p.m.. Felly 7 p.m. yw’r unig amser y gallwn gychwyn. Mae ein gwirfoddolwyr hefyd yn gweithio yn ystod y dydd, felly mae’n rhaid inni gael amser i ddod adref o’r gwaith.

Ms Owen: The problem is that the leisure centre is not available to us until 7 p.m.. That is one thing. The leisure centre is used a lot by groups—there is football for small children before 7 p.m., so the public can use the leisure centre until 7 p.m. and it is then available to us until 9 p.m.. So, 7 p.m. is the only time that we can start. Our volunteers also work during the day, so we must have time to come home from work.

[163] O ran trafndiaeth, mae gennym drwyddedau i yrru bws mini, ond nid oes gennym fws mini, sydd yn ychydig o broblem.

On transport, we have minibus licences, but we have no minibus, which is a bit of a problem.

[164] **Eleanor Burnham:** A oes bws mini gan yr ysgol?

Eleanor Burnham: Does the school have a minibus?

[165] **Ms Owen:** Mae gan y gwasanaeth ieuentid fws mini, ond ni chawn ei ddefnyddio gan nad ydym yn gyflogedig gan y cyngor. Mae'r gwasanaeth wedi dweud y byddai'n fodlon inni gael defnydd o'r bws mini unrhyw adeg, ond ni allwn wneud hynny gan nad oes gennym yswiriant gan nad ydym yn gyflogedig gan y cyngor.

Ms Owen: The youth service has a minibus, but we cannot use it as we are not employed by the council. The service has said that we could use the minibus any time, but we cannot do so because we do not have insurance as we are not employed by the council.

[166] **Eleanor Burnham:** A oes unrhyw ffordd—

Eleanor Burnham: Is there any way—

[167] **Ms Owen:** Yr ydym wedi rhoi cynnig arni. Y broblem arall yw ein bod eisoes yn cael 120 o bobl ifanc ar nos Wener—ni allwn gael mwy. Felly—gwn fod hyn yn swnio'n ofnadwy—os ydym yn ei gwneud yn haws i ddod, byddem yn taro—

Ms Owen: We have tried. The other problem is that we already get 120 people on a Friday night—we cannot take any more. So—I know that this sounds awful—if we make it easier for them to come, we would be hitting—

[168] **Eleanor Burnham:** Byddai eich llwyddiant yn eich ladd.

Eleanor Burnham: Your success would destroy you.

[169] **Ms Owen:** Mae problem gyda'r adeilad hefyd. Un o'r gwendidau yr ydym yn eu nodi o ran yr adeilad yw bod cael canolfan hamdden am £50 y noson yn ffantastig, ac mae Cyngor Gwynedd yn ein cefnogi i'r eithaf ers pum mlynedd i wneud hyn, ond nid yw'n hawdd goruchwyllo 120 o blant mewn canolfan hamdden. Un broblem yw bod gennym ddau set o risiau, felly os ydym yn ceisio dal rhywun neu am gael gair gyda rhywun oherwydd eu hymddygiad, mae fel ffair. Yr ydym yn reit dda bellach am wybod sut i ddal pobl mewn coridorau, ond nid yw'n hawdd. Felly, ni allwn gael mwy na 120 o bobl ifanc; mae 120 yn ormod. Mae'n broblem i bob un o'r clybiau yn y dyffryn gan nad oes unrhyw fsys.

Ms Owen: There is also a problem with the building. One weakness that we identify in the building is that getting a leisure centre for £50 a night is fantastic, and Gwynedd Council has fully supported us for five years to do that, but it is not easy to supervise 120 children in a leisure centre. One problem is that there are two sets of stairs, so if we are trying to catch someone or want to have a word with someone because of their behaviour, it is chaos. We are quite good by now at knowing how to catch people in corridors, but it is not easy. So, we cannot have more than 120 young children; 120 is too much. It is a problem for every club in the valley, given that there are no buses.

[170] **Eleanor Burnham:** Yr wyf yn siŵr eich bod wedi meddwl am hyn, ond a ydych wedi ystyried gwneud cais am arian loteri i gael bws eich hun? A fydddech yn gallu cael yswiriant wedyn i'w yrru?

Eleanor Burnham: I am sure that you have thought about this, but have you considered making an application for lottery funding for a bus of your own? Could you then get insurance to drive it?

[171] **Ms Owen:** Mae hynny'n ddigon posibl. Yr ydym wedi gwneud sawl cais am arian loteri a sawl cais mawr, ond yn aflwyddiannus. Yr ydym yn llwyddiannus iawn gyda cheisiadau bach.

Ms Owen: That is quite possible. We have made numerous applications for lottery funding and numerous big applications, but were not successful. We have been very successful with small applications.

- [172] **Eleanor Burnham:** A ydych eisiau inni lofnodi rhywbeth i'ch cefnogi? **Eleanor Burnham:** Do you want us to sign something in support?
- [173] **Ms Owen:** Byddai hynny'n grêt. **Ms Owen:** That would be great.
- [174] **Eleanor Burnham:** Siaradaf gyda chi wedyn—yr wyf yn Aelod rhanbarthol. **Eleanor Burnham:** I will speak to you afterwards—I am a regional Member.
- [175] **Helen Mary Jones:** A gaf eich tynnu yn ôl at y cwestiynau? A ydych yn meddwl bod eich cwestiwn wedi ei ateb? **Helen Mary Jones:** Can I bring you back to the questions? Do you think that your question has been answered?
- [176] **Eleanor Burnham:** Symudaf at fy nghwestiwn olaf. Yr ydych yn egluro yn eich tystiolaeth ysgrifenedig fod gennych bartneriaeth gref gyda'r ysgol, a bod y prifathro wedi eich helpu i sicrhau eich dyfodol wrth dalu'n rhannol am y lleoliad. A allwch ddweud ychydig mwy am eich partneriaeth gyda'r ysgol? A oes bws mini gan yr ysgol? Beth yw'r sefyllfa gyda'r yswiriant? **Eleanor Burnham:** I will move to my final question. You explain in your written evidence that you have a strong partnership with the school, and that the headteacher has helped you to secure your future by paying in part for the location. Can you say a little more about your partnership with the school? Does the school have a mini bus? What is the situation regarding the insurance?
- [177] **Ms Owen:** Yr un yw'r broblem—nid ydym yn gyflogedig gan y cyngor. Ni fyddwn yn poeni llawer am y bws mini, gan eu bod yn gallu dod. Mater o gost yw hynny. **Ms Owen:** It is the same problem—we are not employed by the council. I would not worry too much about the minibus, because they can come. That is a matter of cost.
- [178] O ran y bartneriaeth gyda'r ysgol, prin iawn yw'r bartneriaeth. Mae'r ysgol yn talu, a dyna yw'r peth mwyaf gwerthfawr y gall yr ysgol ei gynnig inni. Mae'r ysgol yn cynnig yr arian fel nad ydym yn gorfod poeni am ddod o hyd i'r arian i dalu am y ganolfan hamdden—dyna yw'r prif beth. Mae'r ysgol yn reit dda gyda ni. Os oes gennym ffurflenni i'w rhannu, gallwn wneud hynny drwy'r ysgol. Os oes angen gwneud unrhyw gyhoeddiad arnom, gallwn wneud hynny drwy'r ysgol. Ar un adeg, gofynnwyd i'r bobl ifanc a fyddai rhai o'r athrawon yn gallu dod i wirfoddoli, ond yr ateb a gawsom oedd, 'Os yw'r athrawon yn dod, nid ydym ni'n dod'. On the partnership with the school, it is not much of a partnership. The school pays, and that is the most valuable thing that the school can offer us. The school offers the money so that we do not have to worry where the money will come from to pay for the leisure centre—that is the main thing. The school is pretty good with us. If we have forms to distribute, we can do that through the school. If we need to make an announcement, we can do that through the school. At one point, we asked the young people if some of the teachers could come to volunteer, but the answer was, 'If the teachers come, we won't'.
- [179] **Eleanor Burnham:** A fyddai'n bosibl defnyddio rhan o'r ysgol, gan fod yr ysgol ar gau cyn iddynt ddod atoch chi am 7 p.m., gan eich bod yn pryderu fod y bobl ifanc hyn yn hongian o gwmpas? **Eleanor Burnham:** Would it be possible to use part of the school, as the school is closed before they come to you at 7 p.m., given that you are concerned that these young people are hanging around?
- [180] **Ms Owen:** Byddai'n braf pe bai'r ysgol yn gallu gwneud rhywbeth, ond nid wyf yn meddwl y byddai adnoddau ganddi i wneud hynny. **Ms Owen:** It would be nice if the school could do something, but I do not think that it would have the resources to do so.

[181] **Helen Mary Jones:** Byddai'n broblem hefyd oherwydd ni fyddai'r bobl ifanc mwyaf bregus, nad oeddynt eisiau i'r athrawon fod yno fel gwirfoddolwyr, eisiau aros yn yr ysgol.

Helen Mary Jones: It would also be a problem because the most vulnerable young people, who did not want the teachers to be there as volunteers, might not want to stay in the school.

11.10 a.m.

[182] Yr ydych eisoes wedi cyffwrdd ar y ffaith bod Cyngor Gwynedd wedi eich cefnogi. A hoffech ddweud ychydig mwy am sut y mae'r awdurdod lleol wedi cefnogi Iwth Pen? A oes rhywbeth ychwanegol yr hoffech i'r awdurdod lleol ei wneud i gefnogi eich gwaith?

You have already touched on the fact that Gwynedd Council has supported you. Would you like to add to how the local authority has supported Iwth Pen? Is there anything additional that you would like the local authority to do to support your work?

[183] **Ms Owen:** Cychwynnodd Iwth Pen bum mlynedd yn ôl pan oedd problem gyda phobl ifanc yn yr ardal. Er nad oeddent yn gwneud dim o'i le, yr oeddent yn ymgynnull yn y pentref. Felly, y gefnogaeth gyntaf a gawsom oedd drwy'r cynghorydd lleol a oedd yn awyddus i wneud rhywbeth i bobl ifanc yn yr ardal. Y cynghorydd hwnnw a gychwynnodd y cyfarfodydd i gychwyn y clwb ac yn y blaen. Mae wedi parhau fel cynghorydd ac mae'n gwirfoddoli yn y clwb. Mae gwirfoddoli yn y clwb yn dod ag ef yn agos at yr hyn mae pobl ifanc am ei gael ac at rai o broblemau bobl ifanc.

Ms Owen: Iwth Pen began five years ago when there was a problem with young people in the area. Even though they were not doing anything wrong, they were congregating in the village. Therefore, the first support that we received was through the local councillor, who was keen to do something for young people in the area. That councillor started the meetings to start the club and so on. He has continued as a councillor and he volunteers at the club. Volunteering at the club tells him what young people want and about some of the young people's problems.

[184] Pan gychwynnodd y clwb, nid oedd gennym unrhyw le i gyfarfod. Yr oedd yr ysgol yn anfodlon inni gyfarfod yno ac yr oedd y clwb ieuentid yn anfodlon inni gyfarfod yn ei glwb. Felly, yr unig le a oedd ar ôl oedd y ganolfan hamdden. Ni fyddem wedi gallu cyfarfod yno, pe na bai'r cyngor wedi gadael inni gyfarfod yno am ddim am ddwy flynedd er mwyn inni allu sefydlu. Dyna oedd y prif help—yn ariannol.

When the club started, we had nowhere to meet. The school was unwilling for us to meet there and the youth club was unwilling for us to meet at its club. Therefore, the only place left was the leisure centre. We would not have been able to meet there had the council not let us meet there free of charge for two years so that we could establish ourselves. So, that was the main support—financial support.

[185] Credaf hefyd fod y cyngor yn parhau i'n cefnogi; pe baem yn llogi'r ganolfan yn breifat am ddwy awr, byddai'r gost yn llawer uwch na £50—byddai tua £90 y noson, a fyddai allan o'n gafael. Felly, mae'r cyngor yn parhau i roi cymhorthdal i ryw raddau. Mae hynny wedi creu problemau, gan fod ardaloedd eraill am ddefnyddio canolfannau hamdden ac yr oedd y cyngor yn dweud nad oeddent yn gallu gwneud hynny.

I also believe that the council continues to support us; if we were to hire the centre privately for two hours, it would cost much more than £50—it would be more like £90 per night, and it would be out of our grasp. Therefore, the council continues to subsidise us to some extent. That has created problems, because other areas want to use their leisure centres and the council has said that they cannot do so.

[186] O ran y cyngor, mae'r cynghorydd a

On the council, the councillor who started

gchwynnodd Iwth Pen flynyddoedd yn ôl yn awr yn arwain y cyngor. Felly, efallai bod hynny'n rhoi mwy o gryfder inni. Fodd bynnag, ni fyddem yn dweud ein bod yn elwa ar hynny. Yr unig fygythiad i Iwth Pen yw ei fod yn bosibl fod y cyngor yn edrych ar gau'r ganolfan hamdden. Mae'r cyngor yn ailedrych ar ganolfannau hamdden ac mae Plas Silyn yn un sydd o dan fygythiad. Os yw hwnnw'n mynd, bydd yn golled fawr i'r ardal, oherwydd mae pobl ifanc yn defnyddio llawer iawn ar y ganolfan. Ein pryder mwyaf fyddai cau'r ganolfan hamdden.

[187] **Helen Mary Jones:** Yr ydych wedi cyffwrdd â hyn eisoes, gan eich bod wedi esbonio sut mae'r cynghorydd lleol yn gwirfoddoli yn y clwb, ond a yw'r awdurdod lleol wedi gofyn ichi ei helpu i sicrhau ei fod yn gwrando ar leisiau pobl ifanc, fel bod pobl ifanc yn cael cyfle i gymryd rhan wrth gynllunio a datblygu gwasanaethau hamdden? Mae'n amlwg eich bod eisoes yn gwneud hynny'n effeithiol iawn, ond yn anffurfiol, o ran y cynghorydd sy'n mynychu'r clwb, ond a yw'r awdurdod lleol wedi gofyn ichi gymryd rhan yn y math hwnnw o ymgynghoriad?

[188] **Ms Owen:** Efallai bod sefyllfa Iwth Pen ychydig bach yn wahanol oherwydd mae gan bartneriaeth pobl ifanc Gwynedd is-grŵp sy'n edrych ar leisiau pobl ifanc, a fi sy'n cadeirio'r is-grŵp hwnnw. Felly mae'r sefyllfa ychydig bach yn wahanol.

[189] Hefyd, yng Ngwynedd, mae gennym gynllun Clywed, lle mae pobl ifanc yn mynd o gwmpas i asesu pa mor dda mae pobl ifanc yn gwrando ar leisiau pobl ifanc. Fi sydd yn rheoli'r cynllun hwnnw hefyd. Drwy hynny, mae pobl ifanc yn cael dipyn o lais. Mae Mandy hefyd yn gwirfoddoli gyda Siop Siarad, grŵp cyfranogi Cymunedau'n Gyntaf Tal-y-sarn a Nantlle, felly mae llawer o bobl ifanc, sy'n adnabod Mandy drwy Iwth Pen, yn cyfranogi yn y modd hwnnw, ac felly'n gallu bwydo i mewn i bartneriaeth Cymunedau'n Gyntaf. Felly, mae cyfleodd iddynt gyfranogi, ond mae hynny'n cael ei arwain gennym ni, yn hytrach na bod y cyngor yn dod atom ni.

[190] **Helen Mary Jones:** Do you want to add anything to that, Mandy?

Iwth Pen years ago now leads the council. So, that may give us more strength. However, we would not say that we profit from that. The only threat to Iwth Pen is that it is possible that the council is looking at closing the leisure centre. The council is re-evaluating all the leisure centres and Plas Silyn is one that is under threat. If that goes, it will be a major loss to the area, because the young people use the centre a great deal. Our biggest concern would be the closure of the leisure centre.

Helen Mary Jones: You have touched on this already, because you have explained how the local councillor volunteers at the club, but has the local authority asked you to help it to ensure that it listens to the voices of young people, so that young people have the opportunity to take part in planning and developing leisure services? It is obvious that you already do so very effectively, albeit informally through the councillor who attends the club, but has the local authority asked you to take part in that type of consultation?

Ms Owen: Iwth Pen's situation may be slightly different because the Gwynedd young people's partnership has a sub-group that considers the voices of young people, which I chair. So the situation is slightly different.

Also, in Gwynedd, we have the *Clywed* scheme, where young people go around to assess how well young people listen to the voices of young people. I also manage that scheme. Through that, young people have quite a voice. Mandy also volunteers for the *Siop Siarad* Communities First participatory group in Tal-y-sarn and Nantlle, so many young people, who know Mandy through Iwth Pen, participate in that way and can therefore feed into the Communities First partnership. Therefore, there are opportunities for them to participate, but that is led by us, rather than by the council coming to us.

[191] **Ms Davies:** The *Siop Siarad* in Tal-y-sarn had a youth worker who has now finished, so I have volunteered until they get a new worker. Knowing Val and understanding the position of young people and making their voices heard is also forcing that issue a little more. The partnership spoke about having a sub-group, but they had not yet started things up. The chairperson of the partnership is also volunteering with me with the *Siop Siarad*, so we have started to take that forward, because he was keen to get the young people to start their sub-group. We have shaped it a bit better now so that the young people have a date to start to meet and be introduced to the partnership and so that they can start to get their voices heard.

[192] **Helen Mary Jones:** That is great, thank you. Sandy, may I call you to ask question 27 now because, otherwise, there will be four questions from me, which will be a bit boring?

[193] **Sandy Mewies:** Yes, indeed, Chair.

[194] You say that one of the barriers to attending your project is young people's behaviour, and you have explained how you deal with that. You set high expectations that are consistent and clear to young people. Are there lessons that other clubs and youth providers could learn from you with regard to supporting positive behaviour in young people? Do you have the opportunity to share that good practice? You mentioned that you chair other fora. Is that one way of doing it?

[195] **Ms Owen:** I am not sure whether we share good practice. Many people ask us how we manage to sustain such a high number of young people in our population. That is one of the messages that we give with regard to behaviour. We met the youth service recently, because we were trying to help it to promote its own youth service, and one thing that it does is ban young people. That is the main issue with regard to managing behaviour; the behaviour is not being managed at all if young people are banned. We were talking earlier about our bullying issues and that there is no point in just sending the bully out. We try to work with the victim and the bully within the club.

[196] **Ms Davies:** It is about trying to get them to be in the same space together without anyone being at a disadvantage. So, sometimes, when you have certain groups of young people—boys and girls—who are just not getting along, it is a case of saying 'You're going to have to take that space and you're going to have to take the other space'. If we send one group out, they will see that as unfair, while the others feel that they are in a position of strength because we allowed them to stay in. So, it is about making them understand that they must be consistent, as we are, in the same place.

[197] **Helen Mary Jones:** Thank you; that is interesting. Eleanor, we will now move on to your question and then come back to mine if we have time at the end.

[198] **Eleanor Burnham:** Yr ydym wedi derbyn tystiolaeth ysgrifenedig gan Gyngor Chwaraeon Cymru ynglŷn â materion amddiffyn plant. Gan ystyried eich bod yn defnyddio gwirfoddolwyr sy'n oedolion a gan ystyried y drefn o archwilio cefndir sy'n bodoli ar hyn o bryd, sut mae'r angen i ddelio â hyn yn effeithio ar eich gwaith yn Iwth Pen a'ch gallu chi i gynnig i blant a phobl ifanc fannau hollol saff i chwarae ac i hongian o gwmpas ynddynt?

Eleanor Burnham: We have received written evidence from the Sports Council for Wales on child protection issues. Given that you use adult volunteers and given the vetting systems that are in place, how does the need to deal with this affect your work in Iwth Pen and your ability to provide children and young people with safe places to play and hang out?

[199] **Ms Owen:** Yn amlwg, mae gennym bolisi gwarchod plant. Pan fydd rhywun yn **Ms Owen:** We obviously have a child protection policy in place. When someone

gwirfoddoli am y tro cyntaf, yr ydym yn cael geirada ac yr ydym yn gofyn iddynt gael eu gwirio gan y Swyddfa Cofnodion Troseddol. Ar y cychwyn, yr oeddem yn cydweithio gydag asiantaeth dai lleol, a oedd yn trefnu gwiriad yr heddlu ar ein rhan.

[200] **Eleanor Burnham:** A oeddynt yn talu am hynny hefyd?

[201] **Ms Owen:** Mae'r gwiriad am ddim i wirfoddolwyr. Yr ydym bellach wedi cofrestru gyda Chyngor Gweithredu Gwirfoddol Cymru fel y gallwn ofyn am wiriadau'r heddlu ein hunain, a, gan mai gwirfoddolwyr ydym, maent am ddim. Mae pawb wedi cael gwiriad adnabod y CRB a chânt eu hadnewyddu bob tair blynedd.

[202] **Eleanor Burnham:** Yr wyf yn falch o glywed hynny.

[203] **Helen Mary Jones:** Yr ydych yn cyfeirio yn y dystiolaeth a roesoch i ni ar hanes Iwth Pen at y problemau yn y pentref cyn sefydlu'r clwb. A allwch chi ategu at hynny? A oedd y broblem yn ymwneud yn fwy â chanfyddiad pobl hŷn yn y gymuned, ac a yw hynny wedi gwella ers i Iwth Pen ddechrau denu cynifer o bobl ifanc i fod yn rhan ohono?

11.20 a.m.

[204] **Ms Owen:** Yr oedd clwb ieuenctid statudol a gynhaliwyd gan y cyngor yn y pentref rai blynyddoedd yn ôl, ac, fel mae'n digwydd, yr oeddwn yn gweithio yno. Daeth y clwb ieuenctid i ben wedi imi adael, ryw saith mlynedd yn ôl. Yr oedd llawer o bobl ifanc wedyn yn ymgynnull ar y sgwâr lle yr oedd hi'n olau—gan gyfeirio at bwynt un o'r siaradwyr blaenorol. Yr unig le yn y pentref â golau yw'r sgwâr, felly yr oedd llawer o bobl ifanc yn cyfarfod yno. Yr oedd llawer yno ar adegau, gyda'r heddlu'n dweud bod rhwng 60 a 80 bobl ifanc yn cyfarfod ar y sgwâr. Mae Penygroes yn fach, felly yr oedd cael 80 o bobl ifanc ar y sgwâr yn broblem. Nid oeddynt yn troseddu ac nid oeddynt yn fygythiol—cyn amser *hoodies* oedd hyn. Nid oeddynt yn gwneud dim o'i le, ond yr oedd lot fawr ohonynt.

volunteers for the first time, we get a reference and we ask them to have a Criminal Records Bureau check. At the outset, we worked with a local housing agency, which arranged the police checks for us.

Eleanor Burnham: Did they pay for that as well?

Ms Owen: The check is free for volunteers. We have now registered with the Welsh Council for Voluntary Action so that we can ask for our own police checks, and, because we are volunteers, they are free. Everyone has had a CRB check and they are renewed every three years.

Eleanor Burnham: I am happy to hear that.

Helen Mary Jones: You refer in the evidence provided to us on the history of Iwth Pen to the problems in the village before the club was established. Can you expand on that? Did the problem have more to do with the perception of the older people within the community, and has that improved since Iwth Pen started to attract so many young people to participate in its activities?

Ms Owen: There was a statutory youth club in the village some years ago, which the council used to run, and, as it happens, I used to work there. The youth club closed after I left, some seven years ago. After that, a lot of young people used to congregate on the square, which was brightly lit—referring back to the point made by a previous speaker. The square was the only place in the village that was lit, so a lot of young people congregated there. There were many of them there at times, and the police estimated that between 60 and 80 young people would meet on the square. Penygroes is a small village, and having 80 young people on the square was a problem. They were not breaking the law and they were not threatening—this was before the advent of hoodies. They were not doing anything wrong, but it was just that there was a lot of them.

[205] Ar y sgwâr mae'r Co-op, ond yr oedd pobl hŷn ofn cerdded yno. Byddai pobl y Co-op wedyn yn cwyno bod gormod o bobl ifanc y tu allan. Nid oedd dim yn mynd ymlaen ac nid oedd hyd yn oed ymddygiad gwrthgymdeithasol. Yr hyn ydoedd oedd grŵp mawr o bobl ifanc.

The Co-op is on the square, but older people were afraid to walk there. The people from the Co-op would then complain that there were too many young people outside. Nothing was going on and there was no antisocial behaviour to speak of. It was just a large group of young people.

[206] Yr oedd pethau'n gallu mynd yn flêr. Yr oedd rhai cymeriadau ar y stryd a oedd yn ffonio'r heddlu. Yr oeddynt yn dod allan ac yn gweiddi ar y plant a'u haslo. Efallai fyddai un neu ddau o'r plant wedyn yn ateb yn ôl, ac yr oedd pobl yn teimlo nad oedd hynny'n iawn. Felly, yr oedd llawer o sôn yn y papur am bethau negyddol yn mynd ymlaen, gyda'r wasg leol yn ysgrifennu rhywbeth am y bobl ifanc drwy'r adeg.

Things could get messy. There were a few characters on the street who phoned the police. They used to come out and shout at the children and hassle them. One or two of the children would perhaps answer back, and people would feel that that was not right. So, there was a lot of negative reporting going on in the paper, as the local press would be constantly writing something about the young people.

[207] Mae gennym berthynas dda gyda'r heddlu; maent yn picio draw am baned yn aml. Nid oes dim wedi bod yn y wasg ers tair blynedd. Nid oes dim cwynion wedi'u gwneud gan y trigolion lleol, ac nid yw'r cyngor cymunedol wedi derbyn cwynion am bobl ifanc ers tair blynedd. Teimlwn fod yr angen wedi cael ei ddiwallu, ac nid oes cwynion bellach.

We have a good relationship with the police; they often pop in for a cuppa. There has been nothing in the press for three years. There have been no complaints from local residents, and the community council has not received complaints about young people for three years. We feel that the need has been met, and there are no more complaints.

[208] **Helen Mary Jones:** Yn amlwg, pe na bai Iwth Pen yno, byddai'r un materion yn codi eto.

Helen Mary Jones: Clearly, if Iwth Pen were not there, the same issues would arise.

[209] **Ms Owen:** Bid siŵr.

Ms Owen: To be sure.

[210] **Helen Mary Jones:** Ar ran fy nghydaelodau ar y pwyllgor, yr wyf am ddiolch yn fawr i'r ddwy ohonoch. Mae'r sesiwn wedi bod yn hynod ddiddorol ac mae wedi codi pwyntiau y byddwn yn bendant am eu cynnwys yn ein hadroddiad. Diolch hefyd am y gwaith gwerthfawr yr ydych yn ei wneud.

Helen Mary Jones: On behalf of my fellow committee members, I thank you both very much. It has been a most interesting session, and points have been raised that we will certainly wish to see included in our report. Thank you also for the valuable work that you are doing.

[211] Yr ydym yn symud felly i'r trydydd darn o dystiolaeth, sef dystiolaeth Clwb Pêl-droed y Rhyl. Gofynnaf i Jamie Digwood a Lee Jones ymuno â ni.

We will now move on to the third part of the evidence session. I invite Jamie Digwood and Lee Jones from Rhyl Football Club to join us.

[212] Diolch yn fawr, Jamie a Lee, am ymuno â ni heddiw. Diolch hefyd am eich papur. Cyn inni ofyn cwestiynau am waith y clwb, cewch ddweud ychydig sylwadau cychwynnol wrthym.

Thank you very much, Jamie and Lee, for joining us today. Thank you, too, for the paper that you have provided. Before we open the questioning on the club's work, would you please make a few introductory remarks?

[213] **Mr Jones:** Yr wyf yn gallu siarad **Mr Jones:** I can speak a little Welsh, but we rhywfaint o Gymraeg, ond byddwn yn parhau yn Saesneg. will continue in English.

[214] Is that okay?

[215] **Helen Mary Jones:** Mae hynny'n iawn; beth bynnag sy'n eich siwtio. **Helen Mary Jones:** That is fine; whatever suits you.

[216] **Mr Jones:** Diolch yn fawr—thank you. So, when you ask questions in Welsh, we put these headphones on, do we?

[217] **Helen Mary Jones:** Yes, just put them on. There is a volume control on the side. It may be easier to put them the other way up.

[218] **Mr Jones:** Is that right?

[219] **Eleanor Burnham:** You have a Dr Spock effect when they are the other way, and they might fall off.

[220] **Helen Mary Jones:** A ydych yn gallu clywed? **Helen Mary Jones:** Can you hear?

[221] **Mr Jones:** Yes.

[222] **Helen Mary Jones:** Okay. Fire away; tell us a little bit about what has been going on, and then we will have some questions to ask you.

[223] **Mr Jones:** Having listened to the previous contributions, I think that we have covered so much within our community. The driver for that has been Tracey Jones. She is not here, unfortunately; she is on holiday. I have mainly been the coach in the community, and I have been out there delivering, where I have seen the majority of the projects that we have covered in the paper.

[224] Do you want me just to talk about—

[225] **Helen Mary Jones:** Just talk about the different projects. Touch on them briefly, because we have the detail in the paper. I am sure that we can pick up on the other stuff when you are answering questions. Just a bit of an introduction to what you have been doing is what we want.

[226] **Mr Jones:** We have been going out to the community, and bringing the community to the football club. One of the main things is a healthy eating initiative. My background is that I used to be a footballer; I played for Wrexham. I have been going to all the schools in Denbighshire to promote healthy eating to young children. It is based on a slide show. We go into the school and speak in front of all the children. I tell them what a footballer eats, so we are using the power of football to drum into them that healthy eating is important. I tell them a couple of stories about when I was a footballer and tell them about what we used to eat. Then we go to have lunch with them and see what they have in their butties and what dinners they choose. So, it is about a footballer being a role model who can have that influence on them with regard to what they eat.

[227] Another big project that is still ongoing, and for which we have just found out we have funding until September, is our study centre in Rhyl called Strikers. The drivers behind this have been Jamie and Tracey. I have just been delivering it. It has been one of the biggest

eye-openers of my life. I never thought that I would be doing what I am doing in Strikers. We have partnered with Rhyl College to attract people from rural areas who have offended— young adults and children. Ben Owen from Rhyl College teaches them literacy and numeracy and I teach them football out on the park. They do about two hours of literacy and numeracy and then about an hour of football with me. It is basically a matter of dangling the carrot. Again, it comes down to the power of football. I use it a lot because it is so popular. Some of my experiences have been very daunting. There are people who have come into the college who can hardly write their name, but, because they absolutely love football, this has had a massive effect on them. It brings them back each day and each week. The numbers are increasing every day, which tells me that the word is going round.

[228] We have helped a lot of young adults in Strikers. A couple of them have even gone on to full-time jobs as a result of Tracey's links to other pathways. It is also about raising the standards of achievement in literacy and numeracy. It is not so much about football skills; it is all about literacy and numeracy. However, on the other side, we work on their health as well, to improve their wellbeing in everyday life. So, Strikers has had a massive impact in our community, and I think that the word is spreading around Rhyl that it is a very good place to be. Obviously, it is keeping young offenders away from the streets.

[229] **Mr Digwood:** May I just jump in there for a second? I am Jamie Digwood, and I am the new managing director of the football club. What Lee has mentioned about some of the schemes is great. To give you a bit of background, until about two years ago, the football club was all about playing on a Saturday afternoon, winning the Welsh Premier League, and getting into Europe; nothing else ever really went on. The only thing the community ever got was 90 minutes on a Saturday, when they all turn up and pay to come in. There were no other initiatives. From working in football clubs and setting up my own business, I stumbled across a scheme at Charlton Athletic Football Club. Obviously, inner-city areas are quite different to the rural areas of Wales, but there were some areas of similarity. It has a study centre for young offenders and so on. So, when I came back to the football club, I said that we needed to do something for the community. Everyone knows that Rhyl is an Objective 1 area and so on, and I asked what the football club gave back to the community. So, tentatively, we set up our community programme, initially under my company's name, which became the Rhyl Football in the Community limited by guarantee company. All of a sudden, we could understand the grant applications, the way forward and how much help was available with partnership building. So, in the past two years, we have come all that way.

11.30 a.m.

[230] I would not want to say to you that we are a football club that has always been community based. It is only in the last couple of years that we have gone out there and started to give something back to the local area.

[231] **Helen Mary Jones:** That is great, thank you. We will move on to the questions. I am sure that there are other things that you want to mention that we have not touched upon yet. I should have explained, for the record, that Lee Jones is the Football in the Community development manager. That is his official title, which I forgot to put on the record.

[232] **Mr Jones:** I am still getting used to that title.

[233] **Helen Mary Jones:** It sounds pretty impressive to me.

[234] **Mr Digwood:** That is the first time that I have heard it.

[235] **Helen Mary Jones:** The first question is from me. You have touched on this, but there may be something that you want to add. Can you tell us more about the types of

opportunities that Rhyl Football in the Community provides for children and young people in the area, and some idea of the number of young people that you have been working with?

[236] **Mr Jones:** The soccer camps that we run form a large part of that. We have run them at the club and in schools. I am not so aware of the numbers, because I am just a coach, but over 100 children attended the previous soccer camp. It lasts from 9 a.m. to 3 p.m. and we look after them all day, whether at the club or at their school.

[237] **Helen Mary Jones:** Do these take place during the school holidays?

[238] **Mr Jones:** Yes, in the school holidays. However, during term time, we run after-school clubs. We offer a lot through the after-school football clubs. These currently operate in nine schools. The after-school bundle is not just about football, we also discuss healthy eating and we read with the children. Football after school takes place between 3.15 p.m. and 4.15 p.m. and our coaches, who have undergone enhanced Criminal Records Bureau checks, look after them for an hour and teach them football skills. We do something called 'football maths and English', where we sometimes go into the schools to teach English and mathematics using football.

[239] We do holiday camps. We currently operate three large holiday camps, mainly over the school holidays. So, we are extremely busy in the holiday camps when the school holidays come. This year, the Rhyl FC Academy has expanded massively. We have gone from having around 50 children to over 200. It is growing. It is important for the football club to bring young talented footballers through to the first team. We train on Monday nights and play at the weekend.

[240] We also do match day litter-picking. When we run after-school sessions, we offer free tickets to come and watch a home game. So, we get good numbers of people through the gates by doing that. We demonstrate healthy cooking in schools. I worked with the Fire Up Your Life project last year. It has also received funding for this year. Although the Fire Up Your Life project was massively successful, we did not have enough football pitches to deliver the football. I worked in Bruton park for six weeks and, in the first week, around five children attended the session, but the next week the number had jumped to around 50. The power of football got them all together and I had 50 children in a space that is smaller than this hall in which I had to hold football sessions.

[241] **Eleanor Burnham:** You must be a wizard.

[242] **Helen Mary Jones:** That sounds a bit of a nightmare.

[243] **Mr Jones:** Yes. We also ran one in the west end of Rhyl and the numbers attending that rose to about 50 as well. We had only the little cage football pitches that are smaller than this, and, once again, I had to work with 50 children, but that was a massive success and we will run it again in the summer.

[244] **Sandy Mewies:** Was that in a bigger place?

[245] **Mr Jones:** Hopefully. [*Laughter.*]

[246] **Helen Mary Jones:** That is really good to hear. Sandy, I think that you have the next question for Jamie and Lee.

[247] **Sandy Mewies:** Given the number of times that your constituency Member, Ann Jones, manages to bring up Rhyl Football Club and praise them, I did not think that there was anything else left to learn, but I was wrong.

[248] **Helen Mary Jones:** She bangs on about you in the Chamber all the time.

[249] **Sandy Mewies:** I am absolutely amazed by the amount of work that you are doing and the activities that are taking place. I wonder, Chair, whether this could be replicated in some way.

[250] In the written information that you sent to the committee, you gave us information about the activities that you run and the numbers attending these. Can you tell us more about the charging policies and whether, when children and young people need special kit and equipment to take part, you are able to support children from low-income households to participate? How do you pitch it? The west end of Rhyl is known to be a low-income area and there are others.

[251] **Mr Digwood:** I will talk about the academy, which is for the elite players. As we all know, some of the best footballers in the world come from the more deprived areas. When we have been to the poorer areas and found players who have potential, we have looked for sponsors for them because, in running an academy, we need several coaches, facility hire and so on. We have limited funding from UEFA and the Football Association of Wales, so we have secured sponsorship for those players from a local business or person. When they come in, they get their kit and all their sessions for free. They are the kids that have the best chance of going on to Manchester United or Blackburn Rovers and so on. Several of those children had offers to go to clubs prior to us setting up the academy, but could not get there because their parents did not have transport. You know more about the other schemes in the west end, Lee—

[252] **Mr Jones:** Strikers is funded; the young people come along and we provide them with their own equipment such as drinks bottles—I talk a lot about healthy eating to them. The after-school club, because we offer so much of a bundle, is £2 per pupil. With that, they get a free ticket to come and watch a game, as does the school. We go into the school and we read books to the children, run healthy eating talks with them, and they get to win a trophy every week and they also win certificates. There is also the 14-week football programme, for which they pay to attend. The soccer camps are run during half term and cost £5 per day, which works out cheap because we look after the young people throughout the whole day. Jamie has talked about the academy; Fire Up Your Life was funded and Tracy secured all the funding for that. We went into about six areas, including Bruton park, west end, Llanrwst and Llandudno. It was funded, and was a massive success. You can see all the numbers that we worked with on that through the summer. We also run a Saturday drop shop and Friday night football coaching in the leisure centre. I do not deliver that; that is done by another one of our coaches, but I think that it is £3 per session for 5 to 8-year-olds, which just covers the football.

[253] **Helen Mary Jones:** Thank you; we can double-check the paperwork.

[254] **Eleanor Burnham:** Hwyrach eich bod wedi ateb fy nghwestiwn ynglŷn a gweithio mewn partneriaeth. Yr ydych wedi sôn am Gyngor Chwaraeon Cymru, Cymunedau yn Gyntaf, Rhyl Youth Action Group a Strategaeth Dinas Rhyl. Sut mae'r cydweithio hwn yn cydlynu ac yn datblygu'r adnoddau i bobl ifanc i gymdeithasu? Beth sy'n gweithio'n dda a beth y gellir ei wella?

Eleanor Burnham: I think that you have answered my question on working in partnership. You have mentioned the Sports Council for Wales, Communities First, Rhyl Youth Action Group and Rhyl City Strategy. How do these partnerships co-ordinate the development of facilities for young people to hang out? What works well and what could be improved?

[255] **Helen Mary Jones:** You have already touched on partnerships; this question is about

how the partnerships are developing and how they could be improved.

[256] **Mr Digwood:** The Rhyl City Strategy has been a breath of fresh air to Rhyl. It has been outstanding; especially for the football community programme and I know that several other groups speak highly of it.

11.40 a.m.

[257] **Mr Digwood:** It is also a good network for businesses. I think that we have 180 businesses in the set-up now. As for the Sports Council for Wales and so on, we have not really had that much to do with it. Our partnership with Rhyl College and its sister college, Llandrillo College, is developing greatly.

[258] When it comes to facilities, which was part of the question, we are looking at the potential to turn our own pitch into a third-generation rubber-crumb Astroturf pitch. At the moment, we have two groundsmen and, if you walk on the pitch any time between 11 a.m. and 5 p.m. on a Saturday, you will probably be shot on sight. Any time I mention this third-generation Astroturf pitch I look behind me because I think one of the groundsmen will be there. So, we are looking to turn the pitch into a third-generation pitch, to which there would be open access. The college would be a partner with us, so we could use that facility for the basic skills training and the things that happen in the Strikers study centre. Rather than using the car park, they could use a proper pitch. It would also assist with the schools programmes and the camps.

[259] At the moment, we are using facilities that are often fully booked so we are always fighting for space. There is a limited number of Astroturf pitches in Rhyl. Last year, our academy of 50 players had to travel St Asaph. You are talking about asking youngsters from the west end of Rhyl to get to St Asaph. They have a big enough job coming to Rhyl High School, where we train at the moment. The older groups are limited in the amount of tactical work they can do because we are sharing the pitch with five-a-side teams. There is a massive lack of good facilities in north Wales. The Welsh Rugby Union is coming into Colwyn Bay, and I think that that will be fantastic for north Wales.

[260] **Eleanor Burnham:** They have Canadians involved in that have they not? There are people of some calibre involved.

[261] **Mr Digwood:** That is right. We are going to start our own scholarship programme this year, which will work in parallel with the Welsh Rugby Union. So, when players turn 15 or 16, they will have another level to go on to. It will also give them the opportunity to carry on with their education, rather than just dropping out at 16. At 16, not many of them are likely to get into our first team.

[262] **Helen Mary Jones:** I was going to ask you a question about access to facilities, but I think that you have answered that by saying that, basically, there are not sufficient facilities for the programmes that you would like to run and that you are looking at ways to develop that.

[263] **Sandy Mewies:** You have talked about partnership working, but do you ever work with schools in order to use their playing fields out of school hours for Rhyl football and community activities? Can you tell us a bit more about how you work jointly with schools? I know that you have touched on it, but could you go into more detail please?

[264] **Mr Jones:** Schools in Denbighshire have been a breath of fresh air. By going into the schools and offering the football programme and the bundle that we do, we have created really good partnerships. One of our best partnerships is with Blessed Edward Jones High

School. We do a lot of stuff there. We are currently running Foot Soul there. I have been there, helping the teacher out with the PE lessons, because he is on his own. With us helping out, creating that good relationship between the club and the school, the school lets us use its pitches for our academy match days. It does not charge us either, so that is absolutely fantastic. That is why I am trying to get out to more schools; creating partnerships with the schools is important. Not only that, it creates pathways for the young children. For example, if I went into the school and saw that little Joe had fantastic talent, I would contact his parents and invite him to the academy. We feel that partnerships with schools are vital for our development. As I say, one of the best partnerships is with Blessed Edward Jones High School; it has been so helpful with its facilities. It has let us use them whenever possible, and it does not charge us.

[265] **Helen Mary Jones:** That is really positive.

[266] **Sandy Mewies:** It is a win-win situation.

[267] **Mr Jones:** Yes, it is brilliant.

[268] **Mr Digwood:** It is also a win-win situation for the schools. The Football Association of Wales, which I do a lot of work with, I would criticise for the amount of work that it does in the schools, because when we have gone into the schools, the Football Association of Wales has not been there, and it has a full-time development officer in this county.

[269] **Eleanor Burnham:** Could you just repeat that? You have just said that the FAW—

[270] **Mr Digwood:** The Football Association of Wales has a full-time football development officer for Denbighshire.

[271] **Helen Mary Jones:** But has not been involved—

[272] **Eleanor Burnham:** But has not been effective. Is that what you said?

[273] **Mr Digwood:** Well, am I being recorded here?

[274] **Eleanor Burnham:** Call a spade a spade.

[275] **Helen Mary Jones:** I do not think that we should put words into the witness's mouth. I think that what I heard Jamie say was that when he has been going into schools, he has not been seeing the Football Association of Wales there.

[276] **Mr Digwood:** Yes.

[277] **Helen Mary Jones:** That is not quite the same as saying that it has been ineffective.

[278] **Mr Digwood:** I would not say that it is ineffective, but I would say that it has changed its mindset. I do not think that the FAW goes into schools as it used to do. I used to be a football development officer some 10 years ago. I do not see the FAW except at a limited amount of schools. Its main aim is coach education but, again, I would question that in our area, because we have taken guys on Future Jobs schemes and SkillBuild programmes and so forth and we are doing our own internal coach education, and the Future Jobs scheme and the SkillBuild programme have enabled us to get them into the schools. We have probably gone from two members of staff to between 10 and 15 members of staff. So, you can access a lot more schools in a week under those schemes.

[279] **Helen Mary Jones:** That is really interesting. Eleanor has the next question.

[280] **Eleanor Burnham:** Yn eich profiad chi, a yw ‘stereotypes’—ni wn beth yw’r gair Cymraeg am hynny, er nad yw’n air Saesneg ychwaith—negyddol am blant a phobl ifanc yn amharu ar eu gallu hwy i chwarae a hongian o gwmpas yn ddiogel, yn enwedig i gicio pêl ar y stryd, er enghraifft, a sut ydych yn goresgyn yr agweddau hynny?

Eleanor Burnham: In your experience, do the negative stereotypes—I do not know the Welsh word for ‘stereotypes’, although it is not an English word either—of children and young people affect their ability to play and hang out safely, in particular to kick a ball in the street, for example, and how do you overcome those attitudes?

[281] **Mr Digwood:** That is a good question. If we look at the Strikers facility, we see that the first thing that certain people at the club—probably me included—would say, ‘Right; we will have to nail everything down now, because we are going to have people in from all different walks of life and backgrounds’. Football is a key here, in that, no matter what their background, the young people all support a football club and all want to be involved in a football club. We are doing a scheme now where we are linking in with Everton Football Club. It is a SkillBuild programme. So when these youngsters from Strikers pass the first level of basic skills, they will then possibly go on to SkillBuild, and will get a free tracksuit, the Rhyl FC badge and the Everton FC badge. Suddenly, they are part of a scheme, a programme and a football club, which will give them kudos when they go back to their own areas. That should be a hook to keep them on.

[282] I am not sure whether I can answer your question in full. I wish that I could. I do believe that there are fewer kids now playing on the streets. There are signs in many parks saying, ‘No Ball Games’ and so on. It is for the likes of us to put these facilities or practices on. When we were youngsters we could just go out to play and never had any problems. It is for the likes of football in the community schemes, rugby schemes, sport schemes, street dancing and so forth, to put the facilities in place and let the kids come to them.

[283] **Eleanor Burnham:** We had evidence from our first witnesses about young people doing gardening with older people to deal with the intergenerational issue. Those are, perhaps, easier things to do than kicking a football. We all know that older people sometimes worry about footballs being kicked repeatedly against a wall outside their window or whatever, but I am sure that you are doing fantastic work and I think that we all have a role to play, which is why we are here looking into all this.

[284] **Helen Mary Jones:** I guess that what you are doing is giving the young people a place to kick a football where they are not going to be driving older people crackers.

[285] **Mr Digwood:** One scheme that we are looking into, for which we have not quite had backing yet, but it is happening in a lot of areas, is midnight football leagues. When you have children in certain areas that are going around smashing bottles, making noises in the bus shelters and on street corners, and when an old person who has just left his or her friend’s house has to go past 15 kids all wearing hoodies, that is quite scary. Midnight football leagues have been happening in London for a few years now. Charlton Athletic was one of the main founders. You invite the kids to play football from 8 p.m. or 9 p.m. at night rather than doing the other stuff. You can then set up leagues. It would be run by us, the National Probation Service or the local community police. Lee talked about the football cages earlier, which could be used in this case, so you would not need a big area to work on this.

11.50 a.m.

[286] To keep the kids in order, if they turn up smelling of alcohol, their team loses one point, which could affect their league status. If one of them is caught smoking, they lose a point. If a girlfriend turns up having been drinking alcopops, or whatever, the team will lose a

point. So, it is all about steering the children into doing something active that they will enjoy rather than hanging around the streets on Friday and Saturday nights.

[287] **Mr Jones:** I would like to add to that. One of the main things that the Strikers course has provided is a massive boost to the confidence of those who take part. For example, I remember one participant on the first day, who just sat and would not say a word. By the end of the day, he was so much chirpier and was doing press-ups in the classroom. Ben and I do not come across like teachers; we have a laugh and a joke, but we never take a foot off the gas when it comes to literacy and numeracy.

[288] To add to what Jamie said, because their confidence increases each time they come there, they want to play football outside Strikers. They are asking me all the time when the Vauxhall league will start and when there is five-a-side football, because they want to play. They have developed their confidence after working with us and have worked on their football skills. They now want to take part in activities outside Strikers as well. That is another great thing that Strikers has provided.

[289] **Helen Mary Jones:** That is really interesting. I love the idea of the late-night football leagues. I know that these have worked really effectively in other places, have they not?

[290] **Mr Digwood:** Yes. We would really like to run one here and to tie it in with families. There is a potential problem with them all leaving at a certain time and going down the same street together, but some of the football clubs get around that by saying that an aunt or an uncle has to take the kids back. Again, that keeps the noise levels down.

[291] **Helen Mary Jones:** Thank you. The next question is from me. You have said quite a bit about this already, Lee, but you might want to add something. So, I will ask the question, but if you feel that you have already answered it, we will just move on to Sandy's question.

[292] In the written information, you talk about the healthy eating initiative. You said that football coaches can be a positive role model for young people. Can you tell us a bit more about how that works? Do you see the kids changing their behaviour because of what you are doing?

[293] **Mr Jones:** I remember when I was first asked to do this, I had just been released from Wrexham—I did not make the professional team for Wrexham. I was asked if I wanted to go into around eight or nine schools in Denbighshire, stand in front of the whole school and talk about what footballers eat. At first, I was unsure, because I had just been released from football, where my ambition had lain, but then I thought that I would give it a go.

[294] The whole idea was to put up a slideshow and to tell them what I had to eat, and they would see that it contained none of the bad foods. I would talk to them about that and we would arrange with the school that this food would be provided so that they could try it, see whether they liked it, and see whether it made a difference. Given the power of role models and football, I would go into the schools later to run the football programmes, and they would say, 'Look at me, I am eating a banana and an apple'. It had a massive effect on them.

[295] **Sandy Mewies:** You are not staying to watch us have lunch, are you? [*Laughter.*]

[296] **Eleanor Burnham:** We probably have a banana.

[297] **Helen Mary Jones:** We have a bit of time, so I will ask an additional question. Obviously, football is perceived as being predominantly a lad's game, even though many girls get involved as well. To what extent do your programmes work with girls as well as boys? If it does tend to be mostly boys, there is nothing wrong with that at all.

[298] **Sandy Mewies:** I was going to ask that as well, but also I want to ask about young people with disabilities.

[299] **Mr Jones:** I will go through the list. The Football After School programme is for boys and girls, and we have a lot of girls participating; Strikers is open to boys and girls; the soccer camps are for boys and girls, and, sometimes, if we have a lot of girls, we will put them in a separate group, depending on their level of football; the holiday camps are for boys and girls; the academy is boys-only, but we have one girl that plays in my team—she is absolutely fantastic, and I have just had a meeting with her parents. This is one thing that we are good at in Rhyl: we have created a pathway for her to go into girls' football, because she is getting to the age where physicality comes into the game. She cannot really carry on with the boys, so we have created a pathway for her to play with girls. We are in the middle of developing a girls' team at Rhyl academy, but because the main one has expanded so much, and we are so busy with that at the minute, we have not got that up and running yet; but we really want to look in future at a girls' team at Rhyl academy. Fire Up Your Life is another programme open to boys and girls. Everything that we do on Friday night and Saturday morning is open to boys and girls, and we want boys and girls involved as much as possible in everything that we do.

[300] **Helen Mary Jones:** Sandy also asked whether you worked with young people who are disabled.

[301] **Mr Jones:** Sorry, I forgot about that. On Mondays, we work with a disability group of about seven children, one of whom is a girl. They are so keen to do the football sessions, and that is growing all the time—we are trying to get as many people involved as possible, and we work with disabled adults as well.

[302] **Mr Digwood:** I think that it is called Key Ring.

[303] **Mr Jones:** Yes, it is Key Ring. It is funded as well, I am sure that it is.

[304] **Helen Mary Jones:** Sandy, I think that you have the last question.

[305] **Sandy Mewies:** We have heard from other organisations that sometimes health and safety issues are used as an excuse, or perhaps as a threat, to stop activities taking place. Is that something that you have experienced? Do health and safety issues affect the opportunities that you are able to offer children and young people? I assume that you have people who are experienced in doing health and safety assessments.

[306] **Mr Digwood:** Yes, we have public liability and other insurance, so we are covered for the community work and the football club. All the staff are CRB-checked, are qualified coaches, and do the course on health and welfare as well, so they know not to leave a child on their own in a room with another child or with an adult. The facilities are always checked before use, and that would be one of the issues that I would have—some of the facilities that we use are second rate. There seem to be a lot of dogs in Rhyl. I did one session where we had to put cones around the dog mess, and one of the kids was zipping around the cones—this was a couple of years ago, by the way—and he said that it was great that we put cones around the dog muck, because they are used to having to play in it.

[307] **Sandy Mewies:** It is an issue, is it not?

[308] **Mr Digwood:** It is, yes. That is another reason why we are so keen to get the 3G pitch up and running, where we will have quality facilities. Also, when goalposts are left up on a pitch, other kids will invariably come along and smash bottles against the posts, so you

then have glass in the goalmouths. We try our best to cover everything, but the facilities that we have are not helpful.

[309] **Helen Mary Jones:** So, you have a lack of facilities, but there are also issues about the quality of the facilities that you do have.

[310] **Eleanor Burnham:** And dog dirt.

[311] **Mr Jones:** When I worked on Fire Up Your Life, another big issue was that you would turn up, and the coaches do a risk assessment before the session, and you would always find that there were holes in the ground, and sometimes that would stop the game altogether, because someone could fall in the hole and break their ankle.

[312] **Mr Digwood:** He once got shot at as well. Obviously, he is quite fast.

[313] **Mr Jones:** Yes, I was doing a session in the west end of Rhyl and I actually got shot at from a window. I was teaching football, and the next thing something went straight past me.

12.00 p.m.

[314] **Eleanor Burnham:** Was it from an air gun?

[315] **Mr Jones:** I do not know what it was. I just grabbed the children and got them inside.

[316] **Helen Mary Jones:** Good heavens. I know that it is ‘west’ Rhyl, but I did not know that it is the wild west. That is a bit excessive.

[317] Thank you for coming and for your evidence. We have heard some really interesting stuff, which we will learn from. I should have perhaps explained earlier to witnesses and others that the process is that we take evidence here—and we take a lot of other evidence—and we then make recommendations as a committee to the Assembly Government. It is not up to us to change policies and practices, but it is up to us to make recommendations about them. The truth is that the Government has to have a very good reason to refuse to accept the recommendations that we make, and it has to respond formally to our report before the whole Assembly. If it says ‘no’ to some of our suggestions, it has to make a very good case. The evidence and the information that you have given us today will have a powerful voice in shaping where the Assembly Government goes next. As Chair of the committee, I have had discussions with the new Deputy Minister for Children, and he is keen to see the outcome of our inquiry and is ready to shift resources and policy if we find that that needs to happen. The contributions of all the witnesses today are really important, and we are grateful for that.

[318] Diolch yn fawr i bawb sydd wedi cyfrannu: y tystion, yn bennaf, a’r Aelodau. Gwn fod llawer o aildrefnu wedi digwydd er mwyn ichi allu bod yma, ac yr ydym yn gwerthfawrogi hynny. Byddwn yn parhau i gasglu tystiolaeth yn ystod y dydd. Byddwn yn ôl yma rhwng 6.30 p.m. a 7.30 p.m., pan fyddwn yn cynnal sesiwn galw heibio i bobl gael dod i drafod rhai o’r problemau y maent yn eu gweld. Byddwn yn symud ymlaen o fan hyn i ymweld â rhai o’r cyfleusterau sydd ar gael.

I thank everyone who has contributed: the witnesses, mainly, and Members. I know that a lot of reorganisation has had to take place so that you could be here, and we appreciate that. We will continue to take evidence throughout the day. We will be back here between 6.30 p.m. and 7.30 p.m., when there will be a drop-in session for people to come to discuss some of the problems that they see. We will move on from here to visit some of the facilities that are available.

[319] Diolch hefyd i'r staff i gyd. Mae'n dipyn o beth cynnal pwyllgor yn allanol. Nid ni yn unig sydd yn mynychu; mae staff darlledu a chyfieithu ac o'r Cofnod yn dod hefyd. Diolch ichi i gyd am eich gwaith caled. Bydd cyfarfod ffurfiol nesaf y pwyllgor yng Nghaerdydd ar 27 Ebrill.

I also thank all the staff. It is quite an undertaking to hold an external committee meeting, as it is not just us who attend; broadcasting and translation staff attend as do Record staff. Thank you all for your hard work. The next formal meeting of the committee will be in Cardiff on 27 April.

Daeth y cyfarfod i ben am 12.02 p.m.
The meeting ended at 12.02 p.m.