



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

Y Pwyllgor Deisebau **The Petitions Committee**

Dydd Mawrth, 29 Ebrill 2014
Tuesday, 29 April 2014

Cynnwys **Contents**

Cyflwyniad, Ymddiheuriadau a Dirprwyon
Introduction, Apologies and Substitutions

Deisebau Newydd
New Petitions

Y Wybodaeth Ddiweddaraf am Ddeisebau Blaenorol
Updates to Previous Petitions

Sesiwn Dystiolaeth: Diffibrilwyr
Evidence Session: Defibrillators

Sesiwn Dystiolaeth: Gwasanaethau Bysiau yng Nghymru
Evidence Session: Bus Services in Wales

Cofnodir y trafodion yn yr iaith y llefarwyd hwy ynndi yn y pwyllgor. Yn ogystal, cynhwysir trawsgrifiad o'r cyfieithu ar y pryd.

The proceedings are reported in the language in which they were spoken in the committee. In addition, a transcription of the simultaneous interpretation is included.

Aelodau'r pwyllgor yn bresennol
Committee members in attendance

Russell George	Ceidwadwyr Cymreig Welsh Conservatives
Bethan Jenkins	Plaid Cymru The Party of Wales
William Powell	Democratiaid Rhyddfrydol Cymru (Cadeirydd y Pwyllgor) Welsh Liberal Democrats (Committee Chair)
Joyce Watson	Llafur Labour

**Eraill yn bresennol
Others in attendance**

Phil Hill	Deisebydd Petitioner
John Pockett	Cyddfederasiwn Cludiant Teithwyr Cymru Confederation of Passenger Transport
Richard Lee	Ymddiriedolaeth GIG Gwasanaeth Ambiwylans Cymru Welsh Ambulance Services NHS Trust
June Thomas	Ymgyrchwr Diffibrilwyr Leol Local Defibrillator Campaigner

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

Kayleigh Driscoll	Dirprwy Glerc Deputy Clerk
Steve George	Clerc Clerk
Matthew Richards	Cynghorydd Cyfreithiol Legal Adviser
Kath Thomas	Dirprwy Glerc Deputy Clerk

*Dechreuodd y cyfarfod am 09:01.
The meeting began at 09:01.*

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

[1] **William Powell:** Bore da, bawb. **William Powell:** Good morning, all.

[2] Welcome to this first Petitions Committee meeting of the summer term. We have no apologies this morning and I hope that we will shortly be joined by our colleague, Russell George. There are no other updates, so the normal housekeeping arrangements apply. I welcome to our team Jessica England, who joins the clerking team this morning. It is great to have her on board and I look forward to working with her and the rest of the team. We will move forward to agenda item 2.

09:02

**Deisebau Newydd
New Petitions**

[3] **William Powell:** The first petition is P-04-451, Support for the Mentrau Iaith

language initiatives. This petition was submitted by Heini Gruffudd and collected 1,346 signatures. It reads:

[4] ‘We call on the Assembly to ask the Welsh Government to congratulate the Mentrau Iaith for their innovative work in promoting the use of the Welsh language across Wales; to confirm that the Mentrau are a key partner for the Government in the context of implementing its Welsh-language strategy; to provide a prompt response to Cardiff University’s survey of the Mentrau’s work, ensuring that the funding that is given to them is a fair reflection of the scale of the task that they face—while accepting that the amount of money that is available to them needs to be increased substantially; to accept that there is a need for consistency between the Mentrau in terms of funding and that the current inconsistency needs to be addressed; to fund Mentrau Iaith Cymru fairly, ensuring that it can play a full role in co-ordinating the work of the Mentrau and providing them with assistance and guidance; to ensure that the Welsh-language standards compel Welsh local authorities to support the work of the Mentrau and to ensure that the authorities work closely with the Mentrau; to play a full role in providing strategic guidance in the context of community planning.’

[5] We received this petition late last term from a number of petitioners in the absence of Mr Heini Gruffudd, who was away at that time. So, this is our first consideration. I propose that we write to the First Minister, who has overall responsibility for the Welsh language as a first action. Are colleagues content with that approach?

[6] **Bethan Jenkins:** Yr unig bwynt y byddwn yn ei adio yw bod cyfres o ddadleuon wedi digwydd ar lawr y Cynulliad lle mae’r Prif Weinidog wedi ymateb i ddatganiadau. Efallai y byddai’n syniad i ofyn i’r ymchwilyr i weld a yw rhai o’r pwyntiau hyn wedi cael eu cydnabod yn yr hyn y mae’r Prif Weinidog wedi ei ddweud ar lawr y Senedd, yn ychwanegol at ysgrifennu ato.

Bethan Jenkins: The only point that I would add is that a series of debates have happened on the floor of the Assembly where the First Minister has responded to statements. It would perhaps be a good idea to ask the researchers to look to see whether some of these points have been noted in what the First Minister has said on the floor of the Senedd, as well as writing to him.

[7] **William Powell:** Diolch yn fawr. It would be very useful to have sight of that. I am sure that that request has been heard, and it has my support as well. So, thanks for that.

[8] The next petition is P-04-542, Practical Opportunities for Young People. This petition was submitted by George Colville, on behalf of Ruskin Mill College, and is supported by 32 signatures. It reads as follows:

[9] ‘We call on the National Assembly for Wales to urge the Welsh Government to provide more opportunities for unemployed young people to undertake voluntary work to help them develop new skills, particularly skills that are more practical in nature.’

[10] This is our first consideration of this petition. Colleagues, what do you suggest we do with this at first consideration?

[11] **Joyce Watson:** I think that we could write to Ken Skates, who is the Deputy Minister for Skills and Technology. We could also, I think, approach Edwina Hart, the Minister for Finance—

[12] **William Powell:** The Minister for business and enterprise.

[13] **Joyce Watson:** Sorry, the Minister for business and enterprise; it just went out of my head—first day back. Maybe we could also update the petitioner about the fact that last

month, for the first time ever, 500 young people were afforded opportunities of all sorts in one month, in terms of any opportunity to train or to have voluntary opportunities to try to get themselves back to work, which I am sure is what this is about.

[14] **William Powell:** I would be happy to flag that up with the petitioner. In terms of writing to the two Ministers that you named, I think that that makes good sense. Are colleagues happy with that approach? I see that you are. Excellent.

[15] The next petition is P-04-543, No Increase to University Tuition Fees. This petition was selected during the petitions workshop element of the Government and Politics conference, which was held back on 19 February this year, and it collected 22 signatures. As such, there is no lead petitioner, but it is the outcome of that process, which was a very successful event that was organised by the education team here at the Assembly. The petition reads as follows:

[16] ‘We call on the National Assembly for Wales to urge the Welsh Government not to increase tuition fees for Welsh students for a minimum of five years.’

[17] I think that, in the context of this petition, we have to write to Huw Lewis, the Minister for Education and Skills, to seek his perspective. Are Members happy with that? I see that you are. Okay, let us take that forward.

[18] The next petition is P-04-544, Ban the Shooting of Greenland White-fronted Geese. This petition was submitted by Aaron Davies, and collected 240 signatures. An associated petition has collected over 3,500 signatures, on an alternative petitions website. The text reads as follows:

[19] ‘We call on the National Assembly for Wales to urge the Welsh Government to reverse their decision not to ban the shooting of an endangered species, the Greenland White-fronted goose, meaning that Wales remains the only country on the flight path of this endangered species where they can still be legally shot and killed. Scientific evidence has shown that the species is extremely vulnerable to hunting pressures. In their consultation report, the Welsh Government also admit that failure to take appropriate steps to reduce as far as possible Greenland White-fronted geese adult mortality could be seen as a failure to meet conservation obligations. Unlike Scotland, Ireland, Iceland and Greenland there is no current ban on the shooting and killing of this endangered bird in Wales. A voluntary ban is in place on part of the Dyfi estuary in Wales but there is evidence that the geese also use other areas away from the estuary in mid and North Wales where no voluntary agreements are in place.’

[20] We have further information regarding the decline of the species in our papers, as well as specific issues around the patterns of the population of these geese in recent years. So, clearly it is a matter of considerable concern. Joyce.

[21] **Joyce Watson:** I have already written to the Minister on this. First of all, I am a member of the Royal Society for the Protection of Birds, and I went down to the Dyfi estuary, and met with the RSPB, which raised this issue with me. I have had a reply and I can furnish the committee with that reply.

[22] **William Powell:** That would be helpful.

[23] **Joyce Watson:** The Minister did state in that reply that he was not minded to ban it. He preferred instead to go along in the way that he has with this voluntary ban. However, I think that we have to write to the Minister as a committee to see whether we can get some progress for the petitioners. I will give you my reply—it was some months ago—just so that you know, because I am a member of this committee. However, I do suggest that we write to

Alun Davies.

[24] **William Powell:** Thank you very much for that, Joyce. I should also declare that this topic came up in conversation on a visit that I undertook to the Dyfi estuary, hosted by the RSPB also, and some issues may have indirectly led to this coming forward down this particular route. I must say that I express significant sympathy with the views expressed in this petition and we look forward to receiving the information that you have. However, it would also be right for us, as a committee, to write to Alun Davies, as is our normal practice, to flag up the petition and the particular concerns of Mr Davies and his fellow petitioners. Are colleagues happy with that way of approaching things? I see that you are. Good.

[25] We move on now to P-04-545, Aneurin Bevan Hospital Procedures. This petition was submitted by Paul Ward and has collected 20 signatures. It reads as follows:

[26] ‘We the undersigned call upon the Welsh Assembly to urge the Welsh Government to order a review into Aneurin Bevan LHB procedures regarding the following: 1. Discharging vulnerable patients late at night without hospital transport 2. The Virtual Inpatient Scheme 3. Aneurin Bevan LHB Complaints Procedures, especially when a patient is still in poor health or pain 4. Dealing with mental health patients in general hospitals’.

[27] This is our first consideration of Mr Ward’s petition and I think that the obvious thing that we should do now is write to Mark Drakeford to flag up the petitioner’s specific concerns. Are colleagues happy with that?

[28] **Joyce Watson:** May I suggest that we also write to Aneurin Bevan Local Health Board to let it know that this petition has come here to us?

[29] **William Powell:** Yes, I am happy to do that, particularly given the nature of the concerns. The more we reduce delay in considering it and flagging up the particular issues the better. Clearly, there is scope for some work to be undertaken directly with the health board, but if we take those two courses of action, that would be sensible.

[30] **Bethan Jenkins:** A allwn ni hefyd ysgrifennu at y cyngor iechyd cymunedol, achos yn fy ardal i nid yw pobl weithiau’n gwybod i fynd ato? Efallai byddai’n syniad i wybod faint o bobl sydd wedi mynd yn syth at y cyngor iechyd cymunedol gyda’r problemau sy’n cael eu tanlinellu yn y ddeiseb hon. **Bethan Jenkins:** Could we also write to the community health council, because in my area, people sometimes do not know to go to it? It would be an idea to find out how many people have gone directly to the community health council with the problems that are underlined in this petition.

[31] **William Powell:** I think that that would make a lot of sense, actually, given its statutory role as the watchdog over the health board. So, we have a suite of actions: we will write to the Minister, to Aneurin Bevan health board and also to the relevant CHC to flag up these concerns, because this is exactly the area of policy that it would wish to be aware of. So, I am happy to do that without delay.

[32] The next petition is P-04-546, Rearing of Animals in Unnatural Conditions. This petition was submitted by Jeanii Colbourne and collected 23 signatures. The text reads as follows:

[33] ‘We call on the National Assembly for Wales to urge the Welsh Government to prevent the rearing of animals in unnatural conditions and environments. Man has interfered with our food chain too much for too long. If the government & supermarkets acted more responsibly and abandoned this cruel and absurd idea we would find our own levels

naturally.’

[34] The final line of the petition is:

[35] ‘This is all coming about for one reason mans greed.’

[36] Joyce, you have indicated that you want to comment.

09:15

[37] **Joyce Watson:** I do not even know what this petition is about, quite frankly.

[38] **William Powell:** There is some lack of clarity in the wording.

[39] **Joyce Watson:** That is the first thing I have to say. So, I cannot even suggest how we proceed with it because of the lack of clarity. What I would like to do in this case is to ask the petitioner exactly what the petition is about. I do not know about my colleagues but I am completely perplexed by it.

[40] **William Powell:** I think that that would assist Alun Davies in supplying a meaningful response, if it is indeed he that we would write to on it, because it does lack clarity of expression of exactly what is being addressed here. I would be happy with that approach and I think that colleagues are also indicating that we should write back to Ms Jeanii Colbourne to seek further clarity before taking it forward, because I think that that would elicit a more meaningful response from the Minister or anyone else we write to. Thanks for that proposal; we will run with it.

[41] The next petition is P-04-547, Ban Polystyrene (EPS) Fast Food and Drinks Packaging. This petition was submitted by Rob Curtis on behalf of Friends of Barry Beaches and has collected 295 signatures. ‘The time has come’, so reads the petition,

[42] ‘The time has come to halt the sight of millions of polystyrene food and drinks cartons littering the beaches and countryside of Wales. Polystyrene (EPS) is a major component of urban litter and marine debris. It is detrimental to wildlife that ingests it and costs millions for Welsh Councils to remove from our streets. Polystyrene takes hundreds of years to degrade. Over 100 US (including New York), Canadian, and also European cities have banned polystyrene food packaging as a result of the negative impacts of the Environment. We hope that wales will have the vision to join that list. Therefore, with so many alternatives to polystyrene (EPS) packaging now available which has significantly less impact on the environment and human health and also to save Welsh taxpayers millions of pounds in street cleansing costs we, the undersigned, request that the Welsh Government introduces a ban on all polystyrene fast food and drink packaging.’

[43] Before going any further with this, because this is our first consideration of this petition, I should flag up that we have received correspondence from Sara Cammarano PhD from the British Plastics Federation. It is quite a detailed rebuttal and commentary on aspects of the petition. All colleagues have a copy of that correspondence, which arrived relatively recently. We were also copied into correspondence to Councillor Robert Curtis from Anne Sutton of Solo Cup Europe—the registered office of which is in Huntingdon, Cambridgeshire—a manufacturing concern in this field. Indeed, we also have correspondence from Alan Davey, who is director of innovation at LINPAC Packaging Ltd. So, all of that correspondence was available to us and we have had an opportunity to study that. I think that it would make sense, if we do write to the Minister for Natural Resources and Food, Alun Davies, that we include that suite of correspondence as well in seeking his view on the petition in order to take account of the clarification and counterpoints on some aspects that are

flagged up in that correspondence. Are colleagues happy with that? Joyce.

[44] **Joyce Watson:** I am very happy with that, but this is an issue that will not go away and which I think, if we have the time, deserves a piece of work to be done on it. There is a multitude of considerations. I do not know about my colleagues, but I would like to examine all of them. It is an issue that is very high on the agenda—the issue of litter, sea litter and land litter.

[45] **William Powell:** Yes, and the impact on animal and bird life and everything else.

[46] **Joyce Watson:** All of it. However, that is my view, and if others do not share it—

[47] **William Powell:** No, I think that there is merit in that. Bethan, do you have anything to add?

[48] **Bethan Jenkins:** Oes, dim ond i ddweud y gwelais drydar ddoe fod y Llywodraeth wedi datgan bod ymgynghoriad ar wahanu deunydd ailgylchu newydd gychwyn, sef sut y bydd y broses yn cael ei beth bynnag yw'r gair am 'streamline' ar draws Cymru gyfan. Ar hyn o bryd, mae lot o awdurdodau lleol a busnesau yn ei wneud mewn ffyrdd gwahanol. Yn ôl yr hyn rwy'n deall, mae lot o gynghorau sy'n gwrthod cymryd polystyren fel rhan o'r system ailgylchu. Os ydym ni'n mynd i wneud darn o waith, efallai y dylem edrych ar yr ymgynghoriad penodol hwnnw i weld sut y byddai'r deisebwyr yn gallu rhoi eu barn gerbron y Llywodraeth mewn ffordd bositif a hefyd y bobl sy'n rhan o'r masnach hwn.

Bethan Jenkins: Yes, just to say that, yesterday, I saw on Twitter that the Government has stated that a consultation on sorting recycle has just started, namely how the process will be streamlined across Wales. At the moment, a lot of local authorities and businesses do it in different ways. According to my understanding, a lot of councils do not take polystyrene as part of the recycling system. If we are going to do a piece of work on this, perhaps we should look at that particular consultation to see how the petitioners could give their opinions to the Government in a positive way as well as the people who are part of this trade.

[49] Rwy'n cytuno bod angen i ni edrych ar yr opsiynau i gyd, ond mae gennyf bwynt i'w wneud mewn ymateb i'r llythyr yn dweud taw '*human behaviour*' yw e, sef pan gawsom y *levy* ar fagiau plastig gwnaeth pobl newid eu ffordd o fyw mewn ffordd bositif. Nid yw'n ddigon, rwy'n credu, i ddweud mai natur ddynol sy'n gyfrifol am y ffaith bod pobl yn taflu pethau ar lawr neu yn y lle anghywir. Mae'n rhaid i ni roi strategaethau mewn lle er mwyn stopio hynny rhag digwydd. Felly, nid yw'r pwynt hwnnw yn y llythyr yn ddigon cryf yn fy marn i, ond rwy'n credu ei fod yn rhywbeth y dylem wneud bach o waith arno o feddwl, yn y gorffennol, yr ydym wedi bod yn gryf ar bethau yn ymwneud ag ailgylchu ar y pwyllgor hwn.

I agree that we need to look at all the options, but I have a point to make in response to the letter stating that this is 'human behaviour', because since we have had the levy on plastic bags, people have changed their lifestyles in a positive way. It is not enough, I think, to say that it is due to human behaviour that people throw things on the floor or put things in the wrong place. We have to put strategies in place in order to stop that from happening. So, that point in the letter is not strong enough, in my opinion, but I think that it is something that we should do a bit more work on, bearing in mind that, in the past, we have been quite strong on recycling matters in this committee.

[50] **William Powell:** It is really good to see consensus emerging between committee members in terms of undertaking a piece of work on this. I know that I have raised issues in the Environment and Sustainability Committee, of which I am a member, and, indeed, Russell

George has raised similar issues regarding the confusing diversity of practice by local authorities in Wales with regard to issues around recycling, refuse and so on. I call on Russell.

[51] **Russell George:** Chair, I agree with everything that has been said. I think that I am right to say that we are doing a piece of work on waste in the environment committee, are we not?

[52] **William Powell:** I would need to seek clarity on—. I think that it is in the forward work programme.

[53] **Russell George:** I think that it is, yes, so we should relay any correspondence to that committee as well, because I think that we agreed to take—

[54] **Bethan Jenkins:** We do not want to duplicate, either, so if it is about this issue, really, we need to check that out first.

[55] **William Powell:** I think that it is a broader piece of work. It does not relate specifically to this, but I think that if we write to Alun Davidson as clerk and to our colleague Alun Ffred as Chair, that would make a lot of sense, just to avoid duplication and to add focus to what we are undertaking.

[56] **Russell George:** That is fine.

[57] **William Powell:** Thanks for that.

[58] The next petition is P-04-548, the Reintroduction of Welsh Classes in Rennes University. This petition, with 14 signatures, was handed in to the visitor relations team by Cedric Choplin, following a tour of the Senedd. The text reads as follows:

[59] ‘We are visitors from Brittany and we would like the National Assembly for Wales to discuss the reintroduction of Welsh classes in Rennes University.’

[60] That is, Rennes university in Brittany in France. The petitioner, I understand, is teaching himself to speak Welsh, which is excellent and commendable, and he has provided copies of correspondence from Professor Hervé Le Bihan, who is the director of the department of Breton and Celtic studies at the University of Rennes, together with an earlier response from the First Minister, when he raised these issues some time ago. However, I think that it is fair to say, as we did when we were discussing this previously, that we did observe that that response from Carwyn Jones was back in 2012, before he took on responsibility for the Welsh language as such, but, obviously, there is an international dimension to this, which is probably why he responded as he did.

[61] At first sight, obviously, it seems slightly surprising that we are having correspondence in this way, but, actually, it is of some significance to see the importance that our culture is accorded by our fellow Celts in Brittany. So, I would value your thoughts on how to proceed with this. We will start with yours, Russell.

[62] **Russell George:** Is this in line with receiving a petition? Is it within the power of the National Assembly for Wales to do anything about this petition? Although I think that it is a very worthy petition, I am just asking for clarity on that.

[63] **William Powell:** Perhaps I could defer to Steve. We have had some discussion around this.

[64] **Mr George:** We obviously considered whether it was admissible and whether it was

a matter that the Assembly had the power to do something about, and we concluded that it was and it did. Whether it wishes to do so, of course, is a different matter entirely, as is whether it is the appropriate use of resources, priorities and so on. However, funding international education initiatives abroad is something that the Welsh Government, I think, could probably do. Also, if you look at the correspondence between—my accent is not as good as that of the Chair—Professor Le Bihan, or whatever his name was, and the First Minister, you will see that there was some co-operation between Rennes university and Aberystwyth University. So, in a sense, there is a tie into the Welsh education system as well. I take your point; it was one that we gave some consideration to.

[65] **Russell George:** You gave the answer; it is admissible.

[66] **William Powell:** I wonder whether it would also be useful to have a brief legal angle on this.

[67] **Mr Richards:** Thank you, Chair. There is not a lot that I can add to what the clerk said, but it does specifically state in the Government of Wales Act that Welsh Ministers can promote the Welsh language, and that it is not limited as to where it is promoted. So, in effect, it can be promoted anywhere in the world.

[68] **William Powell:** Excellent. Thank you for that. There is clearly no impediment to us considering this petition and taking it forward. I would be happy to write on behalf of the committee to the First Minister to seek his views. Obviously, he will recall having written previously and responded to Professor Le Bihan. Let us see. What views do any colleagues have on taking this forward?

[69] **Joyce Watson:** I think what you have said.

[70] **William Powell:** Okay. Excellent. That is further consensus, which is great. We now turn to petition P-04-549, Make ‘Hen Wlad Fy Nhadau’ the Official Welsh National Anthem. This petition was submitted by Stuart Evans, and collected 1,012 signatures. The petition reads as follows:

[71] ‘January 2016 will mark the 150th anniversary of the composition of Hen Wlad Fy Nhadau by Evan and James James of Pontypridd. December 16th 2015 will be the centenary of Hen Wlad Fy Nhadau being used as Wales’ anthem at sporting events. For the first time ever the players and crowd sang an anthem before an international match. This would become a staple tradition of international sporting events across the world. But it all started in the old Arms Park because Wales wanted to mitigate the infamous haka used by New Zealand. Hen Wlad Fy Nhadau became our battle cry and we won the game 3-0. Now, it is time to make this battle cry the official Welsh national anthem.’

[72] So reads the text of this petition from Mr Evans and his supporters. I think that it would be useful again to draw on a legal angle on this matter, so that we know the frame in which we are being asked to consider this. Perhaps I could defer to the law again.

[73] **Mr Richards:** Thank you, Chair. Culture is a matter that is within the legislative competence of the Assembly; so, on the face of it there is no reason why the Assembly could not make a law to do this. However, there are some other issues that Members might want to consider. We do not generally have laws anywhere in the United Kingdom around official national anthems or flags because these things tend to be based on custom and practice. Generally, we do not legislate unless we want to ban something. So, unless there is evidence, such as individuals being prevented from singing the national anthem at particular events, and unless there is conduct that the Assembly wants to prohibit, I would urge Members to think about whether it is an appropriate use of legislation simply to make a statement about

something.

[74] The other point is: what would be the practical effect of a law that states simply that ‘Hen Wlad fy Nhadau’ is the national anthem? Would there be other implications around penalties for not singing it at certain events? Would the Assembly want to specify events at which it is sung, or whether individuals have to conduct themselves in a particular way when it is sung? So, it is a little bit more involved than simply making a law that says the anthem is official.

09:30

[75] **William Powell:** That is really very helpful.

[76] **Bethan Jenkins:** May I seek some clarification? At a lot of events at the moment, people sing ‘God Save the Queen’ and if you do not stand or sing, that is seen as being disruptive. There is no law, I assume, in terms of that. If you were making ‘Hen Wlad fy Nhadau’ official, would that mean that that song would have to be made official in some way? Would that cause problems in itself? I did not even know that it was not official. I thought that it was just par for the course, but obviously I am learning something new here today.

[77] **William Powell:** As am I.

[78] **Bethan Jenkins:** It would be helpful to understand whether it is just going to complicate the situation even more.

[79] **Mr Richards:** It is par for the course in the sense that it is custom and practice, in the same way that singing ‘God Save the Queen’ is. To answer your specific question, there is no law governing the singing of ‘God Save the Queen’, so, in that sense, ‘Hen Wlad fy Nhadau’ is exactly the same, in that it does not have any formal legal recognition. The question for Members really is: what would it mean to say that this particular song would be the national anthem? What does it mean to say that it is an official national anthem, if the Assembly were to pass a law saying that? That does not mean anything in itself, unless it is backed up with something else, such as it would have to be sung at certain events, or individuals would have to conduct themselves in a particular way when it was sung. It is a bit more complicated than simply saying, ‘This will be an official national anthem’.

[80] **Bethan Jenkins:** I have got some ideas now.

[81] **Mr Richards:** It would put Wales on a different footing from the rest of the UK because there are no laws anywhere else in the UK around this issue.

[82] **Russell George:** Chair, I think that perhaps what we should do is write to the Minister asking for his views on the petition.

[83] **William Powell:** I am very happy to do that and I look forward to the thoughts of John Griffiths on this matter. It will also be interesting to look at international practice, if we come back to this, to see whether there are other things that could inform our consideration of this. It is a very interesting and varied group of petitions that we have considered for the first time this morning.

09:32

Y Wybodaeth Ddiweddaraf am Ddeisebau Blaenorol Updates to Previous Petitions

[84] **William Powell:** The first of these is P-04-365, Protect buildings of note on the Mid Wales Hospital site. The petition was submitted by John Tushingham and first considered in February 2012, having collected 206 signatures. We recall the issue regarding the desired protection of certain buildings of note on this hospital site at Talgarth. I have previously declared my familiarity with this and my association with the area, as colleagues know. We have a response now from the Brecon Beacons National Park, together with some further comments from the petitioner, in the public papers. Clearly, this is still a developing situation. May I suggest that maybe we ask the national park authority to keep us apprised of developments as they take place, so that we are kept in the loop at this time? Are colleagues happy with that?

[85] **Bethan Jenkins:** A oes rheswm pam mae mor araf? Roeddent i fod i'w drafod. A oes rhesymau pam maent yn gohirio'r drafodaeth? Mae'r llythyr yn eithaf byr. Nid yw'n esboniadol iawn. Os ydym yn gallu ychwanegu yn ein llythyr, 'A allwch esbonio i ni pam mae unrhyw fath o broblem wedi—.

Bethan Jenkins: Is there a reason why it is so slow? They were meant to discuss this. Is there a reason why they are going to postpone the discussion? The letter is quite brief. It does not explain much. If we could add in our letter, 'Could you explain to us why there has been any kind of problem arising—.

[86] **William Powell:** It was not lost on me that the letter was somewhat terse. I think that we can seek that view. I believe that there have been some personnel issues in the park, but I am not sure whether that relates to the particular issue around the heritage function. Clearly, I will be happy to build that in to the correspondence that I send to Ms Tracy Nettleton and her colleagues at the Brecon Beacons National Park. Thanks for that proposal.

[87] The next item is P-04-519, Abolition of Park Homes Sales Commission. This petition was submitted by the Caerwnon Park Residents Association and was first considered by us back in December of last year. We recall the specific issue around the sales commission, which was causing considerable concern to the park association—to Sue Richards, Bob Mountford and their colleagues. We last considered this on 21 January, and we wrote to the Minister. We have the Minister's response here in the public papers, together with further comments from the petitioners. Colleagues, what would your proposal be on this matter? We probably need to get back to the Minister, sharing the perspective of the petitioners, but is there anything else that would be beneficial?

[88] **Joyce Watson:** They have had this letter, have they?

[89] **William Powell:** They have had that, and they have commented on it. That is my understanding. So, if we share the petitioners' further concerns with the Minister, we will see whether that is of benefit.

[90] We move now to agenda items 3.3 and 3.4, namely P-04-408, Child and Adolescent Eating Disorder Service, and P-04-505, Eating Disorder Unit in Wales, which we previously agreed to group. The first of these petitions was submitted by Helen Missen and was considered by us initially in July 2012. It has the support of 246 signatures. We also have P-04-505, Eating Disorder Unit in Wales, which was submitted more recently by Keira Marlow and was considered by us in October 2013. It has the support of 526 signatures. We recall the context of this. We also had a very informative evidence session on these matters. We last considered the matter on 11 November 2013, and we agreed to undertake a series of actions here to ask the petitioners for their response to the Minister's latest response, and also we recently had the announcement from Mark Drakeford regarding an injection of funding into

the service and that was just a day or so before our most recent evidence session. We wrote to the Minister, asking him to review the position after 12 months, but we have also had recent contact with Helen Missen on this particular matter, because we wanted to seek some clarity from her as to her perspective on the injection of funding that had come through. We have the Minister's response in the public pack today, and the further comments from Helen Missen.

[91] Also, it would be useful just to note that one aspect that was a particular concern during the evidence session was the imminent deadline for the funding for Beat, which I think was due to lose its funding some weeks after that session. We now have clarity that Beat is now being run in Wales in partnership with Gofal, and the development officer for that combined approach is a lady called Michelle Bushell. That is one useful, additional piece of news, because it is clear that Beat was undertaking valuable work in the area, which was under some threat at that time. Colleagues, how would you like us to proceed on these grouped petitions? Russell indicated first, and then Bethan.

[92] **Russell George:** Chair, when we discussed this, the announcement was made on the day that we were discussing it.

[93] **William Powell:** Yes, it was very close in time.

[94] **Russell George:** It was therefore difficult for us to digest the announcement at that time. The way I understood it at the time was that the extra money was for eating disorders in children and young adults, but it seems that the money is wider than that; it is for a range of mental health issues beyond eating disorders. I can see that the petitioner is suggesting that the money, or the announcement, has been watered down. I think that we should write to Mark Drakeford again, attaching Helen Missen's e-mail and letter, and even, perhaps, if we can pick out some of the key strands in that and the point that I just raised and ask for a specific response to that, I would be grateful.

[95] **William Powell:** I would be happy to do that, because waiting for a period of 12 months to elapse is, in itself, I am sure, not sufficient. Bethan, I know that you chair the relevant cross-party group on these matters, and you have indicated that you wish to speak.

[96] **Bethan Jenkins:** Hoffwn gytuno gyda'r hyn y bu i Russell ei ddweud. Nid wyf wedi gweld dim yn ysgrifenedig hyd yma sy'n awgrymu y bydd yn ehangu ar unrhyw beth heblaw anhwylderau bwyta. Roedd y datganiad ar y pryd yn sôn dim ond am anhwylderau bwyta a dyna pam y daeth pobl o'r wasg, er enghraifft, ataf i oherwydd nad oedd yn sôn am faterion iechyd meddwl; roedd yn sôn yn benodol am anhwylderau bwyta. Felly, mae'n bwysig i ni wybod, oherwydd os bydd yr arian yn mynd tuag at bethau eraill, er mor bwysig yw'r rheini, bydd yn tynnu arian i ffwrdd o'r gwasanaethau prin iawn sy'n bodoli yn barod. Felly, cytunaf y dylid gofyn am ryw fath o asesiad ariannol, fel sydd yn llythyr Helen, achos mae'n rhaid inni ddeall ble y mae'r arian hwn yn mynd os yw'r Gweinidog o ddifrif am daclo'r broblem hon.

Bethan Jenkins: I would like to agree with what Russell has said. I have seen nothing in writing so far that suggests that it will expand on anything other than eating disorders. The statement at the time talked only about eating disorders and that is why people from the press, for example, came to me because there was no mention of other mental health matters; it spoke specifically about eating disorders. So, it is important for us to know, because if the money is to go towards other things, despite their being important, money will be taken away from the few services that already exist. So, I agree that a financial assessment should be requested, as is in Helen's letter, because we have to understand where this money is going if the Minister is serious about tackling this problem.

[97] Yr ail beth roeddwn am ei ddweud The second thing that I wanted to say is that

yw bod y Pwyllgor Plant, Pobl Ifanc ac Addysg newydd gychwyn ymchwiliad ar iechyd meddwl pobl ifanc. Felly, yn hytrach na gwneud mwy o waith ymchwil yn y pwyllgor hwn, byddai'n syniad i gasglu pryderon Helen at ei gilydd a'u cyflwyno i'r pwyllgor, achos bydd y materion hyn i gyd yn rhan o'r ymchwiliad hwnnw.

the Children, Young People and Education Committee has recently begun its inquiry into young people's mental health. So, rather than doing more research in this committee, it would be an idea to draw Helen's concerns together and pass them on to the committee, because these matters will all form a part of that inquiry.

[98] Cytunaf gyda Helen o ran Beat, a'r ffaith nad yw'r Gweinidog wedi dweud unrhyw beth cynhwysfawr am hynny. Fodd bynnag, y realiti yw y bydd Gofal nawr yn gyfrifol am Beat a bydd gan Beat frand yng Nghymru. Er mai dim ond un aelod o staff fydd, mae un yn fwy na dim un o gwbl, sef yr hyn sydd ar hyn o bryd. Efallai, yn y dyfodol, y bydd siawns i Beat i apelio am arian. Gwn fod arian ar gael, drwy'r Gweinidog Iechyd a Gwasanaethau Cymdeithasol, ar gyfer gwasanaethau gwirfoddol, ac mae hynny'n rhywbeth y gall Beat ei wneud.

I agree with Helen in relation to Beat, and the fact that the Minister has not made any comprehensive remarks on that. However, the reality is that Gofal will now be responsible for Beat and Beat will have a brand in Wales. Although there will be only one member of staff, one is better than none at all, which is what we have at present. Perhaps, in future, there will be an opportunity for Beat to ask for funding. I know that funding is available, through the Minister for Health and Social Services, for voluntary services, and that is something that Beat could do.

[99] Ynglŷn â'r mater o *repatriation* a safio costau, mae Helen yn gwneud pwynt da unwaith eto. A fydd hynny'n rhan o'r £250,000 sy'n cael ei grybwyll yn y llythyr? Sut fydd yr arian hwnnw yn cael ei safio a sut fyddwn yn gweld ei fod yn cael ei safio?

With regard to the matter of repatriation and cost savings, Helen once again makes a good point. Will that be a part of the £250,000 that is referred to in the letter? How will that money be saved and how will we see that it is being saved?

[100] **William Powell:** Thanks for the comprehensive contribution on the wider issues that we need to take forward. We need to revisit your comments and, indeed, Russell's earlier remarks in detail in constructing the letter that needs to go to the Minister.

[101] **Mr George:** May I raise one issue? We have quite a few items left on the agenda for updates, but we are also due to start an evidence session shortly. You may wish to consider whether you want to defer the updates until a later meeting at this point so that we can take the evidence sessions.

[102] **William Powell:** If we could take the next single item in view of the fact that the lead petitioner for that petition is in the public gallery, I think that would be a reasonable course of action. Then, with your support, colleagues, we could defer the updates on the other items to our next business meeting. Are you content with that approach? I see that you are. Excellent. Thank you for pointing that out.

[103] We have clarity as to the way in which we go forward on the eating disorder grouped petitions. The final update for today—and, as I said, we have Helen Jones in the public gallery, and we are grateful for her continued interest in the petition that she submitted in February 2013—is on P-04-456, Dementia—This Could Happen to you. We recall the text of this petition and the most recent consideration that we gave to this, which was on 25 March this year. We agreed to write, with some urgency, to Professor Mark Drakeford to pass on the petitioner's comments and also to ask what steps had been undertaken to involve her in the task and finish group and consultation, which he indicated was his intention in his letter of 3 August 2013. I am pleased to say that the Minister's response is in the public papers, together

with the response from Helen. The clerking team has now passed Helen's full contact details to the officials of Mark Drakeford so that contact can be established in the way that the Minister intended, so that she can have a full input as appropriate. The Minister expressed his regret for the slip that had happened there in terms of not following through on his letter of 3 August. So, that is a result, and we look forward to asking the petitioner to keep us updated on her ongoing input into that consultation. Bethan, you have a comment.

09:45

[104] **Bethan Jenkins:** The only thing that I want to say is that when we have been discussing this previously, the Minister has made a big thing of saying that there have been open meetings about it, but then today we learn in the third paragraph down that it was only for practitioners in terms of them saying how they would design, promote and implement the proposed framework. When we were developing the eating disorders framework, it was vital for us to have people who had experienced the illness and their carers involved, and the framework is stronger for it. Could we write back to the Minister to say, 'Yes, okay, perhaps that has been your practice before, but perhaps when you are looking at having consultations in the future, could you extend this to interested parties like Helen, because they have another angle to give?' That is what I think was missing from the whole process, because we did not need to get to this stage where she was not involved. For her to have to have a private meeting with the Minister's officials—

[105] **William Powell:** I think that that makes a lot of sense, and it would also be useful to have the petitioner's perspective on that particular aspect of things as well. So, thank you very much indeed for that contribution and for your agreement to postpone the other updates so that we can stay on track this morning. With no further ado, we move to our evidence session.

09:47

Sesiwn Dystiolaeth: Diffibrilwyr Evidence Session: Defibrillators

[106] **William Powell:** I would like to welcome you all here this morning. We have the lead petitioner Phil Hill, Richard Lee from the Welsh Ambulance Services NHS Trust and June Thomas, who is a local defibrillator campaigner on the petition, which is P-04-471, Mandatory Welsh legislation to ensure Defibrillators in all public places. We have a helpful research brief that all Members have seen. I would like now to ask you to introduce yourselves briefly to check the audio levels and for the Record of Proceedings. I also believe, Mr Hill, that you have an opening short presentation to share with us.

[107] **Mr Hill:** Thank you for the introduction. I would like to thank the Chair and the committee for inviting us today. My background is as an advanced nurse practitioner and prescriber, currently working within the Aneurin Bevan Local Health Board, but I have 25 years of special interest and professional interest in pre-hospital care and resuscitation. I have been an instructor for the Resuscitation Council (UK) for 18 years.

[108] I would like to introduce Mr Richard Lee, who is a clinical services manager and paramedic with the Welsh Ambulance Services NHS Trust. Part of Richard's remit is the management of the department that oversees public access defibrillator sites and community first responder schemes. Their professional input in the last two and a half years with my studies and with this petition has been invaluable.

[109] I would also like to thank June Thomas for showing such courage in agreeing to attend with us today. June has been a community defib campaigner since the sudden unexplained death of her 15-year-old son, Jack, at his girlfriend's home in the Gwent Valleys

in 2012. He was previously fit and well, and had no warning symptoms before he arrested and collapsed on the sofa. Jack had received immediate continued basic life support—CPR—from friends and family, and the ambulance arrived very quickly with a defibrillator. Despite this excellent care, Jack could still not be saved. June works tirelessly currently with the local media in Gwent and charity organisations to get as many defibs into local schools as possible and cardiac risk assessments for young people. It was her wish that, like Jack, other victims of sudden cardiac arrest would get the best possible chances of survival with the ambulance service.

[110] In the last seven years, I have worked closely with WAST on a voluntary basis, setting up a first responder scheme near my home. However, for nearly two and a half years, I have been focused on my Master's study in developing a pilot tool with the public on awareness of, and attitudes to, public access defibrillators. This literature search led to the petition, because I wanted to put my studies and literature search to immediate use. I hope that the evidence that I have provided to you over the months has highlighted the importance of automated external defibrillators in public places. For every minute provision of an AED is delayed to a victim, the chance of survival is said to deplete 10% per minute. This is even if CPR is ongoing. Regardless of who funds the AED, such proliferation of AEDs in public places in Wales has led to questions about their availability and even public awareness of their use. It would be an absolute tragedy if somebody died near a building where there was an AED available, and yet it was locked away or only a select few knew it was there or were allowed to use it. This is contrary to national guidance from the Resuscitation Council, and this is maybe because there are currently many misconceptions about AEDs and public access defib schemes, including, 'Everybody has to have one, do they not?' To show this, I have done a map; sorry, I do not have many of them to hand out. It is a snapshot survey from my own memory of about a 4.5 by five mile radius near my home and it demonstrates the amount of defibrillators that are already in place. Obviously, funding is a big issue, but what people are surprised to know is that the defibs are already there; it is just that when the surgeries or whatever are closed, they are locked away.

[111] International evidence is starting to emerge that with simple, co-ordinated public awareness and training campaigns, reinforced with public access defibrillator legislation, survival rates can not only be doubled, but more than tripled on occasion. I feel passionately that AEDs should be treated with the same, if not greater, importance as first aid kits, firefighting equipment and even river rescue equipment, which have similar laws under health and safety legislation to reinforce their importance. As with the smoking bans and the organ donation law, I feel that, yet again, Wales could lead the way in the UK on this vital public health and life-saving issue. I would like now to invite both colleagues to speak for a few minutes on why they think this law would be important.

[112] **Ms Thomas:** Since Jack's death on 12 February 2012—I was unaware of Phil's petition—I set up Jack's Appeal. I have been fundraising to get defibrillators in the Rhymney Valley and Gwent comprehensive schools. The first one went into Oakdale Comprehensive School in October last year and we are due to deliver another four to schools in the area. Obviously, as a mum, losing a child, it is about the importance of having this equipment to save a life; £1,000 is nothing and, as Phil has already said, the public should have easy access to it so that everybody can use it.

[113] **William Powell:** Thank you very much for that contribution. Mr Lee, you are next.

[114] **Mr Lee:** Hello, everyone. From an ambulance service point of view, we are aware of about 230 locations across Wales where there are currently public access defibrillators and we have good systems in place for activating those defibrillators when there is an appropriate incident nearby. A defibrillator, as June has already said, is a £1,000 device—there is one on the table here—that is increasingly designed to be used by somebody with no formal training.

The machine talks when you turn it on; it gives you very clear instructions on what to do, including starting by telling you to remain calm and giving some reassurance to the user. There are a lot of myths about AEDs that they might make the situation worse. It is impossible to inappropriately treat a patient with an automated defibrillator. That is the whole point of them being automated; they will deliver an electric shock only to somebody whose heart has stopped and whose heart is in a particular type of rhythm when it has stopped. Members will be aware, I am sure, that your heart is an electrically powered device and rhythmically pumps blood around the body. From time to time, for various reasons, the heart goes into a condition called fibrillation, where the heart, instead of beating, is just quivering. The defibrillator is the only treatment that will reverse that. We have heard from Phil that, with every minute that passes, there is a 10% reduction in overall survival. An electric shock via a defibrillator from a lay person has saved many lives across Wales and across the UK, and could save more if more public access defibrillators were available.

[115] **William Powell:** Thank you very much. We are particularly grateful to you all, and to Phil, for having had the commitment to bring this petition forward, as well as for your joining us this morning. We are particularly grateful, for the reasons stated, to you, June, for having the courage to bring the issue forward in this particular way. I know that you have done some media work already this morning on this issue, and I know that there is a lot of media interest in these matters. We have limited time, and we have some important questions that we would like to bring forward with you.

[116] Phil, you have already addressed the issue regarding the fact that quite a number of defibrillators are in buildings that are not accessible for large portions of time. However, what other barriers currently exist that prevent the installation and the effective use of automated external defibrillators in public places in Wales, and how would you propose that these problems are addressed so as to provide greater access to and public benefit from defibrillators throughout Wales?

[117] **Mr Hill:** I think that this is why the legislation is important. As I have shown, a lot of places, especially clinical areas, have a defib already, but, even among professionals, there is a misconception about who can use it and who they should let have it. As we have said, perhaps some focus could be put on changing the law to make people aware of their commitment of making a defib available 24/7, and, instead of just buying defibrillators all the time, making cabinets available, and reassuring people about legislation, litigation, and the fact that they are really foolproof. So, I think that a lot of the barriers are around legislation and funding, when, as hopefully the map demonstrates, there are already an awful lot of defibs out there in Wales—extrapolated across the entire area—that could be co-ordinated with public training and charity work, as well as with the ambulance service.

[118] **William Powell:** We are very grateful for your bringing us the snapshot of this particular area near your home, which really brings home to us what a spread there already is of defibs, but, as you have said, many of them are not accessible. What action, in your view, should be undertaken to map across the whole of Wales the current provision that exists of defibrillators in order to identify where there are gaps?

[119] **Mr Hill:** I have my ideas for my research, but I will refer the question to Richard, because I know that he had similar ideas already.

[120] **Mr Lee:** We have good records of where these machines currently are. On the computer systems that we use within our clinical contact centres to manage 999 calls to the ambulance service, an information box pops up to our call taker to alert them to a presence of an AED, if we know that there is one there. We have processes in place to make sure that we capture new machines in the public sector, and especially in the health sector. There is a need for a greater co-ordination of defibs that are privately funded. A lot of companies will have

provided a defibrillator in their workplace, and we need to find a way to make sure that all of those are captured.

[121] I think that the big opportunity is for us to ensure, in Wales, that, where there is a defibrillator in a building, as Phil says, it is available 24 hours a day to the local community. That is as simple as the defibrillator being mounted in a cabinet on the outside of the building rather than being locked away in the building when that facility is closed. We know that a considerable number of cardiac arrests do not occur in public places, but occur at home. The thing that will make cardiac arrest a disease of the past is for a defibrillator to be widely available immediately for people in domestic situations. That can be achieved only by increasing the number of defibrillators that are available to the public in their residential areas.

[122] **William Powell:** Thanks. My colleagues are keen to open up their lines of questioning. Russell George is first.

[123] **Russell George:** Thank you, Chair. Thanks for attending. I have become more knowledgeable on this issue just in the last 10 minutes. However, where I live and work, I do not know where my nearest defibrillator is. I would guess that it is in the surgery, but, clearly, there is one nearer than that, and I did not know that before. Part of the issue, it seems to me, is that it is more an issue not of having more defibrillators made available but of making the ones that are there more easily available. I am just wondering how, and I take your point—. You are talking about having a public list of where the equipment is held. Have you any idea as to how that could be done? I am thinking of modern technology, apps and all sorts of things, but how could that be mapped and how could that information be sent to the public?

10:00

[124] **Mr Hill:** I think that it all has to be co-ordinated by the Welsh ambulance service, and the legislation is important, because of the evidence from other countries. For example, in North America—and I believe that this is happening in England—they have said that any new school build will have to have a defib, like a sprinkler system. However, if somebody has an arrest in a burger bar just over the road, they have no access to that defib. So, that person might then die. It is the same with airlines. Everybody assumes that there is a law that says that an aeroplane has to have a defib, and there is not. So, I think that the law would make—. Whether it is a charity, a school, or a train station, we do not really mind where or who you get your defib from, so long as it is a proper one and so long as it meets the requirements of the Welsh ambulance service and is mapped.

[125] **Mr Lee:** May I just pick up on the mapping issue? There are map applications available and there is a project being co-ordinated at the moment across the UK to look at a national database of AEDs and locations. That is being co-ordinated through one of the large charities.

[126] **Russell George:** I am also wondering how people—you can make them easily available, but how then do people know how to use them? I know that you mentioned that they can be used by anybody, but I did not know that. I would not know where to start, so that must be part of improving the situation.

[127] **Mr Hill:** It is a wider campaign.

[128] **Russell George:** It is. Absolutely.

[129] **Mr Hill:** That can be led by charities; it can be led by charities along with the Welsh ambulance service. There are at least two charities in Wales that provide free training,

because the cost of training is often a concern. I think that part of the legislation should be signage. There is signage in this building now that tells us where we can escape from a fire, but, although there is national Europe-wide signage for a defib, that is no help if it is locked away on a trolley somewhere, or in a first aid room. So, that is part of the legislation. It is about signage and training and the Welsh ambulance service dispatcher talking the person through it.

[130] **Mr Lee:** That system is in place. If you dial 999 from a location where we know there is an AED, our call taker will give you advice on what to do. That does include talking through never having used a defibrillator before. The other thing that should not be underestimated is the power of the television. Certainly, I am aware of a colleague who is working hard to try to make sure that some story lines in some national dramas include AED usage, because we have seen in other health topics that a story line on *EastEnders* or *Pobol y Cwm* about something being done does drive up public awareness.

[131] **William Powell:** Bethan, you have a question.

[132] **Bethan Jenkins:** Yes. I do remember the situation with your son, and I am really sorry to hear about that. On a positive note, I think that what you are doing now is great in terms of taking something positive from a very tragic situation. I suppose, for me, it is interesting to know that we need legislation, but I would like to understand, for the schools around your area and for the children, how that has affected them and changed their thinking. I was trained as a lifeguard, but I never used a defibrillator, and, as Russell asked, how could people at an early age benefit so that they have the confidence then when they are adults not to have to worry about or be intimidated by its usage? Perhaps it is about not just looking at the Minister for health and the health side of things, but more at the educational aspect through schools, because I see that as integral to giving people the armour for the future, really. So, could you just say a few things about what the school did, or what your area did, because if it is happening in your area, how can we make sure that it happens across other areas in Wales then so best practice can flow through?

[133] **Ms Thomas:** My experience of Jack was that he was a 6 ft 3 in healthy boy who never had any underlying health problems whatsoever. It was such a shock. He was just sat on the sofa and his heart just stopped and we still do not know to this day what happened to Jack. The school rallied around. I also work with another charity, called CRY—Cardiac Risk in the Young. I have a heart-screening programme coming into Oakdale Comprehensive School on 6 June, which would have been Jack's eighteenth birthday. Along with that, I thought about the defibs; the screening and the defibs go hand in hand. So, I approached the schools first. I approached Oakdale Comprehensive School and spoke to the headteacher there. He was more than willing to have a defib, and have charities coming in to train all of the children. There are four other schools now involved. So, that is all lined up.

[134] I think that it was such a shock, especially for the younger children, as people think that heart attacks and stuff are for old people. When they see that this happened to Jack, they see that it can happen to anyone. A lot of these children are rallying around; they are doing the fundraising because they want the defibs in the schools. I went to Risca Community Comprehensive School and spoke to 20 students there. They asked me questions about Jack and we talked about the defib. We are running Jack's Appeal with the *South Wales Argus*, but they turned to their headteacher saying, 'Yes, we'll help Jack's appeal, but are there any funds, sir, for us to buy our defib now?' The headteacher said, 'Yes, there are'. So, that school has gone out and bought a defib, and they are all having their training.

[135] **Bethan Jenkins:** Okay. Thank you.

[136] **William Powell:** Joyce, you indicated that you had a question.

[137] **Joyce Watson:** Yes, I have a couple of questions. One is that your statement said that you cannot shock a heart that should not be shocked. I am just trying to think outside here what sort of situation might people meet. If you were to meet someone who had a heart pacemaker, for example, because they had atrial fibrillation or such like, is it possible, if they had an attack—an AF—which people might actually think is a heart attack, that that person would be harmed by the use of an automated external defibrillator? Is that possible? I am just trying to think—and this is what has come to my head because I am not a medical professional, as you might have worked out—of the sort of scenario where there could be confusion and possible harm done. That is why I am asking that question.

[138] **Mr Lee:** Without suggesting that we do this, I could put this machine on Phil now and turn it on and it would tell us to stay calm; it would tell us to wait and not touch him; and then, very quickly, it would come back and say, ‘No shock advised; start cardiopulmonary resuscitation’. That is what it would say because the software inside the machine would realise that Phil is not in cardiac arrest. Now, the machine cannot see him, so it would advise us to start CPR, but it will not deliver an electric shock. So, if someone has fainted and they are unconscious, we would encourage people to stick the pads on and turn the machine on; the machine will then either advise an electric shock if the patient is in cardiac arrest, or will not if the patient has fainted. These machines are used in large organisations on a daily basis, such as the London Underground, Virgin Atlantic and British Airways. Due to the number of people that they deal with every day, they will apply these machines every day and they are used very safely. When they were new, 20 years ago, the technology was such that there were errors, but these machines now are entirely reliable.

[139] **Joyce Watson:** My next question, following on from the fact that you cannot make a mistake, is about optimum time. It seems obvious to me that there must be an optimum time between the urgent need to re-start someone’s heart, which would go alongside the availability. Do you have any information regarding that, because you are calling for legislation to make the defibrillators available from inside the building to outside the building? I am assuming that that is to do with time.

[140] **Mr Lee:** The evidence shows us that if someone’s heart stops, within three to four minutes their brain will start to suffer through lack of oxygen. So, the first three or four minutes in a cardiac arrest are vital. It is vital that someone starts CPR because that will buy time. It is vital that someone dials 999 to get professional help on the way, and it is vital that someone delivers an electric shock through a defibrillator. If those things are done in the first three or four minutes, that will give the patient the greatest chance of survival. As Phil said, with every minute that passes between someone’s heart stopping and a defibrillator being applied, the chance of survival dwindles by 10%.

[141] **Mr Hill:** And that is with CPR.

[142] **Mr Lee:** That is with CPR. A large chunk of our best successes for cardiac arrest patients whose hearts have stopped and have been re-started and who go on to live a healthy life are people who were in leisure centres or other areas where, at the point that they went into cardiac arrest, a member of staff applied a defibrillator. There is one leisure centre in Wales that I am aware of that, on three occasions over the past five years, has resuscitated people before we have arrived. That is really powerful for a device that costs £1,000. Those are three young people who have gone home to their families to lead a well life. In terms of the prudent healthcare agenda, good outcomes are prudent healthcare. Reviving somebody who goes on to live a functional life after their injury or illness is a good example of spending health money wisely. With every minute that goes by, that outcome becomes worse and, therefore, the patient will need more support in future.

[143] **Joyce Watson:** My final question—I thought I would bunch them all together, with your permission, Chair—

[144] **William Powell:** Yes.

[145] **Joyce Watson:** You call for legislation, but where will the duty be placed? I think that that has to be the biggest question that has not been asked yet. According to where you place that duty, there are all sorts of complications, possibly, that might fall out from that.

[146] **Mr Hill:** As we have said, with the best care—the best resuscitation care—as with Jack, the outcome can be negative. It is only really ever going to be—I hate to put stats on individuals—50:50, is it not, even with the best care? So, the worry is obvious, namely that if a leisure centre or a hotel has to have one by law, with the signage in the cabinets, ‘We will be sued if someone dies in the foyer’. The evidence, as I have said, from other countries is that it is more a case that the finger of blame gets pointed where there is half-hearted legislation that says, ‘We only need them for certain buildings’, because everybody just assumes then that everywhere has got to have one and this building will not let that building have one and whatever. Whereas, if it is a blanket rule that, if you are a public area or a clinical area, you need to let people have access to a defib in case of an arrest near your premises, everyone has that expectation. The Resuscitation Council and the British Heart Foundation released a statement last October that was very clear. They said that, although it is not law—and they have obviously sought legal advice—it would be very unlikely—. You are more likely to get into trouble, probably, if next door has one, but you do not and then the person could not access it. So, if you have one, yes, it has to be maintained and there needs to be a level of training for those staff, but it is about having them available. That is the key, in the same way as we have fire extinguishers available. As you say, nobody really worries about, ‘Oh my God, if I use this fire extinguisher now, will I get sued?’ There should be the same mentality with the defibs.

[147] **William Powell:** Bethan, I think you had a brief final question.

[148] **Bethan Jenkins:** This might seem like a stupid question now—nobody steals fire extinguishers—but I have this vision that if you put defibrillators just randomly outside places—. They are only £1,000, but £1,000 is £1,000. Do you have evidence from different countries on where they put them, so that there is at least somebody around who would know what to do? I have a concern that, if it was in a residential area, someone could take it into their house and not steal it essentially, but not put it back. What are the practicalities of having them so public that they are everywhere and that we lose control over the situation? I am not saying that that will happen, but I always work from that basis.

[149] **Mr Lee:** In all the train stations, they are in unlocked cabinets. Certainly, in Swansea, there is one right in the centre of the city in an unlocked cabinet. I am only aware, over the past five years, of one occasion when a machine went missing and, following a front-page article in the local paper, it was miraculously returned to a local police station, having been found. So, we do not see these things going missing. As you say, fire equipment does not go missing and this would be similar.

[150] **William Powell:** This has been an incredibly powerful evidence session. We are running into the last couple of moments, but I think that it would be that bit more powerful—. Phil, I know that you spoke about doing a brief demonstration regarding this—or perhaps it was Richard who was leading on that. You also spoke of the power of television. I wonder if you could undertake, as has been suggested, a brief demonstration to skill us up in the way that we have requested.

10:15

[151] **Mr Hill:** While Richard is setting up, I will just say that, when we do these sessions for children, they have absolutely no fear of technology. Post Olympics, I did some teaching for children and, literally, they are operating it as quickly as this. They see the pictures and they work. Children have no fear of technology in my experience.

[152] **William Powell:** We have much to learn from them, absolutely.

[153] **Mr Hill:** You teach them CPR and they are straight in there.

[154] **Mr Lee:** Okay, here is the machine. This is one make; there is a different model here as well. When you open the machine there is an 'on' button, which does this: the machine comes on, and the machine will prompt you what to do. So, if we open that one up, Phil, and turn it on, we can hear it talk.

[155] **Mr Hill:** This is a training one.

[156] **Mr Lee:** So, the first thing it does is say 'Unit okay' to tell you it is going to work. Then it tells you, 'Attach the defib pads to the patient's bare chest'. The defib pads come out of this packet, and you stick them to the patient's chest. You can see that there are pictures on them. So, we have attached the pads, and then the machine will run through advising us what to do. We have got the pads on, and the machine now says that it is analysing. The machine is deciding what to do. It is telling you, 'Don't touch the patient'. Then it will either tell you that it wants to give the patient an electric shock, or—. It is telling you to press the button. It will keep making that high-pitched noise until you do. Now it is telling me to start CPR. It gives me a beeper to tell me how quickly to do the chest compression. There is even a mark on the chest to tell me where to do it. It will continue to beep like this for two minutes. Then it will say that it is analysing again, and then it will deliver another shock if it needs to. You can hear from the beeps that the CPR gets quicker as the person gets more confident with it. It will continue to do this for two minutes or until such time—. The gap now is for us to do rescue breaths on the patient. Then it will continue with the metronome, and at two minutes it will tell me that it is going to analyse the patient again. Then it will deliver another shock if that is indicated. If there is no shock at the end of the two minutes, it will say, 'No shock advised', and it will tell you to continue CPR. That is how simple they are.

[157] This one is actually more complicated because it is a training one, so there is a remote control. However, on the real one, there is one button. As you can see, there is an on/off switch, and there is a switch to deliver the electric shock, and that is as complicated as they are. They really are designed to be dead simple to use. There are even some real simple instructions on the front cover in pictorial form, for anyone who is hard of hearing or who cannot deal with the instructions.

[158] **Mr Hill:** This is why the signage is important.

[159] **William Powell:** Absolutely.

[160] **Mr Lee:** These machines really are very simple to use for £1,000.

[161] **William Powell:** Thank you very much to lead petitioner, Phil Hill, Richard Lee, and especially to June Thomas for coming today and giving us this really special insight into why you have brought the petition, and the potential that the wider availability of defibrillators would offer the people of Wales. Thank you very much indeed. Just to reassure you, we will provide you with a transcript of the evidence session today, and that because of shortage of time, we will come back on 13 May, at the next meeting of this committee, to consider the matter in the round, and the evidence that you have brought today. Thank you very much

indeed for your time and all the trouble that you have taken.

[162] Colleagues, I will just alert you to the fact that we have had notice that ITV Wales will be interviewing the petitioners and, just after this meeting—obviously the timing is difficult for some of us—I think they are keen to speak to some of us, if that is possible. I just flag that up as a—

[163] **Joyce Watson:** If we finish at 10.45 a.m., it will be possible.

10:20

Sesiwn Dystiolaeth: Gwasanaethau Bysiau yng Nghymru Evidence Session: Bus Services in Wales

[164] **William Powell:** We are just about to move to our final evidence session with Mr John Pockett, from whom we have a submission on the issue of the funding for bus services in Wales. Of course, we have the research brief to hand. Hopefully, we will be joined in a moment also by Mr Pockett. Mr Pockett has provided a really useful, concise piece of work, which we have had the opportunity to study. Hopefully, he will join us now in a moment.

[165] *Bore da.* Good morning, Mr Pockett. Thank you very much for joining us this morning to contribute to our consideration of this important topic of the funding of bus services in Wales. Also, John, I would like to thank you very much for your concise and focused response to our investigation on the matter, which we have all had the opportunity to study. If you could briefly introduce yourself for the sound levels, Members are keen to move at a good pace to questions, because there is so much that we would wish to ask you.

[166] **Mr Pockett:** Bore da. Diolch yn fawr am y cyfle i ddod i rannu ein teimladau much for the opportunity to come to share our feelings with you.

[167] Thank you very much for the invitation. We welcome very much the opportunity to contribute to this inquiry. I hope that the submission that I put in was fairly brief and succinct and I hope that it highlighted two of the issues that will come out. I hope that that has given them enough time to find the right level.

[168] **William Powell:** Yes, that is perfect. Thanks very much, John. I would like to kick off by asking you whether, in your view, the provision of bus services in Wales, particularly the number, quality and cost of those services, has been improving or declining in recent years. I think that you have addressed that, to an extent, in your submission, but if you could elaborate on that a little for us here in public session, that would be helpful.

[169] **Mr Pockett:** Okay, that is fine, thank you. What I want to say, and I hope that I highlighted this in what I submitted, is that the bus industry is the backbone of public transport provision in Wales, I think, in the numbers of vehicles, of services and of people employed. Also, it is the cinderella of public transport in Wales in terms of the funding that it receives in comparison with other modes. However, using that as the background and to move on specifically to what you say, certainly, there has been an upgrading in the number of services overall over 10 or 12 years. My figures in this paper do not go back that far. The quality of vehicle has certainly improved. I think that the fleet profile now is quite substantially better than it was. As I always say, I live in Pontypridd, the centre of the universe, and if you stand in the bus station there, you will be very lucky—or unlucky, I should say—to see a vehicle that is older than 2005 or 2006. There is the odd one, but they are usually brought in as cover for when other vehicles have broken down. So, certainly, there is an improvement in the quality of vehicles.

[170] Again, I refer to Pontypridd, because I live there and I catch buses there quite a lot, I remember that in 1982 you would have one bus an hour going into Cardiff, but you now have four X4s an hour going non-stop to Cardiff and three stoppers that go around and serve all the villages. I think that that is generally reflected—I know that things are not perfect; they are far from perfect—in the standard of vehicles, the provision of services and the approach of the staff. Operators have put money into staff training. The numbers employed have been growing, although they have plateaued off. I am painting a rosy picture, perhaps you would expect me to. I know that there is a bit of a cusp; I think that that comes out in the statistics that are available on the various websites and from various sources, but I think that, on the whole, there is a definite and marked improvement.

[171] **William Powell:** It was very striking that you highlighted in your evidence that the level of subsidy was at £1 per journey for bus, as against £9 for rail. That is quite an extraordinary difference in the level of public subsidy, and that will have struck colleagues, as it struck me. In the last couple of years, the statistics bear out that the number of bus passenger journeys in Wales has declined more markedly than anywhere else in the UK. Why might that be the case, specifically in the Welsh context, Mr Pockett?

[172] **Mr Pockett:** There are possibly two things, I think. What I said about the £1 per person subsidy is a crude way of doing it—all I did was to take the number of journeys and divide the public money that goes to the bus industry by that number. It is the same for the rail industry. I think that the figure for rail was published by the Office for Rail Regulation not long ago—I think it appeared in the *Western Mail*, so I suppose it must be true. [Laughter.] It is fair—because I like to be fair, as well—as running the rail operation is very expensive; I think you have to recognise that. Nevertheless, there is the downturn, and there are two things. I have made some inquiries into this, and I think it is partly down to the fact that there has been a downturn in the economy. I used to do a quarterly report for the South East Wales Transport Alliance and the South West Wales Integrated Transport Consortium—the regional transport consortia—and I would ask operators for their trends. The trend has been downwards since the economic downturn came about. Added to that, again, I am not here to advertise the *Western Mail*, but you may remember that it ran a story six weeks or so ago in which it highlighted that 100 services had been withdrawn over the past three years, and that is quite a substantial number of services in Wales. So, if there are fewer services, it is bound to mean that you will get fewer people. So, they are the only two answers that I could come up with from making inquiries with colleagues and so on.

[173] **William Powell:** Excellent. I would like to open it up to colleagues; Bethan Jenkins has indicated.

[174] **Bethan Jenkins:** You mentioned Pontypridd, but I had a situation in which I went to a gig in the Muni from Merthyr, where my parents live. I got the bus there fine, but we came out of the concert and we waited and waited for the bus, and it never turned up, so I had to take a taxi from Pontypridd to Merthyr. So, you do paint a rosy picture, because, quite often, yes, services are there, but then, sometimes, there are problems with services that some bus companies do not want to properly address. I just thought I would give you that anecdote, because you live in Pontypridd.

[175] **Mr Pockett:** If you want to give me the detail, I could follow that up for you.

[176] **Bethan Jenkins:** There is no point now. Believe me, I have complained in every avenue.

[177] **Mr Pockett:** Right.

[178] **Bethan Jenkins:** What is fundamental to me is that, when I visit other countries, there is that—. I know that we talk obsessively about integration here, as if it were some sort of panacea, but it does work in the countries I visit, in that you have that seamless transition between different modes of transport, and that is what gets people out of the car. How can we in this country make sure that we have that integration when so many bus services are being pulled from our communities? There is a bus at a random time, the train is at another time, you have to walk 20 minutes between the bus and train station and, for many people, that is difficult, if they are pensioners. How can we do that with the make-up that we have in this country to make sure that, in 10 years' time, we are not sitting here again, saying that bus services are poor and that bus services are not effective enough? We want to make it better; we do not want to be in that situation down the line. It was about putting the integration panacea into practice here in Wales, really.

[179] **Mr Pockett:** Being honest, I think that that is very difficult. It is not going to happen overnight. I think that it is a little bit better than it used to be. You have a difficulty that things would beat trains. I think that for the rail industry, as I said, it is very difficult. It is difficult to run and to operate their timetables. Buses are far more adaptable than trains—a train can be held up, and a driver cannot put his or her foot down and overtake a train to make up lost time. It is not easy; it is very complex. There is legislation in this country—and I talk of Westminster legislation—and there are Office of Fair Trading considerations, as bus operators, for example, cannot exchange commercial information. I think that you know that there was an OFT inquiry here in Cardiff a couple of years ago, so operators are particularly conscious of those requirements. I think that it is a question, to be honest, of it having to be done gradually, and I cannot see any other possible way.

10:30

[180] We are not helped either—and, once again, I have to refer to Pontypridd, but Merthyr is another example—by the fact that the topography and geography is such that they wanted to put a decent semi bus station in Pontypridd, or a halt by the bus station, but they could not because there was something wrong with the curve in the rail and the rail safety branch, as I understand it, said, 'You can't do it here', and there is no room at Pontypridd bus station. Pontypridd is not unique, sadly; I am sure that that is replicated in lots of places, particularly in the Valleys. I can also think of the example of Newtown, where the bus station is down by the Davies Memorial Gallery, but the station is up by Pryce Jones, as I would say. You cannot really move that. Access to the railway station is not very suitable for an intense bus service. So, the answer that I have to give honestly is that I do not really know, but it is something that has to be continually looked at and worked at.

[181] **Bethan Jenkins:** I had to ask the question.

[182] My second question is about reregulation. Last time, we took evidence from passenger groups, who said that people are looking through rose-tinted spectacles if they think that reregulation or part-regulation is to happen. The idea is coming back because of the fact that there are so many individual companies, and some companies will not put on unpopular routes because they will not make revenue and they cannot cross-subsidise, so that is another issue that they face. What is your view on that? Is there a political need for that at the moment?

[183] **Mr Pockett:** I would turn around and ask, 'What is the purpose of reregulation?' In London, you have a completely regulated bus service that is awfully expensive. I know that you have buses going here, there and everywhere, but buses in London cost something approaching £1 billion per year and fares there, last year, went up far more than they did in Wales, for example. They went up 3.2%, I think, in Wales and, in London, they went up 4.6%, which is almost 50% more. So, I do not think that reregulation will achieve anything.

What you would get then is a situation where there is no competition. I know that some people would say that there is too much competition, but, once again, I come back to my own practical experience of getting the bus back and forth to Cardiff—which does usually run—and that has come about because the operator has detected a need in the market and is providing for that, and those buses are pretty busy.

[184] **Bethan Jenkins:** I am sorry to be indulgent, but what about the situation where the council removes the service, then I meet three or four other operators who all say, ‘No, we’re not going to take that up because we can’t get revenue from that route’? That means, therefore, that there is no service to that area and they are totally isolated. There has to be a way forward on this, because it seems to me that, at the moment, there is stalemate between the Government, local government and what the bus operators are willing to do. That is my experience in my area.

[185] **Mr Pockett:** Yes. I would say that we have a very happy and good close working relationship with our partners in local authorities. The reality is that, if there is a need there, either the operator will fulfil it commercially or, if there is a need and it cannot be fulfilled commercially, it needs to be supported, and that is what has happened in the past. We have to recognise that money is tight—absolutely so for the Government here, as it is for everybody, and it has to look at where to cut. That is the reality of the situation. I would turn around and ask who will pay. Bus operators, contrary to what people think, do not make very substantial profits. The last time a study was done on this, it was done by the Transport Select Committee in London, and I think that it was a year last November that the report came out. The committee is chaired by Louise Ellman and it has people like Graham Stringer, who is very pro regulation, on the committee. It came to the conclusion that bus operators, overall, made a profit of 3.5%. Blimey, you could not run a corner shop on 3.5%, really. So, there is not the leeway there to do this sort of thing.

[186] **William Powell:** Thanks very much for that. Joyce Watson, I know that you have done quite a lot of work on behalf of this committee and have undertaken some rapporteur visits and have met some petitioners as well, particularly in the deep rural areas of Gwynedd and elsewhere. I believe you have some questions that you want to pursue.

[187] **Joyce Watson:** It follows on quite nicely from what Bethan and you have just been discussing, namely where the Government’s steps in is where the market will not provide, quite frankly. I do not think that people are necessarily aware of that. So, moving on with that thought, I would like to have your views on franchising and whether you think that there might be some elements of possible success in pursuing that.

[188] **Mr Pockett:** I think that franchising and quality contracts are virtually the same. I think that we accept that. I know that we have some people who continually bleat on about franchising, and they use London as the example. You cannot compare London and Wales. London has an intense population in a very small area with a massive number of people who need public transport. London—I say gladly—particularly the centre of London, has become very car-unfriendly with congestion charges, and very robust policing and enforcing of bus priority measures. If you are caught on a camera in a bus route, the next thing you know is that the fine comes through the post. You cannot compare that with what you have in Wales, namely a massive rural hinterland with a very small population. So, I do not think that franchising is a model that can be replicated in Wales. I do not see at all how anyone can make a link between the two. That is the only place where there is a real strong element of franchising; there is complete franchising in London. I do not see how that would work in Wales.

[189] **Joyce Watson:** Okay, so no franchising. There is one last question from me. What about Bwcabus? What about the need to fulfil the gaps in the market by Bwcabus, which has

been really quite successful, particularly in Ceredigion, but in other places as well?

[190] **William Powell:** In Carmarthenshire as well.

[191] **Joyce Watson:** Yes.

[192] **Mr Pockett:** There is a need obviously to fill the gaps. Community transport does some good work in this sort of area. I think that we have to recognise that the rail system goes along the north and along the south, a little bit too through the middle and there are huge bits in between. Hopefully, bus services, in part, in general fill in those gaps, but there are gaps in the bus services then. There is room for someone to fill those in. The only thing that I would say about Bwcabus is that it gets quite a substantial sum of money. I think that if we were to look at the figures—I have no evidence for this that I can present to you—we would be interested to see what it costs per passenger. I would imagine that it is more than £1 a passenger that is the figure that I came to.

[193] It is a good idea, but most people when they want to catch the bus really want to go on the spur of the moment. You get up in the morning, and you think, ‘It’s a nice day, let’s go to Cardigan or Aber; let’s go there’. You do not want to have to ring up and book it. I do not know. I just pose that question as something—. Perhaps I am lucky that I can turn up and there is a bus there, but the ringing up thing is not a normal bus service. However, it certainly fulfils the need.

[194] **Joyce Watson:** I have one more question. It is not, but we are talking about isolation against not being isolated, and the issue about getting up and it is a sunny day. We are talking about—and you have recognised it—smaller budgets, greater demand and trying to include people in a way—. It certainly works for people who are going to work, because they are thinking of that, and it works also in other areas. What would you propose that the Government and us as the end of our inquiry should move forward with in terms of preventing that isolation that we all know and which your paper recognises exists?

[195] **Mr Pockett:** I think that there is a need to channel funding to the core public transport services in Wales. As I have said, and as I think other statistics show, funding has reduced. Again, I would say this, would I not, but it is amazing that the air service subsidy has gone up 37%? It is wonderful; it is lovely if you have plenty of money, but I think that there is a need to prioritise, I suppose, and that is the joy of being in Government or being a politician, namely that you appoint the priorities and you have to live by them. However, I think that there is a need to prioritise. What is the funding? Nobody knows really, I do not think, what the total funding for public transport in Wales is if you lumped it all together, and I wonder, perhaps, whether a radical rethink is needed. Again, I come down to the idea that the bus industry is the backbone of the public transport industry in Wales. It can adapt far more quickly than anything else; you can put on extra—. I am old enough to remember when a duplicate would be put on; when the bus would be full, they would get another one and it was called a ‘duplicate’. You could put other buses on to respond. Look after the core services and then see what you can do from that, I think.

[196] **Russell George:** How does the funding in Wales for bus services compare to Scotland, Northern Ireland and England?

[197] **Mr Pockett:** Here is an answer I made earlier. [*Laughter.*]

[198] **Russell George:** It is a big question, so perhaps you could give just a brief answer, so that we can get an overview, really.

[199] **Mr Pockett:** I understand from my colleagues in London—I made some enquiries on

this yesterday—it is done differently in Northern Ireland, so it is very difficult to compare that. However, if you look at Scotland, to the end of 2013, so that is December last year, you will see that Scotland had a total of £60 million, plus £188 million, plus £51 million, which comes to something approaching almost £300 million. England, including London, works out at almost £2.4 billion in support for the bus industry. If you look at Wales by comparison, as it stands here and now, you will see that it is £25 million for what is now called the bus services support grant; it used to be the regional transport services grant and before that, it was the bus service operators grant and the local transport services grant. The reimbursement, which is not a subsidy, for carrying concessions, which is public money and is a substantial sum, is £65 million as it stands at the moment. So the figure for Wales is about £90 million. They are the figures that I got from the Department for Transport website.

[200] **Russell George:** How does that calculate—. It is difficult to do a calculation between the different areas that have different population geography. I suppose, compared with Scotland, Wales is having a lot less spent per person.

[201] **Mr Pockett:** That is what it suggests. I have done no further work than that, Russell. Scotland's population is about 5 million; Wales's population is 3 million, and Northern Ireland is 1.7 million or something like that. So, on that basis, as it stands here and now, Wales gets about £90 million a year. However, it has reduced in the last couple of years, as I think that you are all aware.

[202] **Russell George:** Has it reduced in Scotland or England at all?

[203] **Mr Pockett:** I have a note here that says that the BSOG equivalent in Scotland is £10 million less than it was the year before. So, it would have been a further £10 million. If it is helpful, and if there is anything afterwards, please write to me and I can provide you with some information.

[204] **Russell George:** I am grateful; thank you.

[205] **William Powell:** Excellent. I have one final question; I am conscious that our time is drawing to a close, Mr Pockett. Previous witnesses spoke of the potential benefits of developing the quality partnership scheme approach, particularly looking at the traffic commissioner selectively using the powers that he has to impose sanctions on those operators when they fall short of the commitments that they should be delivering on in terms of standards of service. What is your view on the role that they would have to contribute to the quality of bus services?

[206] **Mr Pockett:** The CPT has always been in favour of quality partnerships, where the operator is held to account and the local authority is held to account. It is quality partnerships, not quality contracts, and not what the previous Minister used to muddle up and call 'quality contract partnerships'. They do not exist; it is quality partnerships. We think that they would be the way forward. To a certain extent, there is a good, happy relationship with local authorities at present. There is a good dialogue and, in fairness, it is fair to pay tribute to the Minister who has set up the bus policy advisory group recently, to which the industry is contributing. There are users on it—there are local authorities, the Government, as well as disabled groups, I think, and those sorts of things. That is a very, very welcome initiative on her part, and maybe something could develop from that. I think that, with transport, it is not going to happen overnight, as much as we would like it to. However, I think that there is a vehicle there now—this bus policy advisory group—where those sorts of things can be explored, perhaps.

10:45

[207] **William Powell:** Indeed. Mr Pockett, thanks very much for being such an engaging witness, and for answering our questions so comprehensively. We will be considering your evidence when we next meet, on 13 May. In the meantime, we will supply you with a transcript of today's session, so that you have sight of that, and can check it for accuracy. Thank you very much for joining us today, and we look forward to being in further contact shortly. Diolch yn fawr.

[208] **Mr Pockett:** Thank you, again, for the opportunity. Again, if there is anything, or if you want to write individually, or if you want me to enlarge on the—

[209] **Bethan Jenkins:** You should not say that. [*Laughter.*]

[210] **Mr Pockett:** I think that you were unlucky. [*Laughter.*] However, being boringly serious, if there is anything on the stats, particularly, that you want me to enlarge on, then I can get that from colleagues in London, if that is helpful. Diolch yn fawr iawn.

[211] **William Powell:** Diolch yn fawr.

[212] Just to say, colleagues, before we go our separate ways, we have two petition presentations scheduled for this week. One is today, at the usual timeslot of 1 p.m., on planning powers in Wales. The second is tomorrow—again at 1 p.m.—on the Stop Sexism in Domestic Abuse petition. As I say, that will be tomorrow at 1 p.m. As I have already referred to on a couple of occasions, our next meeting is on Tuesday, 13 May. So, thank you very much for your attendance and contributions today, and I look forward to seeing you again shortly. Diolch yn fawr.

*Daeth y cyfarfod i ben am 10:47.
The meeting ended at 10:47.*