



Cynulliad Cenedlaethol Cymru The National Assembly for Wales

Y Pwyllgor Deisebau The Petitions Committee

**Dydd Mawrth, 13 Mawrth 2012
Tuesday, 13 March 2012**

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

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

Aelodau'r pwyllgor yn bresennol
Committee members in attendance

Eluned Parrott	Democratiaid Rhyddfrydol Cymru (yn dirprwyo ar ran William Powell) Welsh Liberal Democrats (substitute for William Powell)
Joyce Watson	Llafur (Cadeirydd dros dro y Pwyllgor) Labour (Temporary Committee Chair)
Lindsay Whittle	Plaid Cymru (yn dirprwyo ar ran Bethan Jenkins) The Party of Wales (substitute for Bethan Jenkins)

Eraill yn bresennol
Others in attendance

Mohammad Asghar	Aelod Cynulliad, Ceidwadwyr Cymreig Assembly Member, Welsh Conservatives
Matthew Bumford	Deisebydd Petitioner
Jonathan Edwards	Aelod Seneddol, Plaid Cymru Member of Parliament, Plaid Cymru
Alan Hamer	Criced Morgannwg Glamorgan Cricket
Peter Hybart	Cyfarwyddwr Criced, Criced Cymru Director of Cricket, Cricket Wales
Dr Huw Jones	Chwaraeon Cymru Sport Wales

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

Sarita Marshall	Dirprwy Glerc Deputy Clerk
Helen Roberts	Cynghorydd Cyfreithiol Legal Adviser
Abigail Phillips	Clerc Clerk

Dechreuodd y cyfarfod am 8.59 a.m.
The meeting began at 8.59 a.m.

[1] **Ms Phillips:** Good morning and welcome to the Petitions Committee meeting. Unfortunately, as things stand at the moment, we are inquorate. So, under Standing Order No. 17.31, we need to suspend the meeting for up to 20 minutes until we become quorate. We

shall hopefully be back soon.

*Datganwyd nad oedd y cyfarfod yn gwneud cworwm am 8.59 a.m. ac ataliwyd y cyfarfod.
The meeting was declared inquorate at 8.59 a.m. and suspended.*

*Datganwyd fod y cyfarfod yn gwneud cworwm am 9.10 a.m. ac ailymgynullodd y cyfarfod
ffurfiol.*

The meeting was declared quorate at 9.10 a.m. and the formal meeting reconvened.

Ethol Cadeirydd Dros Dro Election of a Temporary Chair

[2] **Ms Phillips:** Good morning, and welcome back to the Petitions Committee meeting this morning. Unfortunately, the Chair is unable to attend today's meeting. Therefore, in accordance with Standing Order No. 17.22, I call for nominations for a temporary Chair for the duration of today's meeting.

[3] **Lindsay Whittle:** I nominate Joyce Watson.

[4] **Ms Phillips:** Are there any other nominations? I see that there are none. As we have received only one nomination, I declare that Joyce has been elected temporary Chair of the Petitions Committee and invite her to take her seat.

*Penodwyd Joyce Watson yn Gadeirydd dros dro.
Joyce Watson was appointed temporary Chair.*

Cyflwyniad, Ymddiheuriadau a Dirprwyon Introduction, Apologies and Substitutions

[5] **Joyce Watson:** Thank you, and good morning. I welcome everyone to the meeting. In particular, I welcome Eluned Parrott, who is substituting for the Chair, William Powell, who I believe is unwell, and Lindsay Whittle, who is substituting for Bethan Jenkins. Welcome and thank you.

[6] I remind everybody that participants are welcome to speak in either English or Welsh. Headsets are available for translation on channel 1 and amplification on channel 0. I respectfully ask that anyone who does still have their mobile phone on switches it off. If the fire alarm sounds, the ushers will tell everyone what to do and, if necessary, direct us to the fire exits.

9.11 a.m.

Trafod y Dystiolaeth Lafar a Gyflwynwyd gan y Gweinidog Llywodraeth Leol a Chymunedau ar 7 Chwefror 2012 Discussion of Oral Evidence Given by the Minister for Local Government and Communities on 7 February 2012

[7] **Joyce Watson:** This item deals, first, with P-04-331, Filming and Recording of Council Meetings. You may recall that the Minister for Local Government and Communities gave evidence to the committee on 7 February on two petitions from Jacqui Thompson. An extract of the transcript has been included in the public papers, along with a letter from the Minister on the impact and benefits experienced by local authorities that already publish details of their expenditure. What actions would Members like to take on these issues?

[8] **Lindsay Whittle:** The Minister has said that while he is sympathetic to the suggestion of a structured process for local authorities to stream their meetings, he has no intention of requiring councils to broadcast their meetings. To be fair, I think that such a decision needs to be taken locally. If that is what each individual local authority wishes to do, then it is up to them. I feel that it would be too dictatorial at this stage for the Assembly to insist on it. I think that we should encourage local authorities to make all their meetings easily accessible to the public, but it is too much at this stage.

[9] **Eluned Parrott:** I agree. While the intention is to improve transparency in local government—and that is very much to be valued—at this point in time, our course of action should be to ask the Minister to encourage local authorities, rather than require them to take action.

[10] **Joyce Watson:** So, is it the wish of this committee to close the petition, in light of all that has been said and given the Minister's response, or would you like it to go forward to another meeting?

[11] **Lindsay Whittle:** I am quite happy to close it.

[12] **Eluned Parrott:** I am happy to close it as well.

[13] **Joyce Watson:** Okay. In that case, petition P-04-331 is closed.

[14] There is another petition in the same name and that is P-04-332, Local Authority Spending Details over £500. It asks the National Assembly for Wales

[15] 'to urge the Welsh Government to place a statutory requirement on all local authorities in Wales to publish details of all spending over £500 in the interest of openness and transparency. The details should be published online and in a format accessible to the public with the freedom to re-use the data.'

9.15 a.m.

[16] There has been a clear statement by the Minister that he does not intend to intervene with the business protocols of local authorities, given that there is a freedom of information system already in place and councils would need to publish a large number of records given the relatively low spend threshold. In light of that information and the information that has been provided to us previously, are there any observations?

[17] **Lindsay Whittle:** Again, I think that £500 is not a significant amount of money. Under the Freedom of Information Act 2000, that information is available to members of the public if they want to find out what has been spent. However, I am sure that every local authority would have a list as long as your arm if they were to record all spending over £500. It would be too much. The Freedom of Information Act is a very expensive Act to implement in local government: staff are spending a substantial amount of time collating the information required by the public. While that is a good thing, £500 is too small an amount. I agree with the Minister that the petition should be closed.

[18] **Eluned Parrott:** I have a concern that the Freedom of Information Act is not as user-friendly to the public as it might be. We need to encourage local authorities to be as transparent as possible. However, given the administrative burden of publishing this volume of information and the doubts about how easy it would be for the public to navigate that kind of information, I am not convinced that this should be done and agree that we ought to agree with the Minister and close this petition.

[19] **Joyce Watson:** I am happy to go along with that for all the reasons that have been stated. We are at a time when people have to watch their budgets closely and to ask councils to employ—and they will have to employ—inordinate amounts of people to cope with this instead of having the money to spend on services would not be a good decision. We will close that petition.

9.17 a.m.

**P-03-238 Llygredd ym Mornant Porth Tywyn—Trafod Ymweliad y
Pwyllgor â'r Safle
P-03-238 Pollution of the Burry Inlet—Discussion of Committee Site Visit**

[20] **Joyce Watson:** We had a committee site visit. Unfortunately, I am the only person here who is a full member of this committee and the only person who could comment on that site visit. Therefore, I do not think that it would be appropriate to have that discussion today. I do not want to deny the people who were there the opportunity to discuss it. We received a comprehensive and well-stated presentation by the petitioners on 27 February. I am minded, with your support, to invite the Environment Agency Wales and Dŵr Cymru to respond to the petitioners in an oral evidence session.

[21] **Eluned Parrott:** I agree. The petitioners have asked for an open process to discuss the matter and that would be the most appropriate course.

[22] **Lindsay Whittle:** I fully endorse those sentiments.

[23] **Joyce Watson:** Thank you.

9.18 a.m.

**P-04-329 Rheoli Sŵn o Dyrbinau Gwynt sy'n Peri Difflastod—Trafod yr
Ymweliadau â'r Safle a'r Dystiolaeth a Gyflwynwyd ar 28 Chwefror
P-04-329 Control of Noise Nuisance from Wind Turbines—Discussion of Site
Visits and Evidence Given on 28 February**

[24] **Joyce Watson:** This concerns another site visit that we undertook and, again, I am the only person here who was present. We asked for responses, but I believe that I am right in saying that we have not received responses from all the parties concerned. Therefore, it would be right to wait for all the responses to come in and put this on the agenda for the next meeting.

[25] **Eluned Parrott:** Agreed.

[26] **Lindsay Whittle:** Yes, agreed.

9.19 a.m.

**Deisebau Newydd
New Petitions**

[27] **Joyce Watson:** The first item is P-04-370, Petition for the improvement of Psychic and Intuitive services in Wales. It was submitted by Ant Edwards and collected 38 signatures. It reads:

[28] ‘We the undersigned call on the National Assembly for Wales to urge the Welsh Government to raise awareness with providers of Psychic services and the public of the Consumer Protection from unfair Trading Regulations 2008.’

[29] We have written to the Minister to seek views on this. I suggest that we await that response.

[30] **Eluned Parrott:** Agreed.

[31] **Lindsay Whittle:** Agreed.

[32] **Joyce Watson:** The next petition is P-04-372, which calls for more ladies’ toilets at entertainment venues. It was submitted by Simon Williams-Jones and has collected 27 signatures. It reads:

[33] ‘We the undersigned call on the National Assembly to urge the Welsh Government to amend building regulations to require increased provision of ladies toilets at public entertainment venues.’

[34] Again, in line with committee protocol, we have written to the Minister and we are seeking views on the issue. It is only right and proper that we wait for a response on that.

[35] **Eluned Parrott:** Agreed.

[36] **Lindsay Whittle:** Agreed.

[37] **Joyce Watson:** We have another new petition, P-04-373, on exclusion zones for mobile hot food vans. It was submitted by Arfon Jones and collected 43 signatures. It reads:

[38] ‘The Petitioners call upon the Welsh Government to consider legislation to exclude Mobile Fast Food Vans from operating within a 400 metre exclusion zone around all schools in Wales during the hours of 8am to 4.30pm weekdays during term time.’

[39] Again, in line with committee protocol, we have written to the Minister seeking views, and it would be useful to await that response.

[40] **Eluned Parrott:** Agreed.

[41] **Lindsay Whittle:** Agreed.

[42] **Joyce Watson:** We have another new petition, P-04-374, calling for all dogs to be kept on leads at all times in public places. The petition was submitted by Wyndham Mark Jones and collected 17 signatures. It reads:

[43] ‘Due to the rising amount of irresponsible dog owners allowing their dogs to approach intimidate and endanger members of the public and their children and pets whilst off leads in public places I propose all dogs be legally required to be under leashed control in public places or places that are accessible to the public their leashed animals and children.’

[44] Again, we have written to the Minister, and I recommend that we await that response.

[45] **Eluned Parrott:** Agreed.

[46] **Lindsay Whittle:** Agreed.

[47] **Joyce Watson:** Next we have petition P-04-375, submitted by Bablin Molik, which collected 71 signatures. It reads:

[48] ‘We call on the Welsh Government to stop proposals for its opt-out organ donation system. I think it is completely unethical for the Welsh Government to be pushing through an opt out system for organ donation. This system should not be implemented, particularly if it does not consider the views of relatives. Whilst appreciating the need to donate organs in order to prevent unnecessary deaths, I still strongly believe it should be a decision that each individual takes and not something that is forced on them by the state. Archbishop of Wales Dr Morgan said: organ donation surely ought to be a matter of gift and not of duty and I agree with his statement. This is violating individual rights and is an unfair system. Please sign this petition should you feel the same and want to stop this legislation being passed.’

[49] So, 71 people did sign it. The petition also draws attention to the level of consultation that the Welsh Government has undertaken on its opt-out organ donation proposal. The Minister for Health and Social Services issued a written statement on 8 March, which reads:

[50] ‘A White Paper setting out the Welsh Government’s proposals for legislation on organ and tissue donation was published on 7 November 2011 for a 12 week consultation...We received an excellent response to the consultation, with 1,234 replies received before the deadline...the White Paper posed questions relating to how the arrangements should work and did not explicitly invite respondents to state whether they supported the proposals. However, 91% (1,124) of the responses we received did indicate an overall view, with 52% (646) of respondents supporting the proposals and 39% (478) opposed.’

[51] A BBC poll published on 2 March showed that plans to introduce opt-out organ donation are supported by almost two-thirds of Welsh people. The poll found that 63% of voters backed a system of presumed consent, while 31% were against such a system. The committee has written to the Minister seeking views on this issue and information on the level of consultation undertaken on the proposals. There are a couple of possible actions. We will, of course, await the Minister’s response—we always do—but we could also refer the petition to the Health and Social Care Committee, which will be tasked with the scrutiny of the proposed Bill, once it is laid.

[52] **Eluned Parrott:** There is one new element included in the notes, rather than in the body of the petition text itself, which is a query about whether or not the consultation should have asked explicitly to agree with this on moral grounds and things along those lines. So, would it be appropriate to add this to the evidence of the Health and Social Care Committee in scrutinising the Bill?

[53] **Lindsay Whittle:** I sit on that committee, so I look forward to the discussion with great anticipation.

[54] **Joyce Watson:** I assume from those comments that it is the wish of the committee to refer the petition to the Health and Social Care Committee. I see that you are content with that.

[55] The next petition is P-04-376 on reorganising education in Powys, which was submitted by Sarah Wheeler and collected over 1,000 signatures. It reads:

[56] ‘We call on the National Assembly for Wales to urge the Welsh Government to call in Powys County Council’s proposals to reorganise education in Powys, which would lead to Builth Wells’ bilingual dual stream English-medium sixth form becoming a Welsh designated sixth form.’

[57] Supporting information has been provided by the petitioner, which I assume you have all read. The committee has written to the Minister seeking his views and I am minded to wait for that response.

[58] **Eluned Parrott:** I agree with that action.

[59] **Lindsay Whittle:** I agree with that as well.

[60] **Joyce Watson:** The next petition is P-04-377 on the continuation of concessionary fares on community transport. This petition was submitted by Betsan Caldwell and collected approximately 4,000 signatures. The petition wording reads as follows:

[61] ‘We ask that the Welsh Government takes account of the recommendations in the externally commissioned evaluation of the Community Transport Concessionary Fares Initiative (CTCFI) and that the scheme is rolled out to community transport schemes across Wales on a separate fares basis, to ensure equality for our most vulnerable citizens—those elderly and disabled people who are unable to use their bus pass on conventional public transport.’

[62] An awful lot of supporting information, testimonials and an evaluation of the initiative by Capital Symonds have been provided by the petitioner and are included in the public papers pack. The petitioner is aware of the Minister’s recent statement on the extension of funding for the pilot schemes while an internal evaluation takes place, but would like to emphasise that the petition is asking that the existing pilot scheme is rolled out to community transport schemes across Wales. We have, of course, written to the Minister, and we are awaiting a response. It might be pertinent at this stage to wait for that response and to put this petition forward for our consideration at the next committee meeting.

[63] **Lindsay Whittle:** I agree with that action. I read in the papers that there are 15 pilot projects. The Minister has indicated that there may be an extension of funding. That all sounds very positive, does it not? That is very good.

[64] **Joyce Watson:** It does sound very positive at this stage.

9.30 a.m.

Y Wybodaeth Ddiweddaraf am Ddeisebau Blaenorol Updates to Previous Petitions

[65] **Joyce Watson:** The first petition under this item is P-04-350, which calls on the Assembly to retain the services of Sporttrain in Rhondda and Cardiff. The petition was submitted by Gareth Holohan and has collected approximately 2,000 signatures. It reads:

[66] ‘We call upon the National Assembly for Wales to urge the Welsh Government to retain the vital community services that Sporttrain provide in Rhondda and Grangetown. These services are: Employment training for young people; Engagement training for NEET young people; Community learning; Welfare, support and counselling services for young

people; Community sports coaching and activities for young people.’

[67] The Deputy Minister for Skills has responded and his response is available for all to read. The committee issued a call for evidence to 127 organisations and individuals in December and received four responses, which are also available to be read by the public and by us.

[68] Red Valley Enterprises Community Interest Company and Cymmer Ward Communities First have both commented on this petition. Red Valleys Enterprises CIC said that it is a social enterprise that raises funds for services and activities in the local community. It echoed the petitioner’s point about Sporttrain’s positive impact on the lives of local young people. It also pointed out that Sporttrain helps to sustain other local organisations by renting space for the activities and services that it provides. In addition, it stated that young people on the Sporttrain scheme have raised money for various charities, and organised events and activities for children in their communities. Cymmer Ward Communities First has said that young people on the Sporttrain scheme volunteered at parent and toddler groups, after-school clubs, youth clubs and play schemes and that the skills that they provided as volunteers have been of great benefit to all of those groups. It goes on to say that Sporttrain ensured that some of the most challenging young people gained valuable experience, qualifications and self-confidence, and that it has helped to prevent them from developing anti-social behaviour. It states that:

[69] ‘At a time when figures show that levels of NEETS are rising and young people are not achieving the basic levels of exercise required, to stop such a beneficial project targeting these young people would certainly seem a very retrograde step.’

[70] A response was also received from Rhondda schools rugby development officer, who said that

[71] ‘many schools have been so impressed by their good work and by the quality of the Sports Train students themselves that they have asked that they continue to deliver sessions in the schools on a weekly basis...For example my assistant Rugby Development Officer, Ben Daniels who is currently the youngest ever Welsh Rugby Union Level 3 coach, began his coaching career as a 17 year old student, 6 years ago, with Sports Train.’

[72] Of the 127 requests for evidence, we have received four very positive replies, but we have also received a reply from the Deputy Minister, who has assured us that, while the money might not go directly to Sporttrain, the Government is not pulling the plug on this type of support within those communities. So, we can do one of two things. We can write to the Communities, Equality and Local Government Committee, of which I am a member, drawing its attention to the issues for possible inclusion in an inquiry on sport in future. I can tell you, as a member of that committee, that that would be very far in the future. The work programme is such—we have a great deal of legislation—it will be a long time coming. Alternatively, we can accept the reassurance of the Deputy Minister in his response and close the petition.

[73] **Eluned Parrott:** I wonder if we have an opportunity to offer or point out alternative sources of support and potential funding to this organisation, seeing as its work is obviously valued and 2,000 people have signed a petition to try to protect it.

[74] **Lindsay Whittle:** It is very disappointing that we have only had four responses.

[75] **Joyce Watson:** That is the issue.

[76] **Lindsay Whittle:** I wonder how indicative that is. Do people believe that it is not

valued, or did they not respond because they did not feel it was worth it and that this was the end anyway?

[77] **Joyce Watson:** The issue here is that Sporttrain did tender and it did not secure the programme commission to deliver traineeships in the Cardiff and Rhondda Cynon Taf local authority areas. This is in the letter we have received and it is has been apparent that some young people, and some careers advisers, are disappointed at the loss of Sporttrain in that particular area, but the Deputy Minister says that he is confident that commissioned providers—and there are other commissioned providers; this is the issue—will deliver the new traineeship programme successfully. I am not sure that it is the job of this committee to get involved in provision. It is a provider, and it is fairly obvious that a tendering process occurred. I leave it in your hands.

[78] **Lindsay Whittle:** I think we should accept what the Deputy Minister has said. If this had been an overwhelming success, perhaps we would have buses full of people outside. It may have been successful in the three or four areas that we have had the response from, but it does not strike me as being 100% successful. If alternative provision is being made, then that is a good thing.

[79] **Joyce Watson:** I think it has been hugely successful because it only ran in these areas. It is always sad when people hope to carry on but are not able to secure the funds. What I am reassured by is that the Minister has put out to tender and that that provision will carry on. That is the bit that satisfies me, and I am asking whether that satisfies you. I see that it does, and with that, we will close the petition.

[80] We will move on to P-03-318 on cross-border maternity services. This petition was submitted by Helen Jervis, with 164 signatures, and it reads:

[81] ‘We, the undersigned, note the proposals to move the consultation-led maternity unit, neonatal intensive care unit and child inpatient unit from the Royal Shrewsbury Hospital (RSH) to the Princess Royal Hospital (PRH) at Telford. We believe this would cause a great deal of hardship and stress for patients and families travelling from Montgomeryshire. It would add an extra twenty minutes onto a journey which is already fifty minutes at best and ambulance response times will inevitably be significantly increased. It is vital that these proposals are not considered in isolation to proposals in Wales and that the Welsh Government adopts a strategic approach to cross border health issues, to ensure that the needs of patients from Mid Wales are fully represented in any proposals at catchment hospitals. We therefore call on the National Assembly to urge the Welsh Government to fully engage in the ‘Keeping it in the County’ consultation process to ensure that patients from Mid Wales are not disadvantaged by any changes.’

[82] The committee has already written to the Minister for Health and Social Services and requested an update on that situation once Powys teaching health board has developed a local delivery plan in the light of Shrewsbury and Telford Hospital NHS Trust’s decision to move services from the Royal Shrewsbury Hospital to the Princess Royal Hospital at Telford. We have had that response. Again, I will ask what action the committee would like to take. One possible action is to await a response from the chief executive of the health board once the local delivery plan has been developed. That is the approach I would like to take. Do you support that?

[83] **Lindsay Whittle:** I support that, but I have enormous sympathy for the petitioners. There is no such thing as a safe birth, is there, until the child is finally welcomed into the world? I would have huge concerns if I thought a member of my family were travelling further and further afield simply to give birth. I know that we are governed by the various boards and groups that help us in the area of health, but this seems extremely worrying for the

people of this area. I am sure that the committee, when it next meets, will look at what the chief executive said, consider the local delivery plan and will certainly help these petitioners. You have my full support.

[84] **Eluned Parrott:** May I ask a quick question on that? The possible action is to await a response once the local delivery plan has been developed, but what kind of delay do we anticipate in waiting for an additional piece of information? I would be a little concerned that the petitioners may feel that they have been forgotten about or that their concerns have not been taken on board if there is a significant delay in waiting for that information.

[85] **Joyce Watson:** I do not think that there will be a significant delay. I do not think that the patients feel forgotten or neglected. This is an issue of cross-border working. The only reason it has come about is because of the reconfiguration of services being put in place by the NHS in England. These people find themselves in a position where they have accessed those services. These discussions and the lobbying have been going on for a long time because of all the things that we have said. I have made my comments on that. We can ask the chief executive of the health board for a timescale. That is right and proper. We will have that information ready as soon as we get that reply. I am quite happy to do that, but we do not want to leave people in a situation where they do not think that we are acting, because we clearly are. The Minister has responded. The Powys Teaching Local Health Board has said that it recognises the problem but that the delivery element was out of its control, which is what has created this situation. Therefore, that is what we will do: we will ask the chief executive for a time frame and will have a response as soon as we can.

[86] We will now move on to P-04-337 Tenovus: Free sunscreen. This was submitted by Tenovus and collected 9,500 signatures:

[87] ‘We call upon the National Assembly to urge the Welsh Government to provide free sunscreen for all children under the age of 11 in Wales.’

[88] The committee wrote to the Children’s Commissioner for Wales, the Children and Young People Committee and the Health and Social Care Committee on this issue. We have had responses, which are included for your perusal.

[89] We know that the Children and Young People Committee will undertake an inquiry on sun protection policy, including use of sunscreen, and we have had significant correspondence and information on this petition. In light of the petition having done its job, and that it will now be heard by committee, and that there will be an outturn report, I suggest that our job is done and that we close it. I see that Members agree.

9.45 a.m.

[90] Moving on to petition P-04-342 MS Nurses. This petition was submitted by Joseph Carter and collected 2,163 signatures. It reads,

[91] ‘We the undersigned, believe that MS specialist nurses provide a vital service for people living with MS and their families and should be protected from Health Board cuts. We therefore call on the Welsh Government to ensure that the numbers of MS specialist nurses are not reduced over the length of the Fourth Assembly and that investment continues to provide 1 nurse for every 300 people living with MS.’

[92] We have written to the Minister for Health and Social Services and to local health boards on the matter, and we have had responses from all of those people, which are included in the public papers. Also, the Minister’s response to the questions raised on this issue in Plenary is included in the papers. The MS Society has also provided lots of information and a

report entitled 'Experiences of people using MS specialist nurse services'. That has been distributed to everyone.

[93] The good thing about this is that we have had many responses. Those responses have been positive. Every one of them has said that there is no will, thankfully, by any local health board to reduce the services currently available—and that is what the petition seeks to ensure.

[94] What will we do next? We could forward the Minister's response, which states that the 2010-11 NHS Wales annual operating framework seeks to increase the number of support staff, which would enable nurses to specialise in care for specific conditions, such as MS, to the petitioner for comment. In light of the detail, I do not think that we can do that justice today, but that would be a positive way forward. I see that you agree.

[95] Petition P-03-236 on a charter for grandchildren was submitted by Grandparents Apart Wales and collected 19 signatures. It reads:

[96] 'We call upon the National Assembly of Wales to urge the Welsh Government to adopt The Charter for Grandchildren and to make the Charter mandatory for professional workers who are employed in the welfare of children.'

[97] We have a lot of information in our pack. A charter for grandchildren was adopted on a voluntary basis in Scotland and is a non-legislative advisory document. The Deputy Minister has previously stated that the charter reflects a number of key principles on which policy for children and young people are founded, but she does not feel that statutory adoption of the charter would add value and could potentially be in conflict with human rights legislation. In addition, it would impact on some reserved matters for which the National Assembly does not have powers. So, the Deputy Minister has previously stated that the rights of grandparents are recognised in relevant policies, including guidance on intergenerational approaches in strengthening families and legislation whereby placements with extended family or friends are given priority when appropriate. However, the petitioners stated that the intention of the policies are not reflected in practice.

[98] The family justice review was launched in 2010 to look at how the family justice system is working, and to make recommendations to promote an informed settlement and to minimise conflict. The review panel heard evidence on where the legislation should be strengthened to ensure that children have the right to a continuing relationship with both parents, and others, including grandparents. The report of the review was published in November 2011 and is available. The Deputy Minister for Children and Social Services has issued a written statement on the report and the UK Government's response to it—an awful lot of work has been done on this. Again, that is included. The petitioners' response to the final review report is also included in our pack. Given that the Deputy Minister has previously stated that the rights of grandparents are recognised in Welsh Government policies, including in guidance on intergenerational approaches in strengthening families, and that the Government has legislated for placements with extended family and friends to be given priority when appropriate, we could request details of the guidance and the legislation and forward it to the petitioners for comment. It is very detailed. We would not have time to do it justice this morning, and we want to do it justice. I think that that is an appropriate way forward.

[99] **Eluned Parrott:** Agreed.

[100] **Lindsay Whittle:** I agree. It is very important that children are not separated from their grandparents. Regardless of what has happened in the family home, lots of grandparents love their grandchildren and that right should be protected at all costs, in my opinion.

[101] **Joyce Watson:** As should the right of the child.

[102] **Lindsay Whittle:** Of course, yes.

[103] **Joyce Watson:** That is the difficulty that is being referred to here, when we are talking about human rights. The good thing that has come out of all of the evidence is the Minister's focus on the voice of the child. That is only a positive thing. We will take that forward in the way that we have just agreed.

[104] Moving on, the next petition is P-04-339, Enforcement of Animal Welfare Standards in the Puppy Farming Industry in South West Wales. The petition was submitted by Colin Richardson, collecting 2,169 signatures. It reads:

[105] 'We call on the Welsh Assembly to urge the Welsh Government to stage an independent inquiry into the enforcement of animal welfare standards in the puppy farming industry in South West Wales. This intervention and independent investigation is as a result of the widespread abhorrence at the ease with which the licences are issued and subsequent lack of enforcement. This abhorrence is creating an extremely negative image of Wales throughout Wales, the United Kingdom and internationally. It is our contention that the setting up of an independent inquiry is the only way forward and will go some way in restoring the reputation of Wales throughout the UK and Internationally. Hopefully it will also curtail the activities of unlicensed puppy farmers & their reprehensible practices.'

[106] As a committee, we have written to the Environment and Sustainability Committee to ask whether it will consider including this petition in its forward work programme. The Minister for Environment and Sustainable Development has told committees that guidance setting out local authorities' responsibilities with regard to licensing and enforcement will be included in the regulations that are being developed under the Minister's animal health and welfare strategy. We could ask for an indicative timeframe for the development of regulations under the animal health and welfare strategy, with a view to encouraging the petitioner to feed into that consultation process. As this is all actually happening, this is good timing. Are we agreed?

[107] **Lindsay Whittle:** Agreed.

[108] **Eluned Parrott:** Yes, I think that is a very practical way forward.

[109] **Joyce Watson:** Thank you.

9.54 a.m.

P-04-335 Sefydlu Tîm Criced i Gymru—Trafodaeth
P-04-335 The Establishment of a Welsh Cricket Team—Round Table
Discussion

[110] **Joyce Watson:** I welcome Matthew Bumford, the petitioner, Mohammad Asghar, Assembly Member, Dr Huw Jones from Sport Wales, Alan Hamer from Glamorgan Cricket, Peter Hybart from Cricket Wales; and Jonathan Edwards, Member of Parliament. Participants are welcome to speak in English or Welsh. Headsets are available for translation and amplification, with translation on channel 1 and amplification on channel 0. I respectfully ask—I will fine if you do not—everyone to switch off their mobile phones. If the fire alarm sounds, the ushers will tell us what to do and direct us to the fire exits if necessary.

[111] We have received your information and there are a number of you here. We have read

your information; you can be assured of that. Unless you have a burning desire to make opening statements, we will move straight to questions. I see that that is okay. I will start. All of the questions are based on your evidence. Can you outline the major practical difficulties that would prevent a separate Welsh cricket team from being established and how those difficulties might be overcome? Would you like to start, Dr Jones?

[112] **Dr Jones:** I can do so if you wish, Chair. The first and most important thing for me to say is that my role here is to support the cricketing fraternity. As far as we are concerned, it is for cricket to decide on matters within cricket's domain. However, there are a number of areas that you need to consider. The first is the implications of this for international cricket in Sophia Gardens. Alan Hamer has clearly shown in his evidence that it would be affected significantly, and that, in fact, there would not be any international cricket there. The evidence that we have had from the England and Wales Cricket Board also shows that. The second area concerns funding. ECB funding to Wales would be significantly reduced. The third area would be the implications for the strength of a Welsh team if it were to be established and the implications for Welsh cricketers at the very highest levels in the game. Another thing that is also important to mention is that it is not just about rules; sport is a very political sector. In fact, I would almost go as far as to say that there is more politics in sport than in the Assembly. It is very political. It is not a case of relying on goodwill and so on. If some sectors of sport see that they have an opportunity to strengthen their position to the detriment of others, they will do that. It is important to have that context. It is not just about the issues that we think about on a day-to-day basis.

10.00 a.m.

[113] **Joyce Watson:** Okay. Clearly, the petitioner has suggested this, so he will now have an opportunity to express his view.

[114] **Mr Bumford:** Well, Chair, I would refute and disagree with everything that Dr Jones has just said, except for cricket being a particularly political sport—it does stand alone in that regard. It is disingenuous to suggest that there would be no international cricket at Sophia Gardens because, of course, in setting up a Welsh team, we would be playing international matches; we would be playing them as Wales. We would therefore be playing international cricket there regularly, rather than perhaps once every four years for Ashes test matches, as happens now.

[115] Also, as a stakeholder in the English cricket league, there is nothing to prevent Glamorgan from bidding for England test matches as it currently does. There is no reason why it could not win those bids.

[116] **Mr Edwards:** Byddwn yn ychwanegu un pwynt at yr hyn y mae Matthew yn ei ddweud. O dan unrhyw fodel, byddai chwaraewyr o Gymru yn dal yn chwarae gemau prawf dros Loegr, felly nid oes unrhyw reswm yn y byd i Loegr beidio â chynnal gemau prawf yng Ngerddi Sophia. Fel y dywedodd Matthew, mae'r gemau hynny'n cael eu neilltuo o dan broses fidio, a byddai hynny'n parhau oherwydd y byddai Morgannwg yn aelod dosbarth cyntaf, fel y bydd Prifysgol Caerdydd o'r haf hwn ymlaen. Bydd gan Gymru ddwy sir ddosbarth cyntaf yn chwarae gemau dosbarth cyntaf y flwyddyn nesaf.

Mr Edwards: I would add one point to what Matthew has said. Under any model, Welsh players would still play test matches for England, so there is no reason in the world for England not to play test matches at Sophia Gardens. As Matthew said, those games are allotted through a bidding process, and that would continue as Glamorgan would remain a first-class member, as Cardiff University will be from this summer. Wales will have two first-class counties playing first-class matches next year.

[117] **Joyce Watson:** It is usual to go through the Chair, but that is okay. I would now like a response from Peter Hybart.

[118] **Mr Hybart:** From a Cricket Wales perspective, we are very committed to being part of the England and Wales Cricket Board. Staging Welsh internationals would involve us affiliating to the International Cricket Council instead of being part of the England and Wales Cricket Board. We do not believe that that is the best way forward for cricket in Wales, either at grass-roots level or international level. We receive very strong support from the England and Wales Cricket Board—we receive up to about £800,000 a year from the ECB. We play Welsh age-group fixtures, starting with under-11 boys and going all the way up to senior women's team, against other English counties, and that structure provides the future cricketers for Wales, many of whom go on to play for Glamorgan. So, we are very committed to being part of the England and Wales Cricket Board. We believe that we get tremendous support from the ECB, and we believe that this proposal will be a very backward step for cricket in Wales.

[119] **Joyce Watson:** Oscar, would you like to make an opening contribution?

[120] **Mohammad Asghar:** Yes, thank you, Chair. As far as I am concerned, you are talking to a person who wants to take coals to Newcastle. I have already produced two written statements of opinion—one of which was three years ago and the other as recently as last month—to support Twenty20 cricket for Wales. Basically, I have been leading on this for a very long time. I met Tony Lewis, who is an iconic test player and an iconic Welshman. I met him nearly four years ago, and he was very keen and interested, but he knew the difficulties and hurdles we would face. Whether it is Cricket Wales, Glamorgan Cricket or any other concern, in my book, they are riding the gravy train. Money is their concern. They do not know about countries like Afghanistan. We saw a film only a couple of weeks ago—it was on in the middle of the night—about how these people who spent years in a refugee camp built a team, and now they are playing world cricket. Peter, you may have seen it.

[121] Wales is part of the United Kingdom. We would like to see Wales have a team, as Ireland and Scotland have. There is no reason why we cannot have a team. I came to Newport 40 years ago, but, before I came to this country, I was very close to playing test match cricket for Pakistan. I was one of the 60 lead players of the country. When I came here, I played cricket in Llanwern; we won the league. The only problem is that Glamorgan is Glamorgan; it is not Wales in my book. The team in Newport, which has won small premiere leagues, has not got a ground at present. That is in Newport. So, how can we serve cricket? I have seen the statements that it is not reasonable and feasible, but I totally disagree with them. There is no shortage of talent and I want to bring our Twenty20 team onto the Welsh stage.

[122] **Eluned Parrott:** First, I would like to follow up on something that has already been said by Dr Jones about the threat of a withdrawal of financial and practical support from the ECB to Welsh cricket should we disestablish from it. How significant and how adequate do you think the support we receive from the ECB is at present? How effectively is it able to inspire grass-roots cricket in Wales?

[123] **Mr Hamer:** From Glamorgan Cricket Club's perspective, we have received around £2 million a year from the England and Wales Cricket Board. Equally important is the international staging agreement. I want to clarify something that Matthew said earlier: Glamorgan was awarded 17 international match days last September, which was well publicised, including the Ashes in 2015. As an express clause in the staging agreement that the club was awarded by the England and Wales Cricket Board, it said that, if Wales sought affiliate or associate status of the ICC, that staging agreement would be terminated with immediate effect. The financial impact for Glamorgan would mean that we would be placed

into administration tomorrow; that is the real truth. We are projecting £3 million of profit from international cricket over the next five years. The impact on the local economy would be considerably greater. The Ashes in 2009 generated more money for Wales than the FA cup final between Liverpool and Manchester United. The fact is that the ECB dictates who stages international matches and we have a clause in our contract. So, from Glamorgan's perspective, it would be a financial disaster that would mean that we would be unable to continue trading.

[124] **Eluned Parrott:** Obviously, we all want to see international cricket played in Wales and that is understood, but I was hoping to understand the role of the England and Wales Cricket Board in supporting grass-roots cricket and cricket development in Wales and whether that support is adequate at present.

[125] **Mr Hybart:** As I stated, the support that we get from the England and Wales Cricket Board is to the tune of about £800,000 per year. Some of that money comes through to Cricket Wales as the national governing body that oversees the clubs and the leagues; some of that funding goes directly to clubs for facility developments, small grants, capital grants and a loaning scheme. The balance is about £500,000 going through to Cricket Wales as the national governing body and then about £300,000 in a typical year going to clubs, but it will vary year on year, depending on the nature of the projects that the clubs submit. I believe that the support that we get from the England and Wales Cricket Board is very good. It has actually increased quite significantly in the last year or so through the cricket foundation's 'Chance to Shine' project. That enables us to put a part-time community coach in every local authority in Wales. So, we are close to delivering that new initiative.

[126] **Eluned Parrott:** My query, again, is about the support for grass-roots cricket. An indication of that is, as a women cricketer, I had to play in an English league with a team in Wales because there was not a Welsh league for women in Wales. So, there is a query about how far and how effectively that grass-roots support is spread. Perhaps a response from the petitioner would be useful.

[127] **Mr Edwards:** Mae dau fodel posibl ar y bwrdd. Model 1 yw bod yr ECB, o ran gemau undydd ac Ugain20, yn gallu cynnig dau dîm—Lloegr a Chymru ar wahân. Roedd adolygiad Woolf a gafodd ei gyhoeddi ar ddechrau'r flwyddyn, a gomisiynwyd gan yr ICC, yn edrych ar systemau llywodraethu criced. Roedd yr adolygiad yn ddamniol iawn o'r *vested interest* yn y gêm, ac roedd yr adroddiad yn sôn am y posibilrwydd hwn, oherwydd mae lleoedd eraill yn y byd, er enghraifft, Trinidad a Tobago eisiau'r un hawliau ag yr ydym ni'n galw amdanynt i Gymru ar gyfer gemau undydd a gemau Ugain20.

Mr Edwards: There are two possible models on the table. Model 1 is that the ECB, in terms of one-day matches and Twenty20, could put forward two teams—England and Wales separately. The Woolf review that was published at the beginning of the year, which was commissioned by the ICC, looks at cricket governance systems. The review was very damning of the vested interest in the game, and the report mentioned this possibility, as there are other places in the world, such as Trinidad and Tobago, that want the same rights that we are calling for in Wales for one-day and Twenty20 matches.

[128] Ynghylch y syniad o Gymru yn dilyn y trywydd o edrych ar gael statws ICC, rhaid cofio bod chwech o aelodau'r ICC yn ynysoedd Prydain ar hyn o bryd: Lloegr, yr Alban, Iwerddon, Ynys Manaw, Jersey a Guernsey. Pe byddech yn tynnu Lloegr o'r *equation*, byddai gan Gymru fwy o chwaraewyr a chlybiau nag sydd gan y

In relation to the idea of Wales going down the road of having ICC status, we must remember that there are six members of the ICC in the British isles at the moment: England, Scotland, Ireland, the Isle of Man, Jersey and Guernsey. If you were to take England out of the equation, Wales would have more players and clubs than all of the

gwledydd eraill gyda'i gilydd. Mae mwy yng Nghymru nag sydd yn Seland Newydd, sy'n aelod llawn o'r ICC.

other countries put together. There are more in Wales than in New Zealand, which is a full member of the ICC.

[129] Fodd bynnag, yng nghyd-destun ynnysoedd Prydain, mae'r ECB yn parhau i ariannu'r gwledydd eraill hyn. Mae'r Alban yn chwarae yn union yr un cystadlaethau ieuencid. Mae Criced Cymru wedi gwneud gwaith arbennig o ran datblygu systemau ieuencid yng nghriced Cymru. Mae tîm yr Alban, sy'n wlad annibynnol o ran statws ICC, yn chwarae yn y cystadlaethau hynny yn ogystal â chwarae mewn cystadlaethau rhyngwladol.

However, in the context of the British isles, the ECB continues to fund these other countries. Scotland plays in the exact same youth competitions. Cricket Wales has done excellent work in terms of developing a youth system for cricket in Wales. The Scottish team, which is an independent country in terms of its ICC status, plays in those competitions as well and in international competitions.

[130] Yn amlwg, yn y cyfnod cyntaf, pe byddai Cymru'n dilyn y trywydd o edrych am statws ICC, byddai modd cael yr hyn maen nhw'n eu galw'n 'bridging loans' oddi wrth yr ECB i godi'r arian, neu byddai'n rhaid i Lywodraeth Cymru wneud yn iawn am y *shortfall*. Fodd bynnag, y gwirionedd yw, mae Cymru'n wlad gystadleuol ar lefel ryngwladol a phe bai'n cyrraedd cwpan y byd, neu *high-performance level* yr ICC, byddai'r arian a fyddai'n dod o'r ICC yn llawer uwch na'r hyn mae'r ECB yn medru ei gynnig i Gymru.

Obviously, in the first period, if Wales was to go down the route of seeking ICC status, it would be possible to get what they call 'bridging loans' from the ECB to raise the money, or the Welsh Government would have to make up the shortfall. However, the truth is that Wales is a competitive country on an international level and if it were to reach the world cup, or the ICC's high-performance level, the money that would come from the ICC would be much greater than what the ECB can offer to Wales.

[131] **Eluned Parrott:** Do you think that there is great public support? Can you give us evidence that there would be public support for a Wales cricket team?

[132] **Mr Edwards:** Gwnaeth y *Western Mail* gynnal pŵl piniwn y llynedd. Roedd 81% o blaid. Fy safbwynt i yw hyn: rwy'n chwarae criced ers pan oeddwn yn blentyn bach, gan gefnogi tîm criced Lloegr i'r carn ac rwy'n parhau i wneud hynny er fy mod yn genedlaetholwr gwleidyddol. Mae'r cefnogwyr a'r chwaraewyr eisiau hyn. Chwaraeais yn erbyn Morgannwg ychydig flynyddoedd yn ôl dros dîm Llandysul. Roedd pob un o'r chwaraewyr a oedd yn chwarae dros Forgannwg eisiau tîm cenedlaethol i Gymru ac eisiau chwarae ar y lefel uchaf dros Gymru. Yr unig beth sy'n atal hyn yw systemau llywodraethol y gêm yng Nghymru a gweinyddwyr y gêm. Mae dyletswydd ar y gweinyddwyr; mae unrhyw gêm neu chwaraeon ar gyfer y chwaraewyr a'r cefnogwyr nid ar eu cyfer nhw.

Mr Edwards: The *Western Mail* conducted an opinion poll last year and 81% were in favour. My point of view is this: I have played cricket since I was a little boy, and am an avid supporter of the England cricket team and I continue to support it despite the fact that I am a nationalist politically. The supporters and the players want this. I played against Glamorgan a few years ago for Llandysul. Each and every one of the Glamorgan players wanted a national team for Wales and wanted to play on the highest level for Wales. The only thing preventing this is the sport's governance systems in Wales and the administrators of the sport. There is a duty on the administrators; any game or sport is for the supporters and players, not the administrators.

[133] **Lindsay Whittle:** Dr Jones, you said that politics was very much involved in sport, but, with respect, it all seems to be about finance at the moment. That seems to be the main

talking point. I am interested in supporting a Welsh cricket team, and that is likely to have major funding implications for the game in Wales; that is quite clear from the evidence. I would not have thought, with respect, that you should be too far apart. What measures could be taken to ensure that any changes in funding could be mitigated? I am quite sure, based on the evidence given by Jonathan Edwards, that there is huge support out there. Most people in Wales naturally support a Welsh team, regardless of the sport; we all have our favourite sports, but you will always find that people will support a Welsh team. I think that that is really positive. With respect, I do not support an England team at all—sorry about that.

[134] **Dr Jones:** That point is a fair one. This is a seductive argument. Theoretically, I would love to see a Welsh cricket team, just as I would like to see many other Welsh teams—that is what we are about at Sport Wales. However, trying to achieve that, particularly at the moment, is very difficult indeed and, unless there is significant compensatory funding from somewhere, it would be almost impossible to achieve. It would put Glamorgan in a very difficult financial position. It would also put Cricket Wales in a very difficult financial position, and that would be detrimental to the development of the game.

10.15 a.m.

[135] For me, one of the most compelling memoranda that you have had is from the ECB; it is quite clear about various points. There are various views and opinions, from the cricket administrators on the one hand, as Jonathan calls them, to those of the petitioners on the other, but some of the points in here are absolutely clear. It says, should Wales decide to separate itself,

[136] ‘then Cricket Wales would need to separate itself from the ECB and join the ICC in its own right as a member nation. It would not be possible to mix and match membership based on different levels of international competition.’

[137] So, one of the options that Jonathan proposed is actually not an option, based on that. The evidence also says,

[138] ‘In a similar vein to Scotland and Ireland, there would be no funding from England to Cricket Wales as all relationships would have to be with ICC and Wales would in effect become a competitor nation to England.’

[139] I think that those are quite compelling arguments. Unless we could overcome those issues by securing significant financial funding from somewhere else, whether or not it was the Welsh Government—I cannot see it coming from anywhere else—then these things would be hugely difficult to overcome. You would then be in a situation where you would have to weigh all sorts of other things in the balance, for example, the standard of international competition and whether it would be better to be part of an international cricket league, or county cricket, or whatever. Those would be different types of arguments.

[140] **Lindsay Whittle:** Is there any evidence to suggest that any of the English counties would suddenly want to stop playing against Glamorgan? This happens in all sports throughout Britain, does it not? In all sports, people travel throughout the entire country.

[141] **Dr Jones:** It is quite well known that there are too many county cricket clubs at the moment. I suspect that if the English system were to start reducing the number of counties, Glamorgan would be very vulnerable at that time. That is where the politics comes about in all this.

[142] **Lindsay Whittle:** With respect, there may be too many in the south-east of England, but there are not too many here in Wales, are there? There is only one.

[143] **Joyce Watson:** Please, could you all speak through the Chair? We are having a free-for-all at the moment. The obvious question now is: can you explain why that would have an effect on Glamorgan, so that we have it on the record?

[144] **Mr Hamer:** As I said earlier, Glamorgan would have to go into administration. We have £16 million of debt and the SWALEC Stadium was built specifically to stage international cricket. The terms of the agreement between us and the ECB—and I am happy to forward them to committee—specifically state that we would lose future international matches. We would have no alternative other than to go into administration. Glamorgan could not survive, with the debt profile that it has, without international cricket. Whether the England and Wales Cricket Board or the other counties would want to continue playing against Glamorgan would be a hypothetical question, because we would not exist, because we would not have any money.

[145] **Eluned Parrott:** What is the timescale on that agreement?

[146] **Mr Hamer:** It runs until 2016. The agreements run for four years, but for the matches from 2017 onwards, the same condition would apply. The reason is that there are too many test match grounds in England and Wales. It has been a common debating point. Hampshire and Durham missed out on an Ashes test because Cardiff secured it, so, clearly, if Wales decided to seek its own cricket status, England quite rightly would allocate its international matches to its English counties. It would not take games across the bridge.

[147] **Eluned Parrott:** But, presumably Wales would allocate its international matches to Sophia Gardens.

[148] **Mr Hamer:** But the evidence indicates that Wales would go into division 7 of the ICC World League, playing teams like Papua New Guinea and so on. We would have to battle our way through the rankings to secure one of two places to play in a world cup once every four years. At the moment, the future tours programme, which sets out which countries play each other, has been fixed for the next 10 years. As it currently stands, there are no plans by the ICC to increase the number of test match teams. Cricket Ireland announced recently that one of its objectives is to try to gain test match status by 2020. It is extremely unlikely, given how competitive and cluttered the cricket fixture calendar is, that any new test nations will be given status by the ICC. So, the best that Wales could hope for would be to battle it out with Ireland, Scotland, Kenya and so on every four years to try to get a place in the world cup.

[149] **Joyce Watson:** Have you finished, Lindsay?

[150] **Lindsay Whittle:** Yes, that is fine.

[151] **Joyce Watson:** I want to move on. We have talked about battling it out and gaining players, because you can only battle it out if you have players to battle with, so can you explain to us how complex the issue of player eligibility is in the context of the ICC rules? Would that present any difficulties, should a separate Welsh team be established?

[152] **Mr Edwards:** Y rheolau ar hyn o bryd yw, pe bawn i'n chwarae criced dros Gymru ar y lefel undydd neu Ugain20 a bod Lloegr am imi chwarae gemau prawf a'm bod i eisiau gwneud hynny, gallwn drosglwyddo yfory. Byddwn wedyn yn methu â chwarae gemau undydd dros Gymru am bedair

Mr Edwards: The rules as they stand are that, if I played cricket for Wales on the one-day or Twenty20 level and England wanted me to play test matches and I wanted to do so, I could transfer tomorrow. I would then be unable to play one-day matches for Wales for four years. That is what happened with

blynedd. Dyna ddigwyddodd i Eoin Morgan, a oedd yn chwarae dros Iwerddon mewn gemau undydd. Gwnaeth ei enw ar lefel ryngwladol ac wedyn cafodd ei ddewis i chwarae gemau prawf. Dyma un o'r prif bethau a ddywedodd Matthew Maynard mewn cyfweiliad gyda'r BBC ychydig fisoedd yn ôl pan oedd yn cefnogi'r syniad o gael tîm cenedlaethol Cymreig i chwarae gemau undydd ac Ugain²⁰; dywedodd y byddai'n ffordd dda o ffocysu ar y lefel elît yng Nghymru. Byddai'n adeiladu ar y gwaith arbennig mae'r bwrdd criced yn ei wneud o ran datblygu ieuenctid pe bai ffocws ar y lefel elît ar gyfer y chwaraewyr hynny. Byddai'n gymhelliad enfawr i chwaraewyr ifanc i ddatblygu eu gêm, a phe baent yn ddigon da i chwarae gemau prawf i Loegr, gallent wneud hynny. Byddai chwarae i Gymru yn gam yn eu datblygiad.

Eoin Morgan, who played for Ireland in one-day matches. He made a name for himself at an international level and was then selected to play test matches. That is one of the main things that Matthew Maynard said in an interview with the BBC a few months ago when he supported the idea of a Welsh national team to play one-day and Twenty20 matches; he said that it would be a good way of focusing on the élite level in Wales. It would be building on the exceptional work that the cricket board has done on youth development if there could be a focus on the élite level for those players. It would be a massive driver for young players to develop their game, and if they were good enough to play test matches for England, they could do so. Playing for Wales would be a stepping stone in their development.

[153] Mae'n rhaid inni gofio, yn hanesyddol, mai dim ond 11 o chwaraewyr Morgannwg sydd wedi chwarae gemau prawf dros Loegr a dim ond rhyw 11 o chwaraewyr Morgannwg sydd wedi chwarae gemau undydd dros Loegr. Felly, byddai cael tîm cenedlaethol Cymreig yn rhoi cyfle arbennig i chwaraewyr ifanc o Gymru chwarae'r gêm ar y lefel uchaf. Mae'n rhaid taw hynny ddylai fod ein huchelgais fel gwleidyddion a phobl sy'n caru'r gêm yng Nghymru.

We have to remember that, historically, only 11 Glamorgan players have played test matches for England and only around 11 Glamorgan players have played one-day matches for England. So, having a national Welsh team would give young players from Wales a fantastic opportunity to play the game at the highest level. Surely that should be our ambition as politicians and as people who love the game in Wales.

[154] **Mr Hamer:** To my knowledge, there are only two current Welsh professional cricketers who play outside of Wales: Michael Powell and Tom Maynard. So, the Welsh team would not even be as strong as the current Glamorgan team, as it contains a number of non-Welsh players. I have had some information from the ECB that says that, if Wales was to become an ICC associate or affiliate member, the ECB territory would exclude Wales and, as such, a player born in Wales who was playing for Wales would need four years of residential qualification in England if he then wanted to play for England. It also said that players born in Wales and living in Wales while playing for Glamorgan would not be qualified to play for England as there would be a four-year residential qualification period. It is not beyond the realms of possibility that our best cricket players, such as James Harris, who is currently playing for the England Lions and is one step away from getting into the England test team, might be forced to play away from Glamorgan; he would be given the choice of playing for Wales or England, but not both.

[155] **Joyce Watson:** I can see that you want to come in, Matthew, so I will bring you in now.

[156] **Mr Bumford:** The key word there is 'choice'. That is what setting up a Welsh team represents: you would have the choice to play for Wales and then, if you were good enough and decided that you would like to play for England, you could go ahead and do that. At the moment, you have no choice. Either you play for England, with everything that goes along with that—you represent England, not Wales—or you have nothing. So, if we set up a team, it

would not take anything away or separate anything; rather, it would establish something, giving players and fans the opportunity to choose Wales, England or both. This is about choice.

[157] **Mr Hybart:** The young Welsh players coming through the system represent Wales, starting at the age of under 11—boys and girls. They are used to playing against all the English counties. The goal for all those Welsh players is ultimately to represent Glamorgan and to play for it against the English counties. That is the structure of the sport, and it is well respected. Those with exceptional talent also want to go on to play for England, but throughout the system and in the junior age groups, there is the same system of people aspiring to play in Welsh age groups and to go on to represent Glamorgan.

[158] **Joyce Watson:** I will start to unpick what we have heard so far, and where the arguments lie, as I understand them. In the current system, there is a process that allows young people in Wales to play at whatever level, supported and funded by the mechanisms that we have all heard about. Those who have ability and aspiration go on to play for Glamorgan and, hopefully, go on to represent England. The other side of that is that, if we had a Welsh team and we moved forward with that, those systems and processes would be dismantled and new systems and processes would immediately start. It seems that that would hugely disadvantage, according to one side of the argument, the aspirations of those players, because the level at which they start to play could be seriously affected. The other side of the argument is that we, as a country, would build up those aspirations and allow them to play for their country, at whatever level that might be. Is that a fair assessment of what we have heard so far, so that you are all represented fairly within this debate? I see that it is.

[159] **Mohammad Asghar:** You ask about the standard of cricket. I think that there are 220 clubs in Wales, but there is no talent-hunting process in Wales at the moment. Welsh cricket is just Glamorgan. That is what I was saying in the first few minutes. There is no shortage of talent here, but we are not picking it up. This is the problem. Forget this scaremongering about finance. Once there is talent, the global cricket world watches you. The best players normally come from ordinary places, whether it is Brian Lara, Len Hutton or Don Bradman; they all came from very humble backgrounds. I am pretty sure that there is such talent in Wales, but my worry is that they are not being head-hunted by Cricket Wales or Glamorgan. We have talented boys and girls here, but they are not being head-hunted. Forget this money business; it will come, and in a big way, if we have our own Welsh team at the front-line of global cricket.

[160] **Joyce Watson:** Since you have made a statement and named people, I have to ask them to respond.

[161] **Mr Hybart:** The vast majority of the 220 clubs that were referred to run very strong junior sections. We qualify about 200 coaches a year at various levels across Wales to coach those youngsters. Those youngsters then feed into nine regional teams, and they play cricket from under-10s to under-15s, boys and girls. Those nine regions are the eight old counties of Wales plus Pembrokeshire. Those nine regions then feed into the Welsh teams that I referred to earlier, going from under-11s through to under-17s. So, there is a well-established structure. There is a lot of talent development going on and there are a lot of talented boys and girls within the system. Within the ECB, the Welsh structure is very well-regarded. Obviously, we would all like to see more talented players coming through the system. The community coach initiative that I talked about earlier—we are putting coaches in to local authorities the length and breadth of Wales—specifically targets those clubs that need a little kick-start in terms of their junior sections and their talent development process.

10.30 a.m.

[162] **Eluned Parrott:** Up to what age can you play for Wales?

[163] **Mr Hybart:** For the boys, it is under 17. There is a senior Wales minor counties team playing against the English minor counties. On the women's side, it is up to senior women's level, again playing against the English county teams.

[164] **Eluned Parrott:** Why is it possible to play for Wales up until the age of 17 or as an adult woman, but not possible to play for Wales as an adult man?

[165] **Mr Hybart:** On the men's side, the structure feeds through beyond the under-17s. It feeds through into Glamorgan cricket.

[166] **Eluned Parrott:** I find it difficult to understand. It seems to me that it is an arbitrary difference. It is possible for women's cricket to be played at Wales level and possible for junior cricket to be played at Wales level but, for reasons that I am frankly not able to understand, it is not possible for adult males to play at that level.

[167] **Mr Hybart:** The Wales junior teams and the Wales senior women's team are not playing international cricket. They are playing against the English county teams.

[168] **Eluned Parrott:** So, there is a conflation between Glamorgan's standing as the county developer and Wales as a national team. Essentially, these are Glamorgan junior teams, are they not, not Wales teams?

[169] **Mr Hybart:** Glamorgan has responsibility for the professional game within Wales. The recreational game falls within the remit of Cricket Wales. So, the junior teams and the girls teams, feeding into the senior women's team, fall under the remit of Cricket Wales, because they are all part of the recreational game. Glamorgan has responsibility for the professional game.

[170] **Joyce Watson:** We will move on now to the final question. I am mindful of the time.

[171] **Eluned Parrott:** We have heard today from the professional cricket authorities that, in the short to medium term, there are financial difficulties and issues to do with the standard of the game in Wales. Should it be our aspiration to develop Wales as a cricketing nation? What steps would be needed to develop us to a point where you believe that that would be viable? Do you really believe that the ECB would nurture a viper, if you like, by developing Wales to the point of viability as a standalone competitor nation?

[172] **Mr Hamer:** One of the challenges at the moment is that Glamorgan has underperformed; I am not going to deny that. Glamorgan's performances on the field over the last 10 years have not been good enough. Had they been good enough, we probably would have had representation in the England team. I wonder then whether this hearing would be taking place. Funding needs to be addressed. Clearly, from Glamorgan's perspective, if it was unable to earn the multi-million pound contribution by staging international cricket, it would have to look to someone else to provide that money; I suspect that that would be the Welsh Government. That would not be Glamorgan's decision, but without doubt, the funding would need to be resolved before these matters could be taken forward.

[173] **Mr Bumford:** I find it wrong and unacceptable that a county in Wales is attempting to hold the rest of the country to ransom over establishing a team, with threats of going into administration. It is an opportune time to be looking at this, given that the Woolf review has just come out. That review looked into the governance of cricket and found it to be quite a corrupt game, with many vested interests. It is now accepted on the international stage that we need to expand cricket and involve new countries. The review has suggested that non-full

members could start hosting world cups, for example—there is talk of Ireland doing that, and there is no reason why Wales could not.

[174] Moving forward, we should have a similar review in Wales. It should, essentially, have exactly the same terms of reference as the Woolf review, which was to conduct a comprehensive, forward-looking review of the governance of the ICC, or—in this case—Cricket Wales. That would include an analysis of governance structures, namely whether it is right that Glamorgan should have so much power over Welsh cricket, given that it is, ultimately, just a county of Wales. It would also look at the ethics of cricket, and in this case, whether England is representative of Wales, or whether Glamorgan is representative of Wales. It should also look at the membership of the ICC and options around that, as well as funding. I would strongly suggest that you contact Cricket Scotland and the Irish cricket board, both of which are taking tremendous leaps forward presently. We have been in contact with them and they are sympathetic to our cause. They would like to see a Welsh team and they are envious of the players, clubs and the facilities that we have at Sophia Gardens. That would be my suggestion for moving forward.

[175] **Joyce Watson:** I see some reaction to what you said, so I will bring those people in to comment.

[176] **Dr Jones:** I am not sure that it is helpful to talk about corruption in the context of this petition; it is not helpful at all. The one issue that is essential for the committee to be aware of in terms of financing the game is that it very much relies on test cricket in terms of its stability. In that sense, it is similar to rugby, which very much relies on the success of the international test team. The success that we will hopefully have on Saturday will have major implications for the funding of the team. It will also have implications for the funding of the regions. Cricket is similar in that the vast majority of it relies on success at test level. If we did not have the ECB in this context, then it would be difficult for the rest of the structure to survive as it is now. Clearly, you can develop a different structure—I would not deny that—but it would be nothing like the structure we have at the moment. Certainly, we believe that it would be hugely detrimental to the development of the game.

[177] **Mr Hybart:** I would like to pick up Matthew's point, which implied that Glamorgan had influence here. Cricket Wales is a new organisation and is a merger of an organisation that used to run the junior game with an organisation that used to run the senior game. Both have been brought together in one organisation. Glamorgan did hold influence over one of those old organisations, but that has changed in this restructuring. So, on the types of issues that we are discussing today in terms of the structure of cricket in Wales, regardless of Glamorgan, Cricket Wales is fully committed to being part of the ECB. This issue is not a concern for our member clubs and leagues. In the last month, we have held an annual general meeting, a meeting of all of our senior leagues across Wales and a meeting of all of our junior regions throughout Wales. It was an open agenda on each occasion and this issue was not raised. So, Cricket Wales is very committed to the current structure and regardless of the financial implications in terms of Glamorgan, we believe that this is the best structure for the development of cricket in Wales.

[178] **Joyce Watson:** Oscar, you get the final word, as long as it is brief.

[179] **Mohammad Asghar:** I totally disagree with Dr Jones when he said that financing was based on test matches. That is totally wrong. The IPL is the richest league and it pays each player around \$1 million, so unless you try, you will not succeed. Good players are leaving Wales, and we do not want that to happen. That is the issue.

[180] **Joyce Watson:** I thank everyone for their comments. We will take on board your suggestion about the Scottish and Irish cricket boards and seek some information from them.

[181] We were going to go into private session to discuss the next item, petition P-04-358, but life is a moveable feast. We will not be discussing it because I believe there has been a recent move within that body, and I think that I am right in saying that it has now been disbanded.

[182] **Ms Phillips:** We understand that it has.

[183] **Joyce Watson:** Unfortunately, we will not be moving into private session to look at that petition, because the state of play is unclear.

[184] **Lindsay Whittle:** What happens now on the cricket issue?

[185] **Joyce Watson:** We will continue to consider it; that was just an evidence session. We can move it onto the agenda for the meeting on 27 March, and I think that it would be right and proper to do so. We can decide where to take it from there. Are Members content to do that? I see that you are. Thank you for asking that question, Lindsay, because I should have said that earlier.

[186] I now officially draw the meeting to a close, and I thank Lindsay Whittle and Eluned Parrott for stepping in, as it would otherwise have been a very difficult situation.

*Daeth y cyfarfod i ben am 10.41 a.m.
The meeting ended at 10.41 a.m.*