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Debate
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Children and Young People Committee newsletter



What is the National Assembly for Wales?

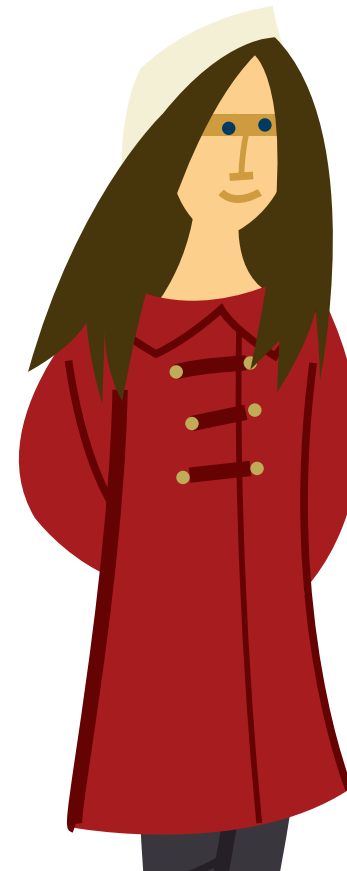
The National Assembly for Wales is made up of 60 Assembly Members from across Wales. They are elected by the people of Wales to represent them and their communities, make laws for Wales and to ensure the Welsh Government is doing its job properly.

01

What is the Children and Young People Committee?

We are a group of five people who work as Assembly Members at the National Assembly for Wales in Cardiff.

People in Wales have voted for us to do this and it's our job to make sure that the people who make decisions about things like how to spend money (called the Welsh Government) are doing a good job. Our group is called the Children and Young People Committee.



Hi,
I'm Helen Mary Jones, Assembly Member for Llanelli and Chair of the Children and Young People Committee. It's my job to help the Committee to consider the issues affecting children and young people in Wales and to help the Committee agree about what we should ask the Welsh Government to do about them.

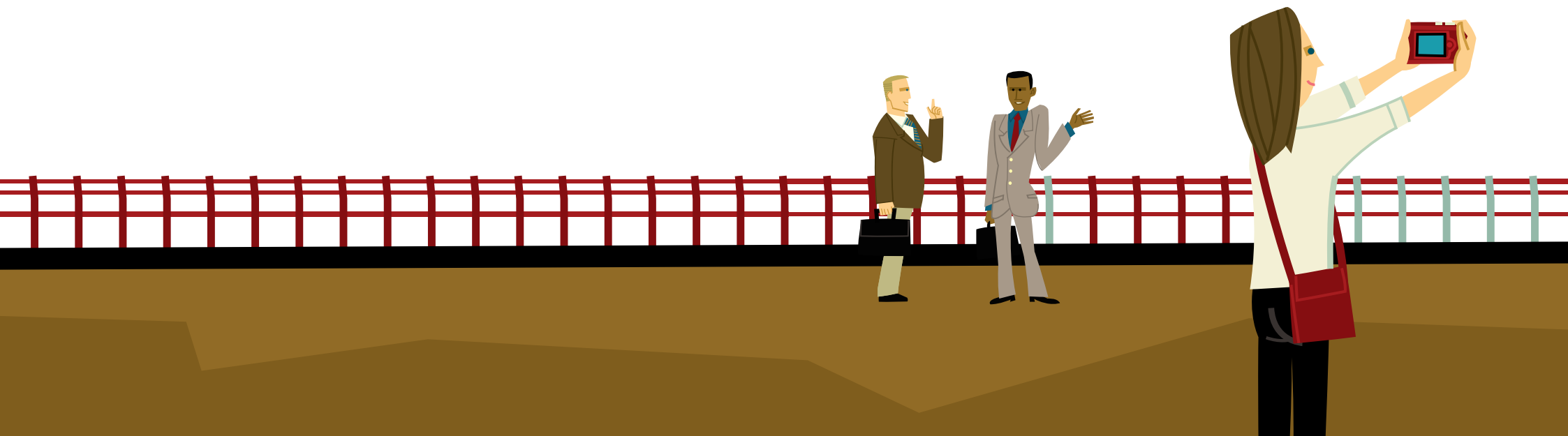
Last summer, children and young people in Wales told us that they were worried about having places where they felt safe and welcome, where they could play or just be with their friends. We decided to investigate this so since December last year, we have been getting evidence from lots of different people about safe places to play and hang out.

Children and young people told us that sometimes they don't play outside with their friends because they or their parents are scared of the strangers they might meet. They are also worried about bullying outside of school. We spoke to the police and others about this, which gave us some ideas about how we might make going outside feel safer.

Lots of children and young people told us that cars and traffic were stopping them play outside safely. We have spoken to the people in charge of building roads and saying how fast cars can go and where they can park. They gave us lots of ideas about how the situation might be improved, but also told us that it was a difficult problem to solve. We hope to give the Government some useful advice on how to make cars share the streets with children and young people in a fairer way.

We thought about lots of other things that might be stopping children and young people play and hang out safely. We will be publishing a report soon that will give advice to the Welsh Government about how to solve some of these problems. Watch out for the report on our website!

Helen Mary Jones, Chair



A day in the life of Angela Burns AM

Children and Young People Committee member Angela Burns AM was elected to represent the people of Carmarthen West and South Pembrokeshire, in West Wales. Here she gives an insight into her work:

“Abi Phillips, the Clerk to the Committee, and I went over to Monkton school a few weeks ago to meet up with a group of children and young people from the Gypsy and Traveller community.

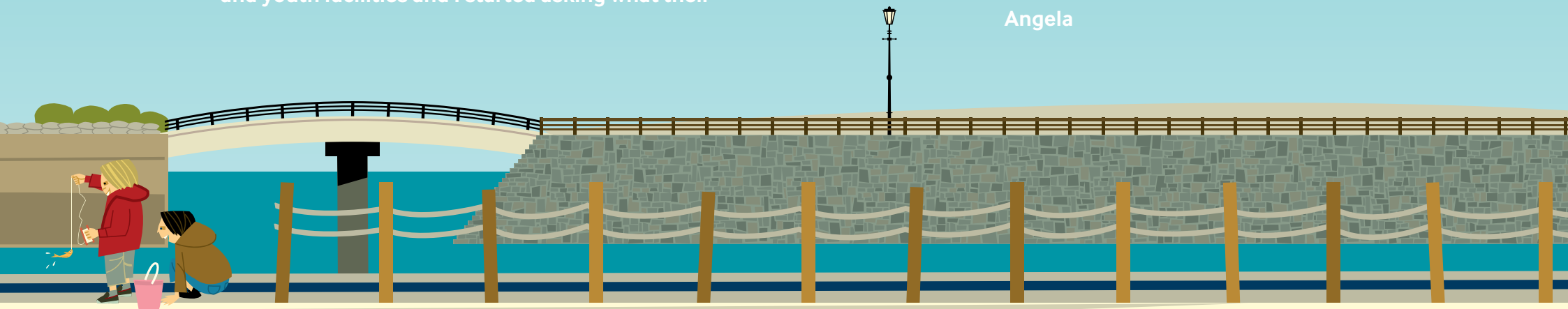
We were running late! I was on the phone to Abi saying “I’m here, where are you?” and she was saying, “I’m here, where are you?” It was totally silly but we were in different car parks at opposite ends! Anyway, we eventually met in the middle and whizzed in to meet everybody. There was quite a crowd and I had forgotten how low school chairs can be; because I’m quite tall I had to fold up a bit. To make things even worse there was a great smell of cooking coming from somewhere and I hadn’t eaten all day – I spent some of the meeting hoping my tummy wouldn’t gurgle.

The young people were really nice but quite shy at first. Thankfully a couple of the boys started to talk about how difficult it is to get to good sports and youth facilities and I started asking what their

dream youth centre would look like. Well, a few million pounds later I began to get the idea! For the boys it was definitely all about football pitches, places to play sports, computers and music studios. The girls were quite different; for them it was about being able to hang out with their friends but they wanted to be really close to their homes. The Gypsy culture is very protective of its youngsters and Gypsy mums and dads don’t like their children to be far from them or with people they don’t know, even if it is a youth worker. So we talked about how we could give these young people the opportunities to play while also respecting their parents’ concerns and making sure they knew their kids were safe.

Some of the best memories I have of my childhood are playing with my mates. We were forever making dens away from the prying eyes of adults, going fishing in streams with bent nails and string and cycling miles and miles on hot summer days. Times have changed but I think that kind of adventuring when you’re young helps your spirit to grow. We really want to try to make sure that today’s kids feel that they can go adventuring in safety, so it’s up to us adults to try to make sure there are safe places for you to play and hang out.”

Angela



The next Assembly is nearly here!

Every four years, the Assembly has to close down for a while to let the people of Wales decide who they want to represent them for the next four years. To do this, we hold an election. An election means that everyone over the age of 18 can vote and have their say on who they want in the Assembly and which political party they want to form a government. The next election is due in May 2011. We expect some of the politicians we have now to be chosen again to represent the people of Wales, but we also know that some of the politicians we have now have decided to stop working at the Assembly next year. Others may not win enough votes and so will not be able to come back. This means that we will have some new politicians working at the Assembly next year.

Because the new politicians coming in to the Assembly may not know what issues the committees have talked about in the past, or what they would have thought about next, each committee writes a report that sums up those issues for the new committee. After the election, the new committee members can read the reports and decide quickly what issues they should be thinking about and what things in Wales need improving.

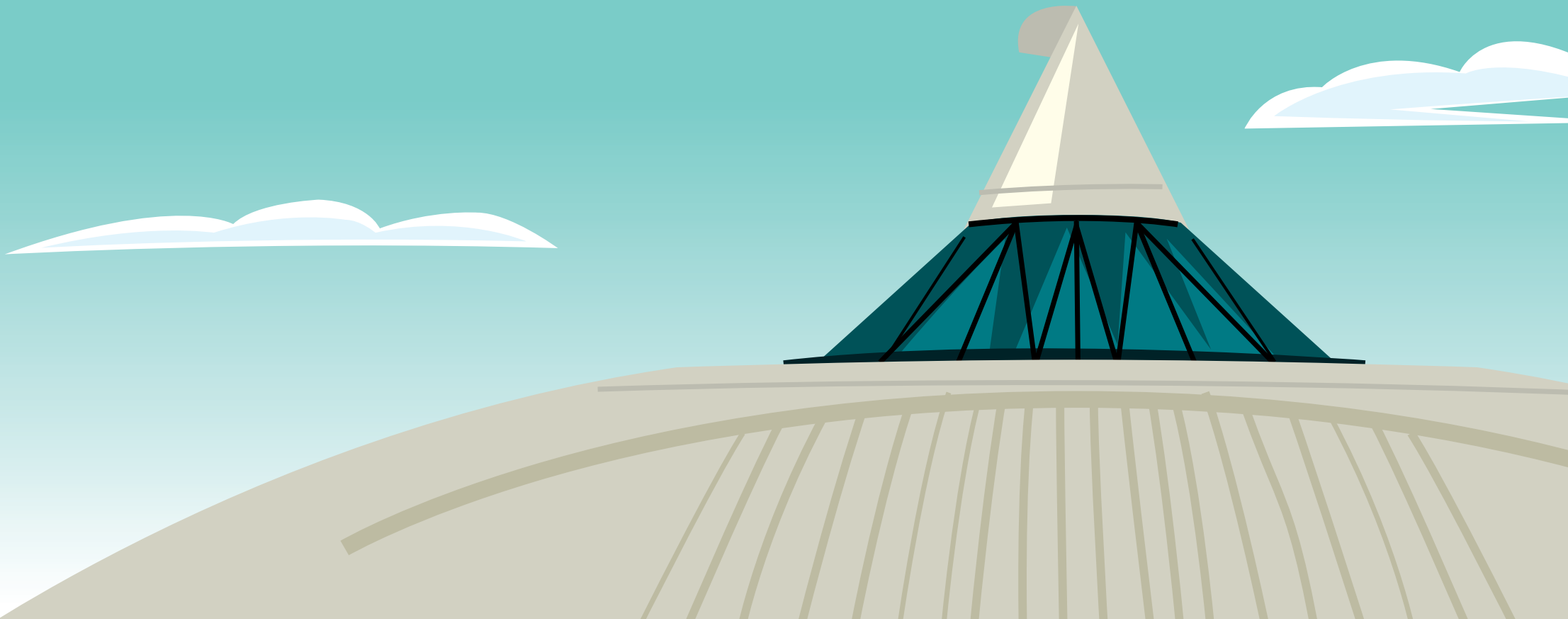
The Children and Young People Committee will be writing its report in January 2011. That means that you have just a few months to get in touch with us if there are any issues that you think should be in that report. What is bugging you or your friends? Is there anything that the Government should be doing to help you in your life that isn't working well at the moment? We'd love to hear from you so that we can make sure the work we do on your behalf is as good as it can be.

Details of how to get in touch with the Committee are in the 'contact us' section of this newsletter. Go on, have your say!



The Senedd is the home of the National Assembly for Wales. Since it opened in 2006, the Senedd has become one of Wales's most iconic buildings. The Senedd is where laws for Wales are made and, in 2008, it was the place where a Welsh law was passed for the first time since the 10th century. The building and the Siambr (debating chamber) are public spaces so the people of Wales can watch Assembly Members in action.

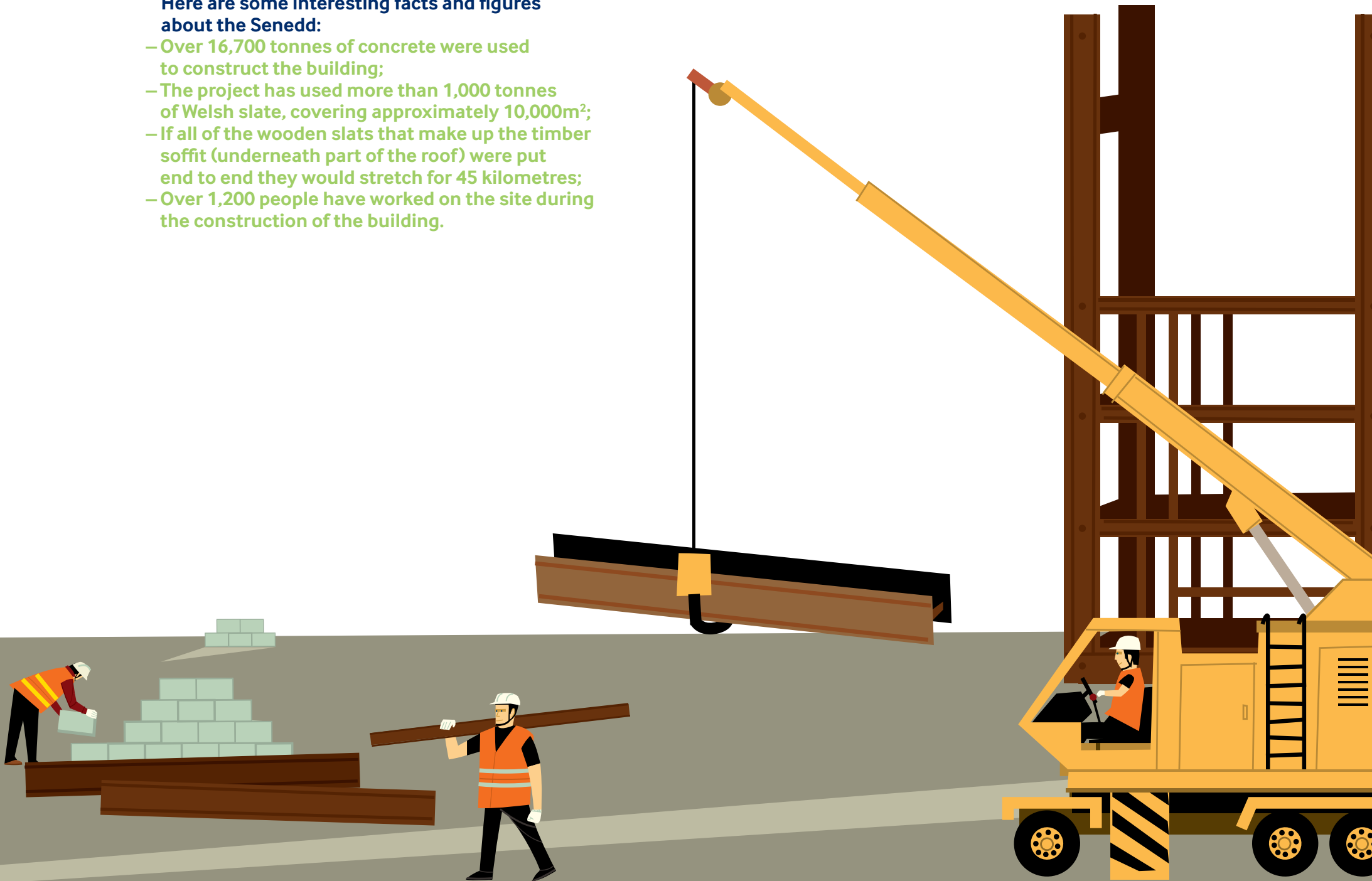
If you would like to visit the Senedd to arrange a guided tour or watch Plenary or a committee meeting, please call our booking line on 0845 010 5500 or email assembly.bookings@wales.gov.uk.



Senedd facts and figures

Here are some interesting facts and figures about the Senedd:

- Over 16,700 tonnes of concrete were used to construct the building;
- The project has used more than 1,000 tonnes of Welsh slate, covering approximately 10,000m²;
- If all of the wooden slats that make up the timber soffit (underneath part of the roof) were put end to end they would stretch for 45 kilometres;
- Over 1,200 people have worked on the site during the construction of the building.



This term for the Committee

The Committee will have three more meetings this term on the following dates – 02 November, 16 November and 30 November.

The Children’s Commissioner was invited to the first meeting of the term to talk to the Committee about his annual review 2009 – 2010. The Commissioner is invited every year to talk to the Committee about his annual review.

The Committee will spend its next two meetings reviewing a report that they published in May 2009, called ‘Parenting in Wales and the Delivery of the Parenting Action Plan’. In the report a number of recommendations were made to the Welsh Government. The Committee has asked some witnesses to come to these meetings to tell them how things have changed since the

recommendations were made. The Deputy Minister for Children will also be attending to update the Committee on what the Welsh Government has done since the recommendations were made. Following these meetings the Committee will write a new report on their findings which will be sent to the Deputy Minister for Children.

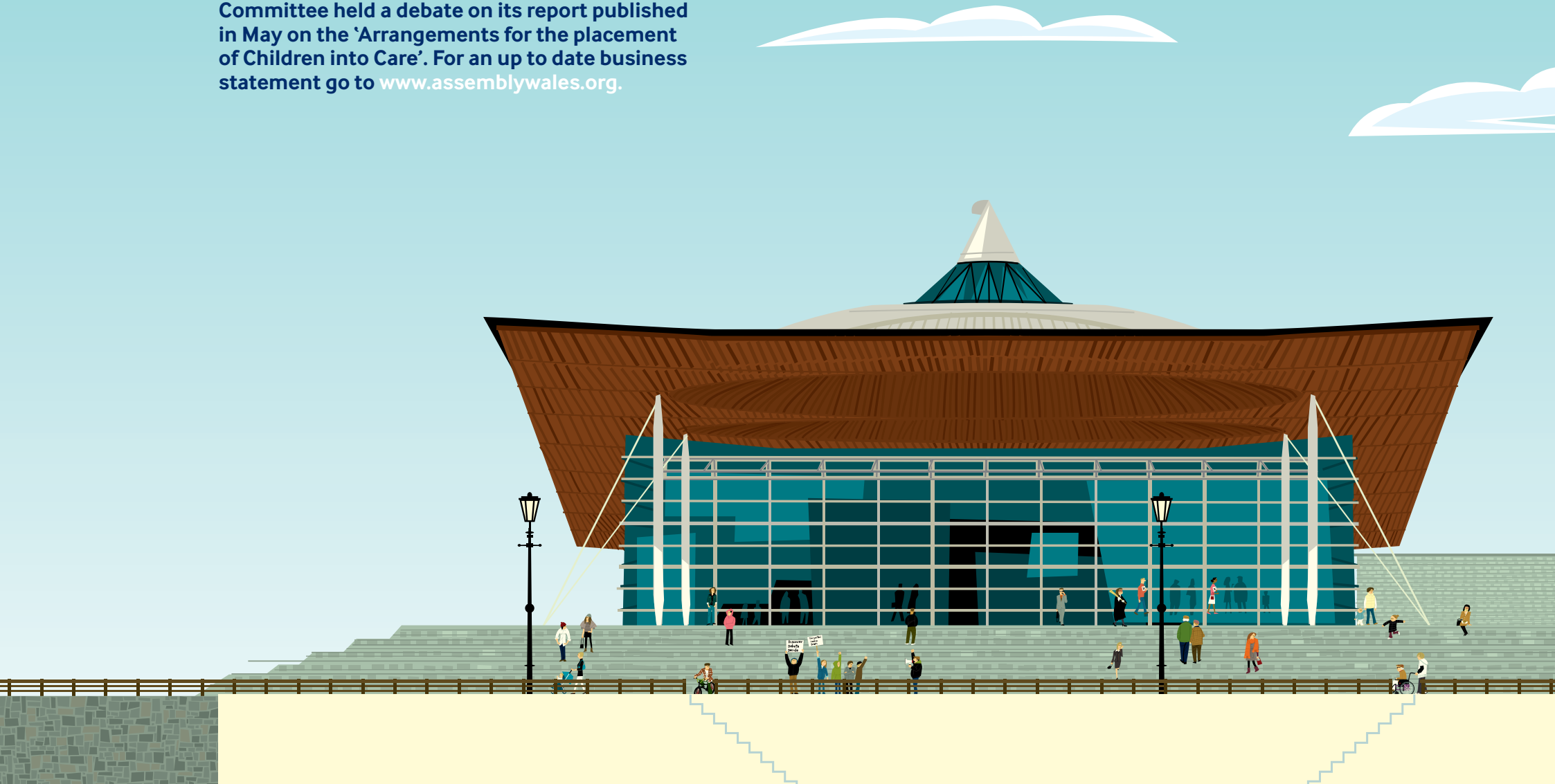
During the last two meetings of term the Committee will be looking at the Welsh Government’s draft budget. The budget sets out all the things that the Welsh Government will spend its money on in the year. The Deputy Minister for Children will be invited and questioned about the budget. The Committee will also be inviting some witnesses in to explain how the budget will affect their organisations. The Committee will then write a report on their findings which will be sent to the Finance Committee.



This term for the rest of the Assembly

For a list of inquiries that are currently being carried out by other committees go to www.assemblywales.org.

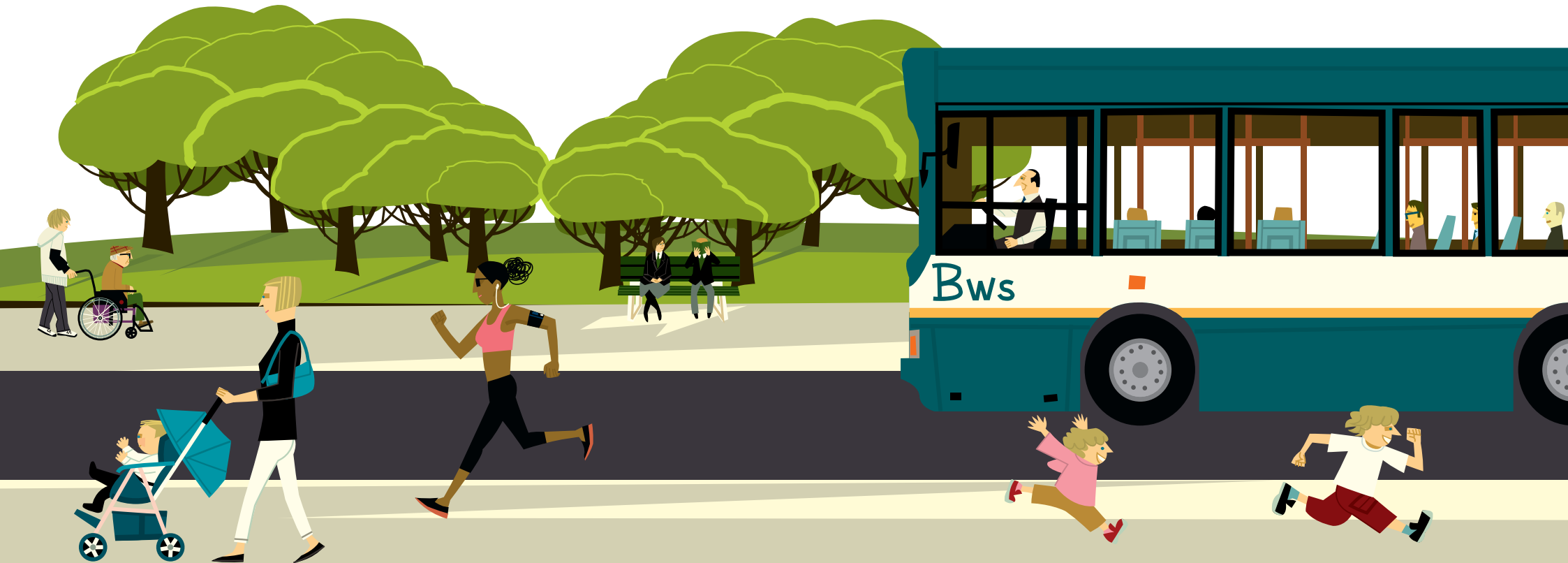
Plenary takes place every week on Tuesday and Wednesday afternoons. Every Tuesday a business statement is made in Plenary which outlines what is coming up in the following three weeks. On 29 September the Minister for Children, Education and Lifelong Learning answered questions in Plenary. On 06 October the Children and Young People Committee held a debate on its report published in May on the 'Arrangements for the placement of Children into Care'. For an up to date business statement go to www.assemblywales.org.



Voting matters

During 2011, the people of Wales will have three opportunities to vote. Over the next few months the Assembly bus will be touring Wales to find out what you think about voting. If you would like to find out more about the tour and when it will be in your area, please visit: www.assemblywales.org

You can also have your say on the Assembly's new online voting guestbook: www.vote2011.wordpress.com



Wordsearch

A	D	I	O	W	A	V	C	W	A	K	X	D	H	E
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Assembly Member
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