



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

**Y Pwyllgor Cymunedau a Diwylliant
The Communities and Culture Committee**

**Dydd Mercher, 13 Hydref 2010
Wednesday, 13 October 2010**

Cynnwys
Contents

- 4 Cyflwyniad, Ymddiheuriadau a Dirprwyon
Introduction, Apologies and Substitutions
- 4 Ymchwiliad i Hygyrchedd Digwyddiadau Celfyddydol a Diwylliannol yng Nghymru—Casglu
Tystiolaeth
Inquiry into Accessibility of Arts and Cultural Activities across Wales—Evidence Gathering
- 22 Celfyddydau Anabledd Cymru
Disability Arts Cymru
- 27 Papurau i’w Nodi
Papers to Note

Cofnodir y trafodion hyn yn yr iaith y llefarwyd hwy ynnddi 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

| | |
|-----------------|---|
| Mohammad Asghar | Ceidwadwyr Cymreig Welsh Conservatives |
| Eleanor Burnham | Democratiaid Rhyddfrydol Cymru Welsh Liberal Democrats |
| Mark Isherwood | Ceidwadwyr Cymreig Welsh Conservatives |
| David Lloyd | Plaid Cymru The Party of Wales |
| Sandy Mewies | Llafur (Cadeirydd y Pwyllgor) Labour (Committee Chair) |
| Lynne Neagle | Llafur Labour |
| Joyce Watson | Llafur Labour |

Eraill yn bresennol
Others in attendance

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|-------------------|--|
| Heledd Bebb | Swyddog Polisi, Hamdden, Diwylliant a Thwristiaeth, Cymdeithas Llywodraeth Leol Cymru Policy Officer, Leisure, Culture and Tourism, Welsh Local Government Association |
| Jacquy Box | Cydgysylltydd Cymru, Celfyddydau Gwirfoddol Cymru Wales Co-ordinator, Voluntary Arts Wales |
| Hilary Evans | Dehonglwr Interpreter |
| Keith Griffin | Cyfarwyddwr Tŷ Cerdd—Music Centre Wales Director, Tŷ Cerdd—Music Centre Wales |
| Maggie Hampton | Cyfarwyddwr Celfyddydau Anabledd Cymru Director, Disability Arts Cymru |
| Dr Chris Llewelyn | Cyfarwyddwr Dysgu Gydol Oes, Hamdden a Gwybodaeth, Cymdeithas Llywodraeth Leol Cymru Director of Lifelong Learning, Leisure and Information, Welsh Local Government Association |
| Patricia Rafique | Dehonglwr Interpreter |
| Aled Rhys-Jones | Cadeirydd, Celfyddydau Gwirfoddol Cymru Chair, Voluntary Arts Wales |
| Alan Watkin | Cynghorwr Cymdeithas Llywodraeth Leol Cymru ar Hamdden a Diwylliant a Phrif Swyddog Hamdden, Llyfrgelloedd a Diwylliant Cyngor Bwrdeistref Sirol Wrecsam Adviser on Leisure and Culture, Welsh Local Government Association and the Chief Leisure, Libraries and Culture Officer for Wrexham County Borough Council |

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

| | |
|----------------|-------------------------------|
| Sarah Bartlett | Dirprwy Glerc Deputy Clerk |
| Tom Jackson | Clerc Clerk |

*Dechreuodd y cyfarfod am 9 a.m.
The meeting began at 9 a.m.*

Cyflwyniad, Ymddiheuriadau a Dirprwyon Introduction, Apologies and Substitutions

[1] **Sandy Mewies:** Good morning, everyone. I welcome Members, officials, our guests and those in the public gallery, if they ever arrive, to this meeting of the Communities and Culture Committee. Headsets are available. We operate in the Welsh and English languages, and we will have people speaking in Welsh. The translation is available on channel 1, and if you have any hearing difficulties, amplification is available on channel 0.

[2] I ask everybody—including members of the committee—to turn off any electronic devices such as mobile phones or BlackBerrys, because they will interfere with the broadcast.

[3] I invite members to make any declarations of interest at this stage. I see that there are no declarations. I have had no notification whatsoever of a fire drill, so if you hear an alarm, please follow the ushers out of the building.

9.02 a.m.

Ymchwiliad i Hygyrchedd Digwyddiadau Celfyddydol a Diwylliannol yng Nghymru—Casglu Tystiolaeth Inquiry into Accessibility of Arts and Cultural Activities Across Wales—Evidence Gathering

[4] **Sandy Mewies:** This is another evidence gathering session. We have had some very interesting sessions to date. I welcome today's witnesses: Jacquy Box, Wales co-ordinator for Voluntary Arts Wales, Aled Rhys-Jones, chair of Voluntary Arts Wales, and Keith Griffin, director of Tŷ Cerdd—Music Centre Wales. Members will ask questions to the organisations individually or perhaps to both organisations. Please assume that Members will have read your papers with great interest, and thank you for submitting them. If you would like to say anything as a short introduction, please do so, but I would like to reserve as much time as possible for Members to ask questions. Would anyone like to introduce their paper?

[5] **Mr Rhys-Jones:** May I just introduce Voluntary Arts Wales, because I am not sure that that came out clearly in the paper? Voluntary Arts Network is the development agency for the voluntary arts in the UK and the Republic of Ireland, and Voluntary Arts Wales is the Welsh national identity of that. The organisation is, as I said, the development agency of the voluntary arts and is funded from the respective arts councils across the UK. To put it out there straight away, as from the end of March, Wales will be the only part of the UK that will not be in receipt of public funding through the arts council.

[6] **Ms Box:** I will not go through the paper, but the underlying message that drives where we are coming from and what we believe in is that most access to the arts in Wales happens in communities, through small groups and organisations based in those communities. The drive at the moment to remove funding from organisations that support those kinds of groups is going to have a dramatic impact on that participation in Wales. The Arts Council of Wales says that it is going to focus its funding on front-line delivery, but the front-line delivery on which it is focusing its funds, from March, is in the form of established community arts organisations and things like that, not grass-roots organisations and groups that provide the majority of cultural and arts activities across Wales, such as brass bands, choirs and visual arts groups that come together in communities. That is the main thrust of

where we come from.

[7] **Sandy Mewies:** I remind Members, and our guests, that our scrutiny is of the Welsh Assembly Government; we are not the Welsh Assembly Government, but we are scrutinising its involvement in this sort of thing.

[8] **Mr Griffin:** Tŷ Cerdd's remit is very wide, but a very important part of our remit is the work that we do with over 22,000 people throughout Wales in bands, choirs and community-generated organisations. As well as that, we have an international remit as a member of the International Association of Music Information Centres. It is very interesting to see the way in which different countries approach the issue of accessibility and the rest of it. A common thread throughout all of it is how important music is in a holistic sense among young people and so on. Our various programmes go from foundation phase right up to people in choirs and bands, who can well be in their 90s. We celebrate this diversity.

[9] **Sandy Mewies:** You will be aware of the 'One Wales' policy document, and its commitment to high-quality cultural experiences being available to all people, irrespective of where they live or their background. In many ways, that is what we are looking at—it is an accessibility issue that we are looking at. The Arts Council of Wales, in its evidence, reported increased participation in the arts across all sectors of society. Does your experience reflect a concerted and successful effort by the Welsh Government and its agencies to achieve the 'One Wales' commitment to date? Jacquy, would you like to start?

[10] **Ms Box:** The participation figures that are collected by the Arts Council of Wales are based on organisations that it funds, so it excludes most of the organisations and groups that we support. The number participating in those groups and organisations across Wales is probably enormous. It has never been mapped in Wales but it has recently been mapped in England. The amateur and voluntary groups in this document—which I can leave—called 'Our Creative Talent' shows that there are, in England, at least 49,140 groups that provide participatory arts activities across England.

[11] What I am trying to say is that there is access to the arts across Wales anyway via these organisations and groups, even though they are not directly funded by the Assembly through the Arts Council of Wales. The money that is channelled through the arts council only supports a part of this participatory arts activity. There are gaps within the funded sector: there are community arts organisations, for example, in certain parts of Wales, but there are significant gaps in other parts. It is not a cohesive picture of funded arts activity.

[12] **Mr Rhys-Jones:** By the cessation of funding to the major umbrella bodies at the end of March, that access will be effectively reduced. The service organisations—they are termed service organisations but they actually provide training and work with community organisations and voluntary arts organisations to strengthen them and to help them function and build partnerships—will cease to receive funding. Therefore, that ability to deliver to the participatory sector will be removed. At the moment, it is very difficult for us to ascertain what the future holds, because that mapping of the participation figures has not been done.

[13] **Sandy Mewies:** Are you saying, Jacquy, that figures are collected for those that are directly funded by the arts council but that you are supporting a lot of other groups? If those figures are not collected by the Welsh Assembly Government, does anybody collect them? How many groups are missed out? We are talking about increased participation, so are you saying that the increased participation is greater than is suspected?

[14] **Ms Box:** I do not know if it has increased; participation numbers across Wales are not known, because they have not been mapped. We put forward an idea for mapping to get a baseline of participation in Wales, namely people who regularly attend arts activities within

their communities.

[15] They are not collected by the arts council or anybody else we know of. We see it as a role that we could possibly take on, but we need to find a way of funding the research that is needed, because it is quite comprehensive to cover the whole of Wales and to map the extent of participatory arts activity. Sorry, but was there a second part to the question?

9.10 a.m.

[16] **Sandy Mewies:** I think that you have answered it, really, because you said that you did not know whether the increased participation was even more increased if it was a constant—

[17] **Ms Box:** There is no baseline of total arts participation in Wales and there never has been. We think that that is missing from the monitoring.

[18] **Sandy Mewies:** That is interesting.

[19] **Mr Griffin:** As far as music is concerned, the short answer is ‘yes’, as the funding that we have received has enabled us to monitor the members of the organisations that we deal with. We are looking at a membership of 22,000 in more than 400 organisations. We are able to take that back over 30 years. I am talking about the members of Tŷ Cerdd now, so it is not every organisation in Wales, but, significantly, 3,000 more people have been taking part over the past five years. We also analyse the age ranges of these groups, which is quite interesting. Again in the past five years, 4 per cent more people under the age of 30—from 15 to 30 generally—have been taking part in generating music, and there has been a slight decrease of 2 per cent in those aged 30 to 45 and 45 to 60. About 30 per cent of the 22,000 are aged over 60, and we celebrate that. We have had to take the numbers for those aged over 75, and 70 per cent of the participants are over the age of 75. We celebrate that because it illustrates the intergenerational and holistic value of music. That figure has remained fairly constant. However, as I said, the interesting thing is that the increase has been among the under-30s. The grants that we are able to give these organisations, which are unique in the UK, are like seed corn, if you like, encouraging people to perform to the best of their ability and to fulfil their potential. That is the sort of thing that we have found most valuable, as far as the groups are concerned, and that has been reflected in the increased membership.

[20] **Eleanor Burnham:** Mae'r cwestiwn hwn i Gelfyddydau Gwirfoddol Cymru. Yr ydych yn amau penderfyniad cyngor y celfyddydau i gyfeirio arian at waith a gyflawnir ar y 'rheng flaen', fel y caiff ei ddisgrifio ganddo, yn hytrach na gweithgareddau cyrff asiantaeth, cyrff ymbarél a chyrrff gwasanaethu, ac yr ydych yn amau ei bod yn ymddangos bod gormod o bwyslais yn cael ei roi ar leoliadau yn hytrach na chyrrff a phrosiectau yn ein hymchwiliad. A allwch ymhelaethu ar hynny ac esbonio goblygiadau penderfyniadau'r adolygiad buddsoddi yn eich barn chi o ran mynediad a chyfranogiad?

Eleanor Burnham: This question is to Voluntary Arts Wales. You question the arts council's decision to concentrate funds on 'front-line' delivery, as it is described by it, rather than the activities of agency, umbrella and service organisations, and you question whether too much emphasis is placed in our inquiry on venues rather than organisations and projects. Could you expand on that and explain what you think are the implications of the investment review decisions for access and participation rates?

[21] **Ms Box:** Following what Keith said, the organisations that are members of Tŷ Cerdd are just a part of it. There are also organisations that work on dance, visual arts, and so on. Our supporters' database is made up of community organisations that deliver the arts

throughout Wales, and there are just under 2,000 organisations listed there. Those are different parts of the picture but, as I said, the whole picture is not known.

[22] Most of those organisations do not receive any funding at all, but they are supported by the infrastructure bodies that set up by themselves. I think that this is a misunderstanding. Sometimes, infrastructure bodies or umbrella bodies are seen almost as a quango that is not actually delivering something as tangible as an arts project. The fact is that organisations such as Tŷ Cerdd, which was formerly the Welsh Amateur Music Federation, and the Drama Association of Wales have been set up by those small groups. They have demanded that support and have needed that support body. One impact of the investment review will be on the money that has supported these kinds of organisations for over 20 years or so, in some cases.

[23] **Mr Rhys-Jones:** In the case of the Drama Association of Wales, it is since 1934.

[24] **Ms Box:** So, there has been that long-term investment, which has really been needed as a support mechanism, and suddenly it is not available anymore and is off the agenda. The reason we feel that that is the wrong choice is because we have been in recession and there are financial difficulties. We think that there should be consolidation at the grass roots in communities that have those existing organisations, and they should be supported even more than they are at present.

[25] **Eleanor Burnham:** Would you compare your importance, taking regard of the arts council's policy, with that of the Welsh National Opera perhaps, or other august bodies? I have been a fundraiser in my time and so I know how difficult it is, but would you say that it is insurmountable for you to raise funds as compared with a large organisation such as that, with its branding possibilities?

[26] **Ms Box:** There are two factors. One is the size of our organisation. There are only two posts in Wales and we do not have an arts product so, as you say, we have no branding opportunities for sponsorship and private investment. However, another issue that has come out in the third sector partnership council is that infrastructure bodies throughout the third sector are finding it most difficult to replace the funding that has been lost, because it seems that people do not really understand how they operate. The arts sector in Wales knows how they operate.

[27] We held an event to get views to feed in to the paper that we produced, 'A Piece of your Mind', and the representatives of the arts sector who attended stressed the interconnectivity of the arts sector in Wales, that is, how different parts of it depend on others, how the amateur and voluntary sector feeds people in to professional organisations, who become professional artists, and how those community arts organisations create jobs for professional artists to go and work with communities. Removing a part of it, which may be a significant part of 32 organisations' funding, will have a huge impact on the rest. People who know that their funding is sort of secure are still fearful because they fear that there will be huge losses in Wales.

[28] **Sandy Mewies:** Keith, do you want to add anything? That really was a question that was commenting on comments in your paper, so is there anything that you would like to add?

[29] **Mr Griffin:** No, but to get back to the venues, the provision of venues for rehearsal and performance is very important. The problem is that it is all very well having the venues, but the danger is that you then will not have a product to put in them. The history of working men's halls and all the rest of it is very interesting. People in communities have had huge aspirations to provide facilities to showcase the arts. Ebbw Vale Male Choir is 160 years old this year. It took over a chapel and refurbished that years ago. Lots of organisations

throughout Wales have taken this work on themselves. The help that was given to them, particularly lottery funding, has made an immense difference to them, especially at a time when you could rehearse in a school, for example, for very little cost. Now with the management of schools, you have to pay for the caretaker and for the hire and all the rest of it, so, a few years ago, putting on the arts could be done fairly cheaply but these days there are additional costs. Any help in that area will be important, but in a way it is not the building, as I think Nick Capaldi himself said, but what goes on within that building that matters. That is what we would emphasise.

[30] **Sandy Mewies:** Fine, thank you. We are going to move on now to transition funding. I just remind the witnesses that this is a limited session, so just stick to answering the question asked of you, because some of the responses that you are giving answer questions that may be further down the line, and I like to give all Members the opportunity to ask their questions.

[31] **Lynne Neagle:** You highlight the uncertainty of the funding associated with the investment review. Could you say a bit more about the difficulties that uncertain funding is causing in enabling you to provide a service?

[32] **Ms Box:** Our situation is probably similar to that of other organisations that have been told that their total revenue funding is being removed from March. As we said in a previous answer, infrastructure funding for infrastructure bodies does not seem to be available anywhere. You cannot get it from any other departments within the Assembly Government, such as that which relates to communities.

9.20 a.m.

[33] You cannot replace that funding. People are starting to look at project-based work and at delivering projects in order to bring in money to support core functions and services. In our case, if we wanted to do that, although we are a tiny team, we would have to have £400,000-worth of projects running to be able to bring in enough money to then offer the support services that we provide to other groups and organisations. That is not feasible with the number of staff that we have and it probably would not be feasible to attract that much funding at the moment.

[34] There are more people competing for funding from the pots available, obviously, and this number will increase. We have had expressions from very small organisations that they feel that they are going to be pushed further and further out of the picture as bigger organisations that have lost funding compete for the available funds—organisations that may have more capacity to do funding applications and so on than smaller groups. Small festivals are concerned about this. Gwanwyn is the festival for the celebration of creativity in older people and it has had lots of approaches from organisations that are fearful of this.

[35] **David Lloyd:** Diolch am y papurau y mae'r ddau fudiad sydd o'n blaenau wedi'u darparu. Mae papur Tŷ Cerdd yn dweud bod cyngor y celfyddydau wedi mynegi ei barodrwydd i ymgynghori'n gadarnhaol â chleientiaid. Beth mae cyngor y celfyddydau yn ei wneud i leihau'r anawsterau yr ydych yn eu hwynebu yn y cyfnod ansicr hwn? Efallai fod hwn yn gyfle i ddweud rhywbeth positif am gyngor y celfyddydau. Pwy sydd am ddechrau? Keith, a ydych chi am wneud, gan mai eich papur chi ydoedd?

David Lloyd: Thank you for the papers that both the organisations that are before us have provided. Tŷ Cerdd's paper says that the arts council has expressed its willingness to consult positively with clients. What is the arts council doing to mitigate the difficulties that you face in these uncertain times? This may be an opportunity to say something positive about the arts council. Who would like to start? Keith, would you like to do so as it was your paper?

[36] **Mr Griffin:** We were initially, and still are, very concerned about the statement. We are delighted that Tŷ Cerdd is still in the arts council's portfolio, but we were perturbed and obviously our member organisations were perturbed at the much reduced rate. We have since had conversations with the arts council and we are pleased that it has underlined the value that Tŷ Cerdd brings to the arts strategy that it has put forward, and the way in which it feels that Tŷ Cerdd can be an instrument for delivering the strategy because there are lots of points in the work that we do that already fit very neatly into that.

[37] The arts council, as are we and as are you, is still uncertain what the future is going to be, but we have been assured that we are looking at efficiency savings rather than capability cuts. That gives us some comfort, I must say, at this time. However, I would underline that a lot of our forward planning is very much still an act of faith: we will be auditioning 400 youngsters for places in the five national youth arts groups that we run; we have to commission new music ready for next year and the following year; and, we have to put conductors for the youth groups on contract for the next three years.

[38] Arts organisations have always lived on a sort of act of faith—a bit like Mr Micawber—that something would turn up. We are very optimistic about the future in that sense, that it is at times of hardship that the arts become really important. We feel that this commitment from the arts council is encouraging, but it is a question of waiting and seeing until December/January exactly what the full picture is going to be.

[39] **Ms Box:** This is about arts council support during this time of transition. There are support structures. The organisations that have been cut, such as ours, have had to have a couple of meetings to discuss with the arts council what we are going to do in the future and how we are going to try to move forward, whether we are going to wind up and what our plans are. There is a pot of transition funding available. Organisations can bid for up to £30,000, but there are 32 organisations so there is not enough in the pot for everyone to have some of it. It is about half of what is needed.

[40] We had a meeting yesterday with the arts council about it and most of that money cannot be used to support the core to then be able to continue by drawing in other funds. It has to be used to look at new business models and that kind of thing, where you might have to buy in external consultants or something to do the work. Therefore, the money that is available is not available for ongoing services, or most of it is not—the parameters have not been clarified. That puts you in a situation where you do not have money to support your core work.

[41] **Mr Rhys-Jones:** There is an additional requirement within that to demonstrate a robust financial future, but if you had been relying on public support for core funding, it is almost impossible to demonstrate that. So, you are in an impossible situation.

[42] **Mark Isherwood:** You refer in your paper to geographical gaps in existing art provision, which is likely to be exacerbated by the arts council's investment review, on the basis that that is to put product quality before consideration of geographic provision. You have made some reference to the impact in Monmouthshire and Powys, but could you expand on that and on how you feel this will impact on geographic provision?

[43] **Ms Box:** Particular parts of the sector have been cut and that will impact in particular areas of Wales. I think that we mentioned the theatre and education sector, where the three organisations that have been cut are in Blaenau Gwent, Powys and Rhondda Cynon Taff, which is served by Spectacle Theatre. If you look at that geographical area and also the population, which is much more significant, there will be a huge gap in the theatre that will be available to children in schools, the devised theatre that has been created specifically for those children and in issue-based work and high quality provision. We hope that theatre in

education will continue to be available in the other areas in Wales where the organisations have not had any cuts at the moment. For example, that is a big geographical gap in that particular provision. The revenue-funded organisations that exist across Wales have had significant cuts in Powys and Monmouthshire, and because of the rural nature of both those areas, the distance that people might have to travel to access arts activity is going to be insurmountable, especially in Powys because it is such a large county and three of its revenue organisations have been cut.

[44] **Mark Isherwood:** What about the rural north west? I have received some correspondence from there related to this.

[45] **Mr Rhys-Jones:** There is nothing specific about that to report, but from April onwards you will be losing two or three national umbrella bodies, which are democratic bodies, elected by members and created by members to serve themselves, as Jacqy previously mentioned. They have been in receipt of public funding and will no longer be in receipt of public funding, and therefore will not be able to deliver across Wales, let alone regionally or in specific areas.

[46] **Mohammad Asghar:** My question is probably for both of you regarding the barriers. Tŷ Cerdd notes that much of its hard work aims to support both high-quality art activity in the areas of Wales where there is little or no alternative to community-generated arts activity, while Voluntary Arts Wales refers specifically to the barriers of transport and location. Could you expand on the barriers faced by people engaging in arts and cultural activities in Wales, possible solutions to these barriers, and what you consider to be the implication of the art council's investment review?

[47] **Mr Griffin:** Obviously, in certain areas of Wales it is not possible, because there are no venues there, to have performances by large-scale organisations like the Welsh National Opera or the BBC. It is very difficult for them to perform there because the venues just are not there. Unless we are insisting that everyone travels to Cardiff, Llandudno or Swansea, you are left with this big problem. The answer is the encouragement of local organisations like Philomusica of Aberystwyth, which provides a lot of the orchestral music there, and which is a mix of amateurs and professionals. In a lot of the Valleys areas, because of the history and the aspirations of people, it is about music that they generate themselves, which is of a very high quality. A lot of our work is not about having some sort of arbitrary standard that we suggest people achieve, but encouraging people to fulfil their potential, because no-one wants to put on a bad performance. Any way that we can encourage them and facilitate the use of professionals who may come in to work with them, for example, and training and so on, that is what we want to do.

9.30 a.m.

[48] However, the barriers are not just geographical. The Wales Millennium Centre is a wonderful facility, but, in a way, a large part of Butetown and Cardiff bay seems to be untouched by that. We are working with Jazz Warriors and the Butetown jazz festival and using National Youth Jazz Wales to show youngsters that, if they work hard and if they train, they can become involved in these national organisations. It is a lot to do with perception as well. We had some youngsters from Rhondda Cynon Taff who came through our training choir. They came from the National Youth Choir of Wales at a time when very few youngsters were coming into the national youth organisations from areas where there was social deprivation. The opportunities were given to them and they grasped them straight away. These youngsters are now performing with their peers from rather more affluent areas and they are still taking part in our national organisations. I quite agree with you that there is a long way to go with this, but it is something that will not be facilitated if funding is cut to grass-roots organisations, because that is where youngsters get their first chance.

[49] This is not true only for youngsters. For people in the community as a whole—elderly people, people with disabilities and so on—it is sometimes difficult to get over the barrier of their perception, as well as other people’s perception. Anything we can do to facilitate that is valuable, because there is a huge untapped audience out there—and not just an audience, but participants. That is really what we need to target, and we need to do that in partnership with other organisations like the Arts Council of Wales and the National Assembly for Wales.

[50] **Sandy Mewies:** I am sorry to say this, but we have three minutes for someone to ask another two questions. Can you be very brief in your response please, Jacquy, and I will move on to the other two?

[51] **Ms Box:** I talked about barriers in the paper, but the main thing is people feeling comfortable enough to participate, and that is mainly to do with socioeconomic difficulties. When you are trying to encourage more people from deprived backgrounds to participate, the best route, as we said, is in their community where they feel safe. We are not saying that there should not be big events and opportunities in the central arts facilities for people to go to, but to get to the point where you are encouraging more people to do that, you need to be working with them in their community first and giving them the confidence to be able to participate in arts activities.

[52] **Sandy Mewies:** Joyce, the last two questions are yours, I understand.

[53] **Joyce Watson:** I am going to ask questions around key issues and partnership working with local authorities. Could you describe your relationship with local authorities and the support you receive from them to achieve your aims? Voluntary Arts Wales has highlighted the fact that some local authorities are withdrawing support on the back of the arts council’s withdrawal of funding. Could you expand on that and, if possible, could you tell us of any of the projects that that has really had an impact on? So, the first question is to both, with regard to your relationship with local authorities, and the second question is specifically to Voluntary Arts Wales, because you made that comment in your paper.

[54] **Mr Griffin:** Our partnership with local authorities is primarily through the music services, which are vital to the whole structure of National Youth Arts Wales. It is only the National Youth Orchestra of Wales and the National Youth Theatre of Wales that are part of the service level agreement with the Welsh Joint Education Committee; the other organisations, the National Youth Brass Band of Wales, National Youth Choir of Wales, the National Youth Training Choir of Wales, National Youth Wind Orchestra of Wales, National Youth Jazz Wales, the National Youth Jazz access course and National Youth Dance Wales rely very much on the infrastructure, which in the case of music at least, if not the others, is already there.

[55] That means that youngsters get the discipline, if you like, and the training right from school. They participate in county groups, then they come into the national groups. That is a unique structure to Wales. It does not happen in England. If you have training, then without participating in any community-based activity, any school activity and so on, you can apply for one of their national youth groups. However, we feel that it is important, in a small country, that we have team players. That is why we work very closely with Tŷ Cerdd, with the Welsh Authorities Music Education Association and ensure that we are all—I will use that dreadful phrase—singing from the same hymn sheet, so that the expectation is there, the training line is there, and that gives us a much greater hold, if you like, and view of what is happening to music generally.

[56] That is our main partnership with local authorities. There are other partnerships, which the individual organisations make with local authorities. Those vary from area to area.

We appreciate the pressures that local authorities are under at the moment, but once you lose a facility like a county music service, as they found in England, it is very difficult to get back again and you have to throw millions and millions at it to get it back.

[57] **Ms Box:** The first point was about our relationship with local authorities, was it not? We are not funded, obviously, by local authorities, but we work with them and we help them with strategies and so on. We meet with the National Association of Local Government Arts Officers and the Welsh Local Government Association quarterly to talk about issues that might be of concern to all organisations. That is our relationship with them.

[58] Different things are happening in different local authorities. We could go away and provide you with some further information about this, such as examples of perhaps what local authorities are going to do if organisations are being cut by the arts council. We would have to do some further research, because I think that things may have changed since we spoke to people a few weeks ago. Within that area—although this is tangential—in Swansea, for example, the arts development officer, because of just general cuts, is not going to be replaced, so there will not be an arts development officer there. Monmouthshire is developing a way of trying to support some of the organisations that have faced cuts as a result of the investment review by removing the arts development officer and using the funding saved from that to support one of the organisations. So, there are a few different approaches, but we could do some further research on that for you and supply that information, if it is possible, within a certain time frame.

[59] **Sandy Mewies:** That brings us to the end of this evidence session. Following up on what you have just said, if you would like to add anything—because I am aware you said you had a meeting yesterday with the arts council—if there is something that you think would contribute to what you have already said or to your paper, please feel free to send it to the clerk. We will send you a transcript of the evidence today, which you can correct for factual accuracy only. Thank you once again for coming.

[60] **Lynne Neagle:** Would it be possible to have a written response to the questions that we did not get to?

[61] **Sandy Mewies:** I was just going to go on to that. We will be asking you a further question on a point in your paper—the clerk will be doing that following this meeting today. However, there are other questions that Members have not been able to ask today, which we will put in writing to you. It is entirely up to you if you would like to answer them. If you think that there are things that you would like to update us with, please do so. Thank you for coming today.

[62] **Ms Box:** Thank you very much.

[63] **Mr Griffin:** We thank you for the opportunity you have given us to give evidence. It is much appreciated.

[64] **Sandy Mewies:** We will move on now to paper 3 from the Welsh Local Government Association. I welcome Chris Llewelyn, the director of lifelong learning, leisure and information; Alan Watkin, who I know very well indeed. It is nice to see you; you have come down from the north. You are all welcome, of course; it is just that I happen to know Alan as well as Chris. We are also joined by Heledd Bebb, the leisure, culture and tourism policy officer.

[65] I should have said at the start of the meeting that we have received apologies from Alun Davies.

[66] I think that you have all given evidence here before. You know about the translation equipment and that we operate through the media of Welsh and English. If you need to turn off any electronic devices, now is the time to do it.

[67] I am going to ask you to give a short introduction to your paper. I say ‘short’ because I want Members to get through their questions. If Members have supplementary questions, please put them through the Chair, because I want to get the main question out of the way first and we can then go back to them if that is necessary. Would you like to give a short introduction to your paper, Chris?

9.40 a.m.

[68] **Dr Llewelyn:** With your consent, Chair, given the time constraints, we would rather go ahead and deal with the questions directly.

[69] **Sandy Mewies:** That is very good; thank you. I have the first question. You emphasise that local authority art provision is discretionary—it is not statutory or mandatory—and that much of this provision focuses on working with disadvantaged communities and within certain policy areas, such as youth arts and disability arts, to ensure that cultural experiences are available to all. How do local authorities align their cultural aims with those of the Welsh Government, if that is something that you aim to do?

[70] **Dr Llewelyn:** I will kick off with this, giving a national perspective, and then Alan can give some local detail. I think that there is an underlying consensus that defines the relationship between local government and central Government, and there is an acceptance on the part of local government that national Government sets the strategy and that the responsibility of local government is to deliver services locally. Within this context, there is recognition that the Minister for Heritage and the Assembly Government set the strategy within this area of activity, and that local government has a responsibility to interpret that strategy and deliver it, taking into account local circumstances, the socioeconomic context, demography and other factors, and the financial constraints. I think that there is an understanding that authorities try to align their policies and strategies with those of central Government.

[71] **Mr Watkin:** If I may, I will be using some local examples, because that is my role here, in a sense. I will raise one or two issues. A lot of work goes on at a local level, picking up on various strands of the Assembly’s policy position. For example, all the counties that I know of in north Wales participate very strongly in the arts council’s Big Night Out scheme, where you are deliberately trying to take artistic performances into areas where they normally would not occur. There is a very good partnership there, particularly in Communities First areas, remoter villages and so on. That sort of work goes on extensively.

[72] One of the issues or challenges that we have as a country is making sure that our ‘national’ companies—whether it is in the arts, libraries or museums—take on that national role as well. I expect that many of you saw Monday night’s programme on National Theatre Wales in Bridgend. That was an excellent example, I felt, of a national company going into a community and working with the community and with students to look at a local issue, producing through drama a very moving project, which hit a variety of health and social issues as well as the arts.

[73] Speaking honestly, I wish that that was the case with all national companies. Those of you who are from north Wales will know that we know some of the national companies by name, but that we do not necessarily see them very greatly working in communities, as opposed to just on a big performance basis. There is a real issue for us as a country there to tackle. I am very proud, in one sense, of a new initiative that we have with some funding from

the Heritage Lottery Fund and from us. We will be opening a refurbished Wrexham museum in February—a long-held dream for the area. A new initiative in that museum is that we have a formal agreement with both the National Library of Wales and the National Museum Wales for them to have a permanent presence in that museum. A specific area has been designed for them to bring treasures out into the community, to deliver support programmes for schools and local groups, and to have an information and communications technology link directly into their organisation, so that the local community can use the expertise of the nationally available staff, who are paid from the public purse as much as local government. There is an interesting role there for us to develop how we draw some of those resources into the local community, into areas where some of these products do not necessarily reach—to paraphrase the Heineken advertisement.

[74] **Sandy Mewies:** Heledd, did you want to add anything?

[75] **Ms Bebb:** Local authorities are often best placed for having that relationship with a lot of organisations, community groups, voluntary organisations and groups at a local level. They can make sure that the necessary links are made and gaps filled to ensure that the national strategy can be delivered on the ground.

[76] **Mark Isherwood:** You refer in your paper to a range of services provided through Welsh Government cultural bodies, often in partnership with local authorities. Given the discretionary nature of local authority provision, how does that partnership actually work in practice?

[77] **Dr Llewelyn:** At a national level, within this sector there is a general consensus and a sense of community, if you like, and local government, along with other stakeholders—the arts council, the Minister for Heritage and his department and a range of other stakeholders—work very collaboratively. There are close working relationships between those various sectors, but there is also an underlying consensus around the challenges that are faced and the recognition that the solutions to the financial problems are going to be resolved through a collective response rather than through an individual response. So, as an association, the WLGGA, representing the 22 authorities, works very closely within local government with the chief officers of culture and leisure and, as I mentioned, with other national organisations, with the Arts Council for Wales and with the heritage department within the Welsh Assembly Government. That relationship is then reflected through the system at different levels within local government and at a community level.

[78] **Mr Watkin:** Briefly, I know that my colleagues in England look with real jealousy on the fact that, in Wales, partly because of our size and partly because of our character and nature, we talk to each other meaningfully. I know that I can pick up the phone to senior officials in the heritage department—in CyMAL on the museum side or with someone on the sport side—and they will take the call and we will talk. That opens up the communication that is essential to working together. However, in England, there is a huge bureaucracy getting in the way of that.

[79] **Lynne Neagle:** Moving on to the investment review, you say in your evidence that you feel that it was well managed, with constant communication throughout and a clear rationale provided for the decisions made. We have heard evidence in this committee from arts organisations with serious concerns about the transparency of the process and the criteria used. Could you comment on that part of your evidence?

[80] You also say that you recognise that some of the funding was withdrawn as a result of strategic prioritisation, so that the focus could be on front-line delivery. Voluntary Arts Wales told us that it thinks that that was a mistake. How will the focus on front-line delivery impact on the wider access and participation agenda?

[81] **Dr Llewelyn:** The review that the arts council undertook was always going to be challenging. It was dealing with a difficult task and it was always going to be challenging to satisfy everybody. The comments that you received are, I think, quite legitimate and reflect a particular perspective. However, from our perspective, as we have indicated in the written evidence, the exercise seemed to be quite robust. There seemed to be an appropriate level of consultation. We were certainly involved in discussion with the arts council and had no complaint from our perspective.

9.50 a.m.

[82] On the priorities, I think that within local government there would be a shared sense of priority insofar as the emphasis placed on delivering front-line services goes. In local government at the moment, and in the discussions between local government and the Assembly Government over the forthcoming budget settlement, the focus is on trying to continue to deliver front-line services and to focus as many resources on the delivery side of things as possible. I think that that complements the approach that the arts council has taken. It is a case of coming to a judgment on the added value of spend in different areas. The arts council has come to a particular conclusion that is not going to be comfortable for everybody, but all that I can say is that in the discussions that local government is having across a wider range of services, the focus is pretty much the same. The focus is on front-line service delivery and the needs of front-line users at the expense of other sectors and, inevitably, I think that those are difficult decisions.

[83] **Mr Watkin:** To give a couple of points again from a local view, if I may, part of my department lost its status as a revenue client, so that money went. However, we do understand why that was done and we are now working with the arts council to build ourselves into a position of new strength, quite genuinely. So, while it is disappointing, we are working from that position and accept the arguments as to why, at the present time, Oriel Wrexham is not of the same status as Mostyn Gallery or the gallery in Newtown. We need to get to that status, so we can accept the arts council's reasoning in a situation where money is not as available as it once was. We have to accept that. On the umbrella bodies, I have a very strong view from working with local art groups and so on; they do not see much benefit coming from the umbrella bodies, to be truthful, and they would rather the money went to the product, to the front end, as opposed to being absorbed in an extra middle ground. If I was to be blunt—as one or two of you know, I am inclined to be so occasionally—I cannot think, off the top of my head, of any significant impact that those umbrella bodies have had in Wrexham in the last 15 years while I have been a chief officer.

[84] **Eleanor Burnham:** We have heard testimony from various bodies, including earlier this morning, although I do not know if you were listening. I presume that you discussed what you have just said. Voluntary Arts Wales and Tŷ Cerdd are two specific bodies that work nationally across Wales. Are you stating that, in your opinion, they have not been of the benefit that you would have expected them to be over the last 15 years?

[85] **Mr Watkin:** Yes, I would say that.

[86] **Sandy Mewies:** That is quite clear. What you are saying is that the local groups might have benefited from direct funding that went underneath. Is that basically it?

[87] **Mr Watkin:** Yes.

[88] **David Lloyd:** Yr ydym yn parhau i sôn am faterion ariannol ac mae cryn dipyn o sôn amdanynt yn eich papur, yr ydym oll **David Lloyd:** We are still on financial matters and you mention them quite a lot in your paper, which we have all read. Could

wedi ei ddarllen. A allwch ymhelaethu ychydig ac esbonio goblygiadau posibl unrhyw doriadau o ran cyllid ar gyfer y celfyddydau a gwasanaethau diwylliannol, yn enwedig o safbwynt y modd yr ydych yn cefnogi amcanion y Llywodraeth drwy weithio mewn partneriaeth â'i hasiantaethau cyflawni?

[89] **Dr Llewelyn:** Ar hyn o bryd, mae'r sefyllfa'n ansicr. Yr ydym yn disgwyl toriadau, ond hyd yn hyn, nid yw'r darlun yn glir o ran maint y toriadau. Bydd pethau yn fwy eglur ar ôl cyhoeddi'r adolygiad cynhwysfawr o wariant yr wythnos nesaf ac ar ôl i Lywodraeth y Cynulliad gyhoeddi ei chyllideb. Ryw wythnos ar ôl cyhoeddi cyllideb y Cynulliad, cyhoeddir setliad drafft llywodraeth leol a bydd yr awdurdodau mewn sefyllfa well i ymateb bryd hynny.

[90] Ar hyn o bryd, mae awdurdodau lleol yn cynllunio ar gyfer toriadau mewn cyllid refeniw o 3 y cant yn flynyddol dros y pedair blynedd nesaf, yn yr un modd ag y mae Llywodraeth y Cynulliad yn gwneud. Pan fydd dyn yn ystyried chwyddiant hefyd, bydd yn golygu toriadau posibl o ryw 25 y cant yng nghyllid refeniw. Ar ben hynny, bydd toriad sylweddol yn y cyllid cyfalaf. Yn y cyd-destun hwnnw, mae'n anochel y bydd y gwasanaethau gwirfoddol—hynny yw, y rhai nad ydynt yn statudol, megis diwylliant, hamdden a'r celfyddydau ac yn y blaen—yn cael eu torri. Eto, mae'n anochel y bydd y ffocws ar wasanaethau statudol fel addysg a gwasanaethau cymdeithasol ac yn y blaen. Bydd pethau yn bendant yn anodd; yn yr un ffordd ag y bydd pethau'n anodd i lywodraeth leol, bydd pethau'n anodd i gyrff cyhoeddus eraill.

[91] Mae tipyn o her i ni yn hyn o beth i allu ymateb i'r sefyllfa honno. Nid yw'r sefyllfa hon yn gwbl annisgwyl ac yr ydym yn trafod gyda'r Gweinidog yn bositif iawn sut y gallwn ymdopi â'r sefyllfa ac ymateb i'r toriadau. Yr ydym hefyd yn cynnal trafodaethau â chyngor y celfyddydau a phob corff arall sy'n darparu cyllid. Mae llawer o syniadau positif iawn yn datblygu, ond hyd nes ein bod yn gwybod ble yn union yr ydym yn sefyll, ni allaf roi mwy o wybodaeth i chi.

you expand on that a little and explain the possible implications for arts and cultural services of funding cut-backs, particularly in relation to the way in which you support the Government's aims through partnership working with its delivery agencies?

Dr Llewelyn: At the moment, the situation is uncertain. We are expecting cuts, but so far, the picture is not clear regarding the size of those cuts. Things will be clearer after the announcement on the comprehensive spending review next week and after the Assembly Government has announced its budget. About a week after the announcement of the Assembly's budget, local government's draft settlement will be announced and the authorities will be in a better position to respond.

Currently, local authorities are planning for cuts in revenue funding of 3 per cent per year for the next four years, as is the Assembly Government. When one also takes inflation into account, it will mean possible cuts of about 25 per cent in the revenue funding. On top of that, there will be a significant cut in capital funding. In that context, it is inevitable that voluntary services—those that are not statutory, such as culture, leisure and the arts and so on—will be cut. Again, it is inevitable that the focus will be on statutory services such as education and social services and so on. Things will definitely be difficult; in the same way that they will be difficult for local government, they will be difficult for other public bodies.

There is quite a challenge for us here and our ability to respond to the situation. This situation is not entirely unexpected and we are discussing very positively with the Minister ways in which we can cope with the situation and respond to the cuts. We are also conducting discussions with the arts council and every other funding body. Many very positive ideas are being developed, but until we know exactly where we stand, I cannot give you any more information.

[92] **Ms Bebb:** Un o'r pethau sy'n digwydd tipyn yn y maes hwn yw cydweithio ac ystyried sut i gydweithio'n rhanbarthol er mwyn gallu rhannu adnoddau ac arbenigedd a gwneud arbedion ariannol. Mae enghraifft yn ne-ddwyrain Cymru, sef cynllun Art Net: Clymu Celf, lle mae'r wyth awdurdod lleol yn ystyried darparu gwasanaeth celfyddydol rhanbarthol. Mae hwnnw yn awr yn y camau olaf ac maent yn mynd i'w trafod yn eu hawdurdodau lleol unigol. Gwn fod cynllun tebyg ar y gweill yn y gogledd ar draws y chwe awdurdod lleol. Nid wyf yn gwybod a oes gan Alan fwy i ddweud am hynny.

Ms Bebb: One of the things that is happening quite a lot in this field is co-operation and consideration of regional collaboration to share resources and expertise and to make financial savings. There is an example in south-east Wales, which is a scheme called Art Net: Clymu Celf, where the eight local authorities are looking to develop a regional arts service. That is now in the final stages and they are about to discuss it in their individual local authorities. I know that there is a similar scheme under way in north Wales across the six local authorities. I do not know if Alan has more to say on that.

[93] **Mr Watkin:** Very briefly, we have just started that process across the six north Wales authorities. The issue will be that the timescale has now been foreshortened. It has taken several years for the south Wales authorities to work through the complications and we are now facing a scenario involving next April and the April after. Although it focuses the mind, it makes it more difficult to have those lengthy debates and discussions to break down people's worries and concerns. I think that that will be an issue.

[94] Another challenge, particularly in the arts world, is the one whereby we need to ensure that independent arts organisations recognise that they need to work together—it is in the Stevens review, which was accepted as WAG policy. There are a number of organisations across Wales. There is one that the Chair knows very well, which receives substantial grant aid, but does not necessarily see itself as having a role in relation to the smaller cousins, if you like, in the surrounding area. There have been consequences to that. In my opinion, there is wasted expenditure whereby every little arts organisation has to create its own marketing and its own ticketing operation. There was a little debate at a local organisation yesterday and they were so proud to tell me that they had found £500 to create a new website. I was saying, 'Well done, wonderful, but why the dickens are you bothering?'. They had to waste a lot of time to find £500, which was a lot for them, to create a website when, in fact, they have a big sister down the road who would not even notice the inclusion of that material. Little examples like that would allow the sector to maintain its product on less money, to some extent.

[95] **Sandy Mewies:** Are you talking about the equivalent of regional working?

[96] **Mr Watkin:** Yes, it is.

[97] **Sandy Mewies:** You say that local authorities are already beginning to see the knock-on effect of the decisions in the arts council's review. What are the implications of the review on local authority support for those organisations that are no longer to be in the arts council's portfolio of revenue-funded organisations? Do you see any corresponding impact on the venues directly funded by local authorities?

10.00 a.m.

[98] **Dr Llewelyn:** At this stage, Chair, building on the earlier response, because the position is uncertain at the moment, I do not think that we can anticipate fully what is likely to happen. What we do know is that it will be challenging and difficult for authorities to plug the gap left by the diminishing funding coming from other sources. However, much will depend on judgments made locally and how individual authorities will respond based on their assessment of their individual circumstances.

[99] **Sandy Mewies:** Have you anything to add to that, Alan? I see that you do not. Thank you. Dai has the next question.

[100] **David Lloyd:** O ran hygyrchedd lleoliadau, mae eich papur yn cyfeirio at y nifer fawr o leoliadau diwylliannol a reolir gan awdurdodau lleol yng Nghymru. Sut y mae awdurdodau lleol yn gweithio'n unol â chanllawiau penodol i sicrhau bod lleoliadau'n galluogi pobl anabl i gael mynediad i adeiladau?

David Lloyd: On access to venues, your paper refers to the large number of cultural venues managed by local authorities in Wales. How do local authorities work in accordance with specific guidance to ensure that venues enable disabled people to have access to buildings?

[101] **Dr Llewelyn:** Mae canllawiau, fel yr ydych wedi sôn, a deddfwriaeth sy'n gosod fframwaith ar gyfer darpariaeth awdurdodau lleol. Mae pob awdurdod yn gorfod gweithio o fewn y ffiniau hynny. Hyd y gwn i, mae awdurdodau yn gwneud eu gorau o ran mynediad ar gyfer pobl ag anabledd ac yn y blaen. Efallai y bydd Alan yn gallu rhoi mwy o wybodaeth i chi am sut y mae awdurdodau unigol yn ymateb i'r her honno.

Dr Llewelyn: There is guidance, as you mentioned, and legislation that sets a framework for local authority provision. Every authority has to work within those boundaries. As far as I know, authorities do the best that they can with access for people who have disabilities and so on. Perhaps Alan could give you more information on how individual authorities respond to that challenge.

[102] **Mr Watkin:** There is the national legislation and the way that we ensure that that is implemented fully, let us put it that way, whenever we are improving, or trying to improve, a building is twofold. First, obviously, the architect has a job in that regard, but we always involve both our local access officer and local access forum. I believe that most parts of Wales would have those, and they are involved at the early discussion stage and throughout the process. I am delighted to say that every so often they give us a ring and ask whether we can send somebody along to an awards evening, because we have delivered what they wanted. For example, there is the recent refurbishment of Wrexham library, which was largely funded by the Welsh Assembly Government, and I have a member of staff going along this Friday to receive the access forum's award for disabled access. By involving the people who face those issues, it means that we can do as much as we can. Sometimes, it is difficult. In particular, many of our arts and library buildings are quite old, and so pose particular problems. All Carnegie libraries, for example, are always up steps, the idea being, in the Carnegie days, that you were being lifted up to a new educational and social level by going into the library.

[103] **Joyce Watson:** I suppose that leads me nicely on to being lifted up and included in relation to my question. In relation to access and inclusion in the arts for disabled people, Disability Arts Cymru refers to patchy provision across local authorities. It says that it is dependent largely upon the attitude of the local authority's arts officer. What efforts, in your opinion, are made to ensure there is consistency of service and provision for disabled people in relation to arts and culture across all local authorities?

[104] **Dr Llewelyn:** As I mentioned earlier, the authorities work within the same framework and try to implement the same guidelines. As far as we know, that is applied consistently. The only thing that I can say is that, if you would find it useful as a committee, we could try to collect further information to see what is happening and perhaps provide more detail on the level of consistency.

[105] **Sandy Mewies:** We are not just talking about mobility problems, of course. We are talking about sight and hearing problems and so on. We have had evidence that, for example,

the millennium centre gives good support. It is a big organisation and can do that, but it does also help other organisations in that regard. Are there any examples of regional working elsewhere and that sort of co-operation? If you could give us that information in addition, that would be quite useful as well, I think.

[106] **Mr Watkin:** Chair, if I could just make one very small point, you mentioned that somebody had said to you that it depends on the attitude of the arts officer. It should not depend on the attitude of the arts officer. If any arts officer working with me had the wrong attitude I would want to know about it, and that would be changed. It is a matter of policy for the organisation. So, I just wonder sometimes whether the message is not being relayed or the comments made to the right level in the local authority for action to be taken.

[107] **Sandy Mewies:** Thank you, Alan. That is fine. Oscar is next.

[108] **Mohammad Asghar:** The key point in my question is the geographic spread that you mention in your paper. You consider there to be a relatively balanced picture across Wales, with reasonably priced or free cultural provision within reasonable reach of the vast majority of the population. However, you raise concern that this provision will become increasingly under threat over the coming years. Could you expand on your concerns?

[109] **Ms Bebb:** In our submission we make that statement because of the wide variety of provision that local authorities provide: libraries and museums, provision within venues and also at a community level. So there is activity that local authorities provide and it is accessible at a very local level. Obviously, with impending cuts and less money available, there is potential for less provision to be made available, and that will have an effect on certain areas and communities possibly.

[110] **Mr Watkin:** There are some signs that certain types of service, where the costs are ostensibly easier to isolate, can be under threat. There are one or two examples in Wales, much to my regret, although not in our patch fortunately, of where mobile library services, for example, have been stopped. That, to me, is a piece of false accounting. It is done just because it is very easy to say, 'This is the cost of that service', because it is contained in the vehicle and the staff. As a result, the service becomes more difficult for people to access in remoter, more rural areas. It is those sorts of issues that we need to be quite careful about in the coming months. We need to look at the overall picture, I would suggest.

[111] **Eleanor Burnham:** Mae hynny'n arwain at fy nghwestiwn i, sy'n ymwneud â heriau. Un ohonynt yw cludiant. Yr ydych yn awgrymu y dylai'r ffocws strategol clir ar gyfer y dyfodol ganolbwyntio'n bennaf ar ddatblygu gweithgareddau a chyfleoedd i ddenu cynulleidfaoedd newydd, drwy gael gwared ar rwystrau megis cludiant, canfyddiad neu ddarpariaeth nad yw'n symud. A oes gennych unrhyw farn am sut y gellid cael gwared ar rwystrau o'r fath, a allai lywio argymhellion ar gyfer yr ymchwiliad hwn a gwella cyfleusterau i bawb, yn enwedig i ni yng ngogledd Cymru, lle, fel y soniodd Alan, mae llawer o'r gwasanaethau ar gyfer cefn gwlad yn dirywio?

Eleanor Burnham: That leads on to my question, which is about challenges. One of them is transport. You suggest that the clear strategic focus for the future should be mainly on developing activities and opportunities to attract new audiences, by breaking down barriers such as transport, perception or static provision. Do you have any views on how such barriers could be broken down, which could provide a basis for recommendations from this inquiry and improve facilities for everyone, especially us in north Wales, where, as Alan mentioned, many of the services for rural areas are deteriorating?

[112] **Ms Bebb:** Credaf fod awdurdodau lleol yn gwneud llawer o bethau i sicrhau bod

Ms Bebb: I think that local authorities are doing many things to ensure that those

yr heriau hynny yn cael eu cydnabod a'u bod yn delio â hwy. Maent yn gwneud hynny, er enghraifft, drwy raglenni, digwyddiadau a gweithgareddau yn lleol sydd o ddiddordeb i bobl leol, a thrwy drafod â phobl pa fath o gyfleoedd sydd eu heisiau arnynt yn eu hawdurdodau lleol, megis rhaglenni a gweithgareddau yn ystod y dydd ar gyfer pobl hŷn, rhaglenni a digwyddiadau sy'n addas i deuluoedd ar benwythnosau, gwaith penodol gyda chwsmeriad ag anableddau, gwaith gyda chyrrff allannol megis Theatr Hijinx, darpariaeth yn y Gymraeg, a rhaglenni sy'n defnyddio iaith arwyddo ar gyfer oedolion a phlant. Maent hefyd yn gwneud gwaith sy'n targedu grwpiau penodol, ac yn aml yn contractio sefydliadau cymunedol celfyddydol lleol i weithio ar gael cynulleidfaoedd newydd i'r celfyddydau, a gweithio gyda phlant sydd â gofynion arbennig, neu grwpiau anabledd. Hefyd, mae cynlluniau penodol fel cynllun Night Out cyngor y celfyddydau, sy'n dod â pherfformiadau i gymunedau, a Live Music Now, sy'n dod â cherddoriaeth i ganolfannau dydd ar gyfer yr henoed. Mae ystod o ffyrdd gwahanol o geisio sicrhau bod darpariaeth celfyddydol yn cyrraedd pawb mewn cymuned.

challenges are recognised and addressed. They do that, for example, through local programmes, events and activities that are of interest to local people, and by discussing with people what kind of opportunities they want in their local authorities, such as programmes and events during the day for older people, programmes and events that are suitable for families on the weekend, specific work with customers with disabilities, work with external bodies such as Hijinx Theatre, Welsh-language provision, and programmes that use sign language for adults and children. They also do work that targets specific groups, and often contract local community arts organisations to work on attracting new audiences to the arts, and to work with children with special needs, or with disability groups. There are also specific schemes such as the arts council's Night Out scheme, which brings performances to communities, and Live Music Now, which brings music to day centres for older people. There is a range of different ways of trying to ensure that arts provision reaches everyone within a community.

10.10 a.m.

[113] **Sandy Mewies:** Chris, do you have anything to add to that?

[114] **Dr Llewelyn:** No.

[115] **Mr Watkin:** I do, but just briefly, as I know that time is almost up. It would be useful for you to think about emphasising the importance of maintaining these 'specialist deliveries', to use our shorthand, at a time when money is tight. Usually, you are talking about a small number of people making a huge impact, and therefore the equation sometimes does not stack up in simple numbers.

[116] I will give you a couple of quick local examples. First, we ran an arts project with the youth service to get youngsters to try to define their identity using whatever art form they wanted and historical artefacts. The museums and arts service came together for that, and we mounted an exhibition. I have to say those youngsters were more honest in what they said in that exhibition than any of us would ever be. It was remarkable. It was done without any staging, and we had the photography done on the night. Three of them came in: one was a punk, one was a Mohican and the other was a Goth. These kids had been involved in this project for 10 weeks, giving up three hours on one night of every week to do it. They were so excited about it. We are talking about a small number of young people but if you did a quick cost equation, the danger would be that you would say that it was not cost effective.

[117] In another example, which also cost quite a lot of money as it went over two years, but it was really good, we used children from lower secondary school as oral historians. They

talked to people throughout our communities about their experiences, including evacuees in the wartime who had stayed or come back. We then used that to commission a local community play, which was performed around the area. It was also taken to Liverpool to share the experience, because the evacuees who had come over were usually Liverpudlians. It brought the generations together and required huge skills levels, but again, looking at the cost and just the numbers, it would be easy in the current climate to say that it was not affordable, and yet the impact was immense for everyone involved.

[118] **Sandy Mewies:** I will allow two more questions, but it means that people will have to be succinct. If you have nothing to say, please say so. Mark will ask the first and Lynne the second, and then I will be bringing this session to a close.

[119] **Mark Isherwood:** I recall attending one of those sessions with you in Wrexham Library a few years back. In your evidence, you refer to leisure and culture services across local authorities examining alternative service delivery models, including possible collaboration at national, regional and sub-regional level. Could you expand on that and tell us what you think the implications may be for access and participation?

[120] **Dr Llewelyn:** There has been considerable discussion for some time across culture and leisure within the heritage portfolio on responding to the challenges of cuts in public sector spending. I think that that is because of the discretionary nature of so many of the services and, given that they are under threat even in the ordinary run of things, there is more sensitivity to these issues. It is probably fair to say that there has been more discussion in this sector over a longer time than in any other area.

[121] The consensus that I mentioned earlier has prevailed here as well. We have had very constructive and positive discussions with the Minister for Heritage and his team over the past 18 months or so, or maybe longer, which have focused on how services can continue to be delivered in the challenging financial context. More than a year ago, we commissioned some research for us, as the WLGA is looking at different models of service delivery. Interestingly, we have a meeting tomorrow in the Urdd's part of the Wales Millennium Centre, and we will be bringing the 22 cabinet members for culture and leisure together with representatives from CyMAL—Museums, Archives and Libraries. The Minister is attending as well and will be opening the session, but we will be looking at different models of service delivery. In the afternoon, we will be looking at the possibilities for library services, ranging from the current position to having an all-Wales service, co-ordinated nationally but delivered locally. So, the range of possibilities is being considered, including regional options, lead authorities, and so on.

[122] There have been similar discussions across the other portfolios as well. Heledd has mentioned Arts Connect in the Valleys and there have been similar discussions in north Wales. So, I think that the sector is responding positively, led by the Minister, it has to be said, and is looking as creatively and as imaginatively as possible without being precious about who delivers what.

[123] **Lynne Neagle:** You say in your evidence that you welcome the arts council's looking strategically at youth provision over the coming months, but of course there is a delay between the cessation of funding for theatre and some theatre in education and the beginning of the new strategy. What implications do you feel that that will have for local authorities?

[124] **Ms Bebb:** Provision for children and young people is definitely a priority. It is a priority for local authorities for that provision to continue. It is important that we look at all the different art forms for provision in schools and try to provide experiences of all art forms for children and young people. Theatre in education is one aspect, but we want to look at more than just theatre as opportunities for children and young people to participate in culture

and arts.

[125] **Sandy Mewies:** Are Members happy with that? I see that you are. I particularly wanted to get to that question because we debated it earlier. Thank you very much for your evidence. We have a few more questions, which if you do not mind I would like to submit in writing to you. Feel free to add anything to what you have said today that you think we have just not had the time to say. You understand the pressure that these meetings are sometimes under. It would also be very interesting, Chris, to hear about the meeting tomorrow, if we could have a short note back to the clerks on that. Things seem to be changing by the minute, almost. If you could update us on that, it would be very useful. Thank you again for coming and for the paper that you submitted.

[126] We will have a short adjournment now, and I will not specify a time but it will be short. I have to do it under Standing Order No. 10.25. Are you all happy about that? I see that you are. I suggest you do not go very far away.

*Gohiriwyd y cyfarfod rhwng 10.18 a.m. a 10.24 a.m.
The meeting adjourned between 10.18 a.m. and 10.24 a.m.*

Celfyddydau Anabledd Cymru Disability Arts Cymru

[127] **Sandy Mewies:** I will now start this session with Disability Arts Cymru. I welcome our witness, Maggie Hampton, who is the director of Disability Arts Cymru, and her colleagues Patricia Rafique and Hilary Evans. First, we have all read your paper and found it very interesting indeed. If you would like to make some introductory remarks feel free to do so, but keep them short because we have a lot of questions from Members and I would like to give them all the opportunity to ask those questions. Would you like to say something to introduce your paper, Maggie?

[128] **Ms Hampton:** Yes. I do not really think I have anything to say other than what is in the paper. I do not really have anything to add to that, but perhaps I can expand a bit more as people ask questions.

[129] **Sandy Mewies:** Of course you can.

[130] **Ms Hampton:** We can play it by ear then, if that is okay.

[131] **Sandy Mewies:** I think that it would be better if you were to expand as we go through the questions. I have the first question. You say that high-quality cultural experiences are certainly more widely available to disabled people in Wales. I am presuming that you mean now. You refer to a number of policies that have enabled this to happen, such as free entry to museums, 'Moving Beyond: An Arts and Disability Strategy for Wales' and the Disability Discrimination Act 1995. Concentrating on these positive benefits at the moment, can you expand on how these policies have made a difference to disabled people in Wales?

[132] **Ms Hampton:** The free access to museums and galleries is a huge benefit. Lots of disabled people are restricted because of their disposable income, and having free entry rather than having to pay £2 or £3 makes a huge difference to people, especially if you have a family or you have to go with a carer or a support worker. That small expenditure is the difference between going to a museum and not. I do know of a lot of disabled people who have taken advantage of the free entry to museums and have really got a lot from that. I know that if people had to pay, it would really restrict the number of disabled people who go.

[133] A lot of the costs of being disabled are hidden. Even for disabled people who are earning, there are almost invariably extra costs involved with living. Sometimes you need to pay someone to go with you or there are extra costs around transport, or whatever it is, and that just makes a huge difference and is hugely beneficial.

[134] Disabled people were originally campaigning for full civil rights, which are still not there, but the Disability Discrimination Act came in and, since then, it has been tightened up and different amendments have been made, and it means that now that there is protection against discrimination. It really means that cultural and arts organisations have duties, and the Assembly, the arts council, public bodies and local authorities have duties under the law, and that means that things have to be done.

[135] Before, people may have had a will to improve accessibility, but I think that the DDA is making a huge difference. Now, with the Equality Act 2010 that came in on 1 October, bringing all the various bits of anti-discrimination legislation together, I think that things are just going to get better. It means, for example, that when funding bodies are setting out the criteria under which organisations can apply for funding, accessibility has to be a part of that. It is another checkpoint. It is another responsibility for everyone. It is just about making sure that this happens, and it has a knock-on effect. I think that it has been great; it can get better, but it really does make a huge difference.

[136] On ‘Moving Beyond’, the arts council’s strategy on disability, Disability Arts Cymru assisted the Arts Council of Wales in writing the strategy. I know that, before the strategy, arts organisations that were funded by the arts council were sometimes asking, ‘Why should we have an action plan on arts and disability when the arts council doesn’t have a firmed up strategy and policy?’. ‘Moving Beyond’ was put in place and I think that it has been fabulous. It is something that the arts council reviews regularly. It is something that is always referred to. You can actually see things happening because the policy in place is leading by example; it is showing arts organisations that the arts council is taking its duty seriously.

10.30 a.m.

[137] They have to have this under the law anyway—under the Disability Discrimination Act, they have to have policy and strategy, so it is a good thing all round. I have been working in the arts in Wales since 1993 and I have seen huge changes because these policies and laws are now in place and it is greatly beneficial to disabled people. A number of disabled people are now starting to develop careers in the arts, which was not happening before and routes are beginning to develop for disabled people to develop their careers. Even if they do not want to make a career out of the arts, it makes a big difference just to be involved and to see if this is what they like doing. It also improves people’s quality of life. That is a big change that I have noticed over the past 17 to 18 years.

[138] **Sandy Mewies:** Thank you, that is good to hear.

[139] **Mark Isherwood:** I think that, in part, you have already addressed this in your positive comments, but you refer to the difficulties faced by disabled people when accessing venues, such as loop systems not being switched on or working—something close to my own heart—caption theatre, inaccessible older buildings, British Sign Language interpreters, and so on. Could you expand on this point, please? Do you have any suggestions or ideas on how this should be further addressed?

[140] **Ms Hampton:** Really, I think that those of us who work in the arts and who are responsible for funding for arts and culture organisations all have a duty to make sure that accessibility is taken on board in all respects. They may appear to be small things, like switching the hearing loop on; however, if we use the hearing loop, we need to be confident

and think about saying to arts organisations, 'This needs to happen'. However, it should not be the responsibility of disabled people or deaf people. I think that there needs to be more training. Disability Arts Cymru provides training for arts organisations and we always tell people about having an action plan to ensure that procedures are in place for switching on the hearing loop, ensuring that people are trained to use it, and ensuring that hearing loops are publicised.

[141] Sometimes, it is difficult for arts organisations if there is a high turnover of staff. Just making sure that there is always someone on duty who knows about the hearing loop and who can check that it is switched on is a really simple thing, but it is the small things that sometimes get lost. I just think that we have to keep pushing it. I do not know, I am not sure, but I just wonder whether there might be a need to make training in accessibility mandatory, 'You have to go; you have to do this'. I do not know. I do not like the idea of forcing people to go to training on disability issues. I think that people should want to do it and that an organisation feels that that is what it should be doing. Sometimes I wonder whether there is a need for this to be something that everyone has to do, just to make sure.

[142] I think that it varies, really, and the issue of things slipping through the net is, I think, partly due to the fact that, in our culture and in our society, we are just not used to always including disabled people. I did say in my paper about the historical exclusion of disabled people. We have been left out of most things in society over hundreds of years, and this is all new and we are not going to change it overnight.

[143] I hope that this will increasingly become something that people want to do, and that there is a general raising of awareness. I think that, perhaps, the Assembly and local authorities and the arts council can continue to lead by example and publicise the facilities that we have and to ensure that people are aware of what is available. It is just about getting the message out; it has to continue. I really do not like the idea of making people go on courses because then people are resentful. However, I think that we need to just keep pushing it and to make sure, as well, that the training is available for those organisations that need it.

[144] **David Lloyd:** Mae fy sylwadau yn debyg iawn i rai Mark Isherwood. Yn eich papur, yr ydych yn dweud bod pobl mewn cadeiriau olwynion wedi cael profiad anodd mewn ambell le. O ran problemau sy'n ymwneud â mynediad pobl anabl i hen adeiladau, a gredwch nad yw lleoedd sy'n cynnig mynediad cyfyngedig yn gwneud digon o ran eu cyfrifoldebau tuag at bobl anabl, neu a ydynt yn wynebu cyfyngiadau gwirioneddol sydd y tu hwnt i'w rheolaeth?

David Lloyd: My comments are very similar to those made by Mark Isherwood. In your paper, you say that people in wheelchairs have experienced difficulties in some venues. On the issues concerning disabled people's access to old buildings, do you believe that the venues that have limited access are not doing enough given their responsibilities towards disabled people, or do they face real constraints that are outside their control?

[145] **Ms Hampton:** I think that a great deal depends on the venue itself. For example, the New Theatre in Cardiff is a very old building with very limited, restricted access. I know that it has struggled with restricted access for wheelchair users, and because of health and safety and getting a licence from the fire officers, access for wheelchair users has been restricted even more in recent years. However, the staff have done absolutely everything they can to ensure that customers are properly informed and that everything is in place to work with what they have, but, really, without probably millions of pounds being spent on the New Theatre, there is not a lot more that they can do.

[146] There are, perhaps, other organisations that could do more. I think that if somewhere is accessed from around the back or via an alternative route it should, at the very least, be clear and clean and not cluttered. You should not have to wade through boxes and packaging,

different rooms, pails, and so on. It is just horrible; it makes the whole thing quite stressful. Quite often, there are more things that staff can do. This is not always the case; a lot of the staff work really hard and people are very pleasant and polite and helpful and really are doing their best. However, when you are making the best of difficult access, it has to be within the culture of the organisation and everyone has to be committed to making it work, from the top down. It should not be just the individual members of staff who have to escort people and so on.

[147] Those who work front of house are doing an increasingly good job under very difficult circumstances and people are usually really helpful. That makes a difficult experience better, but it has to be within the culture of the organisation to make it work. Really, there needs to be more money where the buildings have difficult access.

[148] **Lynne Neagle:** You say in your evidence that arts and cultural services are now much better at actively promoting access, attracting new audiences and encouraging participation. Are there organisations that you think are exemplary in this that we might learn from and are there some areas where you are finding resistance?

[149] **Ms Hampton:** Some organisations are very good at promoting access and, quite often, they are the smaller organisations working in the community. It is perhaps difficult to name organisations as exemplars in that respect. A lot of organisations are doing a great job, using clear print, images that are not fighting with the text, nice clear colours, symbols and bigger fonts and so on. For best practice, it is a good idea for arts organisations and cultural organisations to look at those led by disabled people, as that is usually where the best practice is—because those people are our customers.

10.40 a.m.

[150] I am not talking about just in Wales but organisations across the UK, especially those that have worked with, and been led by, disabled people for many years, such as the Graeae Theatre Company in London, and those led by people who have learning difficulties, such as Heart and Soul, also in London, and Carousel in Brighton. They do a really good job of making their arts publicity accessible. We all have something to learn from arts organisations that are led by disabled people, and we have to get into the habit of looking at what disabled-led organisations are doing, even those that are not in the arts. How people work with print and image and those things is getting better: people are much more aware of website accessibility, and I know that a lot of work is being done on web access, which makes things easier for disabled people. It is improving, but not everyone is doing it yet.

[151] **Mohammed Asghar:** You highlight some of the disadvantages faced by disabled people, such as unemployment and transport, particularly younger adults and those living in rural and deprived areas. How are these limited factors currently being addressed, given the financial constraints that we face? Do you have any suggestions on what more could be done?

[152] **Ms Hampton:** It would help if all bodies providing services for disabled people and for deprived communities were aware of the immense value of the arts to people's lives and the difference that they make to people's quality of life, and if they would take that into account when making difficult decisions about which services to continue and which to cut. I know that that is really hard when we are in such difficult economic times, but I sometimes wonder whether services that are not in the arts appreciate just how important the arts are to people and what a huge difference they make. Being involved in the arts can sometimes help to prevent people from becoming ill, or can help to maintain their health at a certain level and stop them from getting worse. They need to take into account that disabled people who need carers and support workers also need social hours to allow them just to get out, whether to go to the library or the museum, and to have a support worker to go with them.

[153] A personal friend of mine is restricted to his home because of a recent illness, and he is totally dependent on carers to take him out. That has to be arranged at set times. Someone has to be able to drive his van, and the hours have to be allocated so that he can go out. He has recently been given social hours within his package which means that he can go to the library, to the New Theatre, and so on. The fact that he can get out and just do something that is not the essential weekly shop makes a huge difference to him. That is also the case for a lot of other disabled people. People have said to me, ‘You do not know the difference that it makes just to be able to come to this workshop’.

[154] It is an issue for transport and social services, and I just want people to be aware of the fact that, when we are thinking about people’s quality of life, all these services have to overlap. They interlink with each other, and I do not think that we can just take each one in isolation. For the most part, arts organisations are working really hard to make sure that we reach deprived areas, by setting up events for people and trying to work their way around the transport issues. We are aware of that, especially among those small organisations that are working with restricted budgets. We know, because we are there on the ground, as it were. However, we want that awareness to be more widespread and for people to take that on board, and I really think that the only way is for all the services to work together to make that happen.

[155] **Eleanor Burnham:** Yr ydych yn awgrymu bod y modd y mae awdurdodau lleol wedi ymrwymo i wella hygyrchedd ym maes y celfyddydau yn amrywio cryn dipyn. A allwch ymhelaethu ar rai o’r anawsterau yr ydych yn eu hwynebu wrth geisio lleisio eich barn ac ysgogi camau gweithredu?

Eleanor Burnham: You suggest that there is a good deal of variability in the way in which local authorities are committed to improving accessibility in the arts. Could you expand on some of the difficulties that you face in getting your voice heard and in generating action?

[156] **Ms Hampton:** I can give you one example of some difficulties that we faced a few years ago. We had a training officer in post for a two-year project, which was a short-term thing, and we wanted to set up partnerships with local authorities to get them and associated organisations on board, looking at programmes of training, which were to be subsidised. Those programmes included advisory sessions, surgeries, workshops—anything to get arts for disabled people improved in local authority areas. Our training officer worked really hard to make that happen, but the response was really disappointing. A few authorities were interested and we got a few things happening but, in one authority, the arts officer was really keen for things to happen, and went and talked to his line managers or whoever was responsible for allowing him to get things working, but it kept being put off. Then he left and someone else came in, and it had to be picked up and the whole thing started again. Then, it was delayed and delayed and then it all petered out and nothing happened. There were various excuses, such as that the authority did not really have the money, and it was so disappointing when such a lot of work had gone into it. Beyond the arts officers who really did try, it felt that there was not the will to do it. There was not whatever there needed to be to take this forward. We were offering a subsidised service that would have helped to improve matters for disabled people in the area, and it just did not happen, so we were really disappointed with that. It has to be a team effort; it has to be more than just the individual arts officers trying to do their best. I would like to see more cohesive working between local authorities, arts organisations and the arts council to get things moving more and to make sure that this is happening.

[157] **Joyce Watson:** We have talked this morning about arts and issues for the disabled to access arts. Do you think that those issues are wider than just in the arts and that access is an issue in general for people?

10.50 a.m.

[158] **Ms Hampton:** Yes, I think that it is general. The barriers that we face in the arts are pretty much the barriers that we face everywhere. It is quite often difficult accessing health services and transport, education and training; that is pretty much the picture. There has to be such a lot of organising of our lives before we can get the everyday things to happen. Of course, a lot depends upon your impairment and your access needs or income, and for every individual it is going to be different. There is not really a one-size-fits-all experience. It depends upon the kind of support that you have from your family, your colleagues and so on. However, generally speaking, those are typical of the barriers that we face—on communication and information. There is, generally, a lot of hard work involved in getting an education, getting training, getting a job—even just getting to the shops, sometimes. It is getting easier but it is still hard.

[159] **Sandy Mewies:** Thank you, Maggie. I am going to draw this session to a close. We have one or two more questions, which, if you do not mind, we will submit in writing to you. We will also provide you with a transcript of the session, which can be corrected for factual accuracy. If you feel that you want to add anything that you have not had the opportunity to say today, please feel free to do so. Thank you and your colleagues for being here today and for giving evidence.

[160] **Ms Hampton:** Thank you.

[161] **Sandy Mewies:** Before we move on, I just want to tell Members that we are losing Neil, who has been a great support to the committee for some time, and who is going on to pastures new. All that I can say, Neil, is that I will be watching for your name on the television in future. Good luck and thank you for all that you have done for the committee. I am sure that Members will agree with me on that.

10.52 a.m.

Papurau i'w Nodi Papers to Note

[162] **Sandy Mewies:** We have papers 5, 6 and 7 and the minutes to note. Are Members happy to do that? I see that they are.

[163] I remind Members that the next meeting of the Communities and Culture Committee will be on 3 November, when we will continue to take evidence on this inquiry into the accessibility of arts and cultural activities. Thank you for your attendance today and, indeed, for getting through so many of the issues that we wanted to raise.

*Daeth y cyfarfod i ben am 10.53 a.m.
The meeting ended at 10.53 a.m.*